



Neighborhood Bus Tour

Human Rights and Housing in the 21st Century

University of Pittsburgh

November 11th, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Pittsburgh! As in most cities, Pittsburgh prides itself on its neighborhood diversity. With a land area of just over 50 miles, the city includes 90 official neighborhoods. Today’s bus tour will introduce you to the tenant experience in four of those places—The Lower Northside, Beechview, Hill District, and East Liberty. Each location provides a different picture of human rights and housing. In the **Northside**, you will encounter tenant-led activism for preserving a right to the city. In **Beechview**, you will meet activists working with the city’s expanding Hispanic population. In the **Hill District**, you will see the legacy of urban renewal in the historic epicenter for Pittsburgh’s African American community. In **East Liberty**, we will tour new urban landscapes being created by cycles of reinvestment. Returning to Pitt, we will have the opportunity to discuss what we have seen, and how the Pittsburgh experience compares to housing struggles faced by communities elsewhere.

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ITINERARY

10:30am – Press conference and rally (Posvar Hall steps)

11:00am – Bus departs University of Pittsburgh (Guides: Terri Baltimore & Michael Glass)

11:20am – Arrive Northside (Host: Northside Coalition for Fair Housing)

12:15pm – Depart Northside

12:30pm – Arrive Beechview (Host: Casa San Jose & Community Justice Project)

1:20pm – Depart Beechview

1:30pm – Arrive Hill District (Hosts: Hill House & Hill District Consensus Group)

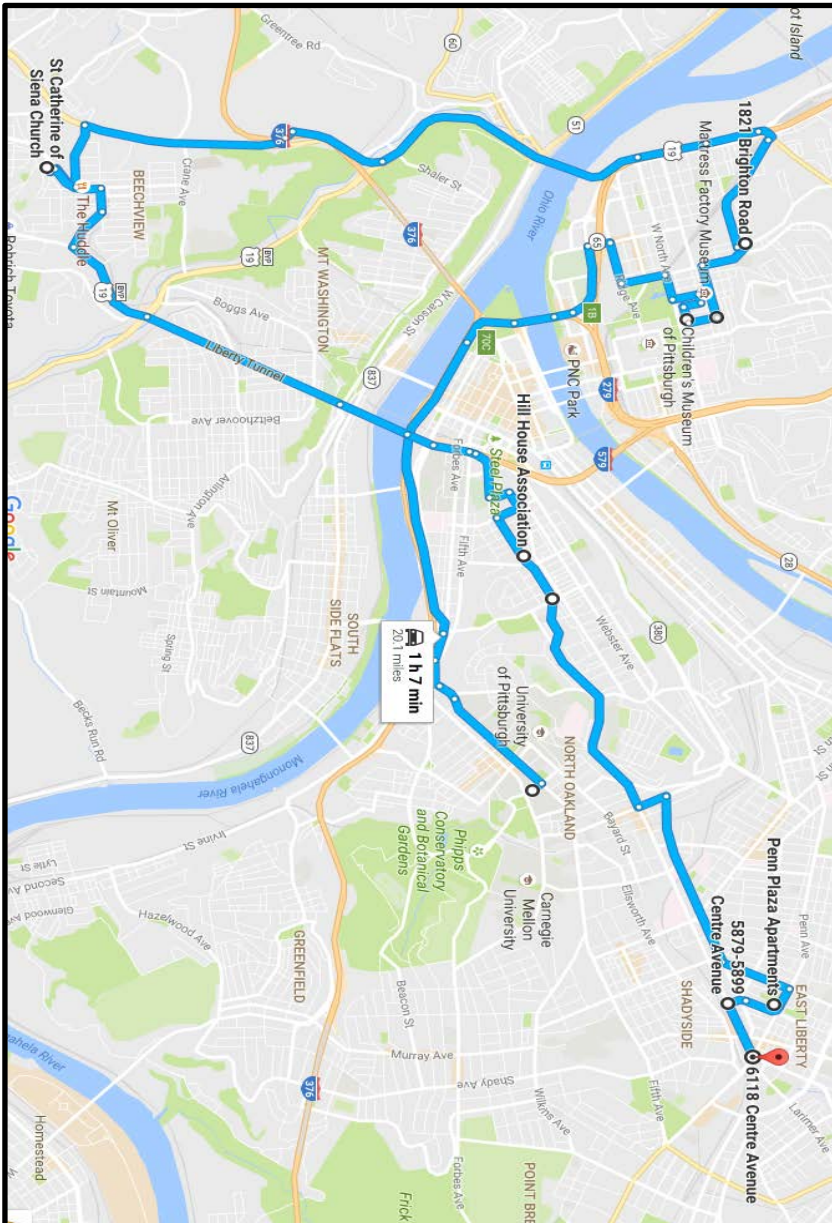
2:30pm – Depart Hill District

2:40pm – East Liberty by Bus

3:00pm – Return to University of Pittsburgh

3:00pm – 4:00pm – Bus Tour Debrief, 105 David Lawrence Hall

MAP



LOWER NORTHSIDE: TENANT ACTIVISM

At a Glance

Population—1950	59,185
Population—1980	18,823 (-68.2% from 1950)
Population—2010	10,641 (-43.5% from 1980)
Percent African American (2010)	51.50%
Percent White (2010)	43.0%
Percent Hispanic (2010)	2.5%
Est. Pop Under Poverty (2010)	28.33%
City Pop Under Poverty (2010)	21.7%
Renter Occupied Units (2010)	58.6%
City Renter Occupied Units (2010)	47.9%

Neighborhood Information

The Lower Northside is situated at the historic center of what was once the City of Allegheny. This city was laid out in the late Eighteenth Century to compete with Pittsburgh, and Allegheny only became part of Pittsburgh in 1907, after a forcible (and thus contentious) annexation. The Lower Northside's residential areas are characterized by high density, good walkability, and (surprisingly for Pittsburgh) generally flat terrain. The Mexican War Streets, Manchester, and Allegheny Center all feature architectural and regional assets, and the area recently gained a new link to Downtown, thanks to the expansion of the area's light rail system. Beyond this history lies an impressive history of tenant activism. The Northside Coalition for Fair Housing was formed in 1998 as a mass eviction of over 300 families in HUD-Assisted rental housing was threatened. The Northside Coalition worked to acquire ownership of the threatened units, and now works to preserve the long-term affordability and diversity of housing across the Northside.

BEECHVIEW: NEW ARRIVALS

At a Glance

Population—1950	11,994
Population—1980	11,911 (-00.7% from 1950)
Population—2010	7,974 (-33.1% from 1980)
Percent African American (2010)	12.1%
Percent White (2010)	80.9%
Percent Hispanic (2010)	5.2%
Est. Pop Under Poverty (2010)	18.3%
City Pop Under Poverty (2010)	21.7%
Renter Occupied (2010)	41.3%
City Renter Occupied Units (2010)	47.9%

Neighborhood Information

Beechview is a southern neighborhood of Pittsburgh, separated from the CBD by Mount Washington. Originally settled by Scots-Irish farmers and miners, the area grew slowly until transportation improvements (including a trolley line in 1902 and the Liberty Tunnel in 1927). More recently, the neighborhood has attracted a growing Latino population. Broadway Avenue in Beechview is attracting several Latino businesses. Whereas the City of Pittsburgh's Latino population is still small compared to that found in the rest of the state, local advocates suggest there is great potential for future growth. Such expansion could reverse the broader population declines in the city, but also has the prospect for generating conflict with other resident groups. Isolated instances of racially-based vandalism have occurred over the past few years, while advocacy groups work to ease the transition of Latino migrants into the area.

HILL DISTRICT: RENAISSANCE, ROOT SHOCK, AND REBOUND

At a Glance

Population—1950	62,597
Population—1980	25,161 (-59.8% from 1950)
Population—2010	17,050 (-32.2% from 1980)
Percent African American (2010)	61.0%
Percent White (2010)	35.5%
Percent Hispanic (2010)	1.7%
Est. Pop Under Poverty (2010)	
City Pop Under Poverty (2010)	21.7%
Renter Occupied (2010)	
City Renter Occupied Units (2010)	47.9%

Neighborhood Information

Described by Mindy Fullilove as America’s most generative African American community, the Hill District has long held a complicated place in Pittsburgh’s mental map. The Hill District originated in the 1800s as a middle-class community of Jewish and German residents who sought a less crowded alternative to living downtown. The African American population expanded in the decades after the Great Depression, and the area became renowned for its restaurants, jazz clubs, and locally-owned businesses. Mid-twentieth century urban renewal and riots during the 1960s hastened the erosion of this area’s vast social capital. Long-term residents of the Hill District remain suspicious of their politically-connected neighbors: The University of Pittsburgh to the East, and the Pittsburgh Penguins to the West. The latter has exclusive development rights to a 28-acre parcel of the Lower Hill first cleared in the 1950s, and community groups are warily anticipating the next phase in the city’s treatment of this historic precinct.

EAST LIBERTY: PITTSBURGH’S BROOKLYN, FOR BETTER AND WORSE

At a Glance

Population—1950	14,954
Population—1980	8,741 (-41.5% from 1950)
Population—2010	5,869 (-32.9% from 1980)
Percent African American (2010)	67.7%
Percent White (2010)	25.0%
Percent Hispanic (2010)	2.6%
Est. Pop Under Poverty (2010)	33.1%
City Pop Under Poverty (2010)	21.7%
Renter Occupied (2010)	78.5%
City Renter Occupied Units (2010)	47.9%

Neighborhood Information

East Liberty was once the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s third most important business district, behind Philadelphia’s Center City and Pittsburgh’s Central Business District. Once characterized by a diverse array of locally-owned businesses, the neighborhood faced decline in the 1950s as suburbanization reduced the area’s appeal. “With the best of intentions”, planners of the period sought to revitalize East Liberty while simultaneously rehousing the displaced residents of the Hill District. Their plan was to erect public housing estates around East Liberty’s business district while rerouting traffic away from the area. This plan failed spectacularly, and East Liberty languished for decades. The past 15 years has seen a frenzy of redevelopment, as the towers were removed and an accomplished Community Development Corporation worked to enhance demand for the neighborhood. Meanwhile, adjacent neighborhoods have created significant new developments that have heightened demand across the East End. While the neighborhood has stabilized, renters in the small (<1square mile) neighborhood have experienced precarity and displacement as private landlords seek to capitalize on East Liberty’s renewed profile.

NOTES