

PITTSBURGH QUARTERLY

Visions of Pittsburgh's future



Remaking cities--starting with our own

Fall 2013

Twenty-five years ago, Pittsburgh hosted the Remaking Cities Conference, an international gathering of architects, visionaries and dignitaries, including England's Prince Charles, the honorary co-host and keynote speaker. This year, Oct. 15--18, 2013, Carnegie Mellon

University will host the Remaking Cities Congress, with 300 invited urbanists and thought leaders who will again focus on the post-industrial city in North America and Europe. In that context, we have asked 10 thought leaders to assess the Pittsburgh region's strengths and weaknesses and to consider what they would like to see in the Pittsburgh of the future. The package begins with a foreword from noted urbanist Richard Florida. --Editor's note

Pittsburgh: the "base case" turns the corner

Richard Florida

Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto, global research professor at New York University, and founder and editor-at-large of The Atlantic Cities

There's no question that I'm rooting for Pittsburgh. I spent nearly two decades of my life in the city, from my late 20s to my mid-40s. Carnegie Mellon, where I taught from 1984 to 2007, made me a researcher. Observing and grappling with Pittsburgh's ongoing transformation shaped my intellectual agenda and my life's work as an urbanist.

In my book "The Rise of the Creative Class," I called Pittsburgh my "base case" for the transition of a formerly industrial city to the creative economy. Although my prognosis was guarded, I concluded it on a positive note. "If Pittsburgh, with all of its assets and its emerging human creativity, somehow can't make it in the Creative Age," I wrote, "I fear the future does not bode well for other older industrial communities and established cities."

I came to Pittsburgh in the late '80s to be part of the newly established Center for Economic

Development at Carnegie Mellon. I immediately got to work with a fantastic group of colleagues to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the city's troubled economy. I had been struck by the economist Benjamin Chinitz's classic 1961 essay, "Contrasts in Agglomeration: New York and Pittsburgh," based on research and policy work in both cities, which argued that Pittsburgh's economic decline, already setting in back in the early 1960s, was an outgrowth of its highly specialized heavy industry economy—only Detroit's was less diverse. In striking contrast, New York's economy was both more diverse and more entrepreneurial, the source of its considerable resilience.

Beginning in the late '40s and '50s, Pittsburgh's leaders had already begun to chart a course to revitalization. The vaunted partnership of the Allegheny Conference, the economic development vehicle of the old industrialists led by Richard King Mellon and Mayor David Lawrence, pioneered a top-down approach to urban revitalization, clearing neighborhoods to make way for gleaming new high-rise towers, sports arenas, parks and a new downtown core. It destroyed many functioning urban neighborhoods, communities and businesses and provoked the ire of great urbanists like Jane Jacobs. That approach continued well into my time in Pittsburgh, when billions were spent on new stadiums and a convention center.

In time, another, more powerful model of development began to bubble up—one that drew from the region's real underlying strength: the diversity and resilience of its great neighborhoods, from the South Side to Lawrenceville and Oakland and more. It also benefited from foundation funding, which enabled the rise of Pittsburgh's community development movement, which serves now as an exemplar to the nation and the world.

For quite a while, and for much of my time in Pittsburgh, those two approaches were at odds. But, in time, an accommodation has emerged. As the old top-down approach became somewhat discredited and certainly less aggressive and hegemonic, a new space was opened up in which the bottom-up approach could gain real strength. As the two began to accommodate one another and hew more closely together—sometimes in cooperation, other times in tension—a new synthesis emerged that combined the strength of the region's large institutions—its universities, hospitals, research centers, foundations and its arts and cultural groups—with the incredible energy of its neighborhoods and people.

Ten years later, the synthesis and transformation is palpable. Pittsburgh has become a technology and talent hub. Its progress in attracting and retaining talent, to take just one indicator, has been remarkable. Nearly half of the city's 24- to 34-year-old workers have bachelor's degrees, according to a 2010 study by the University of Pittsburgh's University Center for Social and Urban Research, a number exceeded only by Austin, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Boston.

One thing that could really up the ante is high-speed rail. Pittsburgh is the bookend to Chicago in the great Chi-Pitts mega-region, home to more than 40 million people and nearly \$2 trillion in economic output. Just as improved rail service has bolstered the economic heft of the great Boston-New York-Washington corridor, high-speed rail would connect Pittsburgh to Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland to the west, Toronto to the north, Washington to the southeast, and Philadelphia and New York to the east, allowing it to emerge as the key hub between two great

mega-regions. Together, they would rank as the world's fourth largest economy, after the United States as a whole, China and Japan. High-speed rail would provide Pittsburgh with the connective fiber, size and scale that would enable it to exploit its geographic location, knowledge-based assets, great livable neighborhoods and affordable housing in an even more powerful way than it does already.

Still, there are some key things the region needs to work on. One of the most urgent is openness to diversity. Numerous studies have shown its importance. In Silicon Valley, for example, new immigrants number among the founders of anywhere from a third to half of high-tech start-ups. While progress has been made, Pittsburgh still has among the lowest proportions of immigrants of any U.S. metro. A 2011 Brookings Institution study, profiled in the *Post-Gazette*, named Pittsburgh the third-whitest metro in the nation. And the region ranks 300 out of a possible 361 on my own measure of diversity and openness to new ideas. With so much redevelopment occurring in Downtown and the neighborhoods, growing gentrification, heightened inequality and widening class divisions—within the city as well as between the city and its suburbs—diversity must become a top priority.

With Bill Peduto taking the mayor's office, Pittsburgh will finally have a leader who can mesh global economic forces with the region's world-class knowledge institutions and incredible, authentic quality of place embedded in its rivers, parks, natural environment, industrial heritage, historic buildings and great neighborhoods. To my mind, he is the personal synthesis of Pittsburgh's older top-down and its newer bottom-up approach to redevelopment. He has the skills and platform to bring this new model to the national and global stage.

Pittsburgh's revival has been no overnight sensation. It took the better part of a generation or two for it to get to where it is now. But without a doubt, it has turned the corner. With the same kind of resolve and resilience the city has always shown, and with the benefit of its new leadership, there is no reason why its future should not be brighter still.

The steps of Pittsburgh's transformation

Donald K. Carter

Director, Remaking Cities Institute at Carnegie Mellon University

Charting the transformation of the Pittsburgh region from 1980s, when all seemed lost, is a remarkable story. The first important effort after the collapse of Big Steel was Strategy 21 in 1985, a partnership of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon, with support from foundations and corporations. Strategy 21 projects included the Software Engineering Institute, the Pittsburgh Super Computing Center, a new international airport terminal, and brownfield reclamation projects.

A second regional visioning effort in 1993 was the result of a benchmarking study by Carnegie Mellon University. The sobering study compared Greater Pittsburgh's economic indicators with the country's 24 largest regions. From 1970 to 1990, the Pittsburgh region had the largest manufacturing jobs decline, the slowest growth in service jobs, and the greatest loss of population. However, the report identified inherent strengths on which to base economic

recovery: strong downtown; concentration of trained workforce; high-value manufacturing companies; and an extraordinary range of recreational and cultural amenities.

From this second regional visioning effort, other research institutes were created, including the Starzl Transplantation Institute, National Robotics Engineering Center, and the Carnegie Mellon School of Computer Science. Scores of new non-governmental organizations emerged, including the Green Building Alliance, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, Sustainable Pittsburgh, Riverlife and Bike Pittsburgh, again with support from Pittsburgh foundations and corporations.

New cultural organizations included the Andy Warhol Museum, the Senator John Heinz History Center and the August Wilson Center for African American Culture. In addition, grassroots efforts (by young adults in particular) led to renovated housing in declining historic neighborhoods, accompanied by new shops, restaurants, music venues, performance groups and art galleries.

Demographic trends are promising. Population has stabilized at about 2.4 million, with slight annual increases since the 2010 Census as more people moved into the region than moved out. The median age of employed Pittsburghers has started to drop, as younger people are drawn to the great quality of life and a steady economy. Over the past five years the population of 20- to 34-year-olds increased by 7 percent with another 8 percent increase projected by 2020.

Nevertheless, thorny issues remain, including a surplus of vacant land and buildings, declining neighborhoods, racial and socio-economic inequities, aging infrastructure, air pollution, stressed municipal finances, fragmented government, and an underfunded public transit system. Post-industrial cities in the Northeast and Midwest share these issues. Yet, of all those cities, Pittsburgh stands out as exemplary in its transformation since 1985, a model to be followed. It is also a valuable legacy to be continued over the next decades as a new generation of community leaders emerges.

What I would like to see in Pittsburgh in the future: a top-ranked City of Pittsburgh Public School system; dedicated funding for regional transit; 20,000 residents in Downtown Pittsburgh; stabilization and regeneration of struggling urban neighborhoods and river towns; less sprawl; greater population diversity; a stable and robust economy; clean air and water; and (as a cyclist) more commuter bike lanes and trails.

Continue the metamorphosis

Lisa Millspaugh Schroeder
President and CEO, Riverlife

Pittsburgh is my adopted home. For more than a decade, I felt an imperative to defend the honor of a city I am proud of, but which was known as the degraded relic of the industrial age in a post-industrial world. But lately, when I say, "I'm from Pittsburgh," I see eyes light up! Pittsburgh has acquired the coveted status of a place on the move, thought to be authentic, resilient and happening. The city is gaining notoriety for innovation in education, healthcare, the arts, technology and energy. The secret is out that Pittsburgh is architecturally distinctive,

geographically spectacular, culturally daring and meteorologically temperate. (Who could have predicted that Pittsburgh's weather could become a perk?) The demographics are finally moving in our favor as the young, the smart, the mobile and the talented choose to move to Pittsburgh.

We have survived one of the most epic struggles that any American city has ever known. And we have done it by capitalizing on our unique assets and by strengthening the character and the function of what is irreplaceable: neighborhoods tucked into hillsides and river valleys flowing to an elegant downtown peninsula. Think about the resurgence of Market Square, East Liberty/East Side, Bakery Square, Lawrenceville, South Side Works, North Side, the Great Allegheny Passage and 60 acres of new waterfront in Three Rivers Park. Think also of the partnerships and the work ethic with which Pittsburghers are putting shoulder to the wheel to make things better: the Pittsburgh Promise, the Breathe Project and the Carnegie International.

I could—and often do—go on and on about Pittsburgh, but the question is: What now? My answer is simple: Keep going! We need to connect our constellation of gem-like pockets in a network of transportation links. We need to do this because choice in transportation equals choices in jobs and schools and medical care, and because businesses grow when connected—to the region, the nation and the world. A transportation system is like a watershed, and as long as the ecosystem is truncated, we are not healthy.

There is no simple panacea, but we have real, immediate ways to start. We have rail lines that were once the lifeblood of the steel industry that can be converted to transit systems linking suburb to city and river to river. We have an airport with drastically underutilized capacity. And in this, the smartest of cities, surely we can embrace the future of robotic transport technologies.

The beautiful thing is that in Pittsburgh we think smart and work hard. We have the grit to roll up our sleeves, and we are ready to take on the next set of challenges.

The key is our people

Richard Piacentini

Executive director, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

Our greatest assets are the people who live and work here. That is why when Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens set out to build the Center for Sustainable Landscapes (one of the greenest buildings on Earth) we decided to enlist local talent. We involved The Center for Building Performance and Diagnostics at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), the Mascaro Sustainability Initiative at the University of Pittsburgh and the Green Building Alliance from day one. We then required that our primary architect and engineer come from Pittsburgh and the rest of the team come from Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania. The team was extraordinary, and the result of their efforts is a world-class building that has no rivals.

With such ingenuity at our fingertips, Pittsburgh is uniquely positioned to be one of the greenest cities in world. Our focus on green buildings very early on in the movement—from the efforts of Teresa Heinz to some of the stunning examples of newer buildings like the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, the green structures at Phipps and PNC Tower—have gone a long way to

lock this in. But there is so much more we can do, and this is particularly true if we are able to solve our Alcosan stormwater runoff problem in an ecologically smart way by using green techniques, such as rain gardens and bioswales, to capture and infiltrate rain water right on site where it falls. And, when it comes to the increased demand for locally sourced materials in accordance with green building rating systems, I think we have the opportunity to become the green building components manufacturing capital for the U.S. as well—especially since we are within 500 miles of half of the nation's population. When you couple that with our work ethic and manufacturing history, along with the extraordinary talent that we have in green chemistry, architecture and engineering at places like CMU and the University of Pittsburgh, there are few places that could compete with us on that level. There is also a growing movement to get toxic chemicals out of building products and, again, we have the talent in this region to put us at the forefront on that issue as well.

Many people from Pittsburgh do not realize what an awesome city it is. We have great people, great cultural assets, and an incredible work ethic. We are only limited by our failure to recognize that we have the talent and assets in Pittsburgh to do anything.

Bringing back The Hill

Laurence Glasco

Associate professor, University of Pittsburgh history department

As a historian who studies Pittsburgh's Hill District, I am impressed by that neighborhood's former jazz spots and sports clubs, as well as by something that gets little attention: that well into the 1940s, the Hill was Pittsburgh's most racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood. "Wylie Avenue Days," that otherwise excellent video, gets it wrong in one respect. The Hill's liveliest era—the 1930s through the mid-1950s—was also an era of ethnic diversity and racial harmony.

The street where August Wilson grew up in the 1940s is an example of this. Not one given to easy praise, Wilson recalled: "We lived in a mixed neighborhood—mostly a mixture of Syrians, Jews and blacks. There was a community of people, and I remember coming home from school, and all of the parents would be sitting on the stoops, talking and exchanging recipes, talking about what they were cooking for dinner, talking about their kids. That was a nice neighborhood, in the sense that anyone in the neighborhood was your social parent."

In the 1950s, urban renewal destroyed the social and commercial heart of the Hill and contributed to its economic decline and racial homogeneity. In the 1990s, the neighborhood began reclaiming itself, as the Crawford-Roberts, Bedford Hills and Oak Hill developments transformed a sizable part of the neighborhood's housing stock. Today, a grocery (finally!) is about to open. The Hill House is thriving under good leadership and recent remodeling. The new YMCA is a very attractive building, and walking and biking green spaces promise to make the Hill an even more attractive and ecological area. Plans to redevelop the former Mellon Arena site and relink the street grid with Downtown portend continued revitalization.

Thanks to the photos of Teenie Harris and the plays of August Wilson, the Hill is reclaiming some of its prominence. Visitors want a chance to experience some of its former magic and

vitality.

But the Hill lacks suitable entertainment venues to do that. There is no restaurant or nightclub. The old Granada Theater has been stabilized, but still has no tenants. The historic Crawford Grill sits quiet and forlorn, as does Wilson's birthplace. My greatest disappointment is that no imaginative cultural entrepreneur has swooped in and built upon the neighborhood's famed past. My greatest hope is that one soon will, and in doing so usher in a promising future to match its storied past.

Restoring and creating new landmarks

Louise King Sturgess

Executive Director, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

am a fifth-generation Pittsburgher and have come to know and love this city through my career. The late C. Hax McCullough, older brother of the distinguished historian David McCullough, opened my mind to Pittsburgh's unique significance and character when I worked for his publishing company. Then, as an editor and educator with the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) for the past 31 years, I have been able to explore and appreciate the region through the insights of a remarkable group of people, including urban designer David Lewis; photographer Clyde Hare; preservationists and authors Arthur Ziegler, Jamie Van Trump, Walter Kidney and Albert Tannler; and many thousands more people (from school age to 100+) who have shared their comments about Pittsburgh with me.

Pittsburgh's greatest assets include its natural beauty (a memorable landscape of rivers and rolling hills); the resourcefulness, generosity and ethnic diversity of its deeply rooted population; the vitality of the arts and culture, of professional sports and recreational opportunities, and of business, education and philanthropy; a Carnegie Library system that has been free since 1895; a network of active, effective, preservation-minded organizations and individuals; and a remarkable range of cultural resources, including historic neighborhoods, main streets, bridges, parks and individual structures such as the Allegheny County Courthouse, The Landmarks Building at Station Square and Duquesne Incline. Historic places give our city its human scale, distinctive appearance and sense of continuity, reinforcing people's sense of belonging and involvement.

Professionally, I am most aware of the need in Pittsburgh to provide funding and programs to repair vacant housing, to maintain historic religious properties that are centers of worship and social services, and to transform vacant lots into community gardens. As PHLF President Arthur Ziegler says, "Through the place we renew the spirit of the people."

In the coming years, I would especially like to see two landmarks in the Hill restored and reused (August Wilson's childhood home and the New Granada Theater); the light-rail system greatly expanded; a fully developed Station Square, with affordable housing, incubator space for small businesses and an expanded riverfront park of industrial artifacts; and David Bear's High Point Pittsburgh created atop the U.S. Steel Building. From there, 841 feet up, Pittsburghers and visitors would have a marvelous view of the region and perhaps would be able to listen to a

recording of David McCullough saying: "To understand the American experience, to understand American history and how American history changed the world, there is no better place to put a spotlight on than Pittsburgh."

Pittsburgh's creative working class

Dan Droz

President of Droz and Associates, co-founder of the Interdisciplinary Product Development Program at CMU and a serial entrepreneur

Across America, and nowhere more than Pittsburgh, the recent recession has created a new "Thrust" Belt, where thousands of talented, motivated and skilled workers who might have been attracted by the security of a cubicle, have been thrust into the uncertainty of entrepreneurship. What used to be described as a "creative underclass" has become the "creative working class" (CWC), where design and inventiveness are intrinsic to their businesses. For example, friends of mine, trained as industrial designers, had an industrial laser cutter in their Point Breeze living room that allowed them to produce a growing line of gifts and lighting accessories. Another opened a record store and resurrected a record label. And thousands of others are designing and manufacturing products in their kitchens, basements and local warehouses and distributing through Etsy or their own websites. Drawn by the economies and cultural and natural assets of our region, the entrepreneurs behind these food trucks, letterpress shops and hundreds of other startups and sidelines—largely young, tech savvy and resilient—span the visionary arc from technology startups in healthcare to design freelancing, manufacturing, crafts and music—a unique combination of technological and creative sensibility with the skills and tools of tradesmen.

The effect of this thrust-worthy vision has been profound, particularly in the multidisciplinary culture they've spawned. Building on Pittsburgh's "can do" roots, this new creative working class brings artistic chops, environmental awareness and a spirit of cooperativeness and "co-opetition" (where even so-called competitors are cooperating), creating cultural and economic vitality and accessibility to skills, knowledge and know-how that stimulates invention. And this spirit of invention, discovery and risk-taking is contagious—they are influencing all of us to think younger and be more adventurous and generous.

In addition to the economics that have driven this wave, there are also new tools and communities that allow this invention to flourish. Inexpensive 3D printing, tech shops that afford access to tools and easy-to-use web development, social media and online distribution platforms have made it possible for budding entrepreneurs to realize their dreams. Apart from the economic and cultural lift, perhaps the most significant impact of this CWC to transform and revitalize our community might well be their spirit of generosity, so indigenous to Pittsburgh. Our community has a legacy of generosity that endowed us with art and cultural institutions, gardens, parks, universities and hospitals. But the generosity exemplified in this CWC extends beyond financial generosity and philanthropy, flourishing through sharing intellectual capital: creativity, ideas and know-how.

The challenge is how to sustain this energy—to keep this generosity of spirit alive and growing

as the CWC move from "there's nothing to lose," to roles of greater responsibility; buying homes, starting families and saving for future college educations that so often stalls the adventurous spirit.

Our growing creative community will soon be a new establishment of business owners, professionals and artists, and our hope is that success breeds further confidence in the spirit of adventure, generosity and sharing of creative capital that can fuel invention and growth and optimism.

The ingredients of an entrepreneurial climate

Ann Dugan

Founder and executive director, University of Pittsburgh Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence

Australian author Edward Counsel observed: "The present is the food of the future." This thought is tailor-made for Pittsburgh, which has dramatically transformed itself several times since its 1758 founding. Pittsburgh's most important asset is its people, whose work ethic and resilience have enabled the city to grow from a colonial outpost into one of the world's leading industrial capitals and into the technology center of today.

Two other closely linked assets are education and entrepreneurship. Recognized as one of the nation's leading higher education cities, Pittsburgh and its universities play a key role in research initiatives that launch dozens of start-ups a year. According to Kiplinger, which named Pittsburgh one of the 10 great cities in America for starting a business, more than \$3 billion in research and development funding came through local institutions of higher learning in 2012. The Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence's mission is to be the innovative leader of economic renewal and growth, serving enterprising people and businesses through a web of activities and consulting that supports their growth throughout the life cycle of business.

Yet education is also one of Pittsburgh's weaknesses. Urban public schools often have low high school graduation rates and send few students to college. While improvements are needed, it is also critical to evaluate traditional educational paths so they better meet the requirements of a changing economy.

The Marcellus Shale job boom requires everything from engineers to facilities and construction workers, with not all positions requiring a college degree. High schools, technical schools, community colleges and workforce investment boards must collaborate with business to develop and provide training that prepares local residents for these jobs.

I hope to see even more start-ups—and support for them. Fostering a culture of change, being open to new ideas, and supporting locally owned businesses in our purchasing decisions needs to be more in the fabric of our business and personal lives. According to the Small Business Administration, between 1993 and 2011 more than 65 percent of all new jobs—18.5 million—were created by small businesses, a situation likely to continue.

Entrepreneurship benefits more than business owners. Businesses enrich neighborhoods by their very presence, in addition to providing jobs and a useful product or service. Just as important, a successful business owner can inspire others to become entrepreneurs. Whether a Main Street retailer or a second-floor service company, both add vitality to a struggling neighborhood. And in the long run, both benefit.

The American dream of owning your own business is growing in Pittsburgh. It is incumbent upon us to ensure this continues, so the city's reputation as one of America's great places for starting a business not only remains but grows stronger.

Improving diversity and governing

Eric Shiner

Director of the Andy Warhol Museum

Having grown up here, I have always loved the city's amazing architecture, rolling landscape and overall green canopy, and, of course, the friendliness of its people. It's a beautiful city with an incredibly rich history of innovation, industry and, perhaps most important, a strong work ethic. It is also a true melting pot, and I've always loved the diversity of ethnic neighborhoods that still stand today.

That being said, I think we have a long way to go to being a truly diverse city where people from all walks of life feel equally represented. In addition to that major challenge, we need to ensure that our government officials have the best interests of the city in mind, over their own personal advancement. I think that government has been our largest stumbling block, and yet the city continues to advance regardless. Imagine what this city could be with a dynamic visionary at the helm, taking us into an incredibly bright future. It is so thrilling to see our city coming back to life in so many exciting ways, and I think that further investment in our infrastructure (roads, schools, etc.) will help deliver us to the next level.

Of course, being in the art world, I always hope that Pittsburgh will become an important collecting community, and we need many more galleries and support networks for artists to make that happen. I would love to see a few artist residencies pop up to provide housing for both local and visiting artists. I might go as far as to say that it would be a very wonderful thing for the city to have a new museum dedicated to large-scale contemporary art. I think there is room on the cultural landscape for such an institution, and we definitely have the old abandoned factories that are ideal for such a thing.

Finally, I hope that all Pittsburghers can take full pride in our amazing city and do away with the intrinsic tendency to apologize automatically for being from here. I hear that all too often, and I think that if everyone actually started to be optimistic about what this city was, what it is and what it can be, we will all be in a much better place.

Strengthening the diversity of our innovative city

William J. Bates


VP of Real Estate at Eat'n Park, member of the national board of directors of the American Institute of Architects, and member of the National Organization of Minority Architects

The Pittsburgh region has benefited from an abundance of natural resources—navigable rivers, coal, iron, limestone, etc.—that contributed to the nation's industrial might. Those were complemented with imaginative, entrepreneurial minds that formed a catalyst making Pittsburgh the Silicon Valley of the Industrial Age. The region continues to extract wealth from the land as a result of Marcellus Shale and new drilling techniques, but the real fuel behind our success has always been innovation. We must cultivate the next generation's creative minds in order to push our region beyond being a mere drilling site. As in the past, the region's future will be driven by its inventions and revolutionary creativity in the arts, science, medicine, technology and culture. Unfortunately, the preponderance of industry not only polluted our air and water, it also obscured our appreciation for the innovation and creativity that thrived in the shadows of the region's industrial behemoths.

Our greatest assets have been our regional universities, healthcare, and philanthropic institutions that have kept the region relevant and viable, bridging the gap between our steel and gas eras. Our greatest weakness might be our inability to retain the intellectual capital that our universities produce.

A recent Post-Gazette article touted Pittsburgh as the "smartest" city in the country. Much credit for this goes to our universities. However, our challenge is filling these institutions with local talent and perhaps, more important, keeping that talent in the region after graduation. To remain viable we must shore up the region's educated workforce, including entrepreneurs, inventors and creative thinkers.

Pittsburgh has also been rated the country's "most livable city," but the lack of community diversity seriously undermines that status. This imbalance runs counter to national trends where racial and ethnic diversity have increased and appear to be a driver for economic recovery. Many non-white university students here express a palpable sense of limited mobility and acceptance within our region. This dynamic is a deterrent to many brilliant graduates who might otherwise stay. As a result, they often leave for employment opportunities in more culturally balanced cities. Everyone in the Pittsburgh region is diminished by the lack of a healthy diverse middle class. This continual demographic migration prevents Pittsburgh from evolving into a more economically, socially and culturally rich place to live, work and play.

Over the centuries, Pittsburgh has been an urban furnace known for forging success from the genius and hard work of contributors from many backgrounds and countries. We have the potential to find continued success by renewing that spirit of inclusiveness. The Remaking Cities Congress will be held at Carnegie Mellon University, Oct. 15-18, 2013. For more information, please visit remakingcitiescongress.org. 

published in the [Fall 2013](#) issue // [subscribe](#) to Pittsburgh Quarterly