

approach

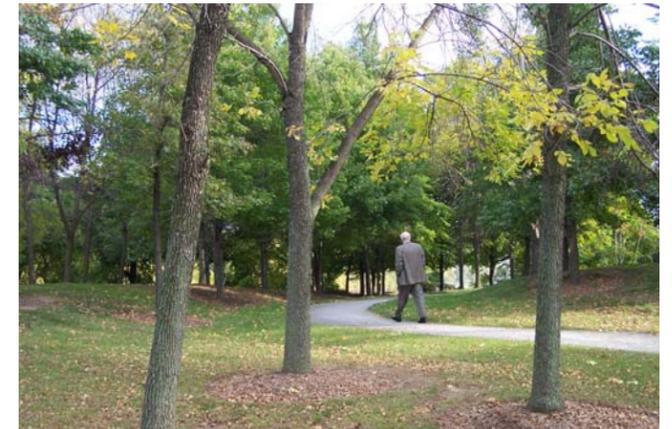
There is momentum underway within the Allegheny Riverfront Area that is beginning to push for something to happen. Lawrenceville has been planning. The Strip District is already beginning to see it happen. The development community is aware that the timing is right. The City is aware and has begun to take the first steps.

This is a chance to redefine, enhance, and advance the Allegheny Riverfront Area to serve the future Pittsburgh and set an agenda for revitalizing the city's riverfronts. The approach is to create a "new" infrastructure from what's "all right" that recognizes 21st century values and the resurgence of city living as a desired alternative, to do so strategically, and to make it sustainable over the long term.

Vision Goals

Six overall goals emerged to guide the planning. The 10 Principles of the Vision Plan for Pittsburgh's Riverfronts were the starting point. From there the Design Team began to merge what was learned from the context research, interviews, and community feedback recorded through community and project progress meetings, design charrettes, and focus discussions, then began to modify them from broad community themes to goals specific to the Allegheny Riverfront's visioning.

- Goal 1: Increase Economic Vitality**
 Maximize investment possibilities for long-term resilience and develop at sufficient density to support sustainable urban infrastructure and services, including viable public transportation.
- Goal 2: Improve Connections to the River and the City**
 Increase public access to the riverfront and the river, increase connections between riverfront neighborhoods, and make better connections to other centers of resources, particularly Oakland and Downtown, to improve the Allegheny Riverfront Area as a desired civic resource.
- Goal 3: Restore and Enhance Ecological Character and Quality**
 Recognize stormwater and vegetation as natural resources for a healthy ecology.
- Goal 4: Develop Complementary Uses and Amenities**
 Enhance the experience of the river's edge with new recreational, commercial, residential, and cultural uses recognizing the need for compatibility.
- Goal 5: Create Beautiful and Memorable Places Built upon Natural, Historical, and Present Resources**
 Give the city a new "front door" orientation toward the river and identify opportunities for authentic and distinctive "places" within the Allegheny Riverfront Area.
- Goal 6: Plan for Sustainable Development**
 Plan for incremental and adaptive development to occur over space and time, build to sustainable standards, and create a model for future riverfront development in the city and the region. Create a regenerative and green agenda to guide development. Engage stakeholders in catalytic interventions that will leverage future development and create strong and lasting partnerships among the stakeholders.



Increase the quality of life throughout the Allegheny Riverfront



Regenerative Development

The concept of sustainable development, “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” has generally been interpreted in terms of greater efficiency and less waste. To create a sustainable society, though, we must do more than stretch our resources. Good stewardship in our use of energy, land, and materials is indeed highly beneficial but perpetuates the fundamental problem of turning whatever resources we have into waste (albeit more slowly), whether landfills or pollution, which will ultimately compromise our quality of life.

Realizing that today we need a better model of sustainability, we are looking to natural ecosystems as models for solutions not only to environmental problems, but to social and economic issues as well. The fundamental characteristic of ecosystems is that they sustain themselves by continuous cyclical regenerative processes—processes that restore and renew their own sources of energy and matter. Ultimately, for human development to be sustainable, we have to figure out how to take part in these cyclical processes, since the alternative is progressive degradation.

This approach has informed all four components of the Allegheny Riverfront Vision Plan: ecology, connections, market, and urban form. In the ecological domain, we have focused on sustaining the quality of our natural resources, especially on the quality of water and our rivers. Our approach has been not to identify isolated problems, such as sewage overflows, but to examine the full hydrological cycle, understand why it’s not working, and find ways to restore it. We take the same approach to our built environment, our infrastructure, and our systems of movement and production.

In the domain of “connections,” we recognize that circulation systems are by nature continuous and cyclical, whether they exist to transport nutrients or people or freight. In the Riverfront Vision, we see movement systems as an integral element of a regenerative city: to create a well-functioning urban transportation system, we look to minimize the use of pollution-producing vehicles; to introduce new and better inter-modal connections; to improve access and accessibility; and to enhance the positive effects of both vehicles and rights-of-way on private property.



Regenerative environments sustain themselves, whether they be ecological, connections, market, or urban form

In terms of market, our approach is to build the resilience of a regenerative community by creating opportunities for an interactive mix of uses and by encouraging synergies among them. As is evident from existing conditions, a mix of uses in itself is not sufficient to ensure economic vitality and eliminate conflicts, such as truck traffic through residential neighborhoods, nor is it sufficient to generate a thriving economy. A regenerative community needs to sustain its own population base over time, with the resilience of diversity, social bonds, and investment in human development. Residential development fuels the economic metabolism of the community, but local businesses, better educational facilities, and community-supported services and recreational amenities also have an integral role if they support and strengthen continuing investment. Lasting economic vitality can be developed only by creating a “cycle of reinvestment” in the community.

With regard to envisioning urban form, our goal is based not only on the principles of good urban design, but even more fundamentally on turning land and buildings into self-renewing resources which sustain their value over time. In a regenerative environment, development must not only meet standards of quality of construction and design, but also contribute to the value of property around it (which of course protects its own value). Similarly, buildings will sustain their value over time only if they are well-built and can be converted from use to use.

