

## **Executive Summary**

The existing property and building located at 1334 Fifth Avenue has significant structural damage beyond feasible financial repair. The property was acquired in January 2023 by Bob Lewis, owner of Orbital Engineering, a firm with headquarters at 1344 Fifth Avenue, immediately adjacent to the subject property and that employs over 120 people at its Pittsburgh office. After deeming the property both infeasible to redevelop and a public safety hazard (pending condemnation), Bob Lewis proposed to demolish the existing three-story building and replace it with a new surface parking lot to combine with the existing surface parking lot servicing Orbital Engineering's corporate offices, to better serve Orbital's growing employee base in Uptown. Mr. Lewis has proposed doing the project at his own cost, and in addition to the demolition and construction of the new lot proposed significant upgrades in lighting, safety, and landscaping, along with consideration of public art.

## **Project Narrative**

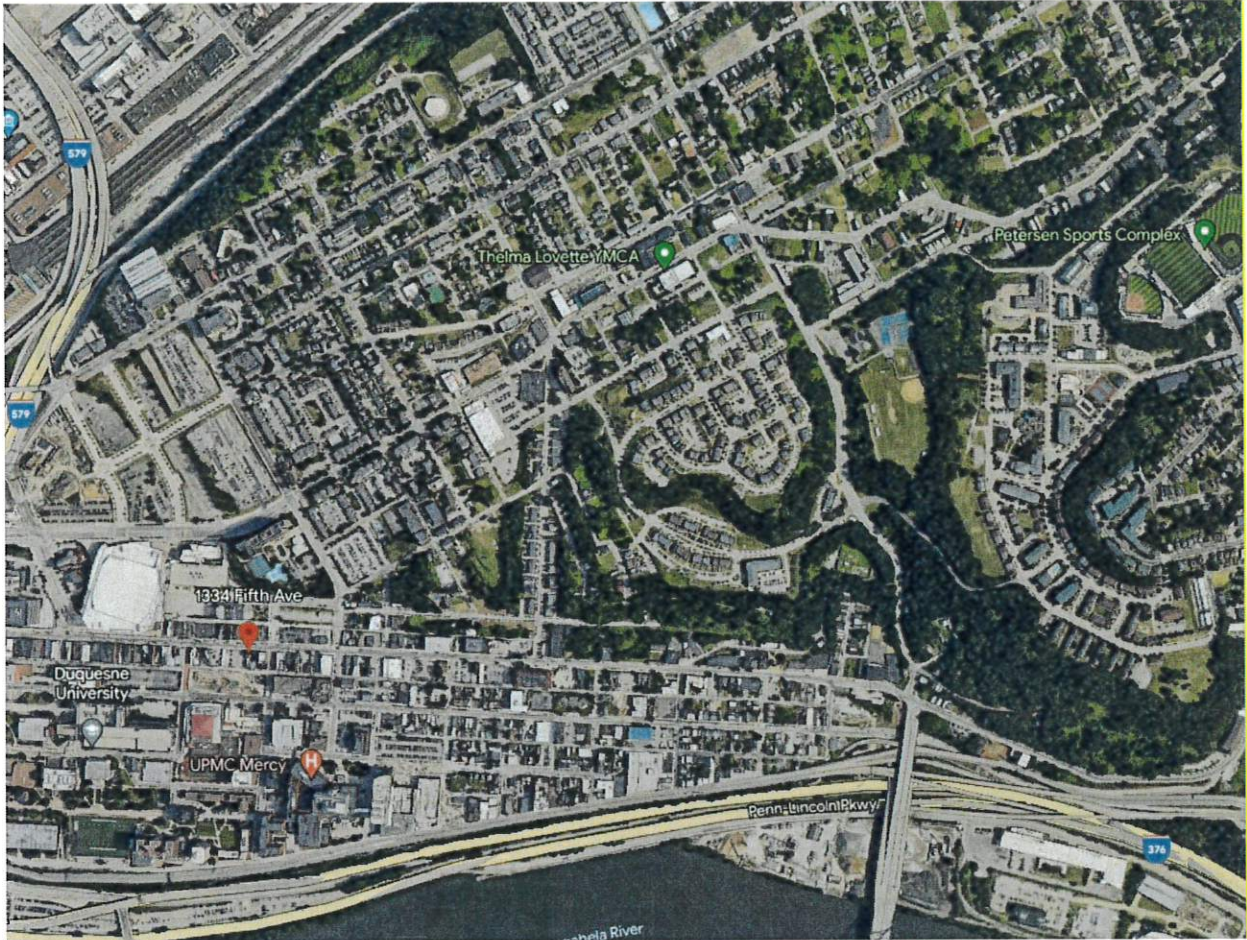
The "Subject Property" at 1334 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh PA, 15219 (Allegheny County Parcel #0002-G-00051-0000-00) was purchased in January 2023 by a Pennsylvania limited liability company affiliated with Bob Lewis, owner and founder of Orbital Engineering. Orbital Engineering is currently headquartered at 1344 Fifth Avenue, with its office building and office parking lot immediately adjacent to the Subject Property. An engineering company with offices across the United States and overseas, Orbital has had offices in Uptown for over 40 years and currently employs over 120 people in its Uptown office.

Upon acquisition, the Subject Property consisted of an existing 3-story brick structure of approximately 1,449 total square feet, previously the property was leased to a restaurant and office space, but has been vacant since January 2023. Upon acquisition, analysis revealed significant structural damage to the existing building, which has worsened over the course of the prior nine months (since January 2023) as shown in the photos below. Cost estimates to repair the structural damage and facade are in excess of \$300,000, deemed in excess of the building's value. The Subject Property received a citation from the City of Pittsburgh for structural issues in April 2023, and Owner was informed of a pending request to condemn property in August 2023.

Due to the above, Owner was concluded that the Subject Property is a public health hazard, and desires to demolish the existing property (at their own cost). While there may be potential for future development of the parcel, Owner further desires in the immediate term to construct a new surface parking lot on the Subject Property land, joining with the adjacent surface parking lot to service Orbital Engineering's growing employee count in Uptown.

As part of the proposed new surface parking lot, Owner has proposed upgrades to both the existing surface lot, and new lighting, safety, and landscaping measures across both lots. Owner is also considering public upgrades including public art as part of the project.

The proposed demolition of the existing building at 1334 Fifth Avenue and construction of a new parking lot and related landscaping, lighting, and other improvements is estimated to cost \$250,911.00 and will be fully funded by Bob Lewis, or an affiliated private entity.



Google Earth image with location marked at Subject Property. Subject Property is the second building down on the lefthand side of the road from the corner of Fifth Ave and Stevenson St; located in Uptown.



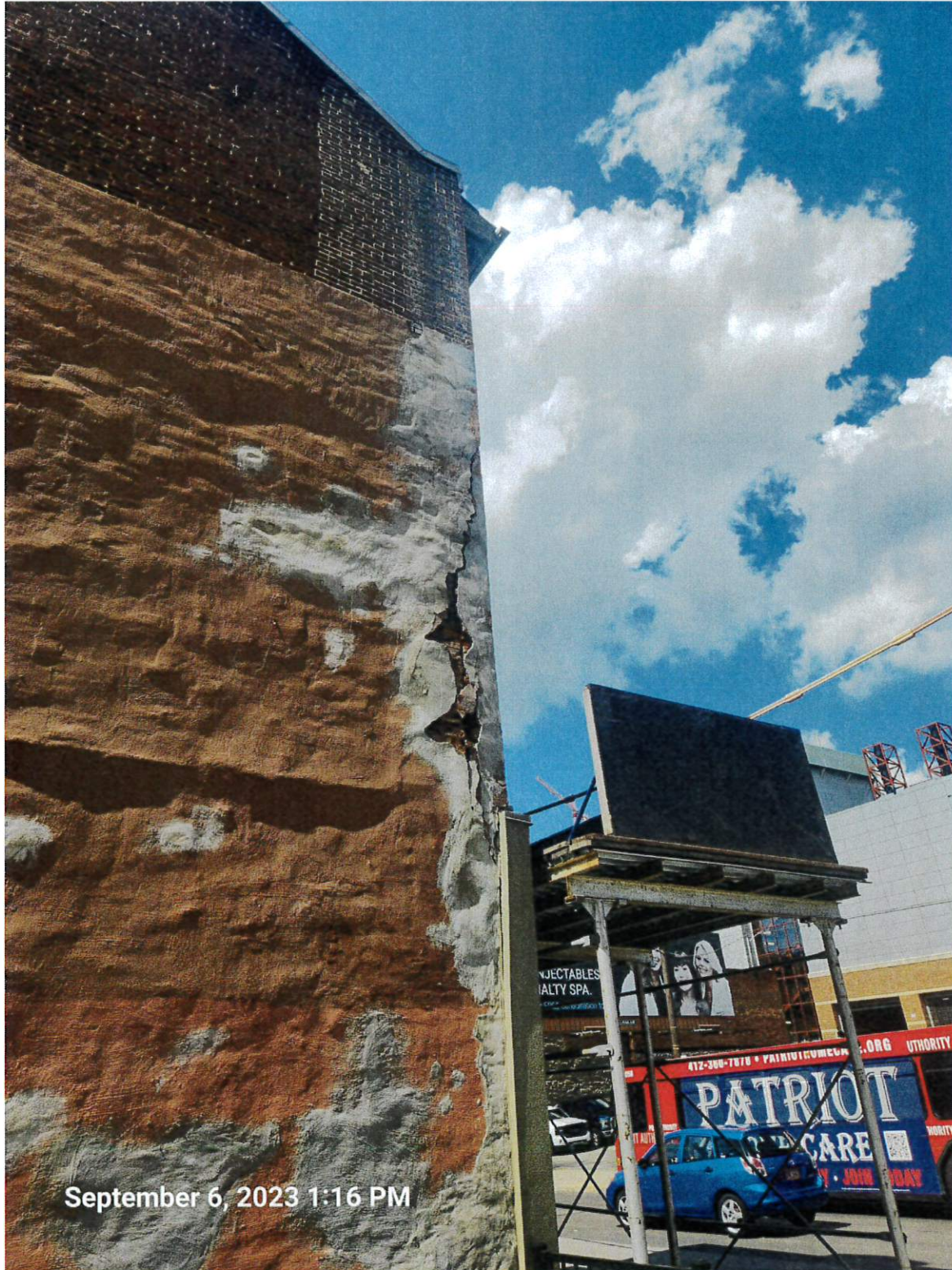
Google Earth image with location marked at Subject Property. Fifth Avenue is at the top of the image. Orbital Engineering is the rightmost building, located on the corner of Fifth and Stevenson. Orbital Employee parking is located to the left of the Orbital Engineering building. Subject Property is marked and is to the left of the Orbital employee parking lot.



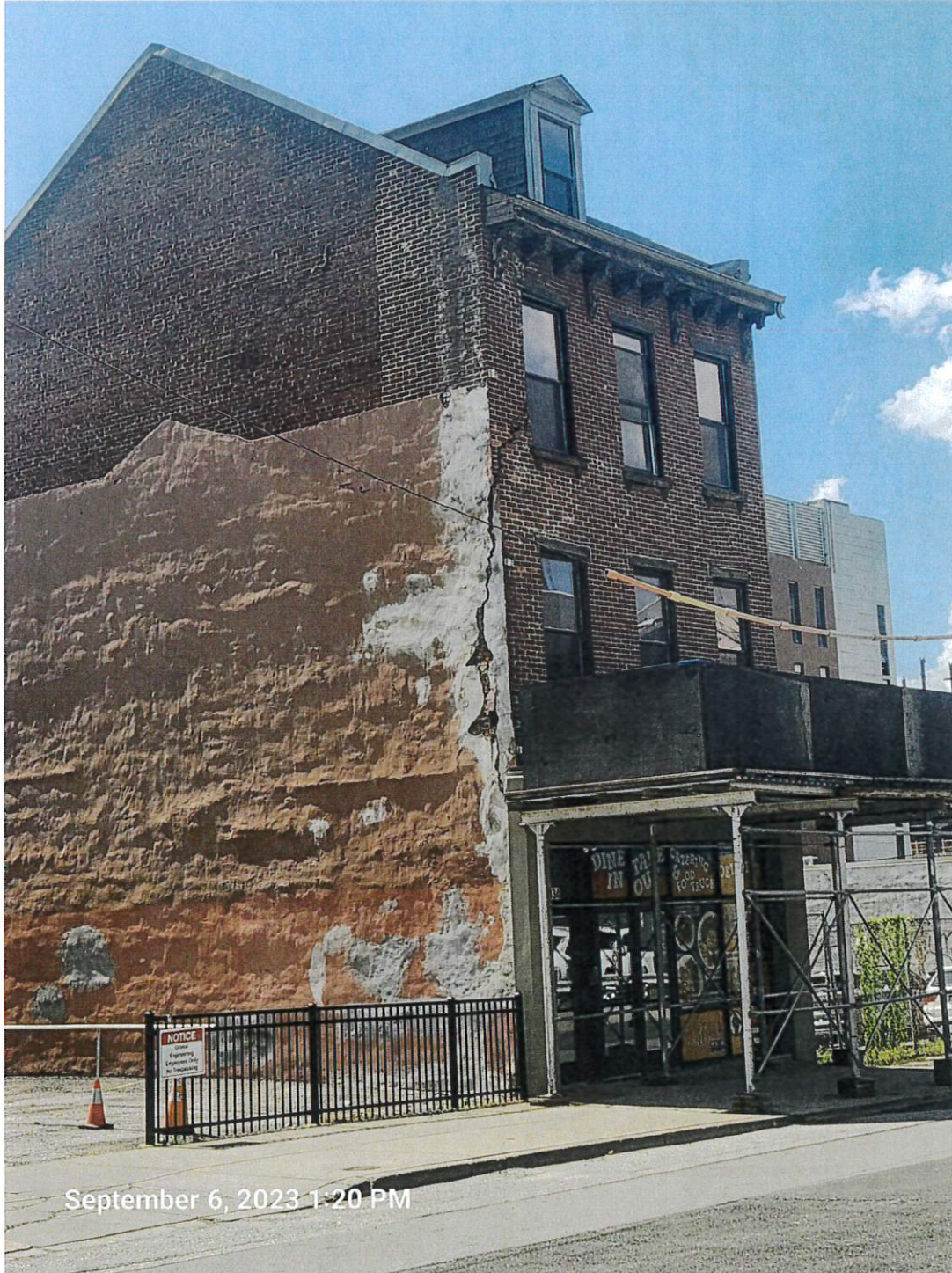
Orbital Engineering (1344 Fifth Ave) pictured left, employee parking in center, Subject Property (1334 Fifth Ave) pictured right.



Cracking and falling debris from the left side of Subject Property if you are facing property from Fifth Avenue. Image shows how lower portion of façade is shifting away from the building towards Fifth Avenue.



Left side of Subject Property, photo taken from standing in Orbital employee parking lot. Image shows the scale of the cracking in relation to the height of the building. Pedestrian canopy staged to prevent falling bricks and debris from landing on sidewalk traffic.



Pictured is a large crack on the left side of the Subject Property spanning from the center of the third-floor window to the top left corner of the first-floor façade. Pedestrian canopy to catch falling bricks and debris from hitting foot traffic. Traffic cones pictured at the bottom left of the image with white pipe above indicate where there is a car length temporary fence keeping Orbital employees from walking or parking under falling debris; fence spans the whole length of the Subject Property on its left side.



## Development Review Panel (DRP) Self-Evaluation Form

### A. General Information

Project Name: 1334 Fifth Ave -additional parking for employees	Address: 1344 Fifth Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Developer Name: 1334 Fifth Ave LLC	Phone Number: 412-965-2911
Primary Contact: Ashley Sokol	Email: <a href="mailto:asokol@orbitalengr.com">asokol@orbitalengr.com</a>
Website: <a href="http://orbitalengr.com">orbitalengr.com</a>	

Developers should be aware of the **Registered Community Organizations (RCO)** ordinance, which the city passed in September 2018, and that the **Hill CDC is an RCO for the Greater Hill District**. The ordinance requires the RCO to establish “orderly and democratic means for forming representative public input” on development proposals, as well as a “clear method for reporting to the city, actions which accurately reflect the community's position.” The Hill District's vehicle for this is the DRP, which you are in the process of completing now. The ordinance also requires that the RCO hold what is called a public Development Activities Meeting (“DAM” for short) with any applicants. **We have worked with City Planning to have DRP presentations at public community meetings count as a “DAM” meeting.** This should reduce delays and unnecessary meetings for you as a developer.

In order to meet the requirements of a Development Activities Meeting (DAM), per the RCO ordinance, **please include in your presentation any approvals you will be seeking from the City that:**

**(1)** require a Public Hearing at the Art Commission, Historic Review Commission, **Planning Commission** or the Zoning Board of Adjustment, **and**

**(2)** meet one of the following project thresholds:

- 2,400 sq. ft. of new or expanded structure
- 4+ new residential units
- **New or enlarged parking area with 10+ stalls**
- Use Variances
- Zoning Map Amendments



- Project Development Plans
- Planned Developments - PDP
- Planned Developments - FLDP
- Master Development Plans
- Institutional Master Plans
- An application to Historic Review Commission
- An application to Art Commission

## Self-Evaluation Form (continued)

The following evaluation criteria were established to use as a filter to assess both existing plans and future plans for the Greater Hill District. Evaluation criteria are a benchmark or standard against which the community can measure aspects of current plans and future proposals for development. The evaluation criteria can be weighted as necessary to assure a balanced evaluation based upon community priorities.

The community can use the evaluation criteria to assess the benefits and challenges associated with future projects according to how well the plan or project meets:

1. Community Goals
2. Project Market Viability
3. Urban Design Best Practices

### B. Development Principles (See Appendix A of the Master Plan for more details)

The following Development Principles serve as a foundation for the Master Plan and guide land use, project approval, and subsidy allocation decisions affecting the Greater Hill District:

Address/Right Historical Wrongs

- N/A**  The Mellon Arena and the Melody Tent sites sit on the Lower Hill District and will be referred to as the Lower Hill District.
- N/A**  Any development plan for the Lower Hill District should aim to restore the pre-Arena street grid as part of creating a new mixed-use neighborhood that is connected into adjacent Hill District neighborhoods.
- N/A**  Land use and development plans for the Lower Hill will preserve no physical remnant of Civic Arena/Mellon Arena and the resulting displacement of 8,000+ Hill residents and businesses.
- N/A**  New developments in the Lower Hill must include 'right of return' preferences for individuals, families, organizations, and businesses displaced by urban renewal to the greatest extent possible.
- N/A**  New development in the Lower Hill must include space for Hill District businesses and affordable housing to the greatest extent possible.

## Self-Evaluation Form (continued)

### Promote Economic Justice

- N/A  All housing developments within the Hill District must minimize the displacement of residents and businesses.
- All development plans must include first source hiring provisions within the project labor agreements for all stages of work at any development site.
- All development contracts must require a minimum MBE participation rate of 30% and WBE participation rate of 15%.
- N/A  All development projects receiving a subsidy from or through the City, County, or URA should provide co-ownership opportunities for Hill District Community-Based organizations and/or Hill District Faith-Based organizations.

### Reflect Neighborhood Driven Civic Design

- N/A  Ground level retail and street activating uses are encouraged as supported by market demand for all new development west of Crawford Street in the Lower Hill.
- All traffic and parking plans must minimize negative impacts such as noise and pollution on existing and future neighborhood residents, while also maximizing resident access to parking and the roadways leading to their homes.
- The design of all new development should recognize that the Hill District is primarily a residential neighborhood with neighborhood business districts that are at the edge of the Pittsburgh Central Business District.
- All development plans must be designed to benefit existing and future community residents and businesses, while allowing for future growth of retail, residential, and commercial spaces.

### Promote a Green and Healthy Environment

- All plans for the Hill District must include provisions for green and sustainable development. This includes ample green space, trees, parks and playgrounds, and LEED certified building standards.
- The design review process for all new proposed projects should seek to preserve the views from the Hill District in all directions. Development of the Lower Hill must not impair views of Downtown from Crawford Street to the greatest extent possible.

## Self-Evaluation Form (continued)

### Utilize Neighborhood Strengths and Assets

- N/A  Land use, public art, and development plans must honor the historical and cultural legacy of the Hill District as a predominately African American neighborhood.
- NA  Community groups and service organizations based in the Hill District should have a priority to acquire vacant land and buildings as needed to improve the quality of educational, social service, and recreational opportunities for Hill District residents.
- N/A  All future development plans for the Hill District shall incorporate existing community plans.

## C. Non-Displacement Strategies (See Appendix B of the Master Plan for more details)

To ensure that the Greater Hill District is developed in a way that benefits the existing residents, the Management Committee has adopted the following Non-Displacement Strategies to govern development activities in the Greater Hill District:

### Economic Opportunities

- All developers must meet with a Hill District-based employment center or program to review project based job descriptions and establish realistic, mutually agreed upon hiring goals. Developers must agree to interview pre-qualified Hill District residents before advertising to the public at large and to provide a hiring priority for Hill District residents.
- All developers must commit to a MBE participation rate of 30% and WBE participation rate of 15% on all contracts, including but not limited to pre-construction services, supply contracts, and construction. Particular consideration must be given to Hill District businesses in fulfilling these requirements.

### Homeowner Support

- N/A  In allocating housing and community development resources for the Hill District, the City and URA should prioritize the rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes through grants to low-income homeowners.

## Self-Evaluation Form (continued)

**N/A**  In allocating housing and community development resources for the Hill District, the City and URA should prioritize "equity protection" services to help existing homeowners resolve tax, title and mortgage issues.

**N/A**  Except in the case of a substantial and imminent threat to health or safety, eminent domain may not be used to acquire occupied property for redevelopment.

### Renter Support

**N/A**  Except in the case of a substantial and imminent threat to health or safety, all proposals for the redevelopment of an occupied rental property must minimize the involuntary displacement of residents to the greatest extent feasible.

**N/A**  All plans to redevelop publicly subsidized housing in the Hill District must include a comprehensive plan to support existing tenants in the transition to new, mixed-income housing. At a minimum, the plan should provide for multi-disciplinary services to respond to the multiple needs of families in transition.

### Preserving Affordability

**N/A**  Overall housing development plans must include a mix of owned and rental housing suited for all income levels. For rental housing developments of 10 or more units, at least 30% of all units must, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations associated with any housing assistance resources be utilized, and affordable to very low-income households (at or below 50% AMI). For for-sale housing developments of 10 or more units, at least 10% of all units must, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations associated with any housing assistance resources utilized, be affordable to low-income households (at or below 80% AMI). In allocating housing and community development resources, the City and URA should encourage a higher percentage of affordability and/or the use of deep subsidies to achieve deeper income targeting.

**N/A**  All plans to redevelop publicly subsidized housing in the Hill District must include, to the greatest extent feasible, a plan to preserve the existing project-based rental subsidy.

### Community Ownership/Equity

**N/A**  In disposing of vacant and publicly-owned property, the City and the URA should give priority to community groups and service organizations based in the Hill District with the capacity to develop such properties in a timely manner.

## Self-Evaluation Form (continued)

- N/A**  All development projects receiving a subsidy from or through the City, County, or URA should provide co-ownership opportunities for Hill District community-based organizations (CBOs) or Hill District faith-based organizations. The CBOs or faith-based organizations should have an interest in the ownership, profits, developer fee, and/or cash flow. If the CBO or faith-based organization provides development services beyond helping to secure community and government support for the project, the organization should receive a higher level of interest in the ownership, profits, developer fee, and/or cash flow. In addition, the CBO or faith-based organization that has an ownership interest should have the ability to approve or reject major project decisions and retain a right of first refusal to acquire the project if it is sold.

**\*ONLY IF APPLICABLE\***

### D. Strategies for Reclaiming the Lower Hill (See Appendix C of the Master Plan for more details)

In the 1950s and early 1960s, much of the Lower Hill District was demolished to make way for a planned cultural district for more affluent Pittsburghers. 1,300 on 95 acres of land were demolished. 413 businesses and over 8,000 residents were forced to relocate, receiving little to no compensation. The Hill District lost its commercial core, much of its population, and its connection to downtown. It was left isolated, disconnected from job opportunities, and starved for capital investment.

The Hill District now has a rare opportunity to correct this legacy. A 28-acre portion of the Lower Hill will soon become available for development. The Management Committee has adopted the following strategies to govern development activities in the Lower Hill, in order to ensure that the Lower Hill is developed in a way that reintegrates the area into the cultural fabric of the community, provides housing and job opportunities for Hill District residents, and serves as a catalyst for market-driven investment throughout the neighborhood:

#### Design Strategies

- N/A**  Development in the Lower Hill District should reflect the social, cultural and historical characteristics of the Greater Hill District.

## Self-Evaluation Form (continued)

- N/A**  The western entrance to the neighborhood should be marked at the intersection of Centre Avenue and Washington Place – with a prominent structure that honors the history and culture of the Hill District.

### Housing Strategies

- N/A**  All housing development plans for the Lower Hill must, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations associated with any housing assistance resources utilized.
- N/A**  Provide that at least 30% of all units must be affordable to very low-income households (at or below 50% AMI).
- N/A**  If public funding is used or if project-based subsidy is available, at least half of the affordable units must, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations of any housing assistance resources utilized, be affordable to extremely low-income households (at or below 30% AMI).
- N/A**  In allocating housing and community development resources, the City and URA should encourage a higher percentage of affordability and/or the use of deep subsidies to achieve deeper income targeting.
- N/A**  To the extent possible, and subject to funding availability and HUD approval, HACP should consider making project-based subsidy available for mixed-income housing development in the Hill District, particularly in the Lower Hill.
- N/A**  All housing development plans for the Lower Hill District must provide an admissions preference for displaced persons to the greatest extent possible, including persons who were displaced in the Lower Hill urban renewal effort and their descendants.

### Business Development Strategies

- N/A**  All commercial or retail development plans for the Lower Hill District must include market-tested strategies to achieve a goal of at least 20% of the commercial or retail floor area for businesses that are a majority owned by Hill District residents or are currently located in the Hill District, and for businesses that were displaced from the Lower Hill by urban renewal.
- N/A**  All commercial or retail development plans for the Lower Hill District must commit best efforts to achieve a balanced retail mix of local, regional, and national companies.