

Forging a New City:

How Should We Shape Modern Pittsburgh?



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IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Deliberation Guide

What is deliberation?

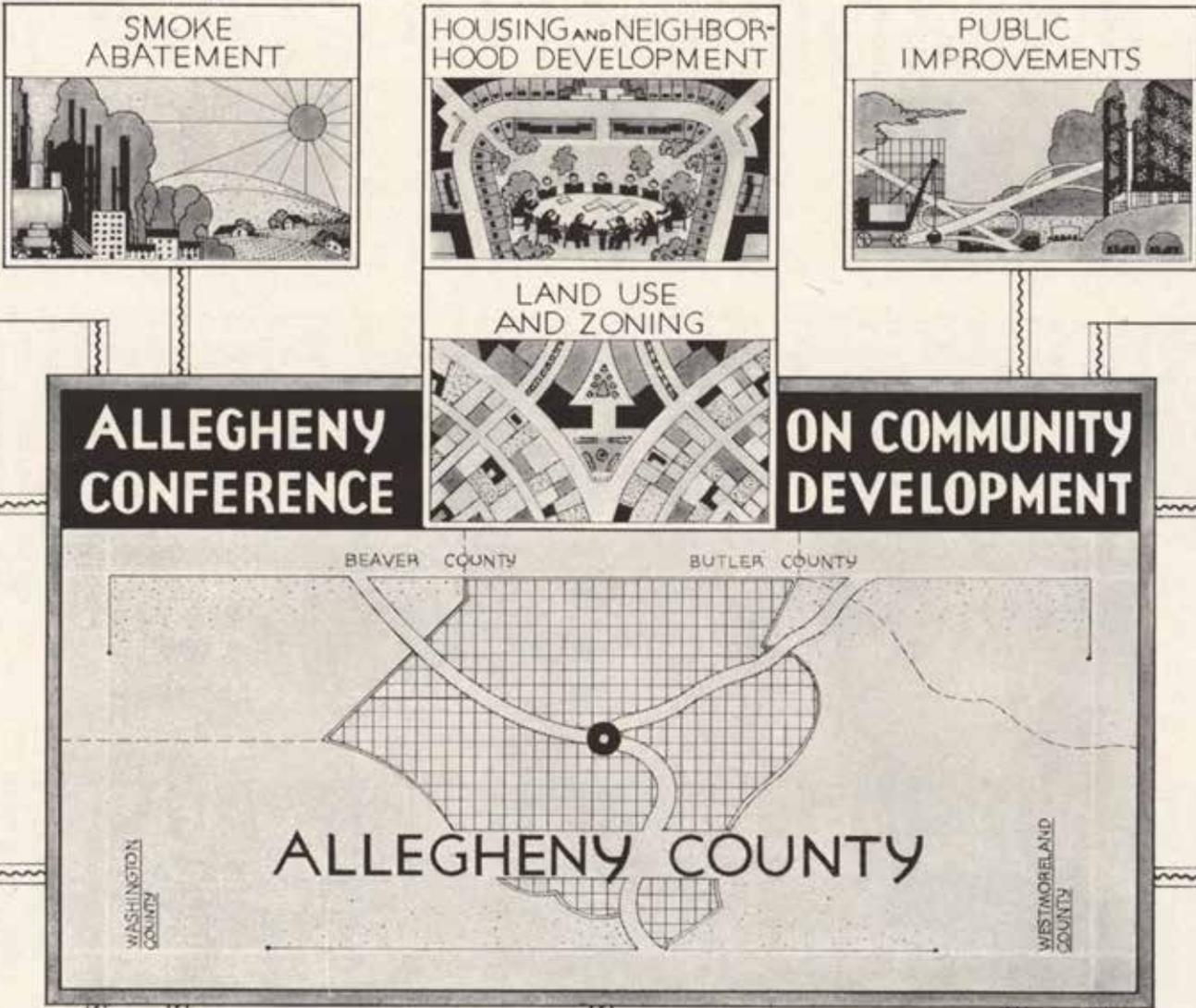
Careful weighing of options against the things we hold valuable in order to make decisions.

How does it work?

- We work to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- We learn about the stakeholders (see pg. 27-28) and how each option might affect them.
- We go beyond the initial positions we may hold to understand what we hold valuable in everyday life.
- We carefully weigh the views of others and work through the conflicting emotions we may feel.

Before beginning, we must all agree that:

- Everyone is encouraged to participate fully.
- No one or two individuals should dominate the conversation - move up and move back.
- The discussion will focus on the options presented in this guide.
- The major options will be considered fully.
- Everyone will work to maintain an open and respectful atmosphere for the discussion.
- Everyone will listen to one another.
- We will remember the historic context of the discussion.

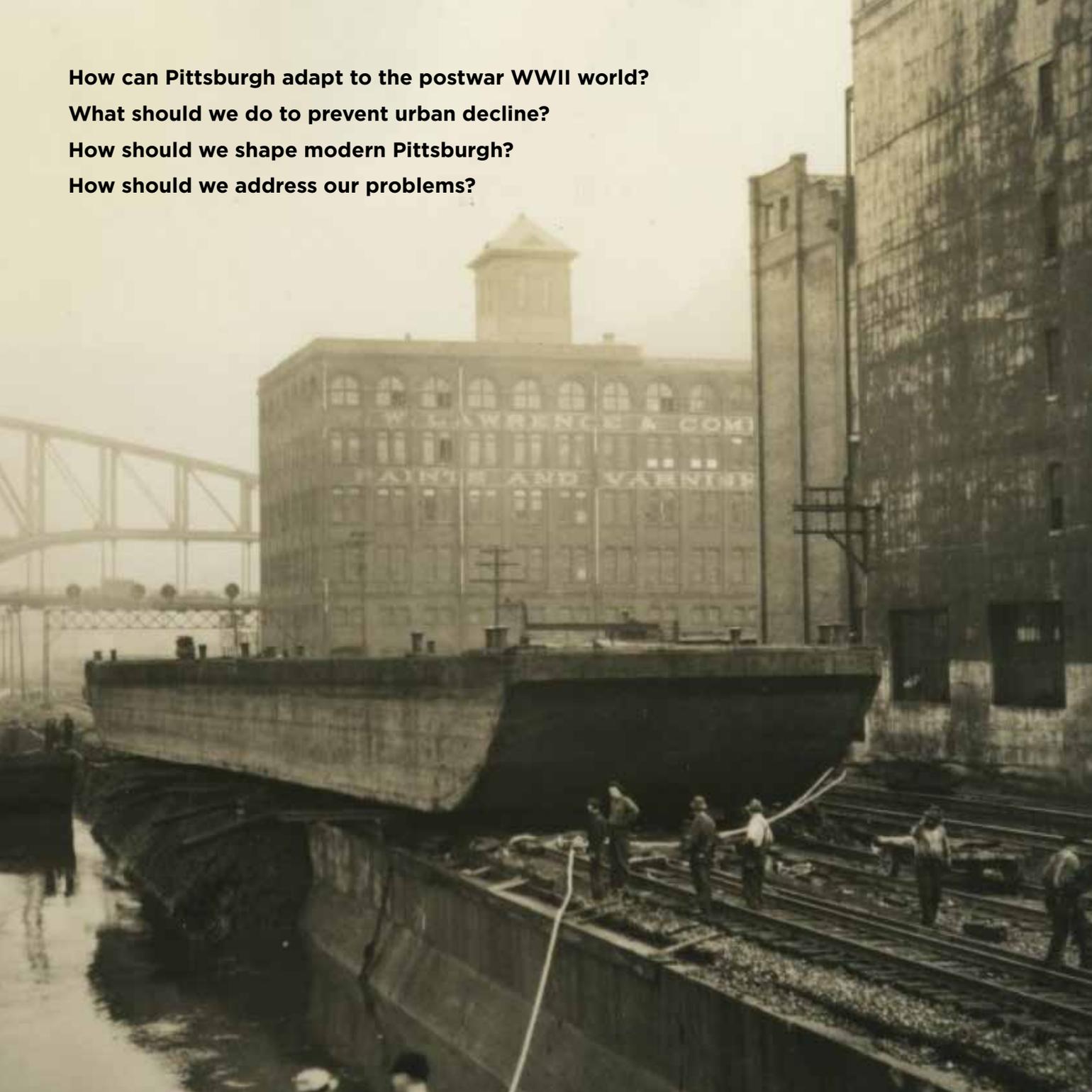


How can Pittsburgh adapt to the postwar WWII world?

What should we do to prevent urban decline?

How should we shape modern Pittsburgh?

How should we address our problems?



It's February, 1946. World War II ended just five months ago with the Japanese surrender, but the end of the war has not brought peace to Pittsburgh.

In fact, the end of the war has created many problems for our city. The war provided jobs, but now those jobs are drying up. During the war, we put aside our differences to focus on the war effort, but now old racial and economic tensions are rising to the surface.

With deteriorating neighborhoods, growing slums, aging housing, and rampant pollution, **we face an urban crisis.**



“Hell With the Lid Off”

The main heating and energy source in Pittsburgh is coal—and you can see it in the air. Factories and houses spew out coal smoke, filling the sky with black clouds. The air is so filled with smoke that street lights are used in the daytime.

The smoke is not only bad for our health; it also discourages economic investment. Indeed, three of the city’s largest companies—US Steel, Westinghouse, and Alcoa—are threatening to move their headquarters elsewhere, because the smoke makes it hard to attract business executives to the city.



Downtown Pittsburgh at 9:20AM
in the fall of 1945 before smoke control

Workers on Strike

The end of the war means trouble for the local economy, which is led by steel and coal. Now that the war has ended and the country needs less steel, steelworkers and miners are losing their jobs. Pittsburgh will have to adapt.

Unions have avoided going on strike for the last four years to support the war effort. Now they are striking, or refusing to work, to get what they want: higher wages and a say in decisions that are made at work and in their communities. They want to make their workplaces safer, their jobs more secure, and their communities more stable.

Right now, strikes are hitting our biggest companies: 75,000 Westinghouse employees and 227,000 steelworkers are on strike. Coal miners are threatening to strike. Labor conflicts at Duquesne Light Company have already shut down the trolley system, and electrical workers are threatening to cut off the power, effectively shutting down the whole city. If these strikes are not resolved soon, they could seriously harm the city.

Repair Delay Seen

Duquesne Light Strike Continues

Duquesne Light Company transmission and distribution workers remained off their jobs in the Pittsburgh district last night when a day-long series of talks between company and Local 148 failed to reach an agreement yesterday.

Steel Strike Panel to Meet

U. S. Acts to Keep 1 1/2 Million on Job

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2 (UP)—President Truman's fact-finding panel in the steel industry's wage dispute today announced that it will begin work Saturday and "the first order of business will be to urge the parties to resume collective bargaining."

A steel strike is threatened for Jan. 14. It is the largest of a series of industrial disputes that threaten to make idle 1 1/2 million workers in the next two weeks.

Labor Department Says—

Prices Rising, Workers Get Less

Average Weekly Pay Reported Down \$4.43

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5 (UP)—The Labor Department reported tonight that prices resumed their upward trend at the end of the war but that the average wage earner finds himself with \$4.43 less a week to meet this rising cost of living.



Crumbling Neighborhoods

Our neighborhoods are deteriorating. Many homes are old, rundown, and overcrowded. Houses that were built for single families have been split up into multiple apartments and hold many people. Sometimes eight people share a small apartment. One family of seven lives in a single room in a cellar. Veterans returning from war feel that they deserve better, and a new law promises to provide low-interest loans to help veterans to buy homes, but so far no new houses have been built.

Pittsburgh is racially segregated, with African Americans living in neighborhoods with the worst houses.

Yet, in spite of the crumbling houses, rent is expensive. Since African Americans cannot rent anywhere else, landlords charge top dollar for slum houses.

Surrounding these houses is garbage—and lots of it. The city does not collect garbage from homes, and trash piles up in backyards, on sidewalks, and in the streets. These “hokey piles” attract rats.

The problem is worst in the Hill District, where many African Americans live. Many houses there have no plumbing so residents use outside toilets. This spreads disease and threatens public health.



THE POLITICAL SCENE . . .

Maybe it WAS the war-time conditions that allowed Pittsburgh's Hill District (for Negroes) to become infested with rats . . . to be an eyesore and a menace to health, because of its hokey piles (garbage dumped willy-nilly on the streets or in vacant lots to fester and decay and foster disease-dealing vermin. Maybe the war HAD a lot to do with the terrible housing conditions for our folk here . . . but now the war is over, and with peacetime it might be good to get a peacetime Mayor.



“Pittsburgh has the worst housing situation in the United States.”

—Frank Palmer,
Director of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority, 1946



Jobs for Everyone

A recent investigation found that most businesses in Pittsburgh give African Americans the lowest-paying jobs or simply refuse to hire them. Steel companies give African Americans both the lowest-paying and the most dangerous jobs. **Many employers, like grocery stores and the electric company, discriminate on the basis of race.**

Construction sites refuse to hire African Americans workers, stopping them from helping to rebuild our city.

During the war, Pittsburgh had a local Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), which stopped some of this discrimination. Keeping a local FEPC, said Reverend J. O. Williams, pastor of the Warren Methodist Church, "would guarantee the right of all people to work at their level of skills regardless of color or religion."

** Parley - A conversation in which people from two opposing sides of an issue try to come to an agreement.*

* Parley Discusses Hiring of Clerks

Committee Meets With Mayor

BULLETIN

Negro pickets were ordered to take up patrols in front of four Downtown department stores late this afternoon after a conference between their leaders, stores' officials and Mayor David L. Lawrence broke up without making any progress in the discussion covering the hiring of Negro sales persons.

Representatives of four Pittsburgh department stores today submitted a plan for the hiring of Negro sales personnel.

The plan was presented to representatives of the General Committee on Fair Employment at a joint meeting in the office of Mayor David L. Lawrence.

A spokesman for the four stores—Gimbels, Kaufmann's, Horne's and Frank & Seder's—said they had offered to continue to study methods by which Negro personnel could be hired and upgraded to salespersons' jobs.



A Permanent FEPC Needed

As was anticipated, the color line has entered the reconversion picture.

As war industry ends and peace-time production starts up, reports come from many parts of the country that certain employers are asking for only "white employes" from the U. S. Employment Service.

While the trend is spotty and by no means Nation-wide, we all know that it will become accelerated as the post-war depression deepens.

There is only one way to deal with this problem of job discrimination with any degree of effectiveness, and that is by strengthening the present Fair Employment Practices Committee with adequate funds and added powers.

1936

1939

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

1946

1936:
Pittsburgh
floods, leaving
62 dead,
500 injured,
and 135,000
homeless

1939:
The steel
industry
booms
to provide
war
materials
for US
allies

1941, July:
Pittsburgh
passes
smoke
control

**1941,
December:**
US enters
World War II

1942, April:
US government
freezes rents
in Pittsburgh
as war measure

1944, January: Smog
is so bad some people
cannot go to work
or leave their homes

1944, September:
Creation of the
Allegheny Conference
on Community
Development

1945, May: World
War II ends in Europe

1945, August:
Pittsburgh industries
lay off 7,000 workers
because of the end
of war contracts

1945, September:
World War II ends
in Asia

1945, November:
David Lawrence
elected mayor
of Pittsburgh

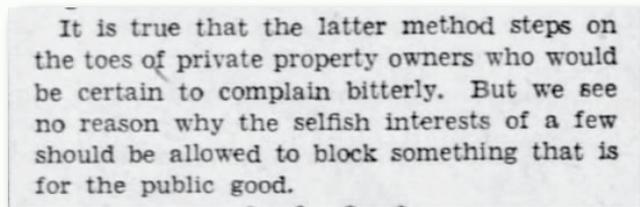
1946, February:
300,000 steel
and electrical industry
workers go on strike

Eminent Domain

To improve the city, officials may use “eminent domain”—the government’s right to take private property and turn it into a public space. Using this power, the city can force people to move, even if they don’t want to give up their property.

Some people are worried about eminent domain. Many small business owners think that the government might take their property and give it to others. African Americans fear that their property will be taken before others because of racial discrimination. Bethel AME and other black churches are worried that eminent domain will force them to move.

Others believe that without eminent domain, a handful of stubborn residents could stop the city from improving. **The Constitution says that people must be paid for the property that is taken through eminent domain**, but people worry that their land is not worth very much and they will not get much money from the government.



It is true that the latter method steps on the toes of private property owners who would be certain to complain bitterly. But we see no reason why the selfish interests of a few should be allowed to block something that is for the public good.

Pittsburgh Press editorial, March 1934

Public Housing

To celebrate Pittsburgh’s public housing program, President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the opening ceremony of Terrace Village in 1940. He personally handed over new keys to the Churchfield family, the 100,000th family to receive public housing. This public housing provides homes for poorer families who would not be able to afford rent elsewhere.

But these new housing projects are segregated by race. About 60 percent of the residents are white and 40 percent are African American. The city’s policy is to keep white and black residents living in different buildings. They say that this is to keep the peace between people of different races.

Terms you will see in this guide:

Slum: An area of a city where low income people live in crowded, poorly maintained housing.

Strike: A refusal by union members to go to work until demands for better conditions (pay, safety, etc) have been met.

Collective bargaining: The process by which workers who have joined a union come together to as a group to demand better pay or conditions at work.

Segregation: The forced separation of groups of people, such as when most restaurants and hotels refused to serve African Americans.

Rent control: A government program that limits how much a landlord can charge for rent, with a goal of keeping housing affordable for residents.

With the end of World War II, we need to confront the many problems that face our city, and we must do so quickly.

OUR OPTIONS

**OPTION 1:
ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
FOR EVERYONE**

**OPTION 2:
REINVENT PITTSBURGH**

**OPTION 3:
PROMOTE FREEDOM
TO REVITALIZE THE CITY**



OPTION 1: ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

But . . . making equal opportunities for everyone will lead to more competition between people.

The way to solve the city's problems is through paying workers more money, fixing poor housing, making sure people can afford their homes, and giving equal job opportunities to all residents of Pittsburgh, regardless of race.

We should give everyone a say in local politics; by working together, people have the power to shape the future of Pittsburgh.

FLEX UNION MUSCLE

To raise wages so people can spend more money, unions should bargain for higher wages and go on strike if necessary. Unions should also fight to get workers into politics so they have a say in how the city is run.

The Hill Clean-Up

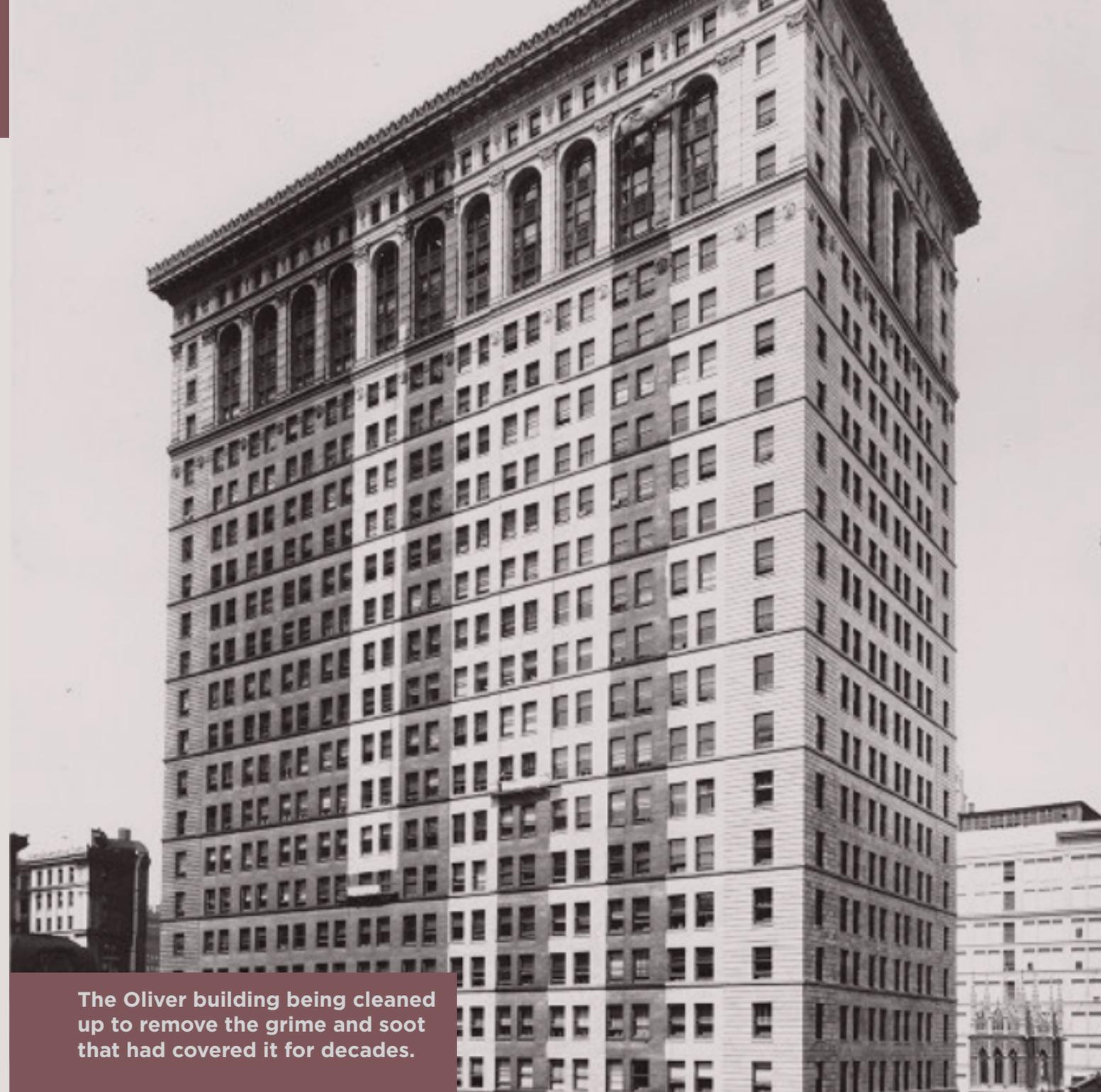
The city's drive to eliminate sub-standard sanitary and building conditions in the Hill district has produced results. Three landlords have been fined and eighteen others have been threatened with similar action unless they correct conditions within five days.

FIX UP THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Instead of destroying old houses, we should fix them up. Landlords should have to follow housing codes and fix up their properties so they are safe. People should be more interested in maintaining their neighborhoods.

ENACT RENT CONTROLS To make sure that houses are affordable for people in the city and that rent does not increase too quickly, we should limit what landlords can charge for houses.

JOBS FOR EVERYONE We should ensure that everyone in the city can get a job without facing racial discrimination by keeping the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) that was started during the war.



The Oliver building being cleaned up to remove the grime and soot that had covered it for decades.

OPTION 2: REINVENT PITTSBURGH

But . . . many working-class people will lose their jobs and their homes.

We need to update the city as soon as possible. Pittsburgh is trapped in the past with smoky factories, old roads, and slum neighborhoods. The downtown streets were laid out in 1784, when the fastest vehicle was a horse-drawn cart; they are not useful for a city full of cars. If the city is to thrive, we need big plans that will bring it into the modern age.

We need a plan that matches the huge scale of the problems Pittsburgh faces. We cannot simply fix up the city house by house; we must have a full solution to the city's urban crisis.

We need to find a way to stop floods and clear the smoke from our city so companies will want to stay here. We need to stop the blight that is ruining the city's neighborhoods.



REINVENT PITTSBURGH We need a full plan to bring some order to the hodge-podge of streets, shops, and crumbling houses that make up downtown Pittsburgh.

CLEAR SLUMS A new law allows us to clear slums. If we start now, we can be the first place in the country with a major plan to make our city better.

PUBLIC HOUSING Everyone deserves a decent home, and only the government can provide clean, new housing for all. We should add more public housing like the ones we built during the war to replace our crumbling houses.

FLOOD CONTROL Pittsburgh has flooded many times, but the 1936 flood damaged most of the downtown area. People will not move their businesses to the city if there is a risk of flooding, so we need to control the rivers with dams.

Kinzua Dam Construction Being Urged

Uncle Sam's program of flood control under which the Kinzua dam will be constructed is moving forward in good shape. The improvement in the channel of the Conemaugh river at Johnstown has been completed and the work of clearing the land for the construction of a dam on the Youghiogheny river is underway. Over

Kinzua Dam Faces Indian Opposition Water Would Cover Seneca Reservations

KINZUA, Oct. 3.—With the present national emergency looming as an obstacle to the construction of the flood-control dam near here, another setback may be encountered in the form of opposition from members of the Seneca Indian nation as two of their reservations will be inundated.

Funds for the project, which was approved under the flood control act of 1911, will not be available until

OPTION 3: PROMOTE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM TO REVITALIZE THE CITY

But . . . people may be selfish and may not look out for their neighbors.

Residents, businesses, and groups in the city should have the freedom to make their own decisions about where to live, where to work, and what to do with their properties. The city should work with these individuals and groups to bring people together and to support people, rather than making decisions for them.

Pittsburgh has diverse neighborhoods where small businesses do well. This togetherness cannot be forced on people —it has to come from the people themselves. Strong and connected neighborhoods are the foundation of any successful city. This option holds that the answer to urban problems is not more government involvement but rather, less. The war increased government control over almost every part of our lives, from how many hours we can work to how many products we can buy. Now that the war is over, we should have our freedoms back, especially the freedom of all people and businesses to make their own decisions.

OPPOSES SMOKE CONTROL

James F. Patterson, candidate for a Democratic nomination for City Council, said he will work for repeal of the anti-smoke law if he is elected.

"I am appealing for votes," he said, "as the man who believes that in Pittsburgh smoke means employment.

"The smoke control ordinance is an added burden of expense and hardship upon the taxpayers. If the smoke control bill has been put before the voters as a referendum, it would have been soundly defeated.

It has been a widespread practice in this country for property owners in a community to discriminate against whole groups of people because of their race, religion or color, particularly negroes and Jews.

They may agree among themselves that none of them will ever rent or sell his house to a negro, for example. This is a so-called "gentlemen's agreement." Sometimes it is called a "restrictive covenant."

CUT TAXES - It costs too much to own property in the city. Cutting taxes would mean landlords would have the money to fix their houses.

ENCOURAGE SPORTS, MUSIC, AND CULTURE - To help our city thrive, we should encourage what we already have - musicians, athletes, and artists. We should build better stadiums, music venues, and cultural centers to grow this unique part of our city.

REMOVE HOUSING RESTRICTIONS - There are too many rules about houses in the city, and they stop people from using their homes as businesses, keeping animals, and growing food. We also have "restrictive covenants" that prevent people from selling their homes to African American families. These rules need to be removed so people can do what they want with their homes.

STICK WITH COAL - Smoke control ordinances hurt the coal industry and force people to buy new furnaces. In Pittsburgh, smoke in the air means people have jobs. We should go back to using coal.



SUMMARY

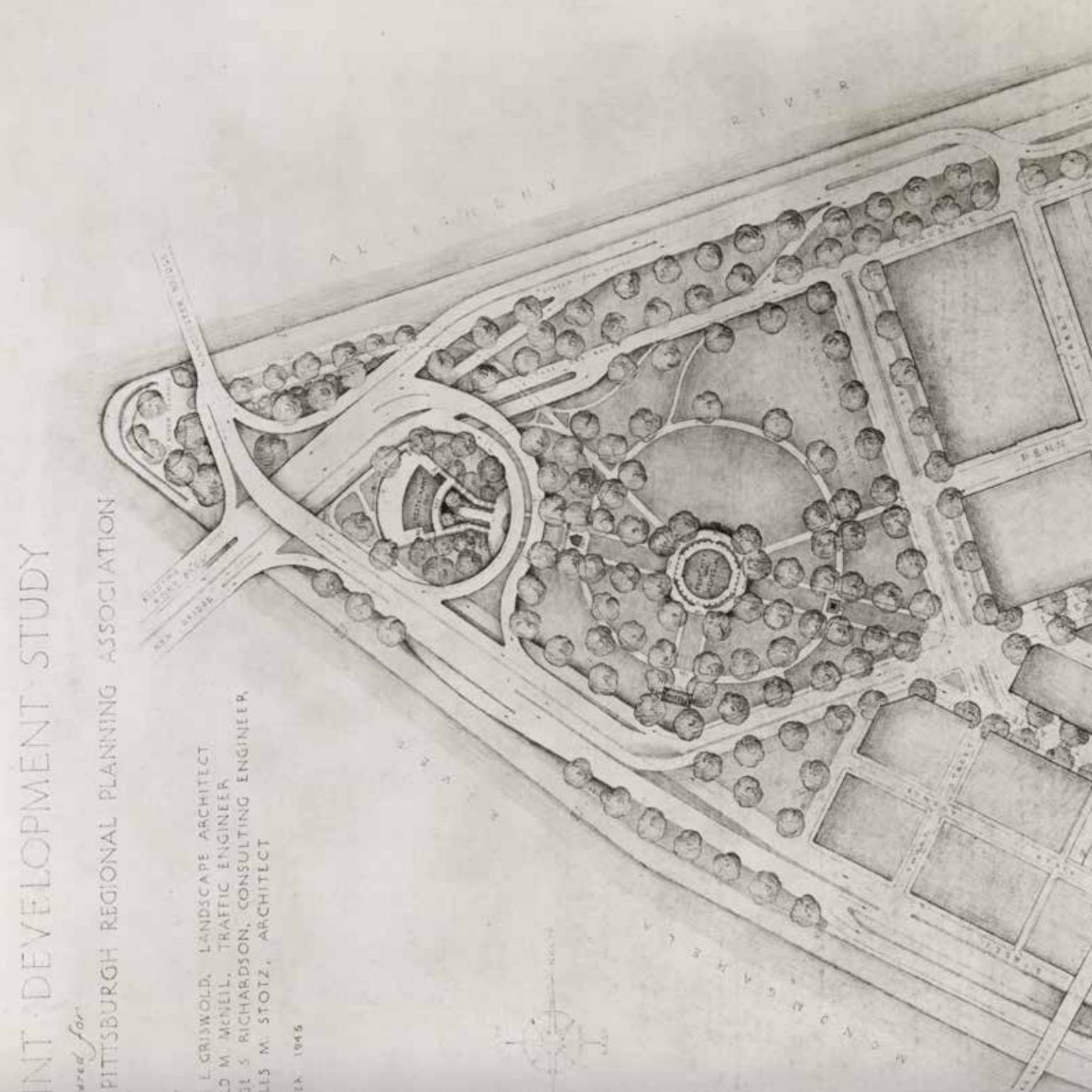
There are many options on the table for improving our city. People are concerned about the slums, poor housing, and outdated roads. They are worried that with all the smoke in the air and flooding rivers, no businesses will want to come here. There is also concern about inequality in housing and employment.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO PREVENT URBAN DECLINE?

HOW CAN PITTSBURGH ADAPT TO THE POSTWAR WORLD?

WHAT TRADEOFFS ARE YOU WILLING TO ACCEPT TO IMPROVE OUR CITY?

HOW SHOULD WE SHAPE MODERN PITTSBURGH?



EXAMPLES OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE

SOME TRADE-OFFS TO CONSIDER

OPTION 1: ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

But . . . making equal opportunities for everyone will lead to more competition between people

Flex union muscle. Bargain aggressively for better wages. Go on strike if necessary.

Enforce housing codes and clean up neighborhoods.

Enact rent controls.

Create a local Fair Employment Practices Committee to prohibit racial discrimination in hiring.

Strikes will slow the economy. Workers will not earn money while striking, and businesses might shut down.

Improving housing will make it more expensive; thus there will be less housing available for poor people.

This will infringe on the freedom of individuals and businesses to make their own decisions about their properties.

Regulations will be compromised on business owners' rights to decide who they want to hire.

OPTION 2: REINVENT PITTSBURGH

But . . . many working-class people will lose their jobs and their homes

Build new highways and parking garages to make it easy to get in and out of downtown by car.

Clear slums and redevelop them.

Construct public housing for the poorest residents.

Build dams to prevent flooding downtown.

New highways will demolish all the buildings in their path, displacing the thousands of people who own homes, work in offices, and operate small businesses along the route.

This will cause the most hardship for those least able to find or afford alternative living arrangements.

Public housing segregates residents by race and class.

One of the proposed dams will break a 1794 treaty with the Seneca nation, flooding a third of the Seneca's Allegany reservation and displacing hundreds of tribal members.

OPTION 3: PROMOTE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM TO REVITALIZE THE CITY

But . . . people may be selfish and may not look out for their neighbors

Remove housing restrictions.

Repeal the smoke ordinance of 1941.

Cut local taxes to encourage development.

Encourage music, sports, and culture.

Mixed uses will change neighborhood character, housing will be more crowded, and diseases will spread more easily.

Smoke will discourage companies from establishing headquarters here, reducing jobs for white-collar employees. It is also unhealthy, leading to lung problems for city residents.

With less money, the government will be forced to provide fewer services to residents.

Sporting events and jazz clubs often attract illegal activities, including gambling, drug use, and after-hours alcohol consumption.

LANDLORD

*HILL DISTRICT
RESIDENT*

STEELWORKER

*DOWNTOWN
BUSINESS
OWNER*

STAKEHOLDERS

*CIVIL RIGHTS
ACTIVIST*

*MAYOR DAVID
LAWRENCE*

*PUBLIC
HOUSING
TENANT*

*EXECUTIVE
MOVING TO
THE CITY*

1. LANDLORD

Owns several properties in the Hill District, and rents them out for as much money as possible. She opposes rent controls because they limit the amount she can charge her tenants. Fixing up her properties would cost too much money, and she feels she already pays too much in taxes.

2. HILL DISTRICT RESIDENT

Grew up in the Hill District and loves living in “the Crossroads of the World,” where some of the best jazz musicians play in some of the best nightclubs. She joined the People’s Forum in 1946 with other activists to protest bad housing conditions and to demand that the city fixes them.

3. STEELWORKER

Member of a union and has worked in steel mills for his whole career. He believes that workers like him should be paid a fair wage and should have a voice in decisions made about their work and their community.

4. DOWNTOWN BUSINESS OWNER

Has owned a business for ten years in Downtown Pittsburgh, and remembers the flood of 1936 well. He wants to see the city improve, but is worried that a new street plan may mean that his property is taken by eminent domain and his business will close.





5. CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Grew up in Pittsburgh in racially segregated neighborhoods. She noticed more equality during the war, with rent controls and the Fair Employment Practices Committee, and wants these to be a part of postwar America. She organizes her neighbors to work with politicians and community groups to achieve equality for all.



6. MAYOR DAVID LAWRENCE

Grew up in the Point when it was an industrial neighborhood housing immigrants. He was involved in politics from a young age, and as mayor, he promises to bring together workers and bosses, and black and white Pittsburghers.



7. PUBLIC HOUSING TENANT

Lives in a newly built apartment complex in the Hill District with other white residents. He would not be able to afford rent elsewhere, so he is glad the city built these apartments, but he worries about where people will go while the new buildings are being constructed.



8. EXECUTIVE MOVING TO THE CITY

Moving to the city to work for a large company. He is worried about moving his family to a city with smoke in the air. At the same time, he loves sports and music, and looks forward to seeing some of Pittsburgh's famous sports teams and musicians when he moves to the city.

CITATIONS

Cover: Heinz History Center Detre Library & Archives, Allegheny Conference on Community Development Photographs, Box 7, Folder 1.

Page 2: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 215, Folder 30.

Page 4: HHC Detre L&A, Eichleay Engineering Corporation Records and Photographs.

Page 5: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 14, Folder 2.

Page 6: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 21, Folder 19.

Page 7: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 21, Folder 17.

Page 8: "Steel Strike Panel to Meet," The Pittsburgh Press, January 2, 1946.

"Repair Delay Seen: Duquesne Light Strike Continues," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, February 12, 1946.

"Prices Rising, Workers Get Less," The Pittsburgh Press, January 6, 1946.

Page 9: "Steel Strike Starts Monday," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, January 19, 1946.

"The Steel Strike's On - Ahead of Time," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, January 19, 1946.

Page 10: (MAP)

HHC Detre L&A, Pittsburgh Bureau of Building Inspection Photographs.

Page 11: "The Political Scene," The Pittsburgh Courier October 27, 1945.

HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 16, Folder 1.

Page 12: "Parley Discusses Hiring of Clerks," The Pittsburgh Press, December 9, 1946.

Page 13: HHC Detre L&A, Kaufmann's Department Store Photographs.

"A Permanent FEPC Needed," The Pittsburgh Courier, September 8, 1945.

Background image: HHC Detre L&A, Urban League of Pittsburgh Records, Photo album, 1948.

Page 14-15: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 21, Folder 17.

Page 16: The Pittsburgh Press, March 26, 1934.

Background image: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 12, Folder 15.

Page 17: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 12, Folder 13.

Background image: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 21, Folder 17.

Page 18: "The Hill Clean-Up," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, August 2, 1946.

Page 19: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 21, Folder 18.

Page 20: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 29, Folder 27.

Page 21: "Kinzua Dam Construction Being Urged," Warren Times Mirror, October 8, 1943.

"Kinzua Dam Faces Indian Opposition," Bradford Evening Star, October 3, 1941.

Pages 22-23: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 21, Folder 22.

"Opposes Smoke Control," The Pittsburgh Press, September 7, 1947.

"It has been widespread practice," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 31 1947.

Page 24: Background image: HHC Detre L&A, Irene Kaufmann Settlement Photographs, Box 2, Folder 8.

Page 25: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 192, Folder 11.

Page 30: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 12, Folder 15.

HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 22, Folder 10.

Page 31: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 21, Folder 19.

HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 22, Folder 14.

Page 32:

I can't seem to find this Daisy Lampkin photo...

Or this Mayor Lawrence photo...

HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 12, Folder 15.

HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 32, Folder 23.

Back cover: HHC Detre L&A, ACCD Collection, Box 7, Folder 1.



