Strategies for the Reuse of Vacant Urban Land: Herron Avenue & Brighton Road

The Urban Lab
The Urban Land Institute & The Urban Redevelopment Authority
Strategies for the Reuse of Vacant Urban Land: Herron Avenue & Brighton Road

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Introducing the Problem

Michael Stern,
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I. INTRODUCTION

This project deals with an issue that is prevalent in many American cities: what is to be done with excess private and public properties throughout our cities – with special emphasis on former commercial corridors. Through the medium of two case studies in separate neighborhoods of the City of Pittsburgh, the project examined both the opportunities and the challenges to redeveloping vacant urban land. The goal of the project was two-fold: 1) to develop realistic proposals to address the specific needs of these two distinct neighborhoods and, 2) to develop prototypes that could be applicable to other cities and communities. Because the issues involved are so common to many other communities, the conclusions should be applicable as well.

According to the Brookings Institution, vacant and abandoned properties occupy about 15 percent of the area of the typical large city. As pointed out by the National Vacant Properties Campaign, “this is abandoned properties connected to urban infrastructure.”

During the past five decades Pittsburgh population has declined by half, leading to large-scale abandonment of previously productive properties. The City of Pittsburgh has seen a decline in population from a high of 676,806 in 1950 to 334,563 in 2000; recent estimates appear to indicate that the decline has continued during the past six years. Regardless of Pittsburgh’s exact population today, it is clear that we are now a City approximately half the size we were a half a century ago, at least in terms of the number of people living here. Even though the average household size has decreased, the number of structures needed to house our population is continually declining. Although a declining population is not the sole reason for the increased number of vacant structures it is certainly a major contributor and the number of vacant structures and lots in Pittsburgh is increasing. Two formerly vital commercial districts in Pittsburgh neighborhoods, one on the North Side and the other in the Hill District, illustrate this issue, which many older U.S. cities currently face. The North Side example – the Brighton Road Corridor – features an area that contains many privately owned properties that are vacant and abandoned, while the Hill District example – the Herron Avenue Corridor – is mostly comprised of vacant lots owned by the City’s Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA).

Regardless of the ownership, these under-utilized properties are a negative influence in their respective neighborhoods and are a liability rather than an asset. As part of a broad and inclusive planning process, a study of these two sites has provided valuable case studies, which was, in turn, be useful in producing broader strategies for revitalization and reuse in similar situations.

This project was a three-way collaboration between the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, ULI Pittsburgh and the Urban Lab program of the Carnegie Mellon University’s School of Architecture.

This partnership created a strong synergy of skills and expertise that advanced the project. Carnegie Mellon brought the energy, enthusiasm and analytic capabilities of their students and faculty; the URA, as a public entity, has been working with the neighborhood groups and individuals concerned for many years, and ULI Pittsburgh was able to bring to bear the expertise and resources of its professional membership, both on a local and national level.

The URA took the primary organizational and coordinating role for the project. However, the Carnegie Mellon team took the lead in developing the planning materials including mapping and physical planning and design, as well as convening the community meetings that were the primary method of engaging the public. ULI Pittsburgh has served as the public spokesman for the project and convening public presentations of the project results.
ULI Inner City Advisor, Rose Gray of Philadelphia provided leadership advice and guidance to the project at several points during the project including the meetings with community groups and the City’s political leadership. In addition, a number of prominent local ULI members participated in the planning workshops.

II. TWO PITTSBURGH CASE STUDIES

A. Brighton Road is a main thoroughfare through the North Side, bordered by some of the City’s wealthiest residents and some of its poorest. Gleaming new stadiums sit within throwing distance of a generation of young people who have little hope for their futures. Brighton Road study area provides an opportunity to bring together a diverse collection of residents and neighborhoods that are too often isolated from one another.

The five neighborhoods impacted by the Brighton Road Corridor have actually experienced a population decline that exceeds the rate of the entire city. During the past five decades total population for these neighborhoods has declined from a high of 45,699 residents to 12,463, a loss of over 72%. With this population loss has come an increase in the number of vacant structures. Overall Pittsburgh maintains an average vacancy rate of 12.0%, but in these five neighborhoods of the 6,792 residential properties, a full 1,377 stand vacant. This number represents a vacancy rate of 20.3%

B. Herron Avenue – Hill District. This corridor was at one time a vibrant commercial strip and is still a major connector between a regional highway and the universities and hospitals of Oakland. It continues to carry a high volume of traffic on a daily basis, while the neighborhood around it has seen considerable abandonment. The URA owns a substantial amount of property along Herron Avenue, which may facilitate site assembly for any future proposals. The URA acquired these properties many years ago for a highway project that never occurred and is now faced with the need to return them to the City tax rolls. Though community groups have long been advocating for the redevelopment of this corridor, it is not clear what would be the best use of this publicly-owned property: should it be commercial, residential, or open space?

The three neighborhoods bordering the Herron Avenue Corridor had a total population of 24,683 in 1950 and in 2000 the population in these neighborhoods was 6,498, a loss of over 73%. In these three neighborhoods there are a total of 3,554 residential properties, 607 of which are vacant, thus constituting 17.1% of the total. Similarly to the neighborhoods surrounding the Brighton Road Corridor, the neighborhoods surrounding the Herron Avenue Corridor suffer from a proliferation of vacant lots. These underused and underutilized areas often become dumping grounds for trash and breeding areas for crime.

III. ISSUES ADDRESSED DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process was be guided by these basic principles:

- **Smart growth** What is the best place to invest scarce resources and investment dollars that will capitalize on development opportunities.

- **Green development** Large parts of these study areas contain environmental challenges including acid drainage as the result of previous mining activities. What are the best strategies for remediating and reusing these lands?

- **Sustainability** How to create economic as well as environmental sustainability.

- **Highest and best uses of property** Given community needs and market conditions, how do we foster a discussion about making prioritized decisions as a larger community.

- **Developing a broader community consensus** Because we studied two different neighborhoods, with different, as well as similar challenges, we hope to foster a broader understanding of the common challenges they face.
The goal was to foster a collaborative attitude that can transcend the provincial boundaries that can often prevail in neighborhood redevelopment.

IV. PLANNING PROCESS
The planning process was organized around a planning charrette, which brought together all of the participants in concentrated work sessions. At the beginning of the planning process, an organizational work session with the core participants and the ULI Inner City Advisor took place to map out the strategy and work plan for the project. During the beginning of the fall academic calendar the student and faculty participants collected the necessary background information and conducted analysis as defined during the organizational work session. These materials formed the intellectual basis of the planning charrette.

The Urban Laboratory at Carnegie Mellon University dedicated two groups of students to this project. They followed a rigorous 15 week process structured around 3 major community design workshops. The studio exercise sequence is a cumulative feedback loop, which leads to a detailed and nuanced urban design vision over the course of a semester.

The project has three phases with a community workshop at the end of each phase. The analysis phase is dedicated to examining economic, social and physical layers of the community, through words, images, maps and models. In the first community workshop the analysis is presented and students work with participants to identify community issues and objective. The second phase, urban design frameworks, transforms the community issues and objectives into a series of urban design proposals culminating in a strategic vision for the neighborhood. The second community workshop functions as a planning charrette to refine design ideas and select a key catalytic area of focus for further design inquiry.

The planning charrette brought together a large collection of participants including: members of the Carnegie Mellon Urban Lab, members of the Carnegie Mellon School of Architecture, neighborhood stakeholders from both communities, local Pittsburgh ULI members, the Inner City Advisor, community development representatives from local lending institutions and representatives of the URA.

The goal of the charrette was the collaborative evolution of redevelopment and reuse strategies that are appropriate for the specific sites while having widespread application in similar cities.

The final phase developed this area of focus as a catalytic project for the community through a detailed three-dimensional urban placemaking study. The final community workshop was used to summarize and present the work and to discuss next steps for the community.

V. CONCLUSIONS
The work in the following pages represents the efforts of these two Carnegie Mellon University Urban Lab studios, in collaboration with ULI and URA representatives, city planning officials and stakeholders in the various communities. All involved feel strongly that this has been a successful team effort. Realizing the importance of this collaborative effort, we wish to thank the people and organizations on the list below, our attempt to acknowledge those who have helped us along our way.

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Carnegie Mellon’s Urban Laboratory in Context

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The most distinctive characteristic of the Urban Laboratory Studio is the realization that urbanist visioning must be interdisciplinary and hands-on. Elected officials, agencies, the private sector, interdisciplinary specialists, the citizens, all play key roles in the process.

In the last 25 years of practice in the US, public participation has emerged as a key factor in urban design. Most public participation processes engage citizens for the duration of the planning process, expanding the range of concerns addressed and iteratively improving the quality of design.

There has been less progress in instituting longer-term mechanisms for empowering citizens to guide and shape the growth of their environment over the long term. In the best cases, a design process with public engagement leads to long-term citizen engagement. One way of describing the Urban Lab process is democracy in action. For all concerned, the Urban Lab is learning by doing.

Since 1990, the Urban Lab faculty and students have worked with over 20 neighborhoods in mapping, analysis and visioning efforts. In addition to the reports that capture the visions developed together between students and community members, the experience leaves behind a community group trained in the participatory design processes, who are prepared to tackle the challenges of implementation when collaborating with professionals, political leaders and private stakeholders.

OVERALL STUDIO STRUCTURE
Community and urban design requires an exploration of a variety of issues at different scales. The process is fundamental. In order to approach the complex problem of creating a neighborhood master plan, we proceed in steps through a series of exercises, working individually and in teams.

Each exercise focuses on a new major idea in the urban design process. Through each exercise we explore an aspect of the problem adding new layers of complexity to the evolving visions. The exercises follow three phases each ending with a community workshop:

Phase 1. – Analysis Working as a studio, students explore economic, social and physical aspects of the neighborhood through maps, demographics, diagrams, photographs, and the building of a large physical model.

Phase 2. – Urban Design Frameworks Working in teams, students transform community issues and objectives into strategic visions for the neighborhood with a series of strategies, an urban design framework and a series of program interventions.

Phase 3. – Placemaking/Visionary Projects
In the final phase student teams develop a single area of focus in detail, exploring development typologies, three-dimensional placemaking and representation.

STUDIO EXERCISE SEQUENCE
The studio exercise sequence is a cumulative feedback loop, leading to a detailed and nuanced urban design vision over the course of a semester. The project has three phases with a community workshop at the end of each phase.

The analysis phase is dedicated to examining economic, social and physical layers of the community, through words, images, maps and models. In the first community workshop the analysis is presented and students work with participants to identify community issues and objectives.

The second phase, urban design frameworks, transforms the community issues and objectives into a series of urban design proposals culminating in a strategic vision for the neighborhood. The second community workshop functions as a design charrette to refine design ideas and select a key catalytic area of focus for further design inquiry.

The final phase develops this area of focus as a catalytic project for the community through a detailed three-dimensional urban...
placemaking study. The final community workshop is used to summarize and present the work and to discuss next steps for the community.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

It is our belief that urban designers have an ethical obligation to collaborate with and empower members of the communities in which they work. Increasingly the term “Community Design” is used to describe practices where designers and planners work with neighborhood residents in the public interest. For our studio the term “community design” relates to the way in which we value social responsibility and community participation in the design process.

Student-led community meetings were sponsored by the John Wesley AME Church and the Hill House for the Herron Avenue Studio and by the Pittsburgh Children’s Museum and the Letter Carriers’ Union for the Brighton Road. Students were responsible for advertising, planning and facilitating the meetings. Each of the three phases mentioned above (and expanded upon below) culminated in a community workshop:

Community Week 1 – Sharing Understanding & Setting Goals [Workshop]. The first workshop focused on the student presentation of initial analysis work, including a physical model of the neighborhood, and the identification
of issues and objectives. Students used these documents as a springboard to generate input from community members.

Community Week 2 – Defining Objectives, Frameworks & Alternatives [Design Charrette]. The second workshop functioned as a design charrette. Working with community participants, student teams of two to three students presented their strategic master plan, discussed and revised alternative design ideas, and identified an area of strategic focus to develop in more detail.

Community Week 3 – Final Presentation & Community Reception [Presentation]. At the final workshop each team presented their design work for feedback. At the culmination of the semester, students prepared a final report summarizing their community and urban design experience, which will be presented to the community for public benefit.

THE REMAKING CITIES INSTITUTE
Building on the success of the Urban Laboratory, the Remaking Cities Institute is being created to ensure and expand the education, community visioning, and research efforts of Carnegie Mellon University; and to strengthen its partnerships in the region in an effort to catalyze the revitalization of urban regions, neighborhood by neighborhood.

The Urban Lab in Context

The Urban Lab has had great success partnering with key Pittsburgh leaders in leveraging the energy and creativity of outstanding student projects to lay the foundation for professional engagement. On one hand, students develop basic documentation for the project, while allowing communities to affordably explore a range of design ideas and implementation alternatives. On the other hand, the Urban Lab’s public process generates strong enthusiasm, and leaves behind a core group of citizens that is better prepared to engage in the future implementation process.

The RCI strives to build a resource in the Pittsburgh region that will promote an improved quality of life and economic development. Ensuring sustainability and quality of life in urban and regional design requires both multidisciplinary expertise and exposure to participatory processes. Physical decisions about land-use, zoning, transportation and other infrastructures, mixed-use development, and neighborhood design is brought together with urban geography, economics, and policy in the Remaking Cities Institute.

The RCI benefits from the strength of the Center for Economic Development (CED), part of the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy. The seamless integration of their expertise in the work of RCI allows us to leverage academic resources to better understand key regional economic development issues. It is our intention that the RCI will pick up where the Urban Lab leaves off, by helping the ideas that come out of the urban design studio have a life beyond the confines of the semester.
The Herron Avenue Studio

Urban Lab Studio
Herron Avenue Corridor
Luis Rico-Gutierrez, Instructor
Figure 1 Plan showing vacant land in the Hill District, with Herron Avenue highlighted.

Figure 2 Plan showing public-owned land in the Hill District.

Figure 3 Plan showing residential framework in the Hill District.

Figure 4 Plan showing commercial framework in the Hill District.

Herron Avenue Studio: Introduction
The Hill District, a once vibrant African-American neighborhood in the city of Pittsburgh, is a unique neighborhood known as much for its landmark past achievements as for its struggles for revitalization in more recent years. The Hill fostered the development of a truly sustainable community of tightly knit residents and local businesses, resulting in strong institutions like the Pittsburgh Courier, the first African American national newspaper or the Pittsburgh Crawfords, the first highly successful African American baseball team.

Unfortunately, much of the physical evidence of its past greatness was eradicated with the thousands of acres of land cleared during Urban Renewal in 1956. With its social and economic connectivity jeopardized, rampant poverty, crime and drug trafficking became among the typical occurrences in the neighborhood. The physical disconnects apparent in the many ill-maintained public spaces, vacant lots and dilapidated buildings, further serve as a reminder of the losses of the past and the urgency in the present to revitalize physically, socially and economically.
Still, the legacy of its past still lives through the nearly fifty churches, schools and various social organizations which reinforce the social networks that serve as the threads that have held this community together through the years.

To these organizations we owe the success of our activities. In particular, we want to thank Reverend Calvin Cash of the John Wesley AME Zion Church for galvanizing the interest of residents, institutions and other organizations in the area, and for organizing them to support the work of our students.

We hope that our endeavors contribute to their efforts to make Herron Avenue a better place to live, full of opportunities for current and future neighbors.

Luis Rico-Gutierrez
Associate Dean, College of Fine Arts
Mending the Bootstraps

Jacob R. Day
Master of Urban Design

Urban Lab Studio
Herron Avenue Corridor
Luis Rico-Gutierrez, Instructor
We know, through visits and anecdotes, that Pittsburgh’s Hill District is economically depressed. The Hill suffers from too few jobs, too few businesses and too few homeowners. By surveying the demographics and geographies of this place, we can paint a picture of this community. We can even calculate, using established methods, some portions of the Hill’s depression. It must be said that not every household, family or business in the Hill District is struggling. But any community that is doing collectively poorer than its regional counterparts, deserves help.

Through analysis, we hope to identify, in four categories, a set of expectations for the Hill, for which reasonable policies and procedures for implementation can be justified. Through design, we set in motion a plan for this implementation; a plan in real, physical, communal terms.

These categories are, joblessness, low home ownership and high rent, high utility costs and an open-loop retail expenditure cycle.

Some of these assessments and proposals will make certain assumptions based on urban design principles. Foremost of these is that people should have the right to walk to most, if not all, of the services necessary for a healthy, safe and comfortable life.

Ultimately, this project should offer a vision for the community to see policies, programming, planning and design that is focused, first and foremost, on their well-being.

The area being studied in this project is known as the ‘Hill District’ as it is located on the high ground between the Monongahela River to the south and the Allegheny River to the north. The core of the Hill District (the Middle Hill and the Upper Hill) as well as a public housing development, ‘Bedford Dwellings’ will be the primary areas of analysis.

Analysis is a critical component to these recommendations. When dealing with a precarious economic condition, it is crucial to understand precisely the terms of the condition. Otherwise, there is potential for recommendations being made on ill-defined terms, which could be tragic for the community.

This summary focuses on the recommendations made and give brief insight to the analysis distilled in the given strategies for implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

These recommendations/strategies focus on improving the economic and infrastructural framework of the Hill District. The lenses through which implementation will be conceived include policy/programming, planning/zoning and design. These distinctions are important because they move from a social framework to a physical one. Policy and programming recommendations will have implications on what zoning strategies are appropriate and what planning recommendations should be made. All of these will help us to define what the built environment should be when complete.
General strategies are defined first, to create a framework within which the other four strategies shall operate. The first of these 'general' strategies is to create a ‘Village Center’ on Herron Avenue between the intersections with Wylie Avenue and Webster Avenue. This will be the access point of the primary goods and services available to the community. It is a focus point for development and the ‘soul’ of the community.

**Herron Village Community Organization** Establish a co-operative organization (or branch) with the Hill House community organization with responsibility for and ownership of the well-being of the community property and the community institutions created in this proposal.

**Provide Community Meeting Space** At the intersection of Milwaukee and Herron, create a community building to house the offices of the Herron Village Community Organization, other community uses or future institutions as well as meeting space for the community and its institutions.

**Beautify the Hill** Any effort to revitalize the Hill District economically, will be interdependent with efforts to revitalize the appearance of the Hill District. The Hill must be a desirable place to live, work or locate a business.

**Create Hill District Green Ring** We would not simply propose that the Hill District be given an abundance of green space, but that the Hill District be given an abundance of usable public green space that is interconnected to the regional park and trail system. The corridor inclusive of the Hill perimeter should have the green space cleaned, upgraded and well kept.

**Bicycle Maintenance & Rest Stop** The proposed routes will come to a confluence, a sort of ‘Green Triangle’ at the intersection of the north trails and the Herron Avenue lanes, near the intersection of Herron and Bedford/Webster Avenues. A bike rest area and plaza, maintenance clinic and restroom facility should be created to make a clear distinction that this is a welcome place for gathering.

**Reconnect Street Grid** According to the USGBC’s LEED-ND guidelines, dead-end and cul-de-sac streets should be avoided at all costs. In this vein of thinking, existing dead-end and cul-de-sac streets should be reconnected to the street grid. These areas only disrupt the flow of automobile, bike and pedestrian traffic.

**Village of Light** Street lamps should be lowered to an urban height, rather than the highway-grade lamps which exist. These should also be placed more frequently and used to create a ‘Village of Light’ so that at many hours, people feel comfortable and safe walking along Herron Avenue.
Provide Access to Equitable Jobs

This is the first of the four specific strategies and comprises several specific techniques for implementation. This is an area of particular importance as much of the data presented thus far has painted a picture of the Hill District as suffering economically, particularly with respect to benchmarks such as the national or local figures. However, few of these statistics can relate the problems in the Hill like the unemployment figures. The Hill District is home to 1.67% of Pittsburgh’s labor force. Of these 2,579 men and women, 18.1% are unemployed.

Help Residents Access Jobs

While each of the following recommendations is critically important, solving joblessness will need to begin with connecting workers to jobs, wherever they might be. Much like the (un)employment figures, income is lagging far behind the local and national median incomes. The median household income in the Hill District is $22,041. Almost 30% don’t earn $10,000. 2,425 Hill residents are considered below the poverty threshold. 431 households are drawing some form of public assistance income.

Workforce Connection Program

This program should be the core function of a ‘one-stop’ center for those out-of-work and those seeking their first jobs. This should only serve to supplement existing programs. The Hill District is accessible from several bus lines, but suffers in two distinct ways in its transportation accessibility. The area is home to some very steep hills. This makes walking and biking slightly more difficult, while certainly not impossible. Only 5.1% of workers are able to walk to work.

Bicycle Sharing Program

It is clear from census data that no workers ride bikes to work. This probably has more to do with accessibility of bicycles and distance than it does the terrain. A bike-sharing station, similar to Portland’s Yellow Bike program would create an accessible and environmentally friendly alternative transportation means for the community.

Help Residents Obtain Necessary Skills/Knowledge

If the workforce is unemployable, all the available jobs in the world would make little difference for the unemployment situation in the Hill. To help the workforce become employable, a series of programs and entities focusing on improving the personal and technical skills of the workforce, as well as the marketability of their knowledge.

Education, being the great equalizer, is in a particularly poor state in the Hill District. Only 31% of Hill residents over 25 have graduated High School. The average salary for persons with a college degree is $49,712. The average for those with a high school degree is $29,848.

Schools

Given the alarming figures for education in the Hill
District, its schools should be bastions of hope. This appears to be far from the truth in the Hill District. Enrollment in Hill District schools has dropped 32%, even as schools close. The closings do not appear to be consolidating students any more than it appears to be in the community's interest. There is no high school present in the Hill District. This clearly exacerbates the issues of access, but may also play a role in delinquency and criminal factors in the Hill District. This, of course, burdens other social problems.

Herron High-Tech Secondary School (6-12) Primary and Secondary education is the foundation for work and careers. Of particular concern is the absence of a high school. There is a recommendation on the table to bring in the city's Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) Magnet High School into the abandoned Millions Middle School building. Rather than accept this proposal, the community should fight the CAPA program in favor of a locally-based 6-12 Secondary School. This school is close to the universities, the innovation zones in the area, the proposed high-tech incubators and UPMC. The school should focus on preparing students for careers in these high-tech industries. However, it should not be a purely vocational program.

Soft Skills Training This program should have evening meetings that help those who are seeking jobs learn the basic skills demanded in the modern workplace, including such things as etiquette.

Workforce Training Spaces In a much more industry-specific vein, space for programming should be offered for nearby businesses to train workers for their specific industries. The provision of community college classes from nearby schools should also be considered, though this may be unnecessary depending on the success of the industry-specific training.

Help Businesses Locate in Hill It is imperative that businesses be attracted to the Hill District. Residents, who spend their time outside of the Hill for work, will likely spend many of their retail dollars outside. Whenever possible, businesses attracted to the area, should be sited within the Hill District. In particular, the area near that designated for high-tech industry/office.

One of the largest employment sectors in the Hill District and in Pittsburgh is the Medical Care field. In the Hill District, we recommend that this sector be a focus industry, particularly the Nursing and Residential Care Facilities sector. Another focus strategy should be on retail. The third principal strategy will be a focus on manufacturing. Ultimately, all industrial development strategies should focus on building symbiotic support structures. They should also work to support or be supported by local assets, such as the steel/aluminum industry, UPMC and the nearby universities.

Medical Device/ High-Tech Machine Manufacturing Cluster Partner community organizations such as the Hill House with University of Pittsburgh and UPMC to attract supplier manufacturers and early stage part manufacturers to the area using the economic incentives in place. This should form the basis for a 'cluster' of these high-tech manufacturers and suppliers.
Help Hill Residents Start Businesses It was stated at the beginning of this document that ownership was a decisive element in rebuilding the economic infrastructure of the Hill District. While home ownership is the oft-referred area, business ownership is also very important. Businesses owned by large corporations, or any entity with ownership resting outside the Hill, will be financed from outside sources. Any return on these investments will also go outside of the Hill. Were ownership to reside in the Hill District, returns, revenues will likely be reinvested in the Hill District.

Business Incubator & Flex Space Create space in development for community-generated small businesses. Flex space can be open at minimal rent and ownership can belong to the Herron Village Community Development Corporation. Flex space can be sold to whatever firm desires to move in. Business incubator ownership should be retained by the community organization, so that businesses can be helped to grow and purchase their own spaces in the District.

Provide Access to Affordable, Owned Housing One of the notable problems in the demographic study was the extremely low rate of home ownership in the Hill. These low rates of ownership are a critical problem for many Hill families as the expenses associated with renting a home indicate far higher expenses than those families who own homes.

Public Transition Housing There are 3595 public housing units in the Hill District. More than 44% of residents living in Hill public housing have been there for more than 10 years. This figure indicates that public housing is not acting in any way as a transitional housing infrastructure, nor is it acting as a developmental infrastructure promoting ownership. Housing should be made available for purchase in a rent-to-own format that is reserved for public housing residents who have saved enough.

Mix Market-Rate/Affordable Housing It is the richness of diversity that makes our cities such interesting places to reside. By mixing market-rate housing in with affordable housing and doing everything possible to make the two indistinguishable, the Hill will become a richer place. In the Hill, there are 4,138 housing units. Of those that are occupied, only 1220, or fewer than 30% of the total number of units are owner-occupied.

Private Rent-to-Own 1,960 of the available homes are rental units. While many of these are very low rent homes, that should not be confused for being affordable. Families in lower income brackets typically spend more on rent (in real dollars) than those in higher income brackets. The development of private rent-to-own housing units should be encouraged for any developer building in the Hill District.

Provide Housing for the Elderly It is absolutely critical that this housing be developed in the Herron Village walking area. These residents must be able to walk (if they are physically able to do so) to access food and other basic necessities. There are a great number of elderly persons in the Hill District and this population will likely increase over time.

Nursing Home There are several degrees of dependence for the elderly. The most dependent are those who will need full-time care and attention, requiring significant and constant medical care. This facility will be a multi-story medical care facility for the elderly. Not only does this provide a relief for the elderly in poor health, but this provides jobs in one of the key growth industries in Pittsburgh, with close proximity to UPMC and the other area hospitals.

Assisted Living & Senior Housing The second degree of dependence includes those that need occasional medical care as well as some level of supervision. These individuals may also sometimes simply need assistance with some daily activities. Housing in close
proximity should be made available to those who would like to live in an environment for active seniors. This housing should follow all of the earlier stated principles of housing in the Hill District, but be marketed to seniors in particular.

**PROVIDE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE UTILITIES**

The cost of utilities represents the fourth highest category of household expenditures for consumer units in lower income categories. For this reason, attention must be paid to reducing the burden that these income groups bear for these expenses. Even the lowest income bracket in the Hill District spends over $1,700 on utilities each year. This represents a huge proportion of expenditures for every income bracket. The first consideration must be that lower income households are responsible for more of an economic burden (proportionately to income) than are households with a higher income.

**Geothermal Heating**

Geothermal heating and cooling appears to be a perfectly appropriate use of the mine-water in the abandoned mines below. The recommended strategy is to use individual wells rather than a communal sourcing effort. While geothermal power may not be the most appropriate method for power generation in the area, geothermal heat sourcing may be.

**Affordable/Clean Electricity/Energy**

Solar power and geothermal power are intriguing, but both are costly and considered geographically inappropriate for the region. While wind power is only slightly favored according to clean energy experts, it is perhaps particularly well suited for the Hill District. The northern edge of the Hill is sloped very steeply and is designated as undevelopable land. Furthermore, it is land abutting the valley of the Monongahela River. This valley, like most, is prone to sustained winds; more so than elsewhere in the same region. The wind turbines need not be considered eyesores. They can add to the character of and provide and identity to the community.

**50-Meter Wind Turbines**

The 50-Meter turbines are the 'typical' windmill-type turbines that are seen around the world today. These turbines (3 of them) have been selected to stand at 50 meters because at this height they will be free of much of the turbulence caused by the physical infrastructure in the Hill, trees, as well as drafts from the river valley.

**Urban Wind Vortex Turbines**

These machines are relatively new to the urban wind power market. The advantage to them, however, is that they are light, relatively inexpensive and have greater usability and power returns than their standard ‘windmill’ type
In this application, we recommend that each rooftop in the Shared Utility District be outfitted with these turbines.

**Wind Power Grid Connection to Duquesne Light** Unlike the prospect of geothermal heating, the provision of affordable and clean energy will be executed in a communal manner. These resources will endow commercial activity in the Herron Avenue Corridor. By generating power and selling it back to the grid in a Net Metering format, the utility district will profit from this relationship. Any unused power should be sold at a higher rate back to the grid. Through this program, a guarantee can be made to businesses and community entities in the Shared Utility District that power rates will remain unchanged for a 10 year period.

**Provision Access to Basic Goods**
The research done here to identify the basic needs that are going unmet in the Hill has helped us to identify the stores that the Hill could support. These are establishments that, based on the dollars being spent by Hill residents, could be built today and would succeed.

A standard in the retail industry is to assess a neighborhood or market’s demand for a store based on the average income in the area. But, in fact, population and expenditure density is far more critical in determining the success of an establishment than income. The use of Purchasing Power Profiles quantify how much a neighborhood actually spends based on the demographic composition of the place. The purchasing power in the Hill District in all included categories is $21,224,664. The data must be put in real physical terms to determine how many stores the Hill District needs. This is critical, because as long as residents must leave their community to make daily purchases, they are spending resources on transportation, they are disconnected from their own community and they are pouring their hard-earned dollars into other communities. The calculation to determine precise physical demand is as follows:

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**Mending the Bootstraps**

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Figure 10: Shared Utility Endowment District

Figure 11: A wind vortex turbine.
STEP 1

Study Area Retail Expenditures in a Category
+ 10% of Retail Expenditures of Neighbor C.T.'s in given Category

Total Retail Expenditures in Category

STEP 2

Total Retail Expenditures in Category
÷ Average Sales per Square Foot for Store Type

Total Square Feet of Store Type Needed

STEP 3

Total Square Feet of Store Type Needed
÷ Median Gross Leasable Area of Store Type

Total Number of Store Type Demanded

Ultimately we see that the Hill could support at least 4 Restaurants, 4 Clothing/Apparel Stores, 3 Appliance Stores, 2 Household Product Stores and 4 Personal Service Entities/Salons/Barbers.

At this point it is important to locate the existing retail establishments within the district that meet the demanded needs.

At first glance, we would note that only four restaurants appear to be viable in the Hill District and so, there is an abundance of restaurants. We may also note this to be true for salons and other personal service establishments. However, in general, the Hill is clearly underserved by appliance, apparel and household product stores. Additionally, it is worth noting that the calculation exposes that the area could support about 84.5% of one grocery store. This might imply that a small store selling healthy, fresh food might of great benefit to the Hill District community.

Identifying Areas for Focus

There are two natural areas for consideration. They are the largest commercially-zoned areas in the Hill District. The first and largest is in the Southwest corner of the Middle Hill along Centre and Wylie Avenues. The other is along Herron Avenue straddling the border between the Middle and Upper Hills. Given that each are at opposite ends of the neighborhood, geographically separated from neighboring districts, and that each are zoned for commercial use, both should act as neighborhood retail centers for the basic goods needed by residents.

The Centre-Wylie area clearly has the bulk of the businesses, including most of the restaurants and personal service establishments. This leaves the Herron Avenue corridor as well as much of both the Upper and Middle Hill without easy access to food, services or other goods. This analysis suggests that development should concentrate on the Herron Avenue corridor.

Equality of access is particularly important when we are considering...
such goods as fresh food, clothing, and other basic goods. All people deserve to be able to access these things, and do so through whatever means are available to them, be it car, foot or public transit.

**Help Residents Open Shops**
The principal strategy for developing retail in the Herron Village area will be to do so with owners and investors from the community. The primary reason for this strategy is that it will be easier to develop business plans and garner existing knowledge from the community for these shops than for high-tech medical device design and manufacturing. The knowledge necessary for such shops may already be inherent in the community, as the Hill District once had many thriving stores.

**Retail Business Incubator**
The first tool for developing Hill-owned businesses will be to set up a business incubator. This will include some support and information services, such as financing advising, retail business advising and human resource services. But most importantly, this should include available spaces for lease that are attractive and have ideal locations on Herron Avenue.

**Priority Small-Business First Loans**
As financing will be particularly important, banks and financial institutions in the area should be encouraged to provide small-business loans first and foremost.
Growing Herron

Trevor Clark, Daniel Cohen, Liana Zimmerman

Urban Lab Studio
Herron Avenue Corridor
Luis Rico-Gutierrez, Instructor
Herron Avenue is plagued by high-speed traffic, a fact noticeable at first glance. However, the high traffic volume presents the opportunity for future economic growth, assuming attractions could be provided for the diverse populations on this road; Hill District residents, residents from neighboring communities, and those from the greater Pittsburgh region all traffic this, and the other two Hill District arteries.

Three nodes, manifested in the form of three distinct commercial areas, are proposed in order to attract the varying populations seen through this traffic analysis.

The great topographical changes make the site a very challenging one. Herron Avenue forms a valley within this fluctuating landscape. Acid mine drainage also renders much of the site unbuildable, and further testing is needed to understand the specifics of this issue. From what is understood of the site’s geological and geographical forces, we believe that the rich green spaces should be used as assets to foster a stronger sense of community and to create a unique and exciting streetscape/landscape. An urban farm meets these goals and could be used as a placeholder for future growth or it might become a successful venture and positive identity for the Hill.

Social and institutional forces also dominate the Hill and Herron Avenue. The University
of Pittsburgh is seen as a threat in that its expansion has successively moved into the area, while the Hill activities and community trust are deeply-rooted in the churches, the Martin Luther King Jr. Reading Center, and other community institutions. Responding to these factors, the proposed node located at Centre Avenue is designed to foster a better, more controlled relationship with the University of Pittsburgh. As part of our initial steps, the aforementioned community institutions are renovated and expanded to build upon an existing sense of community.

Pitt Campus
a history of encroachment

Herron Avenue Studio Page 17
YEAR 0
The first step in the redevelopment of Herron Avenue is the rebuilding and expansion of the two churches and the Martin Luther King Reading Center. These institutions provide the backbone of community support and communications. Additionally, landscaping features and signage are built at either entrance to Herron Avenue to define the borders and new identity of Hill District.

Before any crops can be planted, measures must be taken to ensure the success of the agricultural plots. Remediation of damaged land by planting specific vegetation such as bulrush and cattail, burying French drains along areas of mine drainage, and constructing raised planting beds must take place before any serious agriculture can begin. These measures will be placed as needed.

YEAR 5
Building off the existing businesses, new construction and renovation focuses on the Centre Avenue node. This location will attract a young adult demographic, such as University of Pittsburgh students. Integration of the student community in small-scale buildings prevents large-scale construction by the University of Pittsburgh to which the Hill residents object. A large multi-purpose market building is built to support the agricultural and community needs, like farmers market and community events.

As remediation is complete, full scale agricultural planting would begin. Areas around the institutional buildings would focus on education in a living classroom for both children and adults, while new land to the south is prepared for later farming. Nearby schools will visit through fieldtrips while evening classes cater to adults.
Continuing to strengthen existing structures, the commercial node between Milwaukee Avenue and Webster Avenue would be developed into a second commercial node. Existing businesses, such as the BBQ and snack shop, and new businesses will meet the daily needs of the nearby residents. Between the new construction and the market house is a large plaza.

Successful remediation moves directly into farming in sites to the south. Urban farming will expand northward toward Bigelow Boulevard. With the most complex topography, this area requires terracing and other construction in addition to remediation. A series of paths now links pedestrians and work vehicles through all the farm plots.

**YEAR 30**

Just south of Bigelow Boulevard, the new addition of a Funplex is proposed. Catering to families and young adults, the Funplex is situated to advertise to Bigelow Boulevard as well as to connect to the urban farming area via an overlooking snack stand.

The urban farm is fully functioning, including greenhouses, storage facilities, and equipment paths. Vacant land along Wylie and Wanderless Street are acquired to expand the urban farm, as need arises. Small plots in the surrounding community would be converted as well, linking the entire Hill District with a single identity.

In the future, the community gardens could be used for new construction as needed or become permanent green areas to increase the value to the surrounding homes and businesses.
residential above
commercial (locally geared)

path lamps
decreased street width (45' existing width)

Figure 5

residential above
corner bookstores/cafe
car pad & one-car garage per unit
residential above
courtyard: gallery split-out

courtyard: gallery split-out

Figure 6

Galleries, a bookstore/coffee shop, etc. line this node of Herron Avenue.

Figure 7 Axiometric depicting various new programs.

Figure 8 An existing BBQ restaurant is expanded and stands across the street from the expanded MLK Jr. Reading Center and urban farm learning plot; each plot is unique and serves different crops and caretakers.

Figure 9 An existing BBQ restaurant is expanded and stands across the street from the expanded MLK Jr. Reading Center and urban farm learning plot; each plot is unique and serves different crops and caretakers.

Growing Herron
Orchards within the urban farm may include the following large tree crops: apples, pears, peach or apricot.

Essential for any family neighborhood; Encourages home improvement and home ownership.

Small trees may include the following small tree crops: plum, cherries, and nectarines.

Crops grown within the urban farm may include the following species: tomatoes, carrots, corn, onions, beans, and peas. Used for year round crop or flower production. Also used as a security alternative to a barrier for the urban farm.

Local demand is strong and competition in the area is very low. Ideally promotes alternative fuel sources as well.

Lowest security level barrier; used as an edge condition between homes and farmland; least imposing, so soft looking; 3' tall.

Highest security level barrier; in general used when visual barrier or a concern or when a more formal barrier is warranted; 6' tall.

Low security level barrier; used as an edge condition between homes and farmland; less imposing than brick, 4' tall.

Figure 9
Figure 10 Farmers and residents gather outside market.

Figure 11 Expanded Martin Luther King Community Center.

Figure 12 Iron and glass detailing on greenhouses.

Figure 13 Glass facade of Market across from educational gardens.

Figure 14 Dynamic housing geared toward Pitt students.

Figure 15 Renovated existing buildings.

Figure 16 Fresh landscaping and signage welcomes people to Herron Avenue.

Figure 17 (next page) A resident tends a garden with a view to the Funplex.
FOCUS  A strategy for the redevelopment of the Herron Avenue Corridor

Emma Davison, Adam Lackett, Benjamin Saks

Urban Lab Studio
Herron Avenue Corridor
Luis Rico-Gutierrez, Instructor
SITE FORCES

Placement of the commercial Focus Area around the five-point intersection of Herron, Webster, and Bedford Avenues is based on a variety of existing site forces. Geographically, this intersection is the highest point of Herron Avenue, with Bedford and Webster flowing into it. This area also contains the beginnings of a commercial infrastructure, as well as the highest density of existing structures along the length of Herron. Street connections were an important factor in selecting this focus area. With the construction of the Mellon Arena, The Hill District street grid was cut off from downtown Pittsburgh—with the exception of Bedford Avenue. Likewise, Webster Avenue provides the only direct internal connection between the Upper and Lower portions of the Hill, allowing this intersection to service all of these areas.

CAPA

Pittsburgh’s Creative and Performing Arts Middle School is planning to move into the closed Milliones Middle School. This school is located just off of Herron and CAPA has expressed interest in working with the community to support art programs in the area. A strong physical connection to the school would encourage Hill youth to participate in school programs and Herron Avenue could become a gallery space for these efforts.

SITE OPPORTUNITIES

The University of Pittsburgh has several outreach programs designed to aid underrepresented communities in the city of Pittsburgh. Entrepreneur programs can help community members to develop businesses in the area and programs that combat childhood obesity can help fund and construct resources for children in the area.

Herron Avenue has enormous potential as a North-South corridor within the city of Pittsburgh. Its placement between the Strip District to the north and Oakland to the south gives it a significant commercial advantage, acting as a thoroughfare between these two areas. Upwards of 5,000 cars traverse the length of Herron Avenue each day, however, in its current condition, there are few reasons for these passersby to slow down or even stop.

The diagram on the opposite page denotes the locations of a variety of elements throughout
Pittsburgh, including zones of green space and commercial activity as well as cultural, educational and religious institutions. What becomes immediately apparent is the lack of commercial, cultural and educational resources within the entirety of the Hill District. Basic amenities, such as gas stations and drug stores are virtually non-existent within the area, leading to the endless outflow of the community's capital into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Also noted in the above diagram is the potential to connect the Hill back into the surrounding neighborhoods through the use of Green Space. Possible connections include a proposed “Bedford Skyway” and “Kirkpatrick Greenway” as well as extensions to the existing green spaces along Bigelow Boulevard and into The Golden Triangle, Point State Park and The North Side. To the south, one has access to Schenley Park, down to the Monongahela River and across to the South Side.

THE FOCUS AREA
The intersection of Herron, Bedford, and Webster is situated at the peak of a topographic saddle in the landscape. This intersection also has the largest density of existing commercial and residential buildings. We have focused our efforts on the revitalization and in-fill of this area. It will become the center of a new community that serves to link the middle hill with the upper hill. It is also a point of destination along a path system that incorporates new and existing parks and recreation areas that link Herron Avenue with the rest of metropolitan Pittsburgh.
COMMUNITY CENTER


tenth

first and most important site


FOCUS: A Strategy for Herron Avenue
Recreation opportunities for community youth provide healthy alternatives to high-risk activities that are a big problem in the area. A gym and a skate park on Herron Avenue would contribute to healthy and diverse activity along Herron Avenue.

**CENTRE & HERRON COMMERCIAL NODE**
A small commercial node that builds off existing development at Centre and Herron can become a prominent entrance to the street and take advantage of high traffic levels and the proximity of U Pitt and UPMC.

**COMMERCIAL RENOVATION AND INFILL**
Existing buildings within the focus area will be renovated and converted to shops and restaurants that will service community needs and new structures will fill the vacant lots in between. This layering of old and new will create a rich and varied commercial center that respects the history of the area.

**GREEN CORRIDOR**
In conjunction with the urban-scale park proposals, the street itself will have general improvements. This will provide a more welcoming environment for people walking through the urban core as a connection between the parks. Sidewalks will be widened at the same time the street will be narrowed. This aims to slow down traffic and also to provide for a safer pedestrian environment. Trees will be planted to provide shade and cover, habitat for animals and to...
Phase One focuses on urban infill and existing structural improvements in the area of focus surrounding the five-point intersection. Initial planting of trees and layout of trails and paths.

Phase Two sees the construction of the New Community center, trails are constructed, public art is installed. The second phase of planting makes the length of Herron Avenue greener. The trail network extends up to the reservoir and down Wylie.

Phase Three represents the culmination of the redevelopment. New housing is built to support the growing population, and other commercial buildings will house new demands. The park system and trail links is fully functioning and well maintained. The relationship of CAPA, U Pitt and the Herron Hill Community is one that fosters growth and continual support.
make for a healthier streetscape.

**COMMUNITY INFLUENCE**

Community feedback and criticism has been an important influence on design decisions. The Gym and Skatepark were a response to concerns about bored kids and the trouble they cause. Many of the streetscape improvements were designed to slow down the traffic that continually threatens neighborhood safety and the walkability of the neighborhood. A senior housing complex was designed for older community members that want to stay in the area but can’t afford to keep up their houses. Lastly, concern about parking, especially at the Centre and Herron commercial node was influential in determining the size
Restitching the Hill

Brent Houck, Andrew Jones, Coleman Rusnock

Urban Lab Studio
Herron Avenue Corridor
Luis Rico-Gutierrez, Instructor
The Herron Avenue Corridor, a half-mile corridor stretching from Center Avenue in the south to Bigelow Boulevard in the north, is currently a divider and barrier to the communities of Pittsburgh’s Hill District. The width of the road, as well as the speed of the corridor prevent easy pedestrian crossing. The lack of connection points into and through Herron Avenue cause it to be a barrier between smaller communities rather than a backbone of the larger Hill District community.

Our proposal for the site is based on three main drivers:

The first of these drivers, became the framework for our proposals. Through adjustments to the existing street grid, movement to and through Herron Avenue is both emphasized and encouraged. Early proposals for street grid adjustments created connections of Orbin Street and Milwaukee Avenue through Herron Avenue. In addition, the realignment of Bedford Avenue divided Herron avenue into a series of blocks, providing opportunities to slow traffic and create small, community oriented “corner store” development. The connections through Herron Avenue, likewise, enabled a stitching of the Upper and Middle Hill communities to occur.

Analysis of site conditions, traffic patterns, and slope conditions revealed that the region between Wiley Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue is a strong location for development. This core area became a cultural and community center bridging between the Upper and Middle Hill communities. Capping the historic Wiley Avenue, this region was the central point of many viewing corridors and provided relatively flat ground for development at the connection point of two major corridors, one being the Herron Avenue corridor, creating connections with the greater Pittsburgh regions, the other being the Wiley / Milwaukee corridor, creating community based connections between the Upper and Middle Hill. A slight adjustment in the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Herron Avenue defines the one end of this region and balances it with the other end, capped by the intersection of Herron Avenue and Wiley Avenue.

The Herron proposal focuses on this dense core of community and retail development between Wiley
and Milwaukee. The existing A.M.E. Zion Church and MLK Reading Center are complemented by a key intervention – the African American music center. This institution helps to reestablish the Hill’s lost identity as a jazz hub for the East Coast. Future relationships with the University of Pittsburgh and the new charter school for the arts enhance the value of the institute for jazz education and African American music. The center provides learning opportunities for children and adults alike, while funding itself through its dual use as a performance space. This new source of activity becomes a catalyst for the area, spurring community growth, youth activities, and entertainment opportunities for Hill residents and Western Pennsylvanians alike. This institution’s success will help usher in a new perception of the Hill and inspire future progressive development in the area. The topography of the area adds to the drama of the site, with rolling
hills and layered development. Building heights and locations were determined to emphasize the topography and layering, while increasing the sense of density on site. Green space and trees enhance the terrain of the region further, while bounding the Herron Avenue valley and celebrating the Hill’s history and landscape.

By establishing connections and redefining a positive identity for the Hill District, development will flourish and strengthen the community. Herron Avenue reinvents itself as a community center for both sides of the Hill, connecting divided communities and offering services that span a multitude of demographics. Small-scale community retail includes a food co-op (with produce), baker, butcher, pharmacy, barbecue and other small restaurants. As the music center develops, retail expands to also serve visitors to the area. Pedestrian connections improve by widening and providing planting on the sidewalks, which increases foot traffic in the developed core. The green campus between the institutions enables community activities, such as a recreational play or a jazz concert on the lawn.
The Herron Avenue redevelopment is a long-term project that could take years, or even generations, to complete. However, most successful developments begin with a few key interventions that catalyze the surrounding area and enact momentum for further change. The stitching of streets and creation of our hallmark building, the Music Center, will be the right move to start this process.
This proposed bus route would provide direct service from the Strip District to Oakland via Penn and Liberty Avenues in the Strip, Herron Avenue through Polish Hill and the Hill District. The route would then continue through Robinson Street to Fifth Avenue in Oakland. Utilizing Fifth Avenue, the bus would extend through Oakland and Shadyside and terminate at the East Liberty Division entrance at Fifth Avenue and 16th Pherson Blvd.

This route would be instrumental in providing much improved service for Hill residents as well as establishing a viable transit option from Oakland to the Strip District, enabling a chance for non-residents to frequent Herron Avenue. As well, the connection to the Herron Avenue East Busway Station would allow for the Herron Avenue Corridor in the Hill District to have a rapid transit connection.

Transit: The Link to Life

Michael Sypolt

Urban Lab Studio
Herron Avenue Corridor
Luis Rico-Gutierrez, Instructor
The current interrupted street grid of the Herron Avenue Corridor is not friendly to the pedestrian, as it takes excessive amounts of time to walk to nearby locations. One example of this is the 10 minutes it takes to walk to the end of Landless street from the A.M.E. Zion Church, while the end of the street is only 500 feet from the church, as shown in walking catchment map. In order to reduce the walking time to dead end streets, walkways are proposed to further connect through the Herron Avenue Corridor.

Herron Avenue itself will be redesigned to include a tree-lined median strip with one 11-foot automobile travel lane in each direction. This median will provide turning lanes as needed at intersections. A six-foot bicycle lane will also be provided for each direction of travel along the length of the project area. Where necessary, the roadway will widen to provide parallel street parking. Narrowing the street width at intersections will discourage illegal parking near corners and serve to slow down traffic. To reduce the confusion of the five-point intersection at Bedford, Webster and Herron, Bedford Avenue will be diverted to create a regular four-way intersection.

Another important factor in redesigning the Herron Avenue Corridor is the need for a transit connection to the Strip District and an improved transit connection to Oakland. Transit time from Herron Avenue to the various neighborhoods surrounding the Hill District is examined, not including transfer, walking or waiting time. For example, the Strip District, which is relatively nearby, requires
more transit time than going to downtown. As a result of the required transfer when traveling to the Strip, it takes approximately 25 minutes to travel from the A.M.E. Zion Church to the heart of the Strip District, including walking and waiting time.

In order to create a successful development area along Herron Avenue, several transit route changes are proposed in order to provide the maximum benefit. The first service change is to create a new route “86C Herron Avenue” to link Oakland to the Strip District via Herron Avenue and Robinson Street. This proposal includes simplifying the complex array of the loops of three routes serving the Upper Hill area. Only two of the routes will serve the Upper Hill area and all three will terminate at the bus recovery area at Centre and Herron. This routing will ensure ease of connections to other routes along Herron and even the 81B on Centre Avenue, as well as provide additional connectivity to the proposed development along the Herron Avenue Corridor.

A master plan of the development of the Herron Avenue Corridor includes proposed buildings that address the comments that community members provided during community meetings. The single most desirable business that the community currently needs is a grocery store, preferably one that

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Legend

- Local Bus Service to Downtown
- Limited Stops Bus Service to Downtown
- Express Bus Service to Downtown
- Bus Service to Oakland
- Bus Service to neither Oakland nor Downtown
- Flyer Bus Service to Downtown
- 10 Minute Bus Ride
- 20 Minute Bus Ride
- 30 Minute Bus Ride
- Woodlands
- Water
also has a pharmacy. The proposed grocery store is located at the corner of Herron and, taking advantage of the large expanse of empty lots located at this corner. This building will be neighborhood store with a pedestrian entrance facing Herron Avenue. A number of parking spaces on the street are provided. A parking lot in the rear of the building will provide the majority of the parking for those who arriving at the grocery store by automobile.

Members of the community expressed interest in a mid-rise rental apartment building (four to five stories) that could possibly be used as a senior citizens’ residence building. This building is located near the grocery store.

In the space that Bedford Avenue previously occupied, a performing arts theatre is proposed, responding to the growing interest in the performing arts in the Hill District as shown in the current plans to relocate the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) Middle School to the closed Milliones School Building.

The space between A.M.E. Zion Church and the M.L.K. Reading Center is currently overgrown, but has potential to be an area where children and adults alike can enjoy the outdoors and even play a ball game. A green space is proposed between the A.M.E. Zion Church and the Martin Luther King Reading Room, creating a venue for the
church and the reading room to hold events, as well as creating a central public space for the community.

As more people frequent the Herron Avenue Corridor, neighborhood retail stores will be developed, beginning to establish the Herron Avenue Corridor as a shopping district. A hotel could eventually locate on Herron Avenue once financially feasible.
This proposed bus route would provide direct service from the Strip District to Oakland via Penn and Liberty Avenues in the Strip, Herron Avenue through Polish Hill and the Hill District. The route would then continue through Robinson Street to Fifth Avenue in Oakland. Utilizing Fifth Avenue, the bus would extend through Oakland and Shadyside and terminate at the East Liberty Division entrance at Fifth Avenue and McPherson Blvd.

This route would be instrumental in providing much improved service for Hill residents as well as establishing a viable transit option from Oakland to the Strip District, creating a chance for non-residents to frequent Herron Avenue. As well, the connection to the Herron Avenue East Busway Station would allow for the Herron Avenue Corridor in the Hill District to have a rapid transit connection.

Figure 7

Transit: The Link to Life
As one of the North Side's main thoroughfares, Brighton Road offers a cross-section of Pittsburgh life, its past, and possibly, its future. It borders some of the city's wealthiest residents and some of its poorest: million dollar renovated Victorian mansions near crumbling structures home to rodents and junkies, with everyone and everything in between, including one of the area's largest community colleges and one of its largest cemeteries.

In many ways the Brighton Road corridor is an extreme vision of Pittsburgh's future: whereas the total population of the city has declined by half of its highest population, the five neighborhoods along Brighton Road have declined by almost three quarters. And while
the average vacancy rate is about 12%, some of these neighborhoods see a rate of over 20%.

Add to this the complexities of a variety of grids, topographies and programs. This confluence of conditions poses an interesting set of challenges for an urban studio, whereby many of the traditional remedies available to the urban designer (e.g. consistent street edge, tree-lined boulevards, street furniture, etc) are either unrealistic or irrelevant.

As an area of study, the Brighton Road Corridor provided an opportunity to bring together a collection of residents and neighborhoods that usually operate in isolation of one another: California-Kirkbride, Allegheny West, Central North Side, and a little further afield, Manchester and Perry Hilltop South. These community groups, in conjunction with the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the Urban Land Institute (ULI), constituted the client group for the fall semester of 2006.

The studio was divided into three phases: analysis, master planning, and urban design. Each phase was punctuated by a meeting and/or charrette with the client group. In the first phase, students learned to utilize the traditional tools of urban design to document and analyze the site, from demographic research, to traffic patterns. They also examined less conventional means of analysis, including mapping levels of noise, graffiti, trash, and vagrancy.

Equally important, the students learned to translate their skills and abilities in order to communicate with the many participants at the community meetings, who played an active and vocal role in community participatory design process.

I wish to extend my gratitude to my students for their diligent and imaginative efforts, and to the community for their consistent engagement, in course of the semester-long project. Finally, it is my hope that some of the ideas sparked during our labors see a longer life, in the form of projects that will help shape these communities as they move forward.

Rami el Samahy
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Brighton Road Studio: Introduction

Figure 4: Figure-ground drawing showing the built areas of the Brighton Road Corridor from four periods in the last hundred years.

Figure 5: An examination and a classification of the various open areas in and around Brighton Road.
Mancherster Historic District
Historic neighborhood laid out in 1782 as partial compensation to Pennsylvania's Revolutionary War veterans.

Mexican War Streets
District originally laid out by General William Robinson upon his return from the Mexican-American War.

St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church
Built in the 1850s with a mixture of Romanesque and Art Deco styles.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
Located on Pittsburgh's historic North Side, this church was designed by noted architect Henry Hobson Richardson and was built in 1881 for the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

Carnegie Free Library
First publicly funded Carnegie library in the world.

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Located on Pittsburgh's historic North Side, this church was designed by noted architect Henry Hobson Richardson and was built in 1881 for the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

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First publicly funded Carnegie library in the world.

Figure 6
Initial reaction to site, depicting the open spaces and vacant lots along Brighton Road (by Anna Rubin).

Figure 7
Plan of North Side attractions juxtaposed with density figures.
Brighton Road Studio: Introduction

Figure 10 Diagram juxtaposing vacancy and crime in the various neighborhoods.

Figure 11 Diagrams charting land market value along Brighton Road in section and elevation.
Building Brighton

Abdulla al Shamsi, Jeffrey Bourke

Urban Lab Studio
Brighton Road Corridor
Rami el Samahy, Instructor
This proposal fills in the gaps of the urban fabric along Brighton Road to create the density necessary for a vibrant urban community. This is achieved through the creation of a screen that serves as a façade, recreating a continuous street edge and providing Brighton Road with a distinctive identity.

The screens house a variety of programs, some temporary and others permanent. Initially the spaces behind the screens are filled with some combination of urban agriculture and commuter parking, adding economic value to the community while providing jobs for residents of the North Side. As the economic value of the community grows, buildings are to be built behind the screens, thus allowing the spaces to be upgraded incrementally. The structure of the finished building can grow incrementally as well. Each stage of its evolution corresponds to a different use, be it growing, parking and building. When commuter parking becomes popular, and the vacant lots of the Brighton Road corridor fill up, the building structure can grow to accommodate parking on multiple levels. This same structure can later be used for hydroponics labs managed by the food co-op or housing for CCAC students living in the area. The flexible and scalable building structure allows the vacant lots to support a variety of programs needed in a strong community.
Figure 1 Analysis of transportation network.
Figure 2 Natural and man-made boundaries of the site.
Figure 3 Identification of bus stops with 5 minute walking circles, in relation to various cultural and entertainment interests.
Figure 4 Identification of vacant lots and properties.
Figure 5 Identification of potential small scale development opportunities.
Figure 6 Identification of potential large scale development opportunities.
Building Brighton
BRIGHTON GROWTH:
We have developed an intellectual framework that allows us to organically grow a neighborhood using small scale community development practices. The vacant lots that litter Brighton Road act together as a physical framework allowing our ideas to germinate. Owners of these vacant lots are given a choice out of a large network of ideas that, in theory, would socially, economically, and physically improve the Brighton Road corridor, and its' surrounding neighborhoods.

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**Figure 7** Diagram of potential symbiotic relationships developed in the community by infusing existing strengths with new potential.

**Figure 8** Diagram depicting the possible development paths for a given parcel of vacant land.
GROWING
The 430,000 square feet of vacant lots can be developed to be of use for the North Side’s 10,708 residents through the development of urban agricultural programs. It is estimated that a single person’s fruit and vegetable needs per year can be provided by a 150 SF parcel of land. If all vacant lots are converted to agricultural production, the fruit and vegetable needs of a quarter of the North Side’s population can be met.
**PARKING**

Brighton Road can sustain the addition of over one thousand 1,200 square feet parcels. Each of these can integrate a variety of parking types, from surface parking to elevated and vertical parking structures. The costs assumed are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parking Type</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car Lift (fits 2 cars)</td>
<td>$1,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Parking</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Story Parking Garage (@$70/sf)</td>
<td>$84,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Story Vertical Parking Structure (@$50/sf)</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 1200 square foot lot would accommodate 10 car lifts, 12 cars per floor in a garage, 12 cars on a surface lot or 14 cars per floor in a vertical parking structure. Assuming that each space would generate $150 per month, the yearly revenue from the parking structures would be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parking Type</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car Lift [fits 2 cars]</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Parking</td>
<td>$21,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Story Parking Garage</td>
<td>$64,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical Parking Structure</td>
<td>$75,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In adding these parking spaces, the Brighton Road neighborhood can benefit from 1) the revenue generated from commuter parking,

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*Figure 12: Plan showing potential parking locations.*

*Figure 13: Diagram indicating possible community benefits.*

*Figure 14: Perspective of screen with parking structure.*

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**Building Brighton**
2) the influx of professionals that need to travel in and around the
downtown area every day, and 3) the
creation of jobs for the inhabitants
of the area. In doing so, the parking
structures serve as a catalyst for the
economic boost that Brighton Road
badly needs.

The present owners of the vacant
lots have a choice between the dif-
ferent modes of parking strategies,
depending on their abilities. The
income produced by the parking can
be used to further develop the site in
building, growing or other parking
strategies.
430,000 square feet of vacant land can be developed into 370 vacant lots, each with three floors.

Brighton Road can sustain the addition of 1,100 1,200 square foot parcels. This proposal calls for developing in the following fashion:

75 Business Units
675 Residences
350 Agricultural Lots

This proposal recommends the development of 1,290,000 square feet. If we assume an average cost of $150 per square foot, an initial investment of $193,500,000 is needed. The following are the estimated figures for revenue generation:

Businesses $1,500 per month
$18,000 annually
Residences $1,000 per month
$12,000 annually
Agriculture $500 per month
$6,000 annually

Assuming that it is possible to rent out each 1200 square foot unit for $1,000 per month, then the entire development would earn a total of $11,550,000 over the course of one year. These numbers indicate that it is appropriate to assume that the initial investment could be repaid in 30 years.
Figure 17

Figure 18
Figure 19 View of facades screening various programs, including a parking structure.

Figure 20 View of screen with urban farm.
A-GROW-ING Community

Nina Barbuto, Adam Hall, Jenna Kappelt

Urban Lab Studio
Brighton Road Corridor
Rami el Samahy, Instructor
The site for this project is located on the North shore of the Allegheny River in what used to be Allegheny City. Now one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, it encompasses Allegheny West, Central Northside, California-Kirkbride, Manchester, and Brighton Heights. Our particular site focused on a 1.5-mile stretch of Brighton Road leading from the Community College of Allegheny County up to Uniondale Cemetery. This stretch of Brighton Road currently serves to divide Allegheny West, California-Kirkbride and Central Northside. The proposed goal is to reestablish the site as a neighborhood with an distinctive identity.

The initial analysis conducted depicts the different factors that impact the area. Forces such as Summer Shadows, Winter Shadows, Paving, Green Spaces, Architectural Analysis, Building Footprints, Road Networks, Watersheds and Slope Severity all played roles in informing the design decisions and suggested the potential for large-scale urban agriculture. The ability to create density as well as establish maintained green spaces could allow the residents to gain a sense of ownership and pride in their community.

The community expressed interest in healthy food options within their own neighborhood. Currently, the only places to purchase food along Brighton Road are at Keystone, a plumbing store, Rite Aid Pharmacy, and the Family Dollar. In order to buy fresh produce, meats and baked goods, residents currently must take a bus out of the city to Giant Eagle, a suburban grocery store. The combination of the community’s desire and the initial analysis led to the formation of a plan that incorporated a food cooperative where food could be grown and sold in the neighborhood.

The phasing involves the initial rerouting of roads, establishment of agriculture and the food cooperative. The food cooperative will jumpstart other commercial development in the area; the desired effect is similar to the manner in which Whole Foods reinvigorated the East Liberty development. Ideally, a variety of businesses would be established in the area, some of which will be owned by residents of the neighborhood, and others will be national chains, in order to make the development more viable.

In order to design responsibly within the existing fabric, the existing built typologies as well
as potential ways to define spaces were studied. The result of this investigation is a set of guidelines for the new built fabric within the site. The typologies were continuously used as ways to inform our design decisions.

The typologies led us to the idea of reusing the built fabric that we were taking away. A concept of Destruction/Transformation was established, whereby the materials of destroyed buildings were reused as urban interventions along Brighton Road, Brighton Place, and in the new buildings to be constructed. Glass could be used in new greenhouses, wood and brick could be used for benches, facades, and fences and CMU blocks could be used as building foundations. The reuse of building materials creates a strong unified sense of community that will draw people, residents and visitors, along the streets. The paths serve as a way to traverse the 1.5 miles from West Park to Uniondale Cemetery along a continuous green corridor.

The design proposal aims to create a unified neighborhood in the areas of Allegheny West, California-Kirkbridge, and Central Northside. Establishing an identity of Urban Agriculture will draw people from the neighborhood as well as the Pittsburgh region. The ability to walk from the place where the food is being grown to where the food
is being sold along three different green corridors with unique urban infill will define the area as unique within the city.

The proposed plan has some community support: residents of the area are already interested in starting urban agriculture in the neighborhood and the director of Northside Common Ministries would like to start up farming plots for the men who stay at the shelter so that they can learn a trade that could set them on a track to once again become active members of society.

Without the ability to infill the entire area with housing as it was fifty years ago, fresh ideas need to be introduced that can stir interest within the community. Instead of destruction, this proposal recognizes the strong history within the community and proposes reusing the housing stock in inventive new ways that will allow people of the community to honor the history while instilling new functionality into the area of Brighton Road.
A-GROW-ING Community
A-GROW-ING Community
Figure 18 View of Food Co-Op at corner of Brighton Road and North Avenue

Figure 19 Terraced gardens with flowers

Figure 20 Apple orchards with a view of Downtown

Figure 21 Site Model
Figure 21

A-GROW-ING Community
Redd Up Pittsburgh, Green Up Brighton

Stephanie Chu, Tanya Mejia

Urban Lab Studio
Brighton Road Corridor
Rami el Samahy, Instructor
NATURAL LANDFORM AS ASSET
Brighton Road is currently the missing link in a regional network of green spaces.

To the south, West Park meets Brighton at North Avenue. To the north stretches a proposed hillside greenway along North Charles Street, historic cemeteries, and Riverview Park. Brighton Road between California and North Ave is currently disengaged from these opportunities.

By including community green spaces, a proposed “boundless” (accessible) playground, outdoor recreational fields, and street greening opportunities, Brighton re-engages with the region and provides missing services to its own community.

COMPREHENSIVE TRAFFIC PATTERNS
Brighton Road is currently a thoroughfare for relatively high-speed traffic.

The configuration of the roads surrounding the California and Brighton intersection is confusing for motorists and creates an ambiguous space for automobile, bus, and pedestrian traffic. The current conditions do not create a safe, defined pedestrian environment.

By reconfiguring the intersection and improving the pedestrian experience, the Brighton community is re-engaged with its streets.
NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY

The Brighton Road community is currently disengaged from surrounding economic opportunity.

By connecting Brighton into a green network and improving the vehicular and pedestrian traffic experience, Brighton becomes a more inviting opportunity for economic growth and linkages into surrounding communities.

The visually connected and well-trafficked intersection at California and Brighton becomes an ideal location to re-engage Brighton through the development of a food market, recreational center, greenhouse, and a connection to the recreation fields and public facilities.
The Brighton community is engaged and smaller-scale vacant lot greening strategies are employed. Green network connections are made within the community and onto Brighton Rd.

The community and green space networks expand. The California-Brighton intersection is reconfigured.

Development at the new civic intersection occurs and the Brighton green network re-engages with the greater community and regional networks.

**IMPACT**

A civic-orientated intersection at Brighton and California becomes a gateway entrance to the future North Charles Woodland project and the regional green network within the Brighton neighborhood.

Bringing people back to the streets creates an a.d.a accessible, equitable, and user friendly environment for automobile users, bikers, bus riders, and walkers.

One residential unit located on the triangular block at current California and Brighton would be relocated into Brighton Place.

Job opportunities and economic incentives are provided for potential future residential infill development.

Redd Up Pittsburgh, Green Up Brighton
OPEN GREEN STRATEGY
Community greening of current vacant lots between Brighton Place and Brighton Road will occur through a mix of temporary and permanent strategies.

Permanent green connections are made through the selective conversion of vacant stretches into community deck space, community plots, and opportunities for public art with the intention of providing significant East/West access routes along Brighton Road.

Temporary strategies include immediate cleaning, resurfacing for runoff and parking, and salvaging land on the lots for future infill.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN REDESIGN
In this proposal, the Brighton Road and California Avenue intersection is reconfigured to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety.

A paving strategy provides visual demarcations of thresholds, in addition to distinguishing a concentrated focus area as a significant intersection.

The new configuration also provides the opportunity for development, servicing the Brighton neighborhood and all neighborhoods in the region.
W-E Section: New Rec Center, Greenhouse, Food Market, and Park at Intersection of California and Brighton.

Section B: Temporary Open Space

Section D: Permanent Open Space

Section E: Half-Lot Strategy

Figure 14 Sections (marked on diagram to right)
Figure 15 Gardens on Brighton Place
Figure 16 Greened streets around Brighton Road
Figure 17 Focus area
Figure 18 View of plaza from market
Figure 19 Approaching intersection from Brighton Road

Redd Up Pittsburgh, Green Up Brighton
Figure 18

Figure 19

Redd Up Pittsburgh, Green Up Brighton
Reflective Density
Redefining the Urban Environment Through Transitional Density Simulation

Cathy Chung, Kiko Restrepo

Urban Lab Studio
Brighton Corridor
Rami el Samahy, Instructor
Brighton Place has historically been a successful neighborhood. It was a host to bars, restaurants, residences and the main trolley line. Within forty years, Brighton Place has fallen into disrepair leaving a series of empty lots where buildings were torn down and where numerous town houses have been boarded up. The vibrancy that once characterized the road can be felt only in the character of the remaining buildings and the scant evidence from streetscape in the form of the proportions of the road to the sidewalks to the buildings.

Conversations with the community and analysis of the site have led to prioritizing the filling of the gaps of empty lots throughout the street. Currently, the barren nature of the streets makes passersby feel uncomfortable and gives the impression of a lack of density and, consequently, safety.

The goal of this project is to revive Brighton Place by using a transitional strategy that will serve to compensate for the current lack of density until such time that such density returns. The proposed focus on Brighton Place is justified because it is at the heart of a number of communities that are already thriving or on the upswing (Central Northside, Allegheny, and Manchester). Brighton Place will have its own identity, but it will also serve as a meeting point for these surrounding neighborhoods.

**INSPIRATION FROM MATTRESS FACTORY**

The Mattress Factory has used art and sculpture in a similar way as our steel panels. The pieces on Jacksonia and Sampsonia create an identity that is recognizable and reuse the empty buildings and spaces that plague the community.
This incorporation of art has the added ability of inspiring people to come visit the neighborhood. If the public sees people trying to bring back life into Brighton Place, those who are a bit adventurous might be inspired to come bring their businesses or to move in.

Finally, the force that the Mattress Factory has begun with its sculptures and art is moving eastward, towards Brighton Place. We hope that this will serve as a connecting point where the art will lead people through the communities.
PHASE 1
This proposal sees as the first stage an infilling of the gaps along Brighton Place with reflective steel surfaces. This is not only to continue the successful artistic movements of the Mattress Factory and City of Asylum from a few blocks to the east, but also to solve a more immediate problem. The goal is to reflect the buildings and people that already exist on the street so as to create the illusion that there is a greater density. Likewise, as the viewer walks by he/she will be able to imagine themselves in the surreal context, alluding to the density that is planned for the future.

PHASE 2
The second phase calls for a straightening of the street grids to line up with the already successful Mexican War Streets. There is a current disjunction that inhibits the movement from one neighborhood to the other. The roads created flowing into Brighton Place are extensions of West Jefferson Street, Armandale Street, and Mero Way. These will provide long, straight corridors that will give a physical and emotional connection to the Brighton neighborhood. This movement eastward will be supported by the art from the previous phase.
PHASE 3
After sparking this interest on Brighton Place, it is be expected that businesses and residents will start moving into the neighborhood. The movement needs to be calculated so as to ensure the happiness and health of the growth. By looking at the Mexican War Streets for precedents, it was noted that the corner shops provide the strength and starting points for the community. Therefore, it is proposed to develop the corners of Brighton Place first, with business and eventually mixed-use buildings, with residents on the upper floors and cafes, restaurants, or bars below.

PHASE 4
The final stage will call for the rebuilding and the complete renovation of the street façade. Using the corners as a starting point, residences will be developed along with mixed-use buildings and semi-public spaces. Once again looking at the Mexican War Streets for inspiration, it was found that a main corridor with alleys leading into a semi-private space gives residents a comfortable dichotomy between public and private living. When they feel like being a part of the larger community, they can spend time on Brighton Place. When there is more of a need for a more intimate scenario, the backyards will be a sheltered and private space to spend time.

Vacant lots along Brighton Place are divided into three categories based on their sizes:

(1) The smaller lots are defined as pathways to and from the public to semi-private.

(2) The program in the mid-sized lots will be defined by their adjacent buildings. If it is a cafe, it will be used as supplemental space for seating and serving. If it is a residence, it will be used as a side yard.

(3) The larger lots will be used for urban farms, a traveling library, an outdoor theatre, or any other program that has the ability to bring the community together.
Costs of Materials (new):

One Module
- New panels: $200
- Screws: $15
- Steel Nails: $5.5

Small Lot
- Approximately 20 panels - $6700

Medium Lot
- Approximately 40 panels - $11300

Large Lot
- Approximately 60 panels - $12500

Reflective Density
Reflective Density
Re-using, Re-defining, Re-framing

Acadia Klain, Emily Rice, Aviva Rubin

Urban Lab Studio
Brighton Road Corridor
Rami el Samahy, Instructor
A series of analytical drawings served as the starting point for this proposal, examining the history of the area, the perception of the site and the effects of the physical conditions.

Brighton Road has changed its character several times throughout its history; this historical analysis informs the vision of its future. As an understanding of where Brighton Road fits into the larger context of the North Side and Pittsburgh, a variety of appropriate programs were suggested.

A study was conducted of the roads, public transit and topography to discover the physical disconnections in the site. By overlaying the street grids from 1892, 1925 and 2006, it was found that some areas have been in flux for over 100 years; it was decided to examine these areas closely.

The analytical images reflect the scope of the study at three different scales. They informed the notion of Brighton Road as a corridor in Pittsburgh, as a series of nodes within the North Side, and as a string of places along the road itself. Understanding this road as part of a greater region enabled
Re-Using, Re-Defining, Re-Framing
the imagination of a program that would make it a regional destination. Based on the analysis, the goals of this proposal were to find uses for the vacant space along Brighton Road, to expand on what was already working in the area, to remove as little as possible, and to bring the road together as a cohesive area.

The area around the intersection of California Avenue and Brighton Road became the focus for the project, as it was felt to be the weakest point along the street. It was felt that a strengthening of this node could become a catalyst for the improvement of the entire street. Additionally, the creation of a link from this node to North Avenue would redefine Brighton Road as a place with its own identity, rather than the through street it is now.

The first phase of the project, the initial conditions, is a recognition of the many vacant lots along the road. There is currently a 15-20% vacancy rate in the neighborhoods along Brighton Road, compared to a 12% rate for the city of Pittsburgh and 8% for Allegheny County. These vacant lots became the focus of a tactic of finding different ways of dealing with the open space according to scale, adjacencies and location.

Phase two begins with greening of the vacant lots and the establishment of a series of open-
air markets along Brighton Road. The already existing Swapmeet provides a precedent for this type of small-scale commerce in this area. An examination of various flea markets and farmers markets to gauge sizes and required facilities was conducted. Also, a community garden and renovations of the existing buildings is proposed for this phase.

In the third phase, the introduction of a commercial building is proposed at the corner of California and Brighton, anchored by a new grocery store, which would serve the existing community. The building would fill in the Re-Using, Re-Defining, Re-Framing
vacant space between California and Kirkbride while keeping the historical facades and structures of the existing buildings. This area would also include other community amenities such as a coffee shop and a laundromat.

Subsequently, the addition of small-scale residential infill is proposed along Brighton Road and Brighton Place, amounting to twelve new units and four renovated units. This would augment the previous phase by providing housing for people attracted to the area’s new programs. Smaller scale commercial was added to complement the large-scale interventions. The temporary shelters of the markets could begin to be turned into permanent buildings.

The focus of the project became a portion of the fifth phase, a building named the Brighton Bazaar. Phase five also includes a community center and further infill of housing along the road. In this final phase, Brighton Road would once again have an intact streetwall. Moreover, the open-air markets that served as temporary holding space along the road are replaced by permanent buildings. These markets would then move to the new space created between California and Kirkbride: the Brighton Bazaar.
Precedents for this large market space included the old Allegheny Market, Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia, Faneuil Hall in Boston, Saint Catherine’s Market in Barcelona, Budapest’s Central Market, and the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul. These offered a chance of understanding how these buildings worked programmatically as well as spatially. Local precedents such as Construction Junction, Pittsburgh’s Convention Center and Home Depot, etc, provided an understanding of the relationship of building footprint to parking in Pittsburgh.

It should be noted that the California-Kirkbride neighborhood is a Keystone Opportunity Zone, which means that taxes on businesses that build and move into that area will be waived for the first 10 years of their occupancy, making the area ripe for intervention.

The California-Kirkbride neighborhood is also a National Register Historic District, part of the “Old Allegheny Rows” historic area that includes the buildings on Brighton Place. The status of this district, however, is threatened by the continual demolition of buildings in the area. The proposed Brighton Bazaar building offers a way of preserving some part of the character of this area through a strategy of innovative adaptive reuse by absorbing these buildings into a larger market function, keeping some residential and turning others into offices.
The topography of the area allows the building to be accessible from both California and Kirkbride at multiple levels. Thus access is provided for drivers, pedestrians and bus riders, as well as a link to the neighboring grocery store.

The Brighton Bazaar houses 162,000 square feet of floor area with 300 parking spaces for the bazaar and grocery store. The floor will be kept flexible, with temporary booths to house vendors, which can be cleared out for other events, such as concerts or conventions.

The Brighton Bazaar establishes a destination for local and regional consumers, offering grassroots enterprise in a building that creatively handles the large quantity of vacant space in this area.
Re-Using, Re-Defining, Re-Framing
The first step taken in identifying the specific site and program for this project entailed an examination of the existing strengths as well as the existing disconnections around Brighton Road. The objective was to begin to study why certain neighborhoods were thriving while others that are only a few blocks away were in ruins. Brighton Road runs adjacent to and through both types of neighborhoods including: Manchester, California Kirkbride, Perry South, and Central Northside.

The two largest disconnections identified were the post office, located to the west of Brighton Road, and the railroad tracks that run the entire length of the site (fig. 1) The post office is a huge building that physically and visually divides the residential communities that surround it. It lacks a street presence and yet can be seen and heard from blocks around. The train tracks, with few crossing points from one side to the other, have the potential to serve the area but are not being taken advantage of.

At a different scale, small problems are scattered throughout each neighborhood. (fig. 2) These minor discontinuities, such as cracked sidewalks and fences that visually and physically separate, are often ignored but act as hindrances in making connections.

As a result of the analysis, this proposal considers the moves that could be made to repair some of these disconnections, what new connections could be made to intensify existing strengths, and what new amenities could be added that were missing in the neighborhood.

In order to understand how to connect these neighborhoods, it is imperative to look at the existing language of the Northside. An examination was made of the similari-
ties and differences in the designs of the housing, in terms of materials, windows styles and arrangements, and number of stories. Similarly, an investigation of the public and private outdoor spaces occurred, from the private gardens in the Central Northside to the more public private spaces of the stoop in California Kirkbride Neighborhood.

In a broader sense, it is crucial to the revitalization of the area that the North Side be re-incorporated into Pittsburgh’s transportation network. The area’s proximity to Downtown is currently an underutilized advan-
tage. The cause of this neglect lies in part from its lack of accessibility.

After investigating the rail, road, bus, and bike systems currently servicing the city, an understanding of the existing disconnections became evident. This proposal focuses on the development of a transit hub, located at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Allegheny Avenues, providing light rail service to Downtown. The station would use the existing tracks on the site and connect to the future North Shore Connector by the Riverfront. This line would make for quick commutes to Downtown, and also provide easy access to the Connector and the Greater Pittsburgh Area.

Furthermore, the disconnections of the Brighton Road corridor exist in the gap of the Post Office site where deadend roads line the perimeter of the site. The reconnection of these roads introduces new vehicular routes, promising to defer some traffic from Brighton Road.

With these new roads it is possible to re-route bus and bike paths. Providing access to new neighborhoods, these connections will encourage more circulation and interaction between communities.

After identifying the disconnections, this proposal began to explore various interventions that would
Community Center:
- CCAC extension
- Auditorium
- Library
- Cafe
- Police station
- Athletic facilities
- Parking

Boundless Playground

3 Story Row Houses

Mixed Use:
- Day care
- Small grocery
- Video store

Mixed Use:
- Laundromat
- Cafe

Community Garden

5 Story Apartment Buildings:
- Sculpture park

Transportation Center:
- Light rail station
- Market house
- Bus station
- Offices
- Retail

Figure 9
deal specifically with the post office and the area around it. Given the analysis of transportation routes, the first option explored was in making the post office itself a transportation hub. This hub would initiate use of the existing rail lines to build a train station on the western side of the post office, connection of several roads across the train tracks and the re-routing of the 500-bus line along Allegheny Avenue. In addition, we incorporated pedestrian paths throughout the neighborhood that link the new hub to the existing neighborhood strengths.

Upon further research it was found that the post office was considering relocating to another location [due to the inevitable need to upgrade their equipment]. This development led to a consideration of the future opportunities that could become available to this neighborhood once this huge site force was removed.

Understanding that this prospect is certainly a large undertaking for both the community and the city, this proposal envisioned a phasing to negotiate the scale of this intervention. Initially, it is a primary concern that certain steps be taken to support the current residents. Phase one, involves the development of a new community center at the Columbus Middle School site as well as residential in-fill in the Brighton Place community.

Phase two focuses on the development of the transit hub and market house on Pennsylvania Avenue. New mixed income housing is developed to accommodate the new population, attracted to the area by these new amenities. Extensions of the existing roads bridge the post office site. A pedestrian path is incorporated into the urban fabric to connect the new community buildings.

The result of this development is further in-fill of the post office site to support a thriving urban community.

The community center introduces a new library, cafe, auditorium, parking garage, athletic facility, art gallery, CCAC classrooms and labs, and police station, all of which can be found at the Northern end of the pedestrian path.

The transit hub is established in conjunction with a market house found at the Southern end of the pedestrian path. Offices and retail exist on the upper level and perimeter.