

MCKEES ROCKS

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

MCKEES ROCKS, PA





YOU'LL BE GLAD TO CALL IT HOME.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Frank Aggazio

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June 2023

Greetings,

As the Executive Director of the Allegheny County Housing Authority, I am pleased to be part of the team that put in an impressive eighteen months of hard work in continuing to work on this Choice Neighborhoods Planning process with the first draft submission of the Choice Transformation Plan that was created by the Hays Manor Public Housing Development residents and so many community stakeholders that we can all be proud of in submitting the plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This first draft of the Transformation Plan could not have been completed without this extensive team. This draft is the culmination of countless meetings with the Hays Manor residents and officials and residents of McKees Rocks Borough. I want to especially recognize the continued support and leadership of Borough of McKees Rocks Mayor David Flick, Allegheny County Economic Development Director, Lance Chimka, Focus on Renewal Executive Director, Cynthia Haines, McKees Rocks Community Development Corporation Executive Director, Taris Vreck and Borough of McKees Rocks Council President, Archie Brinza.

The number of business institutions, supportive service providers, elected leaders and partners are too many to thank individually but their on-going input and planning have been invaluable and a true sign of the dedication and commitment to the neighborhood. Without their hard work and thoughtful planning and comments, this task would not be possible.

I am excited to submit this first draft of the Transformation Plan and hope it is found to be outstanding which will lead to a submission of a successful Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Application.

Sincerely,

Frank Aggazio
Executive Director



Acknowledgements

This planning effort is funded by a FY 2021 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant awarded by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to the Allegheny County Housing Authority (Grantee) and Allegheny County Economic Development (Co-Grantee) on behalf of Hays Manor Apartments and the McKees Rocks community.

A special thanks to residents, community members, Borough and partners in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors who contributed their time, commitment and expertise to help shape this plan.

CHOICE COORDINATION TEAM

Allegheny County Housing Authority, Grantee
Allegheny County Housing Authority,
Lead – Housing Team
Allegheny County Economic Development,
Co-Grantee
Focus on Renewal, Lead – People Team
McKees Rocks CDC, Lead – Neighborhood Team
Thrive Design, Planning Coordinator
McKees Rocks Borough

HOUSING WORKING TEAM

Allegheny County Housing Authority, Lead Partner
Allegheny County Economic Development
Borough of McKees Rocks
Hays Manor Resident Leader
Pennrose Properties
McKees Rocks CDC
Focus on Renewal
Level Equity Buildings
Trinity Development
New Sun Rising
ACHA Police Department

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Allegheny County Housing Authority
Resident Services
Zealous Hope Project - Original Guardians
McKees Rocks CDC Community Ambassadors



"Everyone in the community getting together to make McKees Rocks a better place"

McKees Rocks Resident

PEOPLE WORKING TEAM

Focus on Renewal, Lead Partner
 Allegheny County Housing Authority, Co-lead
 Borough of McKees Rocks
 Hays Manor resident leader
 Sto-Rox School District
 Sto-Rox Family Center
 M-Powehouse of Greater Pittsburgh
 Second Baptist Church
 Gateway Health / Highmark
 Computer Reach
 Communities in Schools
 Zellous Hope Project
 McKees Rocks CDC
 First Tee Pittsburgh
 Family Resources / BJWL
 BlackTeaBrownSuga Network

NEIGHBORHOOD WORKING TEAM

McKees Rocks CDC, Lead Partner
 Resident Ambassadors
 New Sun Rising
 Focus on Renewal
 Allegheny County Housing Authority
 Zellous Hope Project
 Communities in Schools PA
 Sto-Rox School District
 Sto-Rox Youth Partnership
 Welcome to the Table
 McKees Rocks Police Department
 Youth Advisory Board
 Partner 4 Work
 Sto-Rox Women's Alliance
 Trinity Development
 Boys and Girls Club of Western PA
 Level Equity Buildings
 Action Housing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	04.
INTRODUCTION	08.
1. PLANNING PROCESS	10.
2. COMMUNITY CONTEXT	22.
3. NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN	42.
4. HOUSING PLAN	58.
5. PEOPLE PLAN	72.
6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	90.
APPENDIX	92.

INTRODUCTION



The McKees Rocks Choice Transformation Plan provides a roadmap for the redevelopment of Hays Manor in the context of a broader downtown revitalization initiative.

A study developed in 2016 by the Urban Land Institute for downtown McKees Rocks and the former site of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie (P&LE) railroad outlined goals and recommendations to revitalize that x acre area into a "dynamic and vibrant community that attracts new residents and boosts quality of life". The study addressed multiple themes, including opportunities for improved connections to the waterfront, mixed-income housing, economic development and resiliency. That effort was itself informed by a series of prior planning initiatives dating back to 2003, all of them consistently describing a vision for downtown McKees Rocks as a place "where people can work, live and play", offering "a quality of life that is satisfying to its citizens".

Five years after the completion of the ULI study, a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant awarded by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Allegheny County Housing Authority would provide the community a unique opportunity to take that long-term vision for a re-imagined downtown one step further, with the development of concrete strategies leading to that vision's implementation. Hays Manor Apartments, a public housing community located in the heart of downtown McKees Rocks, is the centerpiece of this effort, serving as the catalyst or a broader revitalization initiative.

Over the past 18 months, McKees Rocks residents, Borough officials, County agencies and community partners embraced the platform established by the Choice Neighborhoods program to come together and, through a collaborative planning process, help shape a vision for the future and address priorities for future investment. Hays Manor residents have been active participants in this process, committing their time and experience to help drive the agenda for the redevelopment of Hays Manor.

The McKees Rocks Choice Neighborhood Plan focuses on three core goals:

HOUSING | Revitalize Hays Manor, replacing obsolete housing units with modern homes in an attractive, safe community

PEOPLE | Improve outcomes for individuals and families who live at Hays Manor, creating opportunities for growth and self-sufficiency

NEIGHBORHOOD | Enhance quality of life in the neighborhood, focusing on improved access to services and amenities, safety and economic opportunity.

This Draft document identifies a path to advance the community's vision and Choice's core goals with a set of short and long-term strategies to be implemented over the next 5 to 10 years.

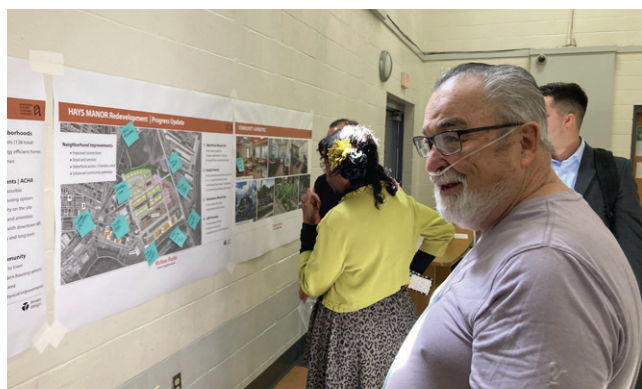
1. PLANNING PROCESS



The McKees Rocks Choice Transformation Plan is the result of a collaborative planning effort led by the Allegheny County Housing Authority with active involvement from Hays Manor residents and their neighbors in McKees Rocks.

Local and regional partners representing public, private and non-profit sectors joined in the effort, landing their expertise and resources to help frame ambitious but implementable strategies addressing community priorities.

To ensure a welcoming environment and ample opportunities for community participation in the different aspects of the plan, the planning process was structured around four key components:



The Choice Coordination Team was charged with establishing the framework for the planning process and day-to-day coordination activities.

The Outreach Team connected residents to the planning process through newsletters, surveys, meetings, door-to-door outreach and special events. Outreach efforts were coordinated by the ACHA, FOR and McKees Rocks CDC with the help from Hays Manor residents and their neighbors, who joined the process as the Original Guardians (Zellous Hopet) and Community Ambassadors (MRCDC).

Working Teams were charged with the specific planning activities associated with the Housing, People and Neighborhood components of the plan.

The Early Action Committee advances projects selected by the community for early implementation.

CHOICE COORDINATION TEAM

Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) | Grantee, Housing Lead and People Lead: The ACHA brings a long history and experience with public housing revitalization efforts to the CHOICE effort. As the Lead Partner responsible for the preparation of the Transformation Plan, the ACHA is in charge of communication, engagement and outreach to Hays Manor residents and coordination with County, Borough and community partners involved in the planning process. Members of the ACHA staff also participate in working teams.

Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED) | Co-Grantee: ACED is the County's lead economic development agency and provides a critical link for the Choice planning process to regional resources and programs.

McKees Rocks CDC | Neighborhood Lead: MRCDC works in McKees Rocks and Stowe Township supporting community revitalization efforts with a focus on equitable economic growth, affordable housing and commercial development.

Focus On Renewal (FOR) | People Lead: FOR is a community serving non-profit connecting residents of McKees Rocks to supportive services, resources and opportunities. FOR has a longstanding relationship with Hays Manor residents and provides significant programming within the community, at the Hays Manor Community Center. FOR co-leads the People Working team with ACHA.

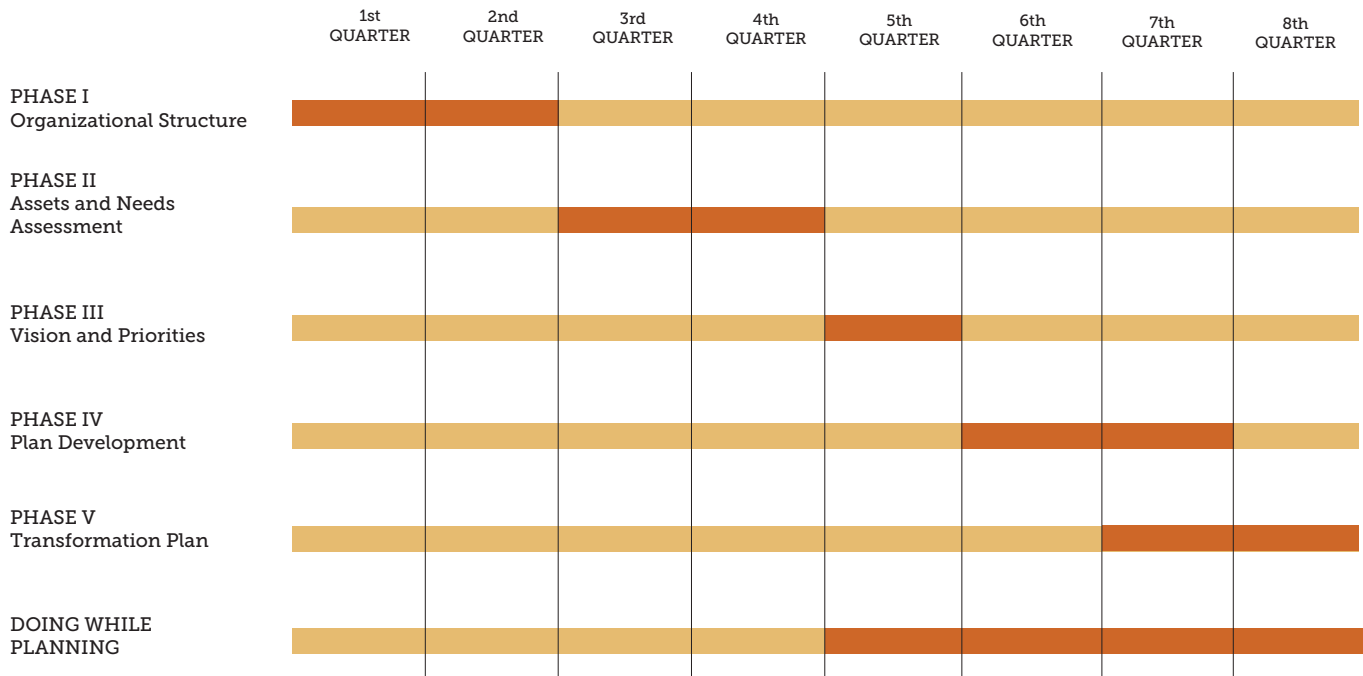
Pennrose Properties | Development Partner: Pennrose was selected in 2022 as the housing development partner advancing the redevelopment of Hays Manor. As a national multi-family housing developer with extensive Choice Neighborhoods experience, the Pennrose team supports the planning effort with the development tools moving the plan to implementation.

Thriven Design | Planning Coordinator: Thriven Design has served as planning coordinator for multiple Choice Neighborhoods efforts, assisting housing authorities and communities with planning, design and coordination between planning partners, HUD communication, design and documentation of the planning process.



THE CHOICE COORDINATION TEAM HELD MONTHLY MEETINGS TO SHARE UPDATES AND ADVANCE THE DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS.

PLANNING TIMELINE



PHASE I | Organizational Structure: Includes steps in preparation for the planning process, including planning schedule, leadership roles, community engagement strategy and procurement of additional consultants.

PHASE II | Assets and Needs Assessment: Included data analysis and efforts to elicit input from residents about community needs and priorities for the Transformation Plan.

PHASE III | Vision and Priorities: Community driven effort leading to vision and overarching goals for the Transformation Plan.

PHASE IV | Plan Development: Focused on goals, strategies and action steps informing Neighborhood, Housing and People strategies.

PHASE V | Transformation Plan: Formalizes the results and recommendation of the planning process into a final document, serving as a roadmap for future investments and transformation efforts.

Doing while Planning: Initiated on the second year of the planning process, this effort is driven by resident input about short-term projects they would like to see implemented during the planning process.

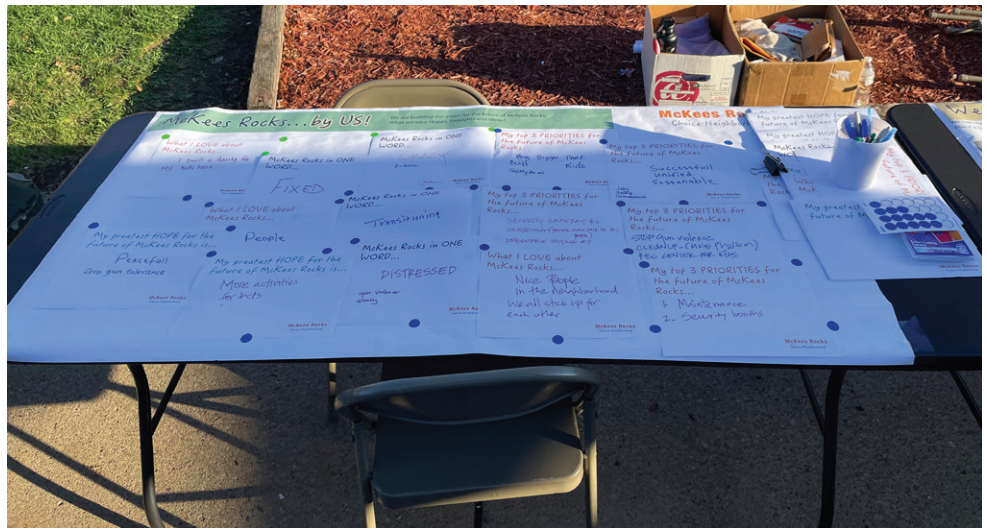
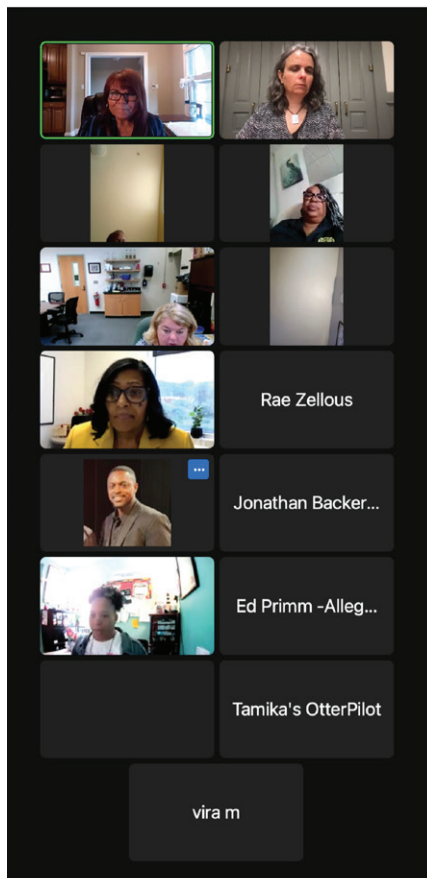
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The McKees Rocks Choice Neighborhood Plan is the result of an 18-month planning process informed by the input and participation of McKees Rocks residents and community stakeholders. Participants contributed their time, experience and expertise to share their concerns, learn from others and help build a collective vision for the future of Hays Manor in the context of a broader revitalization initiative aimed to re-energize the Borough's downtown area and positively affect quality-of-life for its residents.

Despite challenges imposed by COVID-19 in the first year of the planning effort, community members and planning partners still showed up, attending community events, in-person meetings, Zoom sessions and participating in surveys.

Lead Choice partners including ACHA, MRCDC and FOR leveraged their capacity and outreach teams to build relationships and meet people where they are, on streets, community events, front porches and community rooms. Transformational initiatives such as the Choice Program can be met with a range of reactions, from optimism and hope to doubts, skepticism and concerns. Working through these challenges and finding common ground was and continues to be a top priority for this planning process. An open and ongoing dialogue is the only way to achieve that goal.

As the planning process moves towards completion, further efforts will be required to keep the community engaged beyond planning into the next phase leading to implementation.



HAYS MANOR CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS GROUP

MCKEES ROCKS COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

WEDNESDAYS | 6 - 8 P.M.

ONLINE

IN-PERSON

701 YUNKER ST.
MCKEES ROCKS

APRIL 5 - PUBLIC SAFETY

APRIL 12 - HOUSING

APRIL 19 - SERVICES, BUSINESSES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

APRIL 26 - COMMUNITY SERVICES & EDUCATION

MAY 3 - COMMUNITY AMENITIES & OPEN SPACES



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HAYS MANOR RESIDENTS

Hays Manor residents have engaged in every phase of the planning process. From monthly resident meetings, to participation in surveys and a place in each of the working teams, residents have demonstrated their commitment to this effort and to the need to have their voices heard. A core team of residents was formed early on to ensure consistency in communication and to help disseminate information about the Choice process throughout the community. The group attended the virtual HUD site visit held in March of 2022 and has, ever since, provided a consistent voice, representing different sections of the community and different household groups.

Highlights of resident Involvement include:

- Needs Assessment
- Monthly resident meetings
- Working Teams
- Youth Planning Group

The planning process was structured to provide multiple venues for community involvement in planning and decision-making

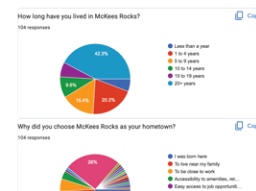
Needs Assessment Survey



Led by FOR with substantial support from ACHA and the Original Guardians, resident surveys were conducted in the Summer of 2022. With a 96% response rate, input received from resident surveys inform the Transformation Plan.

Neighborhood Survey

McKees Rocks – Choice Neighborhoods Survey 104 responses



Led by the MRCDC, neighborhood surveys addressed broader community themes and informed neighborhood priorities. Over 100 responses were received.

Hays Manor Meetings



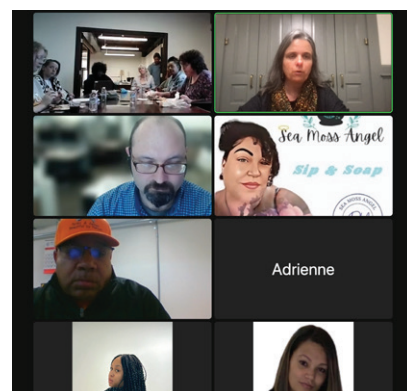
Hays Manor residents have been meeting on a monthly basis to hear updates about the planning process and participate in special sessions organized around themes of community interest. Attendance at meetings has grown from month to month with an average of 30 people per meeting.

Working Team Meetings



Neighborhood, Housing and People working teams included representation from the Choice coordination team, planning partners and residents. Meetings were held on a monthly basis to advance plans, discuss engagement and develop strategies. Working team meetings were held both remotely and in-person.

Thematic Conversations



Thematic conversations were held by the Neighborhood, Housing and People teams, allowing residents and planning partners to focus their attention on the specific goals and strategies advancing priority themes.

Special Events



Young Hays Manor residents had their voices and ideas heard at the youth planning session held in the Spring of 2022. Their vision for the future community set the tone for discussions around the types of homes and amenities to be included in the plan.

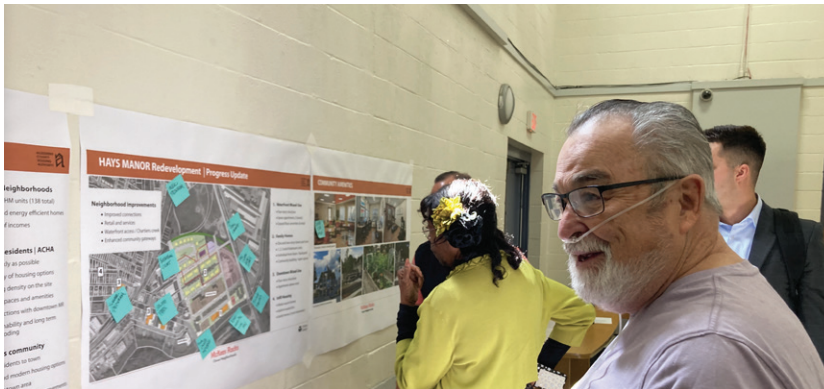


A town wide event was held in the Summer of 2022 on Chartiers Avenue to inform the broader community about the Choice Program and elicit preliminary input about community priorities.



A family celebration event was held at Hays Manor in August of 2022 to celebrate the completion of the needs assessment and share survey results with the community. Approximately 200 residents attended and interacted with the planning team providing valuable insight for Early Action Activities.

Hays Manor Housing Design Team



The Hays Manor Housing Design team comprises a small group of Hays Manor residents committed to the planning and design of the future community replacing the existing public housing. Residents have met with the planning team to provide input about preferred housing options, site layout and phasing strategy. The design team hears updates from the developer on financial feasibility and funding options. Future meetings will address unit and building design and site amenities.

Housing Tours



Planning partners organized housing and neighborhood tours in the Fall of 2022 to expose residents to projects similar in scope to the Choice effort. Residents visited the Larimer community in Pittsburgh and affordable housing projects developed by the ACHA in the region.

Outreach Initiatives

Beyond surveys, meetings and special events, information about the Choice planning process was disseminated to the community on a regular basis through flyers, newsletters, articles in the local newspaper and social media posts.



THE NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED TO MCKEES ROCKS RESIDENTS ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCHING OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY PROVIDED BACKGROUND ABOUT THE CHOICE PROGRAM AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY.

Meeting people where they are

Two strategic initiatives were put in place early into the planning process to maximize outreach opportunities among Hays Manor residents and the broader McKees Rocks community. Resident Ambassadors and the Original Guardians were organized respectively by the MRCDC and FOR / Zellous Hope to be on the ground, helping disseminate information, conduct surveys, and, through informal conversations, help inform the Choice team about resident feedback.



Resident Ambassadors helped create a communication channel with the broader community. As residents, they encouraged participation in the process, gathered questions and heard about people's concerns. They meet regularly as a team to share updates with each other and with MRCDC as the lead Neighborhood partner.

The Original Guardians was formed by an effort from FOR and the Zellous Hope to create job opportunities for at-risk, unskilled residents through community projects. Funding from the Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant supported the hiring and training of local residents, including Hays Manor residents, to support the needs assessment survey and other Choice initiatives.

ORIGINAL GUARDIANS HELP CONNECT RESIDENTS TO SERVICES AND RESOURCES

HAYS MANOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

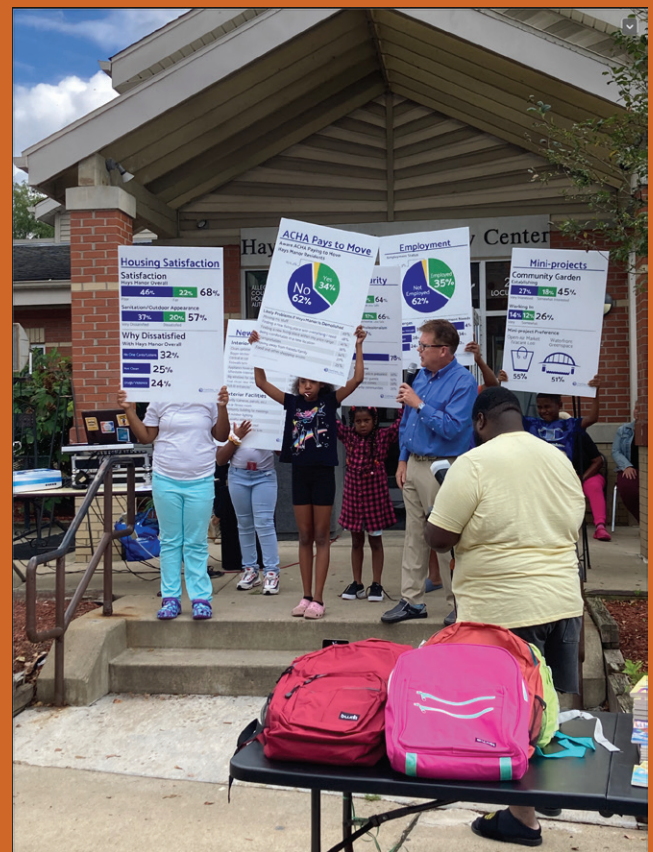
The Hays Manor Needs Assessment was held early into the planning process to help inform priorities for all three components of the Transformation Plan. Led by FOR with technical support from CorCom Research Consultants, the needs assessment included 56 questions covering a wide range of themes: Employment, Children and Youth, Food and Nutrition, Health and Wellness, Transportation, Safety and Security and Housing.

Implementation of the survey process was coordinated by FOR with support from ACHA's resident services and Zellous Hope Project who engaged local residents to participate in the process as survey takers and were paid a stipend to work with residents through a user-friendly questionnaire. A total of x Hays Manor residents were employed for x weeks to support the survey process.

The survey was completed by 96% of Hays Manor households (132 total). Upon completion of the survey, a community event was held to celebrate the process and show appreciation for residents, volunteers and the staff involved in the process. A quick summary of the findings was shared by the survey team at the event with a final report delivered to residents and planning partners as the basis for their work within respective working teams.



THE SURVEY PROCESS WAS COMPLETED IN THE SPRING OF 2022 WITH A 96% RESPONSE RATE



RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY WERE PRESENTED AT THE SUMMER COMMUNITY EVENT

Early Action Activities: A Community Pride and Placemaking Initiative

Early action activities present McKees Rocks with a unique opportunity for a community pride and beautification program that brings residents, agencies and local businesses together around small but impactful projects transforming the way residents and visitors perceive and experience the community. Small but engaging and visually impactful placemaking projects around the Chartiers Avenue gateway will re-energize the community and bring people together around positive change.

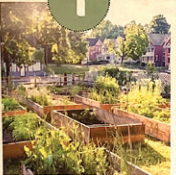





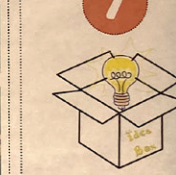
What we heard

The opportunity for Early action activities was discussed with the Hays Manor community early in the planning process. A first round of community input was received through the resident needs assessment conducted with households in the Spring 2022. At the time, residents were presented with x potential projects, indicating their preference for an open-air market and a greenspace along the waterfront as top options. Based on that input, the Choice coordination team explored potential paths for implementation but challenges associated with site control prevented the team from moving these projects forward. The team then returned to the broader community in the Summer 2022, eliciting input about 6 potential projects. Two of these project - Public Art and Pocket Parks - were selected for early implementation.

We are doing while planning! *Vote and Join Us!*

Let's start transforming McKees Rocks today! Which of these themes for quick community projects do you want to see implemented? Place a DOT on ideas you would like to see happening!

McKees Rocks
Choice Neighborhood

<p>1</p>  <p>Community Garden Community gardens are great ways to connect with nature, improve access to fresh food and build community. Would you like to see more community gardens in McKees Rocks?</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>Public Art McKees Rocks has a beautiful history to share and celebrate. A partnership between residents and local artists can help turn that history into one or multiple community landmarks! Murals, sculptures and other types of art projects can help beautify the town and tell the story of our community.</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>Pocket Parks Would small parks and in-downtown McKees Rocks combined with landscaping and programming make the area more attractive to you and your family?</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>Linden Street Gateway Improvements Linden Street is one of the main entry points to McKees Rocks and an important circulation node for drivers, transit riders and pedestrians. Beautification projects and safety initiatives can help create an attractive community gateway for residents and visitors alike.</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>Open Air Market Open air markets are a great way to attract vendors, improve access to fresh food and build connections with neighbors. Would you like to see an open air market in McKees Rocks?</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>Waterfront Green Space A waterfront green space along Chartiers Creek would be a great way to activate underutilized land and create a new open space amenity in the community.</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>Your Idea! Do you have a suggestion for a quick to effective project that will help improve our community? Get a pen and write it down!</p>
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HAYS MANOR RESIDENTS VOTED FOR THEIR FAVORITE PROJECT AT THE 2022 FAMILY SUMMER EVENT. PUBLIC ART AND POCKET PARKS WERE SELECTED AS THE TWO TOP PROJECTS.

PUBLIC ART | COMMUNITY MURAL

Murals provide an opportunity to transform underutilized building facades into bright and welcoming works of art. McKees Rocks already has a tradition of mural art projects throughout the town and a team of local mural artists is ready to work side-by-side with the community to implement a gateway mural on the side wall of the Father Ryan Center. The mural project will be managed by FOR with collaboration from the Women's Alliance. Implementation is anticipated for the Summer 2023.



THE SIDE WALL AT THE FATHER RYAN CENTER IS IN A PROMINENT LOCATION ON CHARTIERS AVENUE. THE BUILDING IS ONLY FIVE MINUTES AWAY FROM HAYS MANOR.



COMMUNITY PLANTERS

While the implementatin of a pocket park was not feasible within the timeframe of the planning process, Choice partners the planter program as a placemaking opportunity with positive impact throughout the town. The initiative includes the annual distribution of planters and flowers to businesses and residents in an effort to spread color and greenery throughout the Borough. Planters can be combined with the mural initiative as art pieces to be painted by artists and community members.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is a key partner in this initiative, bringing expertise with similar projects throughout the region. The Women's Alliance will act as the local partner.



Businesses and residents sign up to receive and maintain planters at their properties.



THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY MANAGES AND MAINTAINS PITTSBURGH'S DOWNTOWN PLANTERS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM PROVIDES MCKEES ROCKS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP A SIMILAR INITIATIVE ON CHARTIERS AVENUE AND BOROUGH GATEWAYS.

Downtown Pittsburgh Flower Planters

Initially provided as a gift to the City of Pittsburgh for its 192th birthday celebration in 2008, today more than 500 large planters accent main pedestrian corridors downtown Pittsburgh all year long.

The Colcom Foundation proposed this "bouquet of flowers" for the city 10 years ago and has continued its support for the downtown flower planters project and other beautification efforts in downtown Pittsburgh.



SPRING



SUMMER



AUTUMN



WINTER

2.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

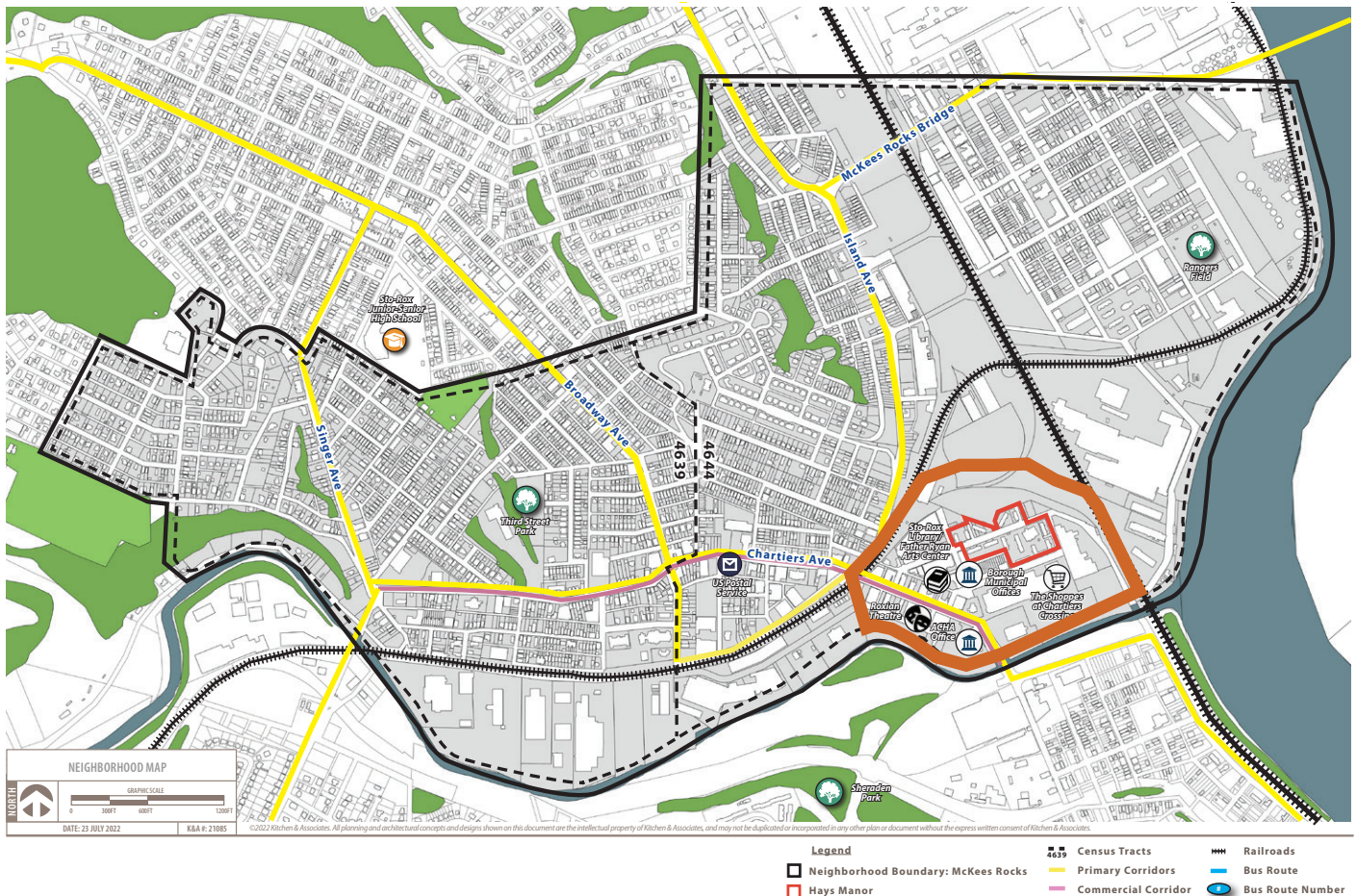
Community Boundaries

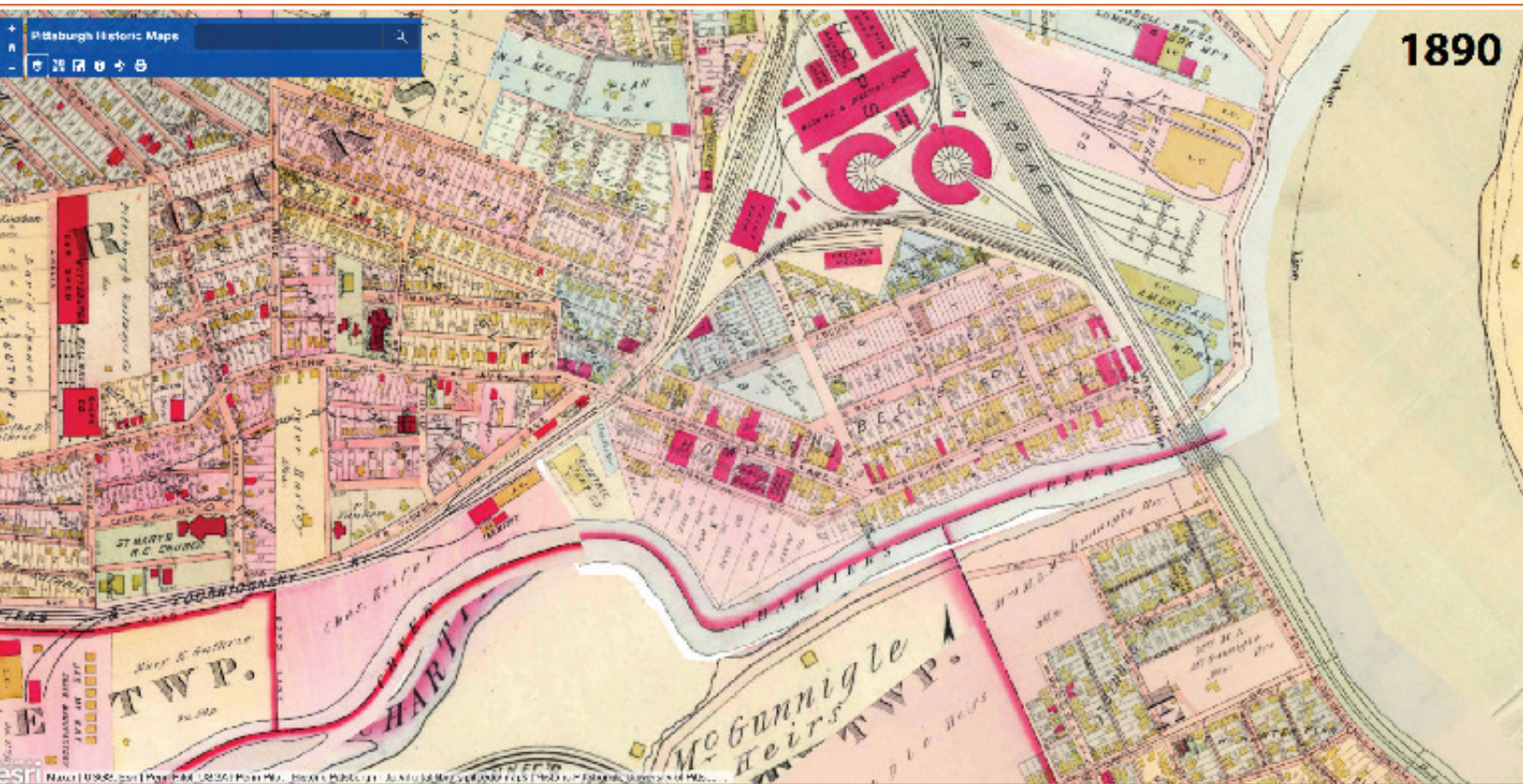
McKees Rocks occupies approximately 1.12 square miles of land in Allegheny County. The Borough of 5,920 residents is bounded by the Chartiers Creek to the south and the Ohio River to the east. An irregular boundary starting at the McKees Rocks Bridge separates McKees Rocks from neighboring Stowe Township. The community is bisected by the former PL&E Railroad. Residential areas occupy flats along the river known as “McKees Rocks Bottoms” and the steep hillsides overlooking the valley. McKees Rocks is located just 6 miles from downtown Pittsburgh and 25 minutes from the Pittsburgh International Airport.



Primary Choice Impact Area:

Although McKees Rocks is the designated Choice Neighborhood, the Transformation Plan is centered primarily on the Lower Chartiers Avenue area as the Primary Choice Impact Area (PCIA). The PCIA is bounded by Carson Street to the east, Chartiers Creek to the south, Island Ave to the west and the old CMX property to the north. The plan expands further into residential blocks targeting infill redevelopment opportunities. The expanded area is generally defined by Broadway avenue to the west, Island avenue to the east, Chartiers Avenue to the south and the municipal boundary to the north





1000BC - 1700s

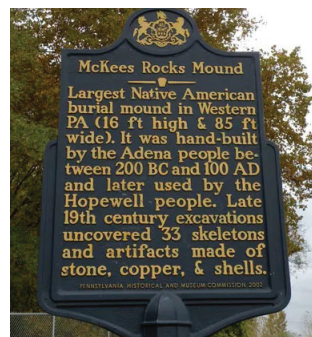
1700-1800s

Native Americans

McKees Rocks is one of the earliest locations of human settlement in eastern North America. People settled along the river, where they could live by farming, hunting and fishing. The community is the site of a pre-historic burial mound, the largest in Pennsylvania.

Colonial Era

European settlers are attracted to the area. In 1769, Colonel Alesander McKee was deeded 728 acres of land that forms part of today's McKees Rocks. The area develops with an agrarian economy for most of the 18th century, until the arrival of the railroad.



Brief History

McKees Rocks was home to one of the first recorded human settlements in eastern North America. Home to successive native American groups who cultivated the rich farmland in the Ohio River valley, the area saw increased European settlement during the colonial and early American eras. The industrial revolution brought significant population change to McKees Rocks in the early 20th century when the borough became home to the PL&E Railroad service facility. The facility and supporting industries provided employment opportunities that attracted a diverse immigrant workforce to McKees Rocks and the community thrived economically and socially. With waning importance of the railroad McKees Rocks economy declined in the second half of the 20th Century as population declined. Much of the historic downtown was demolished as part of an urban renewal effort that resulted in the construction of Hays Manor and McKees Rocks Plaza. The 21st

Century has brought a renewed interest in reviving the community, breathing new life into the Chartiers Ave business district and increased services to help residents succeed and thrive. A strong local non-profit sector has been active in improving the physical, cultural and economic fabric of the community. In 2020 the Allegheny County Housing Authority located its headquarters in the community. The CHOICE planning effort centers Hays Manor in the revitalization of McKees Rocks downtown area and creates an opportunity to improve both physical and social connections in the community, harnessing the growth and economic activity occurring in neighboring Pittsburgh.

1890 - 1940s

1950 -1990s

2000 - NOW

Railroad Era

The Pittsburgh Lehigh and Ohio Railroad propels a new economic era around freight and passenger transportation. New industries spring up around the railroad, providing employment and creating demand for housing and services. Immigrants moved into the area and Chartiers Avenue developed as a vibrant downtown with goods, services and entertainment.

Industrial Decline and Urban Renewal

By mid-twentieth century the railroad lost its importance in the region, impacting surrounding industries and local jobs. Residents left the Borough in search of job, leaving vacant homes and commerce behind. In the 1950s, the area was target of federal investments under the urban Renewal program, which replaced a significant portion of the historic downtown with a shopping plaza and public housing (Hays Manor).

Rebuilding Era

Renewed interest in repairing the physical, economic and social structure of the town triggered a series of community visioning and planning efforts. CDBG funding from the Sanders legal decision helped form local community organizations such as Focus on Renewal and the McKees Rocks CDC. The Father Ryan Center opened in 2008 and the Roxian Theatre reopened in 2017 as a regional music venue.



Community Assets

Community assets are features that are important to residents and contribute to their quality-of-life. Residents identified six key assets as factors driving their choice for McKees Rocks as a place to live and raise their families.



Home

Home is repeatedly the most prized asset for McKees Rocks residents. Homeowners and renters alike have a deep connection with their homes and the residential environment they live in.



Central Location

Easy access to the region is another highly valued asset identified by residents. Situated across the river from Pittsburgh, McKees Rocks provides residents with convenient access to jobs and services in the City and other parts of the region. Residents referred to easy transit connections, short rides and little traffic as advantages they experience on a daily basis.



Affordability

Affordability is a key factor informing residents' preference for McKees Rocks. Despite recent changes in the housing market indicating an increase in home values, the Borough is still seen as an attractive option when it comes to housing affordability.



Services & Amenities

Access to community services and amenities rank high as features valued by residents. For a small town of less than 6,000 residents, McKees Rocks concentrates a wealth of services and amenities, including supportive services, cultural amenities and community organizations.



Business District

The Chartiers Avenue business district is another asset valued by residents, providing banking, supermarket and a variety of neighborhood retail options within a short distance from people's homes.



Community

When residents speak of what they love about McKees Rocks, there is a unique emphasis on its people and a deep sense of belonging. Residents speak about having their roots in the area, family connections and the strong friendships built along the way with neighbors. Residents praise the opportunities to get involved and help each other as reasons that keep them in the community.

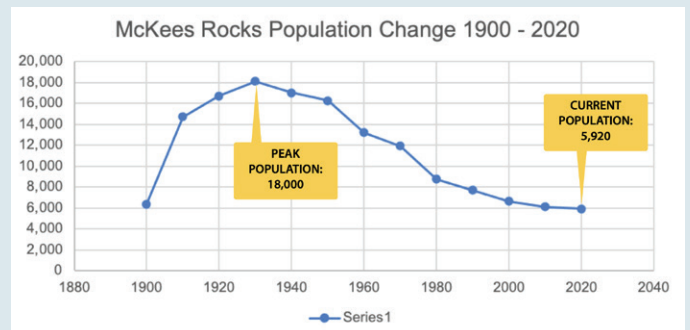
Neighborhood Indicators

Covering an area of approximately one square mile, the Borough of McKees Rocks comprises two census tracts. Hays Manor and the target Choice area are located in Tract 4644. The following are key indicators informing the planning process:

- McKees Rocks is home to 2,901 households and a total of 5,920 residents identifying primarily as white(48.6%) and black (41.5%). A small minority (2.2%) identifies as hispanic.
- The median age of local residents is 32.3, evidence of a population that is significantly younger than the national median age of 38.1 or Allegheny County's median age of 40.5. Approximately 21.9% of residents are under 18 and 12.8% are over 65 years old.
- At \$26,259, the median household income is less than 50% of the county's median income of \$62,843. Incomes in tract 4644 are under \$20,000.
- Approximately 31.3% of all residents live in poverty, compared to 11.4% in Allegheny County.
- 84% of all residents have a high-school degree and 14.9% earned a Bachelor's degree.
- Unemployment rate for residents 16 and over was at 5.8 % in the Borough, compared to the County's rate of 2.7%. Approximately 37.5% of residents are not in the labor force.
- There are 3,437 housing units in the community with 63.7% as single family homes, 28.5% in small multi-family buildings (between 2 and 19 units) and 7.4% in structures with 20 units or more. 50% of all units were built before 1939 and only 3% were built in the past 10 years.
- 15.6% of all units are vacant, almost twice as high as the County's vacancy rate of 8.34%.
- Roughly 40.7% of occupied homes are owner-occupied and 59.3% are renter occupied.
- 77.4% of the households have a computer and 69.2% have access to broadband internet.

	TRACT 4644	McKees Rocks	Allegheny County
LAND AREA		1.06 SQ Miles	
POPULATION (2020)	3,552	5,920	1,223,348
HOUSEHOLDS	1,581	2,901	541,541
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	2.03	2.02	2.19
POPULATION UNDER 18	25.7%	21.9%	18.6%
POPULATION OVER 65	13.4%	12.8%	19.3%
MEDIAN INCOME	19,929	\$26,259	62,843
PERSONS IN POVERTY	42.4%	31.3%	11.4%
RACE - WHITE	45.8%	55.5%	76.3%
RACE - BLACK	40.6%	33.1%	13.4%
RACE - ASIAN	5.3%	2.8%	5.9%
HISPANIC	7.7%	4.7%	18.5%
HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE	31.9%	40.7%	64.3%
MEDIAN HOME VALUE	\$41,300	\$51,800	\$154,700
HOUSING UNITS	1,896	3,437	600,399
HOUSING VACANCY	17.1%	15.59%	8.34%
HIGH SCHOOL GRAD	84%	84%	88%
BACH DEGREE	13.9%	14.9%	32.1%
HH WITH COMPUTER	71.2%	77.4%	90.3%
HH WITH INTERNET	62.4%	69.2%	82.7%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS DATA 2020; AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2015-2019



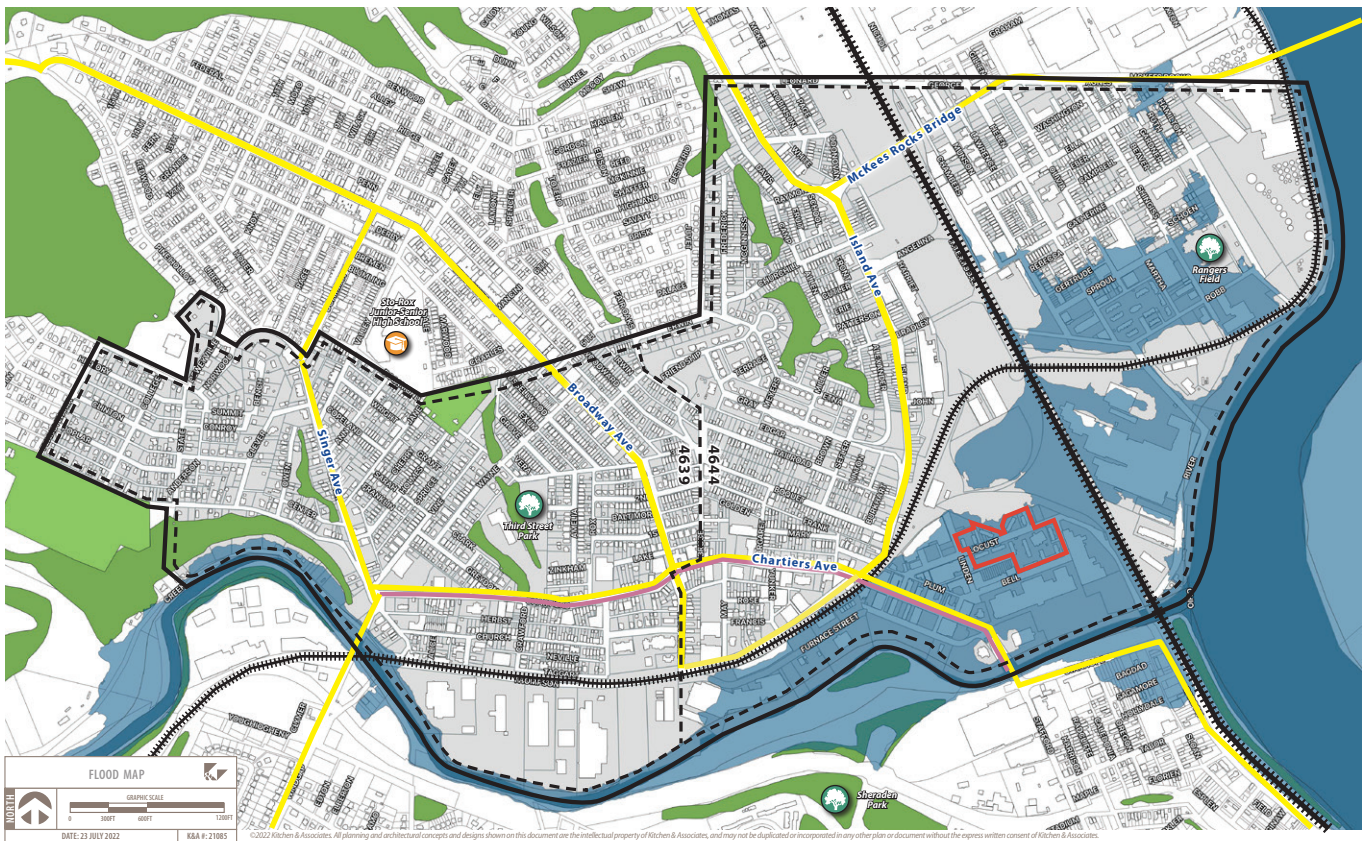
MCKEES ROCKS POPULATION HAS EXPERIENCED A STEADY TREND OF DECLINE SINCE 1930, WHEN THE BOROUGH REACHED A PEAK POPULATION OF 18,000 PEOPLE. REVERSING THAT TREND AND ATTRACTING NEW RESIDENTS IS A CORE GOAL FOR THE COMMUNITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

Physical Landscape

McKees Rocks lies on the confluence of the Ohio River and Chartiers Creek. While most of the residential neighborhoods are located on high land, the business district and industrial areas sit in low lying areas by the water. Much of the district is classified by FEMA as a 100-year flood zone. Chartiers Avenue, Island Avenue and Broadway Avenue are main arterial corridors connecting the Borough to Pittsburgh and other parts of the region. The borough is bisected on both north-south and east-west directions by active freight railroad corridors.



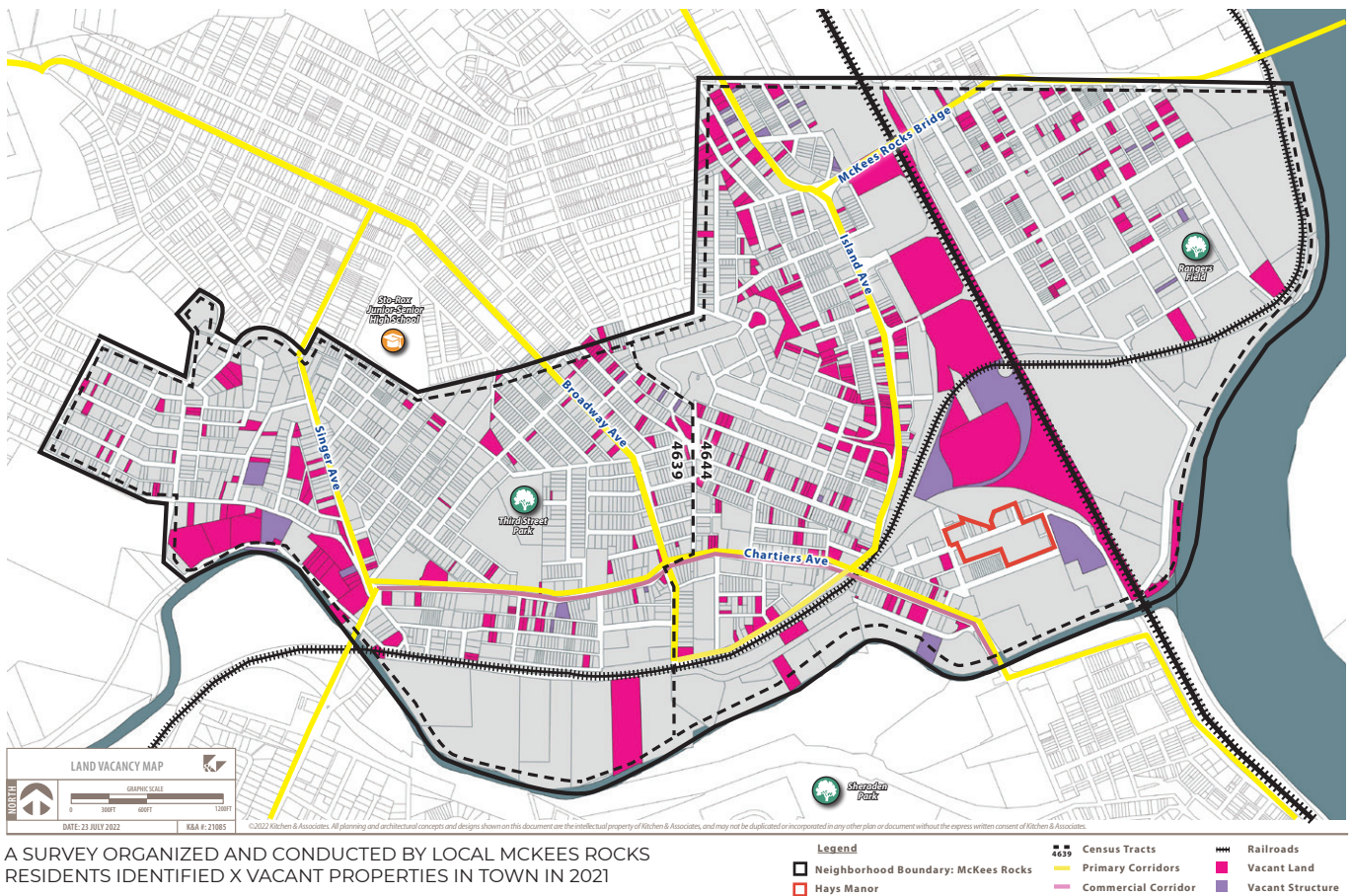
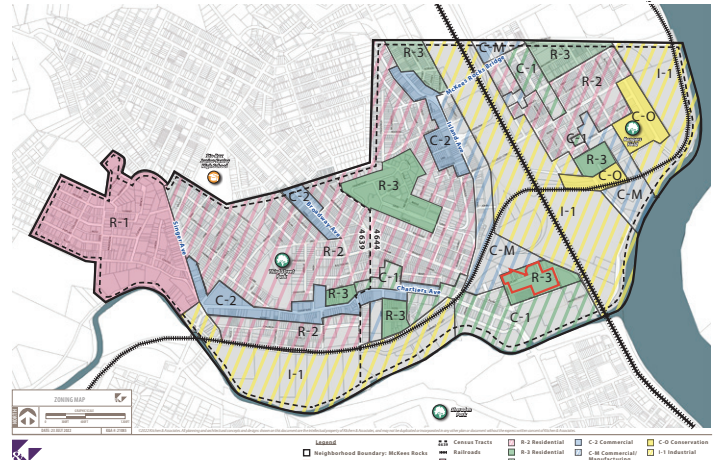
STEEP SLOPES MARK MUCH OF THE RESIDENTIAL FABRIC IN MCKEES ROCKS



HAYS MANOR AND SURROUNDING DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES ARE LOCATED WITHIN THE 100-YEAR FLOOD ZONE

Land Use

Nearly one third of the Borough's land area is classified for industrial uses. Commercial uses occur along arterial corridors including Island, Chartiers and Broadway Avenue. Residential uses occur primarily to the north of the railroad on high grounds, with low density single family homes concentrated on the western edge of town. Mixed-use buildings on Chartiers Avenue offer housing opportunities along the corridor. Vacancy impacts all areas of town with a significant concentration of vacant homes, vacant storefronts and vacant industrial properties.

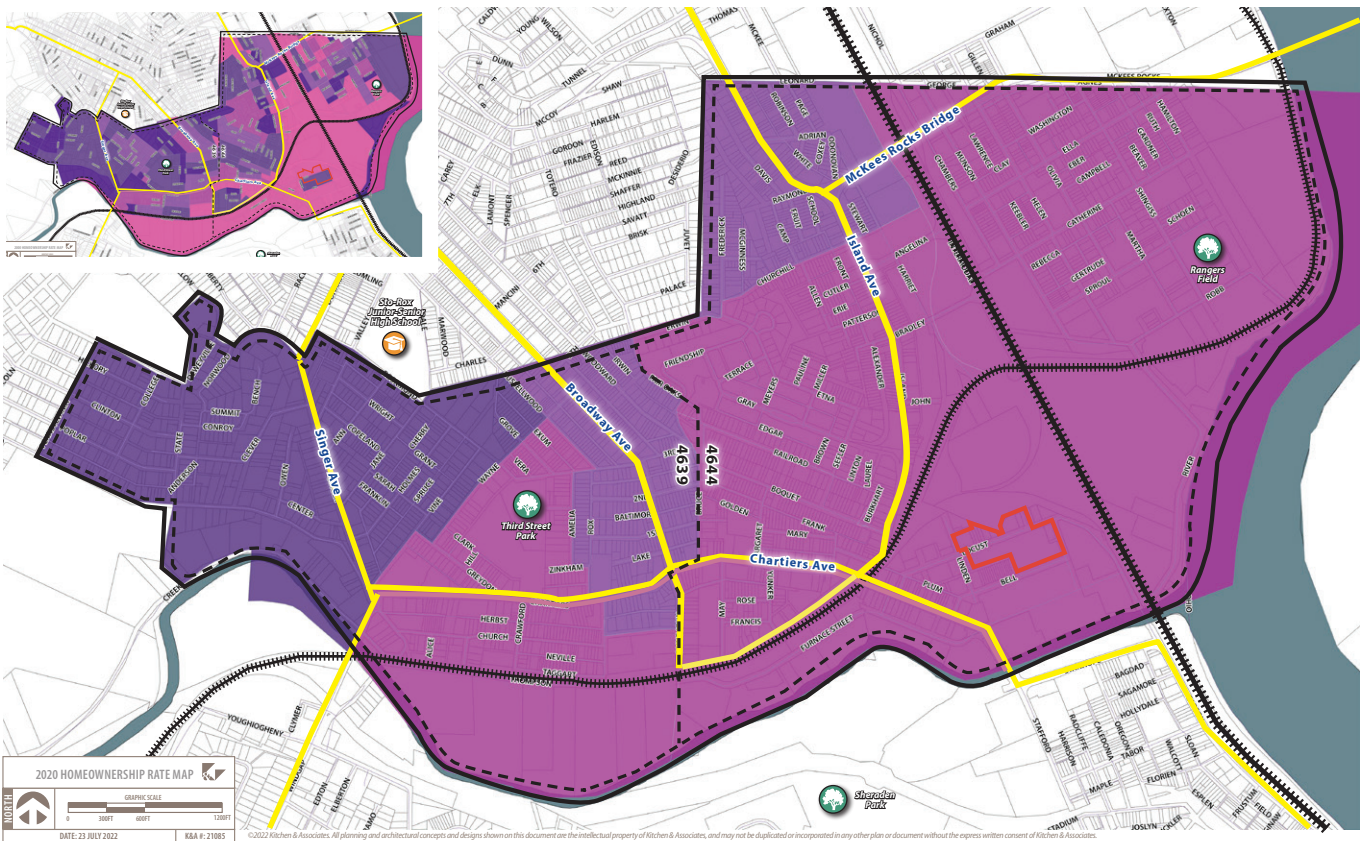
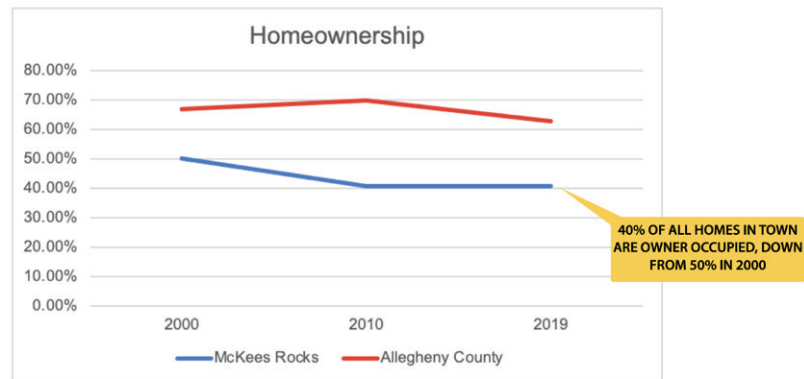


A SURVEY ORGANIZED AND CONDUCTED BY LOCAL MCKEES ROCKS RESIDENTS IDENTIFIED X VACANT PROPERTIES IN TOWN IN 2021

Housing

Out of the 3,437 housing units located in McKees Rocks, x were identified as vacant by the 2021 survey conducted by the local housing vacancy task force. Housing vacancy compromise neighborhood stability and is a key community priority for this Choice Neighborhood Plan. Most housing units in town are single family homes but approximately x% are located within properties owned and operated by the Allegheny County Housing Authority. Homeownership has declined over the past 20 years and remains significantly lower than the rate in other parts of Allegheny County. Only 42% of all owner occupied units have a mortgage, indicating a concentration of older, long-term residents. High costs associated with the upkeep

of older homes, along with the individual needs of aging residents indicate the need to introduce new housing options to the local stock, allowing residents to age in place.



THE WESTERN EDGE OF MCKEES ROCKS SHOWS A HIGHER CONCENTRATION OF OWNER OCCUPIED HOMES. THIS IS AN AREA ZONED FOR SINGLE FAMILY, DETACHED HOMES.

Legend

- Neighborhood Boundary: McKees Rocks
- Hays Manor
- Census Tracts
- Primary Corridors
- Commercial Corridor
- Railroads
- 60%-80%
- 40%-60%
- 20%-40%

Services and Amenities

McKees Rocks residents have access to a range of service providers, including day care and after school programs, food pantry, senior services, and other resources. The Shoppes at Chartiers Crossing serves the area with a grocery store, liquor and beer stores, neighborhood shops and bank. A Rite Aid pharmacy was located in the area until six months ago but it is now closed. Chartiers Avenue includes a mix of local neighborhood shops, and a number of arts and cultural attractions including the Roxian Theater, Black Forge Coffee, Father Ryan Arts Center and Hollwood Music. These venues attract a broader audience from the Pittsburgh region who visit McKees Rocks for shows, arts exhibitions, art

classes and specialty shopping. The Sto-Rox Family Health Center provides primary care services, women's health, behavioral health and other services from their location on Thompson Avenue in downtown area. The nearest hospital is located in Kennedy Township and Pittsburgh hospitals are within a 15-minute drive from Hays Manor. For recreation, residents have access to the 3rd Street Park and Rangers Field. Waterfront access, although desired, is limited by physical boundaries and the lack of infrastructure. Improved access to outdoor amenities is one of the community priorities for this plan.



MOST SERVICES AND AMENITIES IN MCKEES ROCKS CAN BE FOUND IN A CORE AREA ALONG CHARTIERS AVENUE



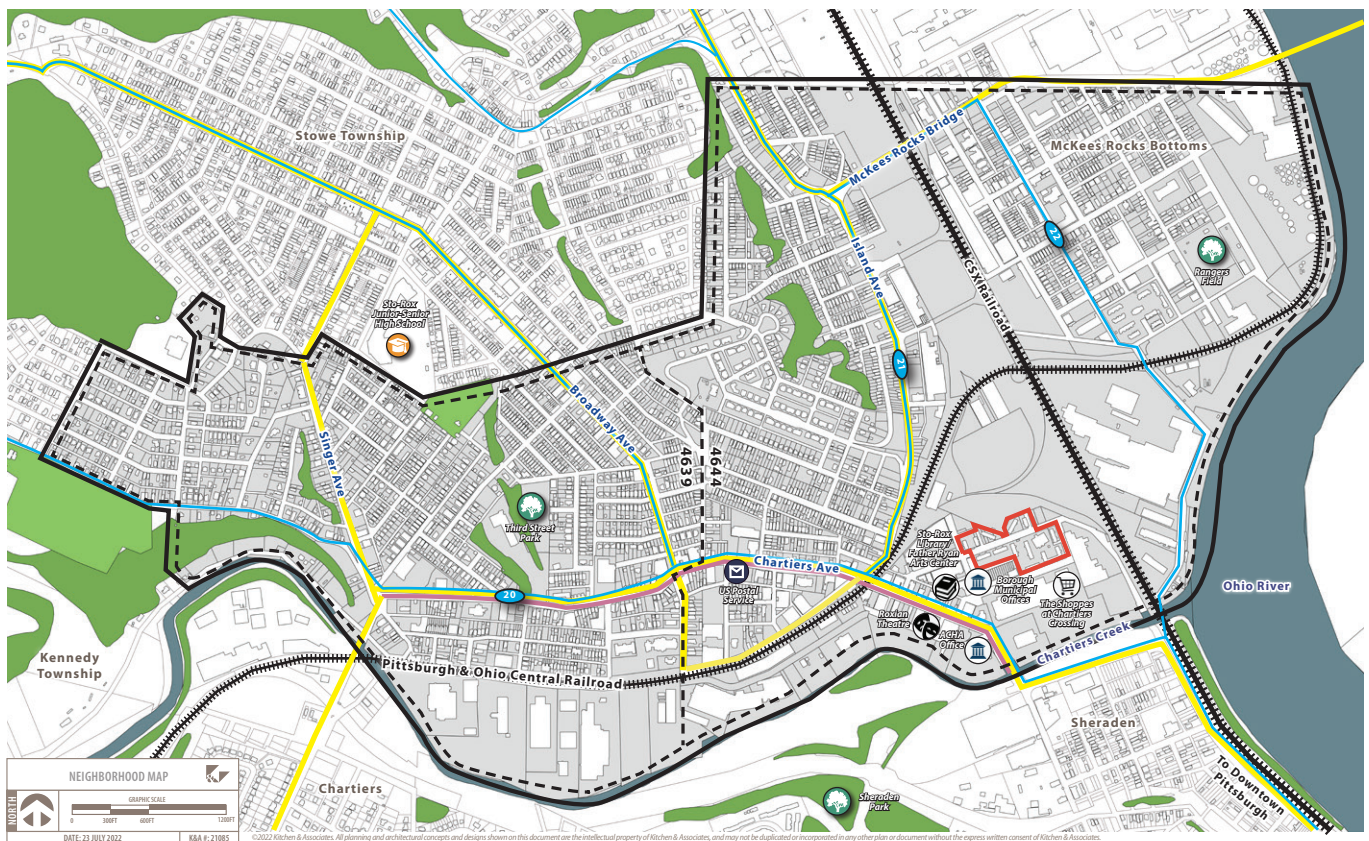
Mobility

According to 2020 U.S. Census Data, 58.3% of Borough residents commute to work by car and 17.7% rely on public transportation for daily trips. McKees Rocks is served by the Port Authority of Allegheny County with multiple bus lines serving the area and a transit hub located within walking distance from Hays Manor. Most residents use public transit for work related trips and access to services. However, short distance trips within Sto-Rox Township were seen as challenging due to topography and limited options via public transit. That is certainly the case for families with children in the school district, located outside of the boundaries of McKees Rocks.

Although upper elementary children are bused to school, K-3 students depend on adults to get them to school. Several of these families struggle with that responsibility due to limited public transit options. Public safety is also a mobility concern, with residents expressing concern about walking in town, especially during evening hours.



TRANSIT HUB ON LINDEN STREET PROVIDES RESIDENTS WITH ACCESS TO THE REGION. THE COUNTY ALSO PROVIDES THE 'ACCESS' TO OLDER RESIDENTS WITH SCHEDULED TRIPS IN THE REGION.



BUS LINES 20, 21 AND 22 SERVE MCKEES ROCKS WITH A TRANSIT HUB LOCATED ON LINDEN STREET BY CHARTIERS PLAZA

Schools

Early childhood education: Private and not-for-profit daycares and Pre-K programs fulfill the local need for early learning opportunities. Focus on Renewal is one of the main providers with two locations in town, one of them at the Hays Manor Community Center. Family Foundations Head Start also provides programs for infants and toddlers ages 0-3.

K-12 education: McKees Rocks families are served by the Sto-Rox School District. The district's primary campus is located in Kennedy Township, three miles away from Hays Manor and downtown McKees Rocks. Sto-Rox High School serves 9-12th grade students from a separate campus, one mile to the northwest of Hays Manor. Beyond kids attending the local public schools, another 600

students in the district attend local charter schools. The Sto-Rox School district ranks #649 out of the 677 school districts in Pennsylvania. Although graduation rates are above average (94% in x), math and reading proficiency are substantially lower than state standards. Technical schools also serve the area but attendance among Hays Manor residents has traditionally been low.

Enrichment programs: Local students have access to a range of after-school and summer programs provided by local and regional organizations. FOR, Family Resources, the Boys and Girls Club, Steel City Impact, M-Powerhouse and Computer Reach are key providers, offering options for K-18 children.



FOR SERVES THE COMMUNITY WITH VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS FROM THEIR SPACES AT THE FATHER RYAN ARTS CENTER (PICTURES ABOVE). PICTURE BELOW SHOWS THE STO-ROX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

Public Safety

Public safety is a top concern for McKees Rocks residents. Data provided by the McKees Rocks Police Department in 2021 shows the rate of Part 1 crimes per 1,000 Borough residents four times higher than the County average (2017-2019 data). Community policing is provided by the McKees Rocks Police Department with additional support from the Allegheny County Housing Authority Police, who is responsible for security at public housing properties.

Local administration and community-based organizations have been working tirelessly to address the many facets of community safety, from a perspective of public health, economic opportunity, youth development, education, built environment and institutional infrastructure. In the past six

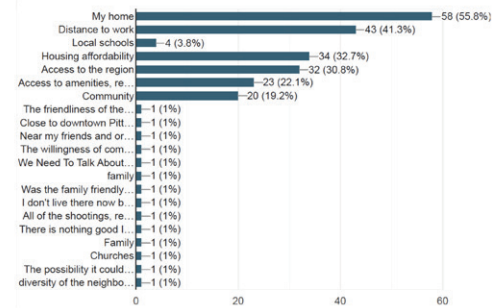
months, McKees Rocks was awarded multiple crime prevention grants (county, state and federal grants) in support of strategies and interventions intended to decrease violence in the community. Choice lead partners such as FOR and McKees Rocks CDC have a lead role in these safety initiatives and ensure coordination with Choice Neighborhood activities.

At the local level, McKees Rocks is participating in a county pilot program aimed to include social workers and mental health professionals in response to police calls. The goal for this program is to assess the effectiveness of alternative intervention in efforts to de-escalate crisis situations and reduce unnecessary arrests.

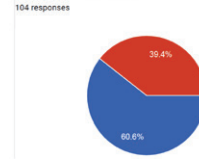
What we Heard: Community Survey

The community survey targeting McKees Rocks residents was conducted by the McKees Rocks CDC between November 2022 and January 2023. The survey was conducted online and through in-person interviews. CDC Ambassadors went door-to-door announcing the survey and making themselves available to assist residents who need assistance getting it completed. A total of 104 surveys were completed. Key highlights include the following:

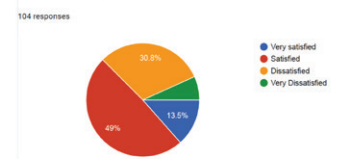
What are the things you like the BEST about living in McKees Rocks?



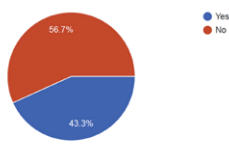
Are you currently employed?



How satisfied are you with your household income?



If you had the choice today, would you choose McKees Rocks to live in?



4. Why do you feel this way?

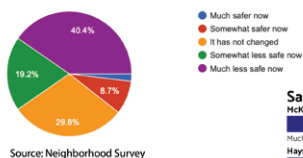
Yes, I would choose McKees Rocks

- Community pride
- Affordable housing
- Proximity to Pittsburgh
- Proximity to family
- Small town feel, quite, peaceful, good neighbors who...
- Good services available for parents and kids

No, I would leave McKees Rocks

- Quality of schools
- Lack of services, retail options and amenities
- Lack of options for children and senior residents
- Crime, violence and drugs

How has safety in McKees Rocks changed over the years?



Source: Neighborhood Survey

Safety

McKees Rocks (Past 2 years)

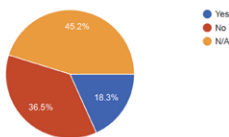
44% Much Less Safe 20% Somewhat Less Safe 64%

Hays Manor (Past 2 years)

49% Much Less Safe 17% Somewhat Less Safe 66%

Source: Hays Manor Needs Assessment Survey

Do you feel safe letting your children play outside?



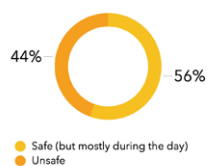
Source: Neighborhood Survey

Children Playing Outside

Do Not Feel Safe

Source: Hays Manor Needs Assessment Survey 78%

How safe do you feel walking in McKees Rocks?



"During the daytime, no problem."

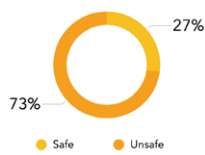
"After dark, not so much, but otherwise, I walk all over the place"

"In the daytime, very safe"

"During the day, I am safe, but I am always alert"

"Early AM, very safe. Less as evening approaches"

How safe do you feel walking in McKees Rocks AT NIGHT?



"Not safe at all. You don't know if you're gonna get hit by a bullet..."

"I don't feel safe at all to walk my dog"

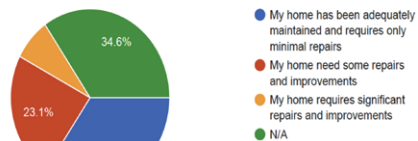
"Would not walk, unless dire emergency"

"Not nearly as safe today as I felt 20 years ago"

"I would never walk in the Rocks at night"

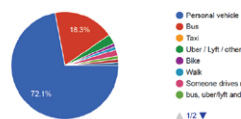
If you own, how would you rate the physical condition of your property?

104 responses



What is your primary mode of transportation?

104 responses



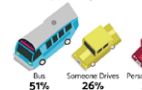
Do you or a member of your household own a car?

104 responses



9. Transportation: Most ride the bus (51%) and are satisfied with their mode of transportation (58%). Many walk in McKees Rocks daily (62%).

Primary Transportation



Walking Around McKees Rocks



What we Heard:

Household Needs Assessment

The Household Needs Assessment targeted Hays Manor residents and was conducted in the Spring and Summer of 2022. The survey was conducted through in-person interviews led by FOR with support from the Zellous Hope Project and a team of residents who were trained by a professional survey consultant to conduct the surveys. A total of 132 surveys were completed representing a 96% response rate. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix section of this plan. Highlights include the following:

Health and Wellness:

- 27% of residents report fair to poor health. 33% report very good or excellent. 37% report good.
- 26% of residents visit emergency room when they feel sick.
- 16% of households have members with a long-term illness.
- 45% are concerned about their mental health.
- 47% of residents have occasionally experienced food insecurity.
- 45% of residents are interested in community gardening.
- 62% are interested in group exercise classes.
- 17% of households have a member with a physical disability.
- 15% of households have a member have a mental disability.
- 86% of residents rely on food stamps for grocery shopping
- 38% of residents believe they do not have a healthy diet.

Economic Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency:

- 62% of households are not employed. 35% are currently employed.
- Low pay, transportation and lack of affordable childcare options are key factors preventing residents from pursuing job opportunities
- Residents expressed interest in computer skills, budgeting and finance, small business training
- For the 35% of households currently employed
- Average income: x (check ACHA data)
- Residents are afraid of losing their Medicaid. They are afraid of losing their safety net. That fear paralyzes people.

Youth Education and Recreation Opportunities:

- X children under 18 currently live at Hays Manor
- 66% of all households have children under 18.
- 58% of children attend Sto-Rox public schools
- 51% of kids rely on school buses for access to school. Transportation is a challenge for families. Access to Head Start and other early learning opportunities is hindered by limited transportation options.
- Only 26% of families with kids participate in summer programs.
- Current BJWL program is underutilized.
- 59% of families are somewhat happy or very happy with their children's education. What about the other 40%?
- Only 13% of families with kids participate in sports and recreational activities
- Only 12% of families attend after school enrichment programs. Again, families are limited by lack of transportation options.
- Break the cycle of generational poverty by investing in children, their education, well being and opportunities.

ALIGNMENT WITH PLANNING INITIATIVES

Over the last twenty years, significant efforts were made to restore McKees Rocks economic vitality and guide new investments. Critical improvements such as the extension of Carson Street, the revitalization of the Roxian Theatre, Chartiers Avenue facade improvement initiatives and other projects are outcomes of these planning initiatives. Alignment with these efforts is a priority for the plan to ensure consistency.

2003 New Founding of McKees Rocks

Initiated by the McKees Rocks Planning Commission and supported by the Borough and the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development, the 2003 plan proposed a redeveloped downtown with new mixed income housing and a new Civic Center on Chartiers Avenue. Hays Manor is envisioned as a grid of residential blocks with a connector boulevard linking the area to a redeveloped residential waterfront.

2010 The Char-West Multi Municipal Comprehensive Plan

The Char West plan provides a comprehensive set of recommendations aiming to improving local and regional connections between McKees Rocks, Neville and Stowe Township. These areas are identified as growth areas for targeted investment opportunities.

2015 Carnegie Mellon University Urban Design Studio Plan

Urban design students at Carnegie Mellon University focused their plan on the complete redevelopment of the downtown area, replacing the existing fabric with proposals for a new mixed use neighborhood addressing climate change, infrastructure, transportation and housing.

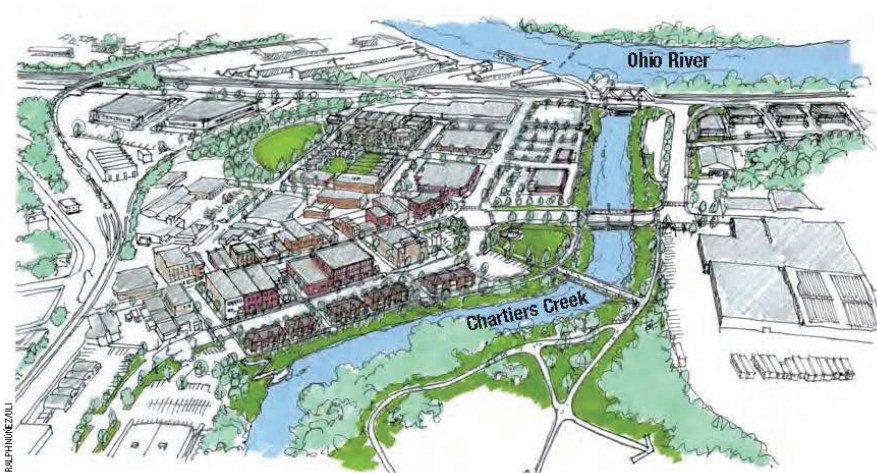


2019 McKees Rocks Housing Strategy and Work Plan

Led by the McKees Rocks CDC, the Housing Strategy identifies opportunities for housing revitalization with strategies to preserve homeownership, return vacant properties to a productive use and introduce mixed-use projects within the Lower Chartiers Business District. The report also addresses the need for organizational capacity in support of local initiatives.

2020 Sheraden Park Master Plan

The City of Pittsburgh Planning Department worked with the Sheraden Park Steering Committee and consultants to develop a plan for the renovations and expansion of Sheraden Park. The park is located across the creek from downtown McKees Rocks and is envisioned as a regional amenity connected to the region and with waterfront access to Chartiers Creek. A pedestrian bridge connecting McKees Rocks to the park was also envisioned in the plan.



2014 Chartiers Avenue Streetscape Plan

This strategic plan was led by the McKees Rocks CDC and envisions a welcoming, friendly and safe Chartiers Avenue addressing traffic conditions, building design and integrity, commercial development and stormwater management improvements. The plan outlines recommendations for land use, streetscape and design standards along the commercial corridor. Funding commitments to advance the implementation of the streetscape plan have been secured and the project is now moving forward with design development. Construction efforts are anticipated for 2025.

2016 Rebuilding the working communities of McKees Rocks and Esplen

The Urban Land Institute conducted a five-day panel generating recommendations for investment, land use and social equity for the target area including Hays Manor, the Chartiers Avenue business district and former railroad tracts. The plan recommends modifying the shopping center layout to improve connections to Hays Manor and envisions mixed-use development with a heavy emphasis on downtown living opportunities.

THE TRANSFORMATION PLAN

The McKees Rocks Transformation Plan addresses
Neighborhood, Housing and People priorities.

NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS

1. Re-imagine downtown McKees Rocks as a safe and attractive hub for residents and visitors
2. Upgrade existing housing stock

HOUSING GOALS

1. Redevelop Hays Manor as a safe and attractive mixed-income community integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood
2. Strengthen residential blocks with infill housing opportunities

PEOPLE GOALS

1. Increase access to physical and mental healthcare
2. Expand access to fitness, sports and outdoor recreation
3. Improve food security and expand access to fresh food
4. Job readiness and self-sufficiency
5. Children enter kindergarten ready to learn
6. Elementary and middle school age children are proficient in reading and math
7. Young adults graduate high school and are career ready
8. Expand ACHA's capacity for in-house case management

3. NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS

Two overarching goals guide the NEIGHBORHOOD plan:

1. Re-imagine downtown McKees Rocks as a safe and attractive hub for residents and visitors
2. Upgrade existing housing stock

The neighborhood part of the McKees Rocks Transformation Plan builds on the community's long-term vision for a vibrant downtown, offering residents and visitors a mix of shopping, services, cultural and housing opportunities structured around a safe and attractive network of pedestrian-friendly streets, community spaces and a reclaimed waterfront.

This Neighborhood Plan seeks to reverse a historic pattern of disinvestment by leveraging recent and future investments to establish the area's identity as a regional hub for entertainment and community events, replacing underutilized land and vacant storefronts with new development, thriving businesses, employment opportunities and community services.

Stabilization of residential blocks is another neighborhood priority, with a focus on homeownership preservation and improved rental housing options.





GOAL 1

Re-imagine downtown McKees Rocks as a safe and attractive hub for residents and visitors

A. Leverage the Choice Neighborhood initiative to promote a mix of uses.

The Choice Neighborhood initiative provides a unique opportunity to advance the community's vision for a mixed-use downtown district where shops, homes, services, offices and light industrial uses contribute to create a safe and lively environment. Strategies for new uses include:

1. **Housing:** Leverage Hays Manor redevelopment as an opportunity to promote downtown living with a mix of housing options for current and future residents.
2. **Commercial spaces and services:** Leverage new housing development as mixed-use projects with ground floor commercial spaces and services.
3. **Civic spaces:** Convert vacant and underutilized land for civic spaces dedicated to Borough administrative offices and community gathering opportunities.

4. **Recreation:** Convert vacant and underutilized land into downtown recreation amenities with a mix of indoor and outdoor spaces promoting active and passive recreation opportunities. That includes parks, pocket parks and recreation buildings.

5. **Maker spaces:** Target vacant storefronts with opportunities that promote employment and entrepreneurship such as incubators, maker spaces and artist studios.

6. **Zoning:** Revisit the current zoning ordinance to reflect the vision for a mixed-use district, providing appropriate land use and bulk standards, along with flexible parking requirements.

B. Establish a regional hub for recreation and economic opportunity

A key component of the neighborhood vision is the establishment of community anchor activities advancing social and economic goals for residents and their families. Early into the planning process, Neighborhood partners agreed about the unique opportunity to attract regional and national organizations such as Manchester Bidwell and the Boys and Girls Club to establish a regional hub for workforce development, sports and recreation with a focus on resources that support residents and their families towards employment, healthy lifestyles and self-sufficiency. Downtown McKees Rocks provides an ideal location in the region for such facilities due to central location and easy connection to Pittsburgh and western suburbs of Allegheny County.



THE WAREHOUSE IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE PROVIDES AN INSPIRING MODEL FOR A TEEN CENTER FOCUSED ON RECREATION, EDUCATION, HEALTH, ARTS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT. THIS APPROACH COMPLEMENTS THE WELL ESTABLISHED FATHER RYAN ARTS CENTER LOCATED ON CHARTIERS AVENUE.



THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB ALREADY SERVES THE STO-ROX COMMUNITY WITH AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS AT THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS. A DOWNTOWN LOCATION WITH SPORTS AND OTHER PROGRAMS IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION.



MANCHESTER BIDWELL IS THE PARENT ORGANIZATION FOR A NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMS SERVING THE PITTSBURGH AREA. A PARTNERSHIP WITH MCKEES ROCKS WOULD HELP ESTABLISH A SATELLITE LOCATION IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA SERVING RESIDENTS OF THE BOROUGH AND WESTERN SUBURBS.

C. Reclaim Chartiers Creek as a community amenity

For decades, the Borough turned its back to Chartiers Creek and the Ohio River. But the vision for a waterfront that is an integral part of the community has been central to community plans developed over the past twenty years. A linear open space amenity running along Chartiers Creek can become an attractive front yard for downtown McKees Rocks as both a recreation amenity and an opportunity to connect with nature. An easement through public and private properties fronting the creek will be required to secure space for walking paths, landscaping and other improvements.



EXAMPLE OF GREENWAY ALONG



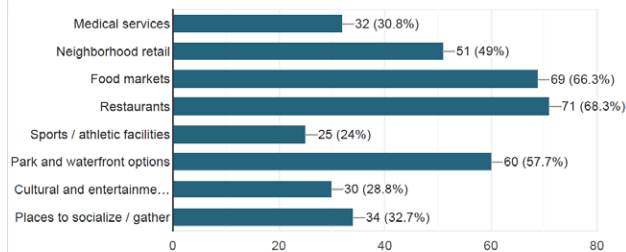
MRCDC IS WORKING WITH PROPERTY OWNERS AND WATERFRONT ADVOCATES SUCH AS RIVERLIFE INC. TO DEVELOP A GREENWAY PLAN RE-CLAIMING CHARTIERS CREEK AS A COMMUNITY ASSET CONNECTED TO THE REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK.

E. Reinvest on Chartiers Avenue as the heart of downtown McKees Rocks

As the main street of McKees Rocks, Chartiers Avenue reflects much of the community's character and diversity. Investments made in recent years to revitalize the Roxian Theater put the community on the map of regional attractions with a full calendar of concerts and cultural events. Coupled with the Father Ryan Center, Black Forge Coffee and other venues, the avenue has the potential to establish an identity for McKees Rocks as an entertainment and cultural destination with opportunities for music, theater and other cultural events. At the same time, the traditional character of the corridor with small scale mixed use buildings, lands itself for downtown housing above shops, restaurants and other essential services.

What types of services and retail amenities would you like to see in McKees Rocks? (Pick up to 3)

104 responses



THE NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY IDENTIFIED FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS, RESTAURANTS AND MEDICAL SERVICES AS COMMUNITY PRIORITIES.

Coordinated investments between Choice partners will reinforce the Borough and MRCDC's ongoing efforts to revitalize the area. The following initiatives were identified as key components of the Chartiers Avenue reinvestment strategy:

1. Streetscape improvements: Design is currently underway for streetscape improvements targeting the stretch of the avenue between Linden Street and Island Avenue. With implementation funds already secured, MRCDC anticipates project completion within the next 3 years. Coordination with the Borough, County and State will be required as the avenue is part of highway PA-51.

2. Facade Improvements: Neighborhood partners are working to identify funding opportunities to support local businesses and property owners in their efforts to revamp storefront facades fronting Chartiers Avenue. This initiative started several years ago with a pilot program assisting 4 local businesses. Additional funding assistance will help complete the initiative.



HOLLOWOOD WAS ONE OF THE LOCAL BUSINESSES PARTICIPATING IN THE FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

3. Redevelopment opportunities: While efforts to restore and occupy vacant storefronts with new activities are underway, there is space for transformative projects targeting vacant and underutilized land. Three of those properties are owned by the MRCDC and have been designated target sites for future mixed-use development. Two of the properties will integrate the Choice housing strategy with mixed-use projects.



507 CHARTIERS AVENUE IS ONE OF THE PROPERTIES ON CHARTIERS AVENUE TARGETED FOR OFF-SITE REDEVELOPMENT

4. Vacant storefronts: Initiatives such as pop-up business events, micro retail and small business spaces can activate vacant storefronts and generate pedestrian activity along the corridor. Small retail spaces provide entrepreneurs who are starting a new business a wonderful opportunity to test out the market for their products with minimal investments in physical space. These types of spaces can be rented for short periods of time and at affordable prices, providing an attractive option for local property owners and entrepreneurs.



EXAMPLE OF MICRO-RETAIL SPACE

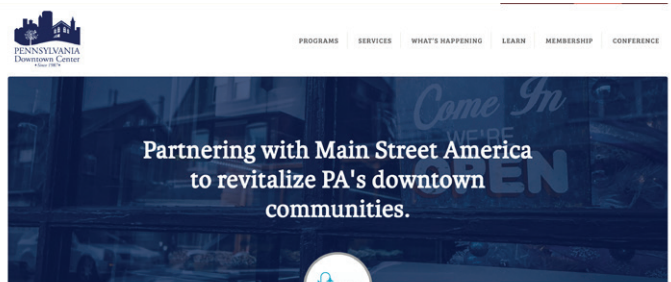
5. Attract food and beverage establishments: McKees Rocks offers limited options when it comes to restaurants. Residents and local businesses want to see more food options in the area. Recruiting new food establishments to the area will help reinforce the avenue's identity as an entertainment hub, keeping visitors in town after concerts. Employers such as ACHA, FOR and Chase Bank also generate demand for restaurants at lunch time.



507 CHARTIERS AVENUE IS ONE OF THE PROPERTIES ON CHARTIERS AVENUE TARGETED FOR OFF-SITE REDEVELOPMENT

6. Establish an annual calendar of events: Seasonal events attract visitors and shoppers to the community and promote a festive environment that benefits both residents and local business owners. Conversations with community members indicated the desire to see flea markets, farmers markets, music festivals and holiday festivities as part of the annual community calendar. The MRCDC can work with the Roxian Theatre, Hollowood and other local businesses to organize an annual music festival attracting artists from the region to local venues and outdoor stages. Food trucks and other vendors can compliment the program, attracting visitors from the region.

7. Establish a business association: Although there already is a well established network of business owners on Chartiers Avenue, a formalized approach to collaboration would help advance goals for the corridor. A well organized business association can help recruit new businesses, establish a consistent branding identity, seek funding opportunities, plan events and share resources. A short-term goal in that direction includes training and capacity building opportunities offered by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center. The center promotes exchange sessions with well-established business associations throughout the region and provides training and technical assistance.



24,040 Net FTE Jobs	7,217 Net New Businesses	6,174 Total Building Projects
\$1,723,133,113 Total Public & Private Investment	1,075,142 Volunteer Hours	1,354 Public Space Projects

Statewide Main Street Program Accomplishments (1987-2019)

THE PENNSYLVANIA DOWNTOWN CENTER ASSISTS DOWNTOWN COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES IN ESTABLISHING A MAIN STREET PROGRAM

F. Improve access and mobility

The redevelopment of Hays Manor presents a unique opportunity to improve access and mobility in the downtown area, especially around the Shopping Plaza and the public housing site. While the area was historically laid out as a grid connected to the rest of the downtown, that original system gave place to megablocks during the Urban Renewal era, creating an isolated pocket of commercial, industrial and residential uses poorly connected to the traditional fabric of the neighborhood and unwelcoming to pedestrians and other mobility options. Three strategies will help improve connections and re-establish a safe and walkable environment.

1. Re-establish the street grid with improved connections to Chartiers Avenue, Carson Street and other local corridors. Create new links within the Hays Manor area and plan for future connections to the north and east of the railroad.

2. Upgrade local neighborhood streets, repairing streets in bad conditions and improving sidewalks. Prioritize safety with traffic calming devices, crosswalks and enhanced street lighting. Add trees for shading and other green infrastructure solutions to help minimize runoff and flooding risks. This effort should also address improved access to and within the Chartiers shopping plaza.

3. Prioritize improvements to the transit hub including ADA compliant sidewalks, adequate bus shelters, seating, signage, lighting and landscape improvements. An information kiosk would also be a good addition to the area as a way to disseminate information about community resources and events.



THE BUS STOP AT LINDEN STREET SERVES MULTIPLE BUS LINES CONNECTING RESIDENTS TO THE REGION. THE BUS STOP IS HEAVILY USED BY HAYS MANOR RESIDENTS.



BELL AVENUE IS AN IMPORTANT CONNECTION IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD BUT CREATES AN INHOSPITABLE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT WITH AN UNCLEAR DEFINITION OF BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE STREET AND SERVICE AREAS CONNECTED TO THE SHOPPING PLAZA. IMPROVEMENTS TO BELL AVENUE SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE LIGHTING AND TREE PLANTING.

G. Improve neighborhood lighting conditions

Research shows that lighting improvements have a positive impact in crime reduction. Well-lit streets inhibit crime activity by making areas more visible to neighbors and police enforcement. Better lighting also improves the perception of safety, encouraging people to spend more time outside and increase movement on streets. Four initiatives will help improve lighting conditions in the downtown business district:

1. Downtown lighting assessment: A collaborative effort with the Borough, businesses and residents can help create a task force to assess lighting conditions in the area and identify locations where better lighting is needed.

2. Street lighting: While Chartiers Avenue is reasonably well lit, side streets and other corridors in the downtown area were identified as places where people feel unsafe due to limited lighting. The improvements associated with Hays Manor housing projects provide a unique opportunity to assess lighting conditions and establish a plan for repairs, upgrades and new lighting where needed.

3. Exterior lighting at building facades: Another measure to enhance lighting conditions in the area includes exterior lighting at business establishments and public buildings. Structures such as the Roxian Theatre and Hollowood on Chartiers Avenue already demonstrate the positive effect well designed exterior lighting can have in highlighting neighborhood assets while improving general lighting conditions in the area. Chartiers Shopping Plaza, banks, local shops, civic and community buildings can be targeted for similar efforts.

4. Porch lights: A campaign to assist local residents with the installation of porch light fixtures can help add another layer of safety improvements at residential blocks. That is certainly a fixture anticipated for future housing sites but existing homes in the downtown and surrounding areas can be included in a porch light campaign to encourage residents to keep their porch lights on at night.



LIGHTING IMPROVEMENTS WERE PART OF THE SCOPE OF THE PILOT PROGRAM TARGETING FACADE IMPROVEMENTS ON CHARTIERS AVE. THIS MODEL CAN BE EXPANDED TO OTHER STRUCTURES IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA, INCLUDING THE SHOPPING PLAZA, OFFICE BUILDINGS AND OTHER BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS.



HELP MAKE THE WEST WARD A SAFER, MORE WALKABLE, AND BRIGHTER NEIGHBORHOOD!

LIGHTS ON

LIGHTS ON promotes safety and walkability in the neighborhood by encouraging residents to keep their front porch lights on from dusk to dawn on a daily basis. Side porches or entrances that face the street should be lit up, too!

Get a FREE LED bulb and light sensor that automatically turns your light on and off when the daylight changes. Sign up at one of our events.

WEST WARD
Community Initiative

www.westwardeaston.org

PORCH LIGHT PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE ONE ESTABLISHED IN EASTON, PA ASSIST HOMEOWNERS WITH LIGHTING FIXTURES AND LIGHT BULBS.

GOAL 2

Upgrade existing housing stock

A balanced approach to preservation and development targeting both homeownership and rental housing will ensure that current residents stay in the community while creating opportunities for future residents to move in.

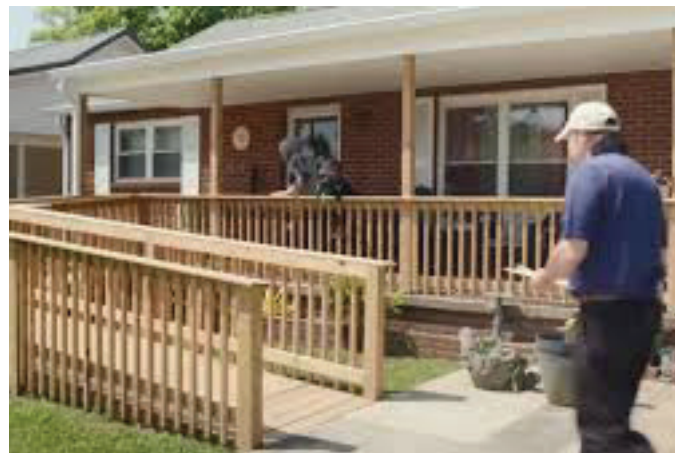
A. Partner with existing homeowners to preserve homeownership

The housing stock in McKees Rocks is largely defined by old homes. The community survey indicated that costs associated with maintaining a home are a concern for long-term homeowners, especially in households with limited or fixed incomes.

Assistance programs supporting homeowners with information and resources for basic home repairs will go a long way in helping residents remain in their homes. Programs like the Whole Home Repairs Program recently released by Allegheny County provide a good example of initiatives targeting health and safety renovation projects with financial and technical assistance. Home improvement loans are also available to qualified residents.

At the local level, a coordinated initiative can help create a targeted program tailored specifically to McKees Rocks homeowners with small grants and/ or matching grants supporting improvements such as sidewalk repairs, weatherization and other priorities. A needs assessment survey can help guide the parameters for the local program.

Another path to assisting local homeowners includes partnerships with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together. Both organizations serve qualifying homeowners with rehabilitation, repairs and modification improvements at no cost.



HOME REPAIR PROGRAMS CAN HELP RESIDENTS MAINTAIN THEIR HOMES AND MAKE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ALLOW THEM TO AGE IN PLACE, PRESERVING THEIR HOMES AND THEIR CONNECTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.

B. Create new homeownership opportunities

Surveys conducted during the planning process indicate interest in homeownership among residents who currently rent in McKees Rocks. Residents who live and have well established roots in the community could benefit from financial assistance and guidance in the process of preparing for homeownership. A successful homeownership program would integrate three key components:


- **Homebuyer counseling:** Homebuyer counseling programs can help prepare prospective homebuyers for homeownership with information about financial responsibility, available incentives and other resources
- **Financial incentives** such as forgivable loans, grants, tangle title grants and other forms of support, looking to share the burden with future homeowners in their process of acquiring and rehabilitating homes.
- **Borough and COunty efforts** to remove barriers and streamline the redevelopment of vacant properties.

C. Partner with the Borough and landlords to provide good quality rental housing

Over 1600 housing units in McKees Rocks are renter occupied, representing 56% of all homes in the community. While a significant percentage of these units are located in multi-family rental communities such as Hays Manor, the majority are standard homes owned and managed by small property owners. Local landlords could benefit from grants, short-term loans and other financial incentives to help them maintain and upgrade their properties.



LOCAL DEVELOPER LEVEL: EQUITY BUILDING IS ACTIVE IN MCKEES ROCKS, IMPLEMENTING AN INNOVATIVE HOMEOWNERSHIP MODEL THAT COMBINES SUPPLY AND DEMAND BY REHABILITATING ABANDONED STRUCTURES WHILE ALSO WORKING WITH PROSPECTIVE HOMEBUYERS TO HELP THEM PREPARE FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP.



Project Description

Philadelphia's rich history has left a legacy that includes some of the oldest housing stock in the country. As maintenance and repair needs grow, PHOC is committed to ensuring that small landlords can access capital to make much-needed repairs.

The Rental Improvement Fund (RIF) program offers two loan options to small landlords to repair their rental properties. Loan option 1 has a maximum loan amount of \$25,000 and a 10-year loan term (\$25K/10Y). \$25K/10Y RIF loans are fully forgiven if program requirements are met during the loan term. Loan option 2 has a maximum loan amount of \$50,000 and a 15-year loan term (\$50K/15Y). \$50K/15Y RIF loans have a 0% interest rate if program affordability requirements are met during the loan term.

Which landlords and properties are eligible?

- Landlords who own no more than 15 rental units across no more than 5 rental properties. This total includes properties owned by individuals and associated LLCs inside & outside of Philadelphia.
- Units where the current rent is affordable to households earning at or under 60% AMI
- Priority will be given to units currently occupied by a tenant
- Properties must be current with or under a payment agreement for city taxes
- Properties must have a valid rental license and property insurance **unless** the loan proceeds will be used to address open code violations or do lead remediation work that currently prevents the property from getting a rental license or property insurance. In those cases, a rental license and insurance must be obtained immediately following completion of the repair work.

Income Guidelines

To be eligible for a loan, the current rent must be affordable to households earning at or under 60% AMI, as shown on the chart below:

Maximum Monthly Rent by Number of Bedrooms							
	0 (studio)	1	2	3	4	5	6
\$940	\$1,071	\$1,298	\$1,605	\$1,834	\$2,024	\$2,214	

Note: For properties in higher-income neighborhoods, tenants may also be asked to sign a form certifying that their income is below 60% of the area median income.

The Rental Improvement Fund offers two loan products:

Loan Option \$25K/10Y

- Loan amount: \$10,000-\$24,999 per unit
- Loan term: 10 years
- Forgiveness schedule: The loan will be forgiven 20% annually beginning in year 6 if conditions are met.

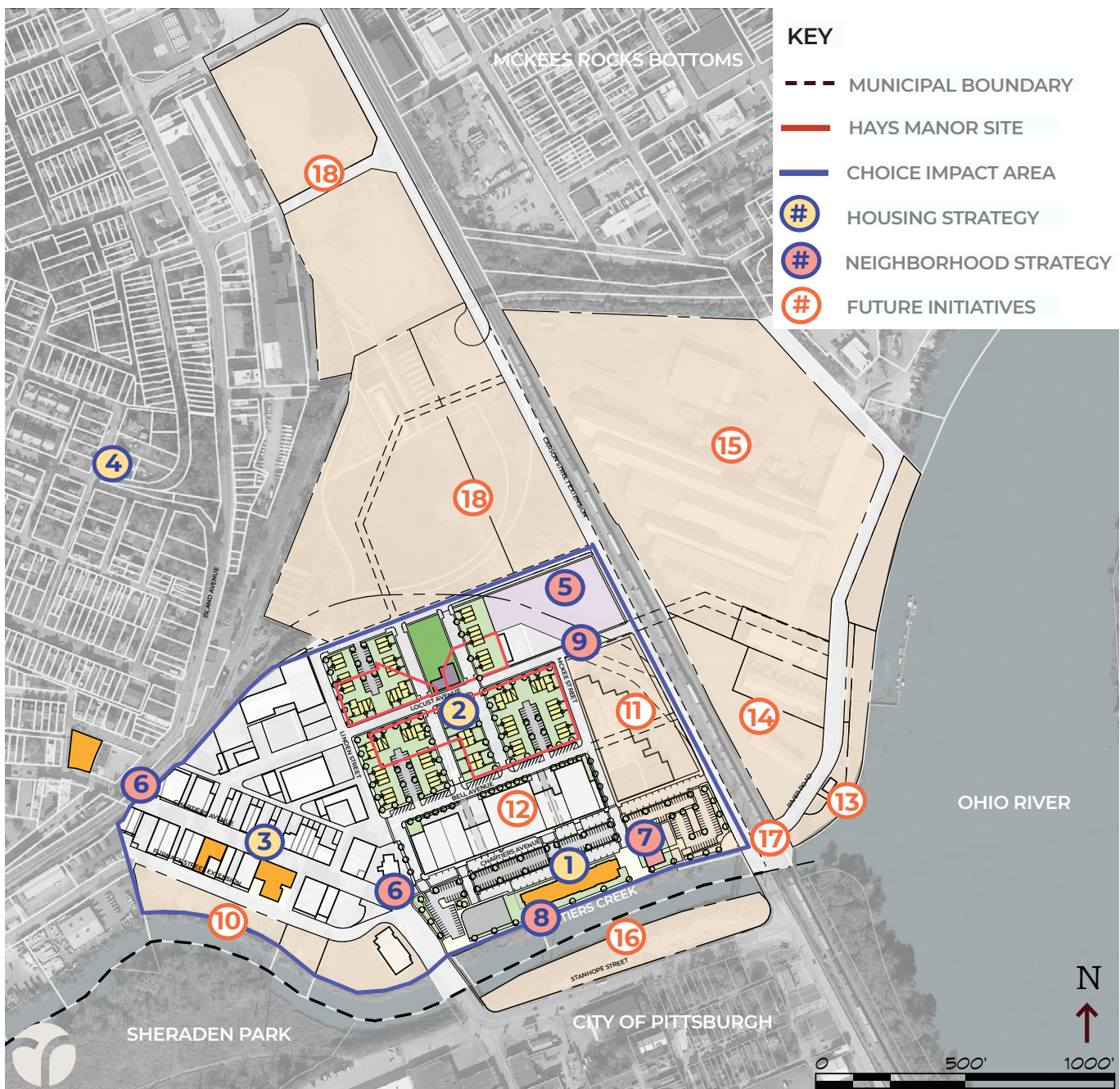
Loan Option \$50K/15Y

- Loan amount: \$25,000-\$50,000 per unit
- Loan term: 15 years
- The loan has a 0% interest rate if program requirements are met during the loan term.

PROGRAMS LIKE THE RENTAL IMPROVEMENT FUND IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA PROVIDE A USEFUL REFERENCE FOR LANDLORD ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO PROPERTY OWNERS WHO COMMIT TO MAINTAINING THEIR PROPERTIES AFFORDABLE TO LOW AND MODERATE INCOME RESIDENTS.

NEIGHBORHOOD VISION PLAN

The Neighborhood Vision Plan summarizes key initiatives proposed for the Choice Impact Area, reflecting the goals and strategies outlined in previous pages. The plan also indicates the location of future housing projects, further described in the Housing Plan. Opportunities to expand the downtown area are also included here, reflecting the community's desire for a long-term vision beyond the scope of the Choice Impact Area, including properties to the east and north of the Choice area should they become available in the future. The images in following pages exemplify the character of proposed projects.





1 DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE PHASE I



2 DOWNTOWN HOUSING PHASE II



3 DOWNTOWN HOUSING PHASE III



4 NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL HOUSING



5 COMMUNITY RECREATION FACILITY



6 GATEWAY IMPROVEMENTS



7 CIVIC SPACE



8 CHARTIERS CREEK GREENWAY



9 IMPROVED ROAD NETWORK



10 CREEK FRONT FOCAL POINT



11 FUTURE COMMUNITY HUB



12 NEW LINKS THROUGH SHOPPING CENTER



13 PUBLIC RIVERFRONT ACCESS



14 WATERFRONT GREEN SPACE & RECREATION



15 RIVERFRONT RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY



16 CREEKFRONT BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT



17 CARSON STREET GATEWAY



18 FUTURE WORKFORCE HUB

4. HOUSING PLAN



HOUSING GOALS

Two overarching goals guide this housing plan:

1. Redevelop Hays Manor as a safe and attractive mixed-income community integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood
2. Strengthen residential blocks with infill housing opportunities
3. Promote affordable homeownership

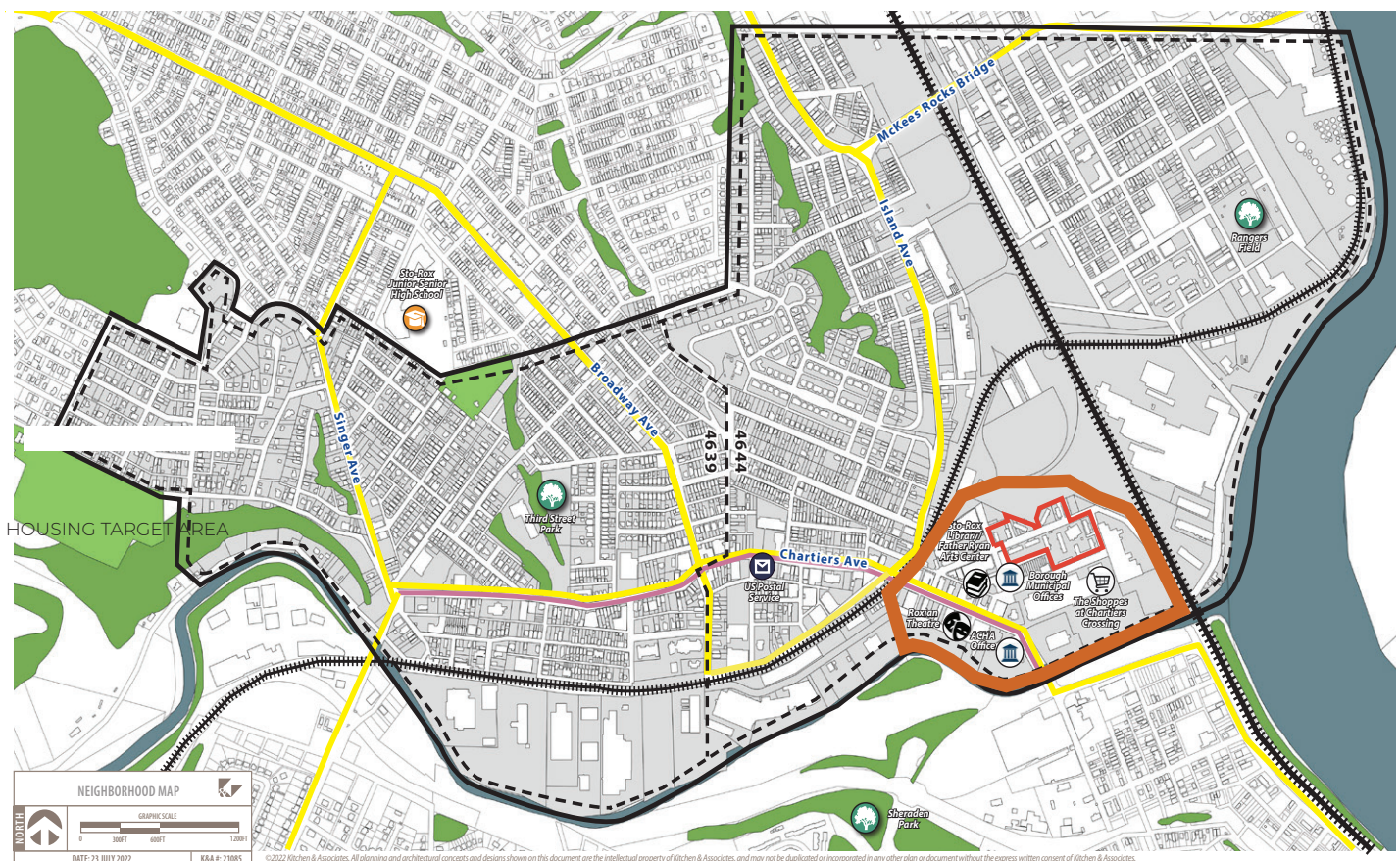


The Housing component of the McKees Rocks Choice Neighborhood Plan provides a framework for the redevelopment of Hays Manor as a catalyst for positive transformation of the downtown area.

This planning effort provided the ACHA, Hays Manor residents and community partners a unique opportunity to not only plan for the replacement of obsolete housing with new homes but to reimagine a new era where downtown living becomes an attractive option for current and future Borough residents and an integral part of a vibrant downtown environment. The Housing Plan is informed by the resident needs assessment, community survey, market analysis and a series of discussions led by the Housing Working Team with residents, neighbors and planning partners throughout the planning process. It responds to input received from Hays Manor residents with respect to needs and priorities for their future homes and community while also acknowledging the important role the site's redevelopment plays in the broader vision for downtown McKees Rocks.

Housing Target Area

The Housing Plan is centered primarily around Hays Manor and the section of downtown McKees Rocks defined by Carson Street to the east, Chartiers Creek to the south, Island Ave to the west and the Trinity Property to the north. The plan expands further into residential blocks targeting infill redevelopment opportunities. The expanded area is generally defined by Broadway avenue to the west, Island avenue to the east, Chartiers Avenue to the south and the municipal boundary to the north.



GOAL 1

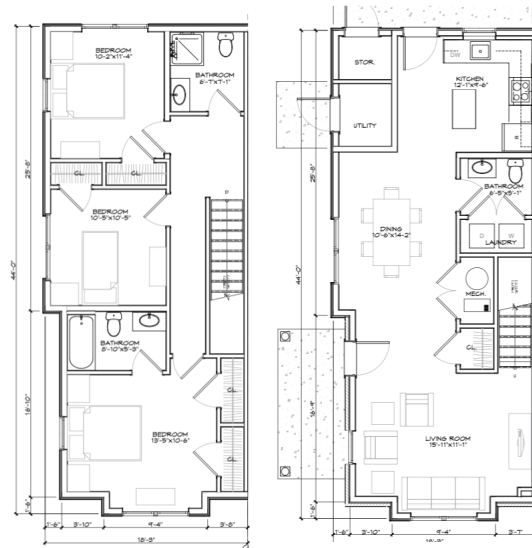
Redevelop Hays Manor as a safe and attractive mixed-income community integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood

A. Meet current and future housing needs with a variety of housing options

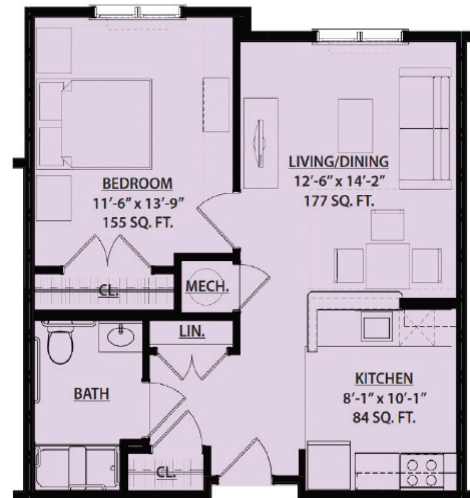
This housing plan anticipates the total demolition of existing structures at Hays Manor followed by a one-to-one replacement strategy based on a mix of on-site and off-site redevelopment solutions. A total of 240 new, modern, mixed-income housing units will be developed within the Housing Target Area, including 138 replacement and 102 non-replacement units combining affordable and market-rate options. Twenty additional units will be dedicated to homeownership opportunities. The plan will include a variety of housing types and building configurations, offering current and future residents a range of housing choices according to their preferences and needs.

To help develop the program and design approach guiding the housing plan for on-site and off-site locations, a housing design team was formed with the participation of a core group of Hays Manor residents who met with the planning team regularly over the past 6 months and will continue to meet through completion of the plan.

While discussions regarding the architectural character and aesthetics of future development projects have not occurred yet, residents expressed their preference for buildings that mimic the scale and character of typical residential blocks in town.



LAYOUT OF A TYPICAL TWO-STORY THREE BED-ROOM TOWN-HOME. AT 1,200SF, THESE UNITS WILL EXCEED EXISTING HAYS MANOR UNITS BY 400SF.



LAYOUT OF A TYPICAL ONE BEDROOM FLAT - AT 650SF, THESE UNITS WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY LARGER THAN THE CURRENT HAYS MANOR UNITS, WHERE A ONE BEDROOM FLAT IS LIMITED TO X SF IN SPACE.

Safety and privacy inform discussions about building types and preferences for private front doors over shared hallways. Private outdoor spaces such as porches, decks, patios and backyards are also key features residents would like to see, especially for multi-generational households with children. Central air and appliances are also important to residents. Regarding unit design, space stands as a top priority with a focus on ample kitchen, bathroom and living spaces.

Beyond programmatic requirements, building safety, durability, efficiency and long-term sustainability are a top priority for the community and for the development team.

B. Leverage vacant and underutilized properties for meaningful redevelopment

A key priority established early on for the Choice Neighborhood plan was the opportunity to reclaim vacant and underutilized downtown properties towards a more ambitious and impactful revitalization effort. Unlike most Choice public housing sites which include large swaths of land, Hays Manor is limited to only 4.3 acres of land area. To achieve this plan's goals, additional land will be required and priority has been given to properties adjacent to Hays Manor. The Housing Working Team quickly moved to explore options to incorporate underutilized properties into the mix and, in this way, expand the redevelopment footprint, maximizing opportunities for higher housing yield and additional uses. Approximately 20 privately owned properties are under consideration for potential site acquisition.

C. Promote a mix of uses to support community life and economic development

The Housing Plan seeks to leverage housing development to create opportunities for a mix of uses that complement and enhance the downtown environment. Each one of the proposed housing phases will include space for non-residential programmatic requirements identified during the planning process. Efforts to match these space opportunities with potential retail, commercial, civic or community uses are currently underway. Preliminary discussions with Housing, Neighborhood and People partners have identified the potential for supportive services such as a daycare, afterschool programs and a health and wellness space. Opportunities for shops, restaurants and medical spaces are also under consideration. All in all, approximately 25,000sf of non-residential spaces are included in the housing plan.



PROPERTIES UNDER CONSIDERATION AS PART OF THE FUTURE HOUSING STRATEGY

D. Adopt best practices in planning and urban design to ensure a safe and attractive environment

Resiliency: As a low-lying community situated in a flood risk area, Hays Manor is naturally vulnerable to the risks associated with extreme climate events. The development team is working closely with the County, Borough and partners to promote resiliency through ecologically sound design solutions. In accordance with state and federal standards, all buildings will be elevated above the Base flood elevation and will incorporate waterproofing solutions to minimize flood damage during extreme weather events.

Connectivity: Upgrades and enhancements to the streets surrounding Hays Manor and other Choice housing sites will be incorporated into the plan with the goal to restore neighborhood connections and promote a safer public realm in the community.

Neighborhood character: Attention to building scale, massing, architectural features and building materials will ensure an attractive and cohesive residential environment that is compatible with the character of McKees Rocks. A variety of building materials along with colors and textures will promote an aesthetic that blends new housing into the fabric of the community.

CPTED principles (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design): An appropriate site layout and building design can promote enhance safety and security in the new community. The plan will incorporate design strategies to ensure clear road connections, a safe and attractive pedestrian environment, natural surveillance to appropriate building design, defensible spaces, clear sight lines and well-lit streets and buildings. Residents and the McKees Rocks / Housing Authority Police Departments are key partners in helping refine the plan.

Accessibility: In accordance with federal and state regulations, a minimum of 5% of all housing units will be designed and built to comply with handicap accessibility requirements. Beyond the units, primary access and circulation at multi-family buildings will be designed to be ADA compliant.

Energy efficiency and green building: Energy saving measures and sustainable features will be incorporated into the design of all proposed development phases to minimize operating and utility costs for residents and foster a healthy living environment. Buildings will be designed to meet PA energy and sustainability standards, including features like sealed building envelope with adequate insulation and high performance windows; high efficiency HVAC systems; water conserving plumbing fixtures, certified roofing products and others. At the site level, best practices will be incorporated into the design to minimize the development's environmental footprint: bioswales and rain gardens will be adopted to limit runoff and reduce pollution on local waterways; drought resistant and native species trees, shrubs and groundcover will be selected for landscaping; efficient irrigation systems and other strategies will help minimize water and energy consumption throughout the development sites.

Green infrastructure: The redevelopment of Hays Manor provides a unique and critical opportunity to upgrade the Borough's stormwater infrastructure in the downtown area and mitigate future risks of flooding. A partnership with ALCOSAN and other governmental agencies will help ACHA and neighboring property owners identify opportunities and funding sources to further the implementation of green infrastructure projects. Green infrastructure solutions can be adopted not only on housing sites but at parks, streets and underutilized parking lots and other impervious areas. Trees are also an important component of the solutions as they help mitigate urban heat island and mitigate runoff and flooding. Partnerships between ACHA, county agencies and local non-profits can help establish a multi-year effort targeting downtown streets and properties

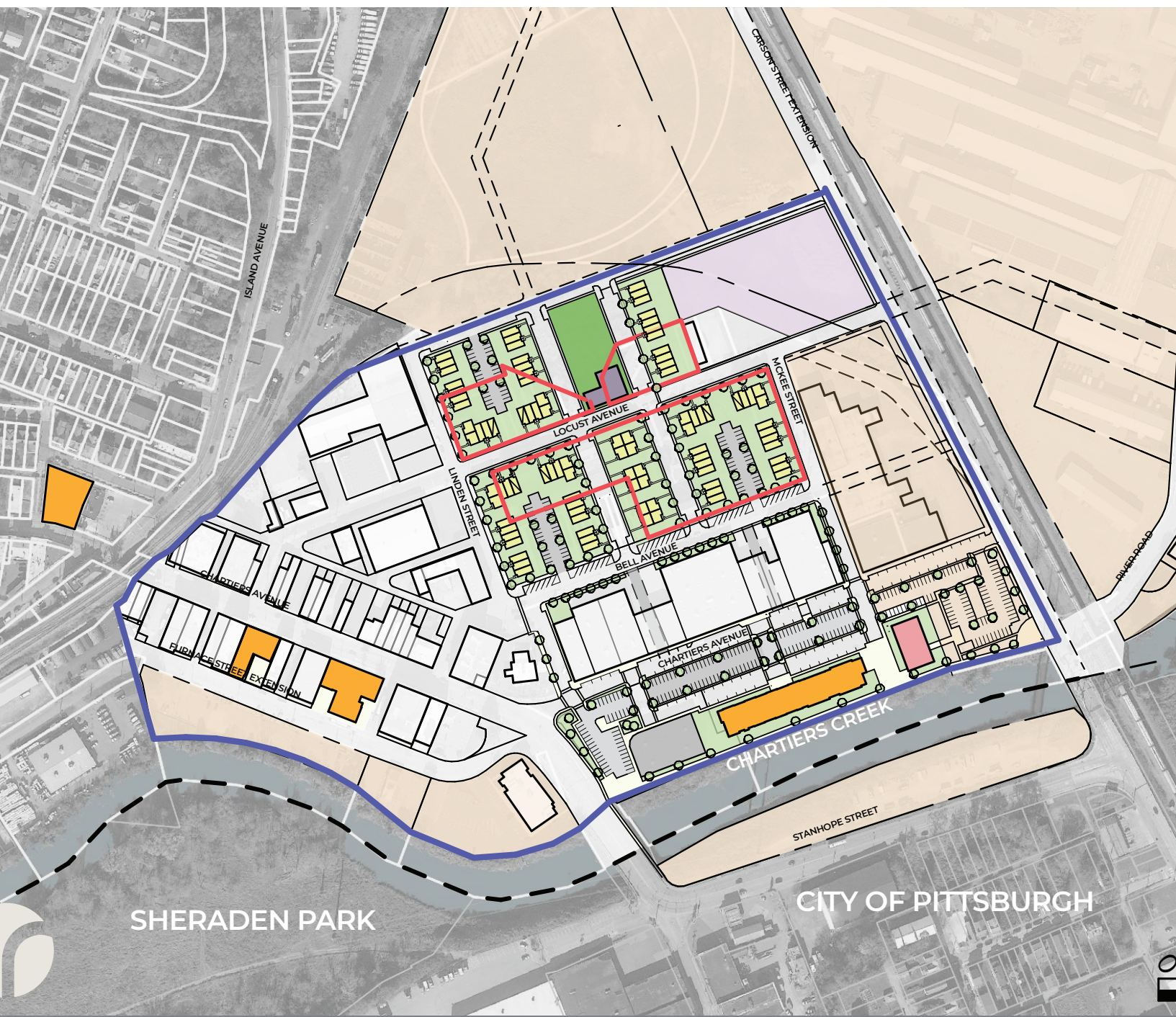
E. Maximize housing options across incomes

The Housing plan strives to structure all phases of this redevelopment effort with a mix of income restricted (replacement and affordable) and unrestricted units (market-rate) units.

Mixed-income housing is a priority for the Choice Neighborhood program, securing opportunities for low income households to live in high quality housing alongside moderate and higher income households. For McKees Rocks, the Choice effort introduces a unique opportunity to offer a range of new housing options for local and future residents across unit sizes and project types. Mixed-income housing ensures access to quality homes, indistinguishable from one another and the shared use of site amenities by all households.

THE HOUSING PLAN

The redevelopment plan for Hays Manor responds to current and future housing demand with a strategy structured around four development phases. In addition to the Hays Manor site, three other areas were identified during the planning process as potential target housing sites (see map below). Each phase will include a mix of replacement, income restricted and unrestricted housing units and along with additional spaces supporting commercial, civic and community activities.



PHASE I: MCKEES STREET AGE-RESTRICTED MIXED-USE

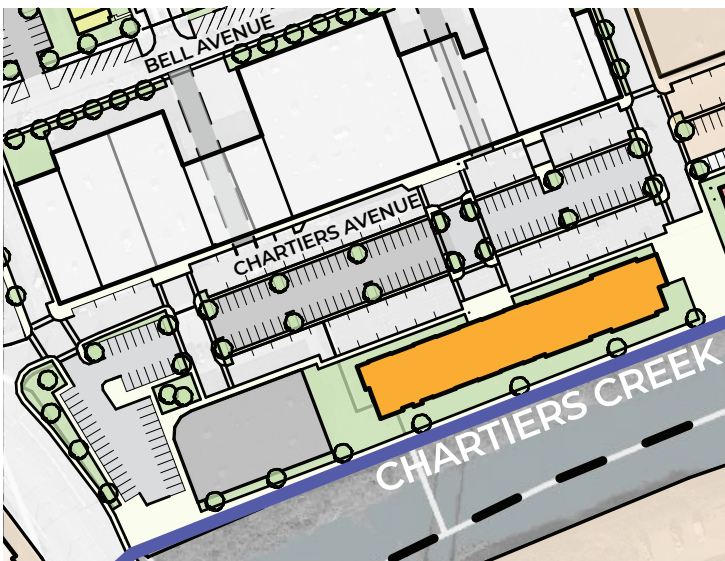
The first development phase is an ambitious first step in the redevelopment process. Envisioned as a critical piece of the revitalization of the downtown area, the proposed mixed-use building reclaims underutilized land at the Chartiers Crossing Shopping Plaza for an age-restricted mixed-use development combining a mix of residential, commercial and community uses. This move will provide McKees Rocks residents a much needed housing option that is suitable to their needs as they age. All units will be built to be adaptable with 5% of them as fully handicap accessible units. This project will also help activate the area with pedestrian activity and opportunities for new shops and services. The proposed four-story structure will be developed along the southern end of the shopping plaza, with direct access from Chartiers Avenue and Carson St and just across the street from a grocery store, shops and an adult day center. The senior midrise will face Chartiers Creek and connect to the future greenway envisioned along the creek. Up to 60 one-bedroom apartments will be developed in this first phase, complemented by up to 12,000sf of ground level commercial, community spaces and parking.



EXAMPLE OF MIXED-USE



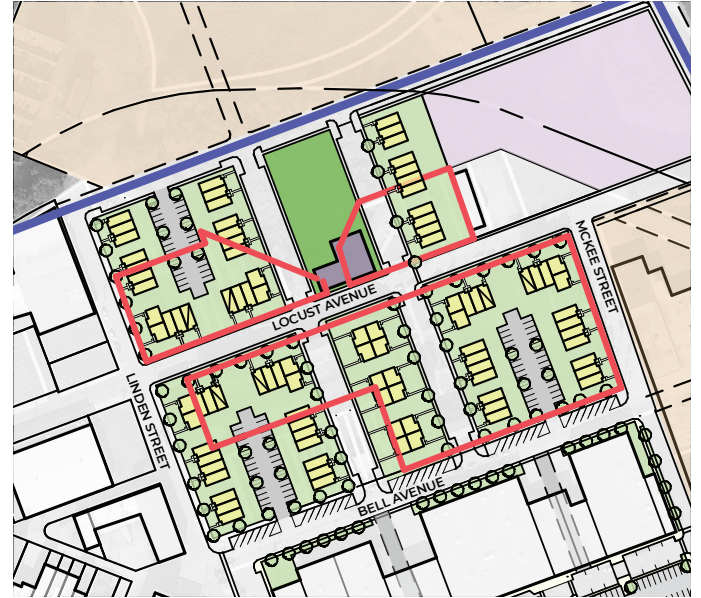
LIVING AND KITCHEN SPACES AT SENIOR APARTMENT. A TYPICAL ONE BEDROOM UNIT HAS 650SF



PHASE II: LOCUST STREET FAMILY

The second phase of this housing strategy targets the redevelopment of approximately 7 acres of land, including the Hays Manor site with 4.3 acres and adjacent properties. The consolidation of surrounding vacant and underutilized properties creates an opportunity for a new residential community of 90 family townhomes and stacked flats. The site is laid out in four residential blocks centered around a common green space and new indoor amenities. The plan responds to the desire expressed by Hays Manor residents to live in homes with individual entrances and private backyards, mimicking the scale and character of residential neighborhoods in the Borough. Parking is provided at a ratio of one space per unit. As a family community, this phase will include a mix of one-, two-, three and four-bedroom units and a variety of amenities such as green spaces, play areas, community room, fitness room and others.

This redevelopment effort also includes a much-needed upgrade of the existing road network, re-establishing the neighborhood grid and reconnecting Hays Manor to surrounding areas with safe and complete streets. It also responds to development requirements in flood zones, with homes elevated above the base flood elevation.



PHASE II SITE PLAN



EXAMPLE OF TOWNHOMES



The housing plan for Phase II is inspired by a vision established early on by a group of young Hays Manor residents who called for "homes of all sizes and shapes around a park". This model was built by the youth design team.

PHASE III: CHARTIERS AVE MIXED-USE

The third development phase creates a unique opportunity to add new housing options and commercial space along Chartiers Avenue, in the very heart of McKees Rocks. This phase includes the redevelopment of two vacant lots owned by the McKees Rocks CDC into two small infill mixed-use projects, totaling up to 42 new units and approximately 12,000sf of ground floor commercial spaces. The two properties are located next door to the Roxian Theatre, FOR and Father Ryan's Center. This strategy also includes a third property, near the intersection of Chartiers and Island Avenue. While not developed by the Choice team, this project by Action Housing will allocate 9 of its 36 units to Hays Manor replacement requirements. Redevelopment of these three sites will not only boost the area with new residents and foot traffic but create opportunities for new retail and services.



HOUSING INVESTMENTS ON CHARTIERS AVENUE WILL ADD UP TO 78 NEW MIXED-INCOME UNITS TO MCKEES ROCKS HOUSING STOCK

PHASE IV: INFILL RENTAL AND FOR-SALE HOUSING

The Housing and Neighborhood working teams are coordinating efforts with local housing partners to redevelop vacant properties within the housing target area through a mix of rehabilitation and new construction initiatives. The effort will include primarily single-family homes serving larger families in the community. Just like in other phases, this phase will include a mix of replacement and non-replacement homes. Approximately 2/3 of the homes will be for-rent with the remaining 1/3 as affordable homeownership opportunities. Target properties will be identified in the Summer 2023.



VACANT HOMES IN OTHERWISE STABLE RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS ARE THE TARGET FOR PHASE IV EFFORTS.

FINANCING PLAN

To be determined | Future Submission

RELOCATION PLAN

To be determined | Future Submission

6. PEOPLE PLAN



PEOPLE GOALS

1. Increase access to physical and mental healthcare
2. Expand access to fitness, sports and outdoor recreation
3. Improve food security and expand access to fresh food
4. Job readiness and self-sufficiency
5. Children enter kindergarten ready to learn
6. Elementary and middle school age children are proficient in reading and math
7. Young adults graduate high school and are career ready
8. Expand ACHA's capacity for in-house case management

The People component of the McKees Rocks Choice Transformation Plan tackles three areas identified by Hays Manor residents as priorities to help improve long-term outcomes and create opportunity for their families: Health, Economic Opportunity and Education.

For a small town of less than 6,000 residents, McKees Rocks has an exceptional network of organizations and service providers deeply committed to supporting local residents and connecting them to resources. Led by FOR and the ACHA, these organizations came together as People Partners for this planning process to focus on the specific challenges faced by Hays Manor residents and help promote a favorable environment where individuals and families can succeed.

Through resident surveys, monthly meetings thematic sessions and informal conversations, People partners identified eight key goals to be achieved in the next 5 to 10 years.



GOAL 1

Health and Wellness

Increase access to physical and mental healthcare

A. Connect residents to healthcare resources

Although health related services and programs are available in the community, awareness about these resources is limited among Hays Manor residents. To bridge that gap, Choice partners have identified the following key strategies:

1. Establish a team of Community Health Navigators who will make the link between healthcare providers and residents, helping disseminate information about services through consistent door-to-door outreach. Community health navigators will be on the ground, meeting residents where they are and connecting them to resources according to their specific needs.

I am a...
connector
advocate
health educator
coach

Community Health Worker
The bridge to a healthy community.

Community Health Workers at a Glance
Community Health Workers (CHWs) are trained public health professionals who are part of the care team. They often serve high-risk and underserved populations. CHWs bring **shared life experience** to patient care, helping to **build patient trust and break down barriers** to health and well-being.

Job titles for Community Health Workers:

- Patient navigators
- Community health advocates
- Outreach workers
- Peer educators
- Promotores de salud
- Doulas

Improving Patient Health
CHWs work closely with the patient beyond the clinic walls, both in the home and the community.

“The work that community health workers do can’t be left until the next time the doctor sees the patient. CHWs are extending and enhancing the reach that providers have—and as a result, we are taking care of more people more effectively.”

— Jay Breines, CEO, Holyoke Health Center, Holyoke, Massachusetts

Services and support that CHWs can provide include:

- Identifying and addressing any barriers to health and well-being
- Giving patients culturally appropriate health information to improve their understanding of their condition and care plan
- Helping patients access medical care, including behavioral health services and wellness programs
- Coaching patients on preventive behaviors, such as smoking cessation, exercise, diet, and obtaining health screenings
- Conducting outreach to patients in the community or through home visits

Learn More
The Office of Community Health Workers in the Division of Prevention and Wellness is working to build the CHW workforce throughout Massachusetts. To learn more, visit mass.gov/dph/chw.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

LITERATURE INFORMING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE JOB OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS CONNECTING RESIDENTS TO INFORMATION AND HEALTHCARE RESOURCES

2. Promote health literacy through user friendly materials and engaging community events. Healthcare providers can also benefit from a partnership with community health navigators to run health campaigns (STD, anti-smoking, women's health, etc), information sessions, and organize regular community health days.

3. Establish a health and wellness resource center at the future housing community. Building on the model of the mobile health clinic run by the Sto-Rox Health Center, the future housing development will include a medical suite to support primary medical services such as screening and referrals. The medical suite is initially envisioned to be located on the ground floor of the proposed senior mixed-use development in downtown McKees Rocks.

4. Expand access to mental and behavioral health: Community Health Navigators can also partner with mental health providers to disseminate information about mental health resources. Building on the success of existing initiatives by Zellous Hope, an informal mental health support system. Healing circles



USER-FRIENDLY POSTERS AND FLYERS WITH SIMPLE AND ENGAGING MESSAGES CAN SUPPORT THE WORK OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND NAVIGATORS IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT COMMON HEALTH CONDITIONS AND THE IMPORTANCE VISITS OF PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.

Resident Suggestion!

Add a health reference library to the future health center to include helpful books and materials residents can learn from and share with their families and neighbors.



THE STO-ROX MOBILE HEALTH CLINIC PROVIDED CRITICAL SERVICES TO RESIDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND CONTINUES TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY EVERY WEEK WITH SCREENINGS, PHYSICAL EXAMS AND VACCINES AMONG OTHER SERVICES.

GOAL 2

Health and Wellness

Expand access to fitness, sports and outdoor recreation across age groups



OUTDOOR EXERCISE STATIONS ARE SOME OF THE FEATURES BROUGHT UP BY RESIDENTS IN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT FUTURE PARK SPACES

A. Promote access to safe and attractive open space amenities within walking distance from Hays Manor

Hays Manor residents have expressed the need and desire to have green spaces and outdoor amenities integrated into the design of the future housing community. Two central amenities are proposed within close proximity to future housing:

1. Locust Street Park: A x,xxxxsf space will be dedicated to a central open space at the family development. (proposed Phase II). The space will include a playground, picnic tables, walking paths, and landscaped spaces. The new community park will be located within walking distance from 100 new homes and easily accessible from downtown McKees Rocks, creating opportunities for community-wide events such as outdoor fitness classes and movie nights. A small community building will be located at the park, providing residents with indoor amenities such as a multi-purpose community room, restrooms and a fitness room.

2. Waterfront Plaza and greenway: A x sf long greenway and plaza are proposed as neighborhood improvements along Chartiers Creek between Linden and Carson Street. The greenway will invite residents to experience an improved waterfront with a landscaped and well-lit walking path served with benches, trash receptacles and other street furniture. A plaza at the end of McKees Street and adjacent to the proposed senior mixed-use building will create additional outdoor recreation opportunities with a splash ground, outdoor seating and other improvements to be further refined

B. Secure space for Hays Manor residents at regional community facilities

The Borough of McKees Rocks is currently in negotiations with the Josh Gibson Foundation for the sale and revitalization of the old recreation building located at State Street. Although the facility will be located on the opposite end of town, efforts will be made by the ACHA and partners to ensure that Hays Manor families can benefit from future services and recreation programs. Transportation is a critical barrier to be overcome.

As a critical component of the Neighborhood Plan, a regional recreation facility is envisioned in downtown McKees Rocks. A program including sports and recreation opportunities for children and adults is under consideration within walking distance from all future Choice housing sites.. MR CDC is leading the dialogue with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA as potential partners in this initiative.



THE FORMER BOYS & GIRLS SITE ON THE WESTERN END OF MCKEES ROCKS WILL BE REVITALIZED AND MANAGED BY THE JOSH GIBSON FOUNDATION AS A COMMUNITY CENTER WITH PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH, SENIOR CITIZENS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

C. Connect residents to existing resources in McKees Rocks

The Father Ryan Center is a wonderful recreation asset in McKees Rocks, offering dance and fitness classes, among other physical activities. But despite proximity to the center, Hays Manor residents do not fully benefit from these programs. Intentional campaigns, scholarships and other incentives will entice Hays Manor residents to benefit from the opportunities the center has to offer.

D. Support residents' initiatives

When it comes to fitness, sports and active recreation, residents, local gyms, personal trainers and instructors have a wealth of ideas to keep people moving. Resident initiatives such as walking teams, dance nights and group lessons led by local instructors should be encouraged and supported with supplies and through established communication channels.



SUPPORT TO RESIDENTS' INITIATIVES TO ORGANIZE RECREATION AND FITNESS EVENTS WILL HELP KEEP PEOPLE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

GOAL 3

Health and Wellness

Improve food security and expand access to fresh food

Hays Manor is a unique public housing community when it comes to access to grocery stores. Residents enjoy proximity to a grocery store within walking distance from their homes, right in downtown McKess Rocks. For the most part, the local ALDI's serves residents with the basic food needs at affordable prices. However, too many families still can't make ends meet and experience food insecurity. Residents report that ALDI's selection is limited when it comes to fresh produce and healthy options. Other grocery stores in the area are only accessible by car and are considered too expensive for the majority of residents.

A. Secure location for a new and expanded food pantry

Currently located in Hays Manor, the existing food pantry is a critical resource for Hays Manor residents and the broader Sto-Rox community, serving approximately x families on a weekly basis. The food pantry is managed by FOR and provides residents with essential food options x days a week. The pantry also provides a variety of services, including cooking lessons for families and a delivery service to senior residents with mobility challenges. An expanded Food Pantry program will look to continue these services and build partnerships with local churches and community groups to establish a one-stop resource center for food access. Location for the future food pantry is yet to be determined but priority is being given to the downtown area, within walking distance from future homes.

The FOR Food Pantry and 'Welcome to the Table Project' by Marlene Banks and volunteers are two local initiatives seeking to help alleviate food insecurity with weekly food distribution



THE FOOD PANTRY AT HAYS MANOR OPENS EVERY FRIDAY FROM 1 -4 PM AND SERVES STO-ROX RESIDENTS



APPROXIMATELY 150 MEALS ARE SERVED WEEKLY BY THE 'WELCOME TO THE TABLE PROJECT'

B. Promote fresh food initiatives

Choice partners have identified three distinct opportunities to expand access to fresh food in the community:

1. Nutrition and cooking lessons: FOR has a well-established partnership with Penn State Extension Nutrition Links and the Family Table Program. Before the pandemic, the program provided cooking lessons to local families, involving them in the process of planning, shopping and preparing fresh meals. Lessons were built on the use of products commonly found at food pantries and were delivered from FOR's teaching kitchen at Father Ryan's Center. Twenty families at Hays Manor participated in the program. Moving forward, FOR and the Extended Food and Nutrition Program are looking to expand the program with options for different types of lessons tailored to household needs (from single households to families and senior residents). Lessons will be delivered to groups at Father Ryan's Center and individually through online lessons to families in their own homes.



VIRTUA HOSPITAL "EAT WELL" INITIATIVE IN SOUTH JERSEY INCLUDES A MOBILE FARMERS MARKET THAT VISITS COMMUNITIES ONCE A WEEK PROVIDING FRESH PRODUCE AT VERY LOW COSTS.

2. Fresh food market: Choice Partners have also identified the need to introduce options of fresh produce in the community. A partnership with the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank or healthcare providers can support a local fresh food truck serving the Sto-Rox community. A central location in the downtown area with easy access by car or by foot would ensure the success of the initiative. Other approaches under consideration includes a small farmer's market or, at a minimum, a summer farm stand. Involving young adults in any of these food initiatives would help create seasonal job opportunities and raise awareness about healthy food and nutrition.

3. Community Gardening: A third piece of the food strategy includes a gardening program to be developed in partnership with the Penn State Master Gardening Program. Residents have demonstrated interest in gardening as an opportunity to learn and teach younger generations about the nutritional and environmental values of locally grown food. A gardening program will provide training opportunities and resources to community groups and individuals looking to maintain vegetable gardens at their homes or neighborhood blocks.



THE 'SEED TO SUPPER' PROGRAM PROVIDES NEW GARDENERS WITH THE TOOLS AND INFORMATION THEY NEED TO GROW THEIR OWN FOOD.

GOAL 4

Economic Opportunity and Self-sufficiency

Residents are well prepared and ready for job opportunities with steps to self-sufficiency

A. Connect residents to local employment opportunities

FOR and Grow Sto-Rox have established partnerships with local employers to promote local hiring and expand opportunities for entry level jobs in the area. Over twenty businesses have stepped up to the challenge since xxxx, providing Sto-Rox residents with training and entry level paying jobs with benefits. In several cases, these are transitional jobs that support ex-offenders re-entering the workforce, helping them build a resume towards sustainable employment. Expanding awareness about local job opportunities among Hays Manor residents is a top priority for the ACHA and FOR. Job fairs and regular informational sessions are some of the options under consideration by People partners.



5 GENERATION BAKERS IS A MCKEES ROCKS BUSINESS COMMITTED TO LOCAL HIRING. THE COMPANY IS WELL KNOWN FOR A SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT WITH ECONOMIC INCENTIVES IN SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL GOALS SUCH AS EDUCATION AND HOMEOWNERSHIP.

B. Connect residents to resources offered through the PA Career Link and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Regional WIOA Plan for Allegheny County identifies healthcare, finance, education, arts and entertainment and agriculture as industry sectors projected to grow, creating demand for a skilled workforce. The PA Career Link services connect prospective employees to sustainable job opportunities and works closely with regional organizations such as Manchester Bidwell and trade industries to connect interested candidates to training opportunities. The PA Career Link has a presence at the FOR Resource Center and can serve as a critical reference for Hays Manor residents.



THE PA CAREER LINK CONNECT RESIDENTS TO JOBS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES WITH ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS MANCHESTER BIDWELL IN PITTSBURGH. THE PROGRAM TRAIN RESIDENTS FOR JOBS IN HIGH DEMAND IN THE REGION.

C. Establish a local job readiness program to prepare residents for career and job opportunities

To help Hays Manor residents prepare for job opportunities, Choice partners have identified the need to facilitate residents' access to the wide spectrum of supportive services that already exists in McKees Rocks. Input received from surveys and individual conversations indicate that residents are not always informed about the resources, services and programs available in the community. Residents have also communicated that they are often uncertain about the specific support they may need to prepare for employment. That is especially the case for individuals who are looking to re-join the workforce after a voluntary or involuntary pause. A local Job Readiness Program will help alleviate these challenges providing a continuum of services and guidance about the steps towards employment. From mental health to record expungement, to affordable childcare, transportation, and connections to training opportunities, an organized program at the local level will meet people where they are leveraging resources that are already available in the community. Key services to be included in the proposed program include:

- Mental health
- Essential workplace skills training
- Job training opportunities
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Financial literacy
- Computer literacy

D. Maximize resident participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program was established by the federal government as an employment and savings program for families living in subsidized housing. The primary goal of the FSS program is to support families as they work towards employment and economic self-sufficiency. Participants in the FSS program pay rent according to their income. As incomes increase, rent increases but a portion of that rent goes towards an individual escrow account. Funds from that account can be used towards homeownership, education and other personal goals established by the participant. At the end of the program period (typically 5 years), residents have full access to their savings.

Hays Manor residents are eligible to participate in the program, but few are currently enrolled. The ACHA has re-launched the program in 2023, re-introducing residents to the newly revamped program. Outreach to residents has started with a preliminary presentation by the FSS coordinator and will continue with individual efforts at the household level. The program will continue to be available to all Hays Manor residents, including those who choose to join the Section 8 Voucher Program as an alternative relocation option.

E. Section 3 employment opportunities

To be determined | Future submission

GOAL 5

Education

Children enter kindergarten ready to learn

A. Expand the reach and capacity of the McKees Rocks Family Center

The Family Center provides local parents of infants and toddlers with a variety of programs and resources. The Center is run by FOR from two different locations (Father Ryan Center and Hays Manor Community Center) and includes a kindergarten readiness program, play groups, a diaper and formula bank and a safe space where parents of young children can learn about other resources to help meet their needs. Despite its proximity to Hays Manor, the Center currently has a limited reach among Hays Manor residents. For example, Hays Manor families represent only 20 to 30% of all kids attending the kindergarten readiness program.

Outreach - To expand its reach among Hays Manor families, the Center will partner with the ACHA and Zellous Hope Project to establish a consistent outreach strategy and ensure that all families are informed about the Family Center as soon as they move into the community. Open houses, orientation days and one-on-one outreach are some of the tools under consideration.

New facility - FOR and ACHA are coordinating efforts to identify a new location for the Family Center when the existing Hays Manor Community Center is demolished. A second location is the only way for the Center to maintain and expand its services since space at the Father Ryan Center is limited. A new location will also create an opportunity for additional capacity to accommodate not only Hays Manor but additional families from the Sto-Rox area. Potential locations under consideration include: ground floor space at the future senior mixed-use (Phase I); a temporary space in the downtown area with future relocation to a permanent facility once the family housing phase (Phase II) is completed.



B. Connect Hays Manor residents to resources offered at Family Foundations

Family Foundations Early Head Start is run by the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development and provides support to expecting families, infants and toddlers from ages 0-3. Services are free of cost to families and are provided both at families' homes and from their main location at Helen Street, in McKees Rocks Bottoms. Although the program offers a wealth of resources to local parents, participation among Hays Manor residents is limited due, primarily, to lack of awareness about the program and lack of transportation. Working parents and parents of multiple children have identified transportation and scheduling conflicts with work and other family responsibilities as key challenges preventing them from participating in the program. The ACHA, FOR and the Office of Child Development are exploring transportation solutions to bridge the mobility gap, including the potential feasibility of a van service run by either one of the partners. A survey with young Hays Manor families will also be conducted to identify other ways to maximize resident participation.

C. Connect expecting parents and young families to resources for physical and mental development.

There is a wealth of services in the Borough and in the region available to expecting families and parents of infants and toddlers. From regular dental exams, to hearing and speech screening, to breastfeeding, nutrition and others, the area already provides the resources people need in the early years of parenthood to ensure the healthy development of their children. Awareness about these resources and knowledge about their importance in supporting children's physical and mental development are the primary challenges to be tackled by Choice partners.

One way to streamline the process for parents and make it easier for them to benefit from these services is to create a checklist of developmental milestones from pregnancy to kindergarten and include information about services and programs associated with those milestones.

Community health workers (discussed under Goal 1 of the People Plan) can also provide the consistent connection with individual families to ensure they are taking advantage of existing resources.

GOAL 6

Education

Elementary and middle school age children are proficient in reading and math

A. Maximize school attendance among Hays Manor children

School attendance is a key predictor of academic performance and has been a focus of the Sto-Rox School District for both primary and upper elementary schools. The district has seen attendance numbers drop significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic and has worked consistently with partner organizations to reverse the trend. For K-3 students, transportation is a top challenge since children depend on parents and caregivers to get them to school in time. A support system for parents, based on incentives and other measures is currently being explored. FOR and the ACHA are working together with the school district to identify potential solutions tailored to the specific needs of Hays Manor residents. Transportation is one of the challenges, especially for families who do not own a car and who rely on public transit for daily trips. The nearest bus stop is within a 15-minute walking distance from the school campus. A key recommendation of the neighborhood plan is to extend a bus route to the school campus.

Other measures under consideration include a campaign among upper elementary students based on rewards and incentives.

B. Maximize participation at after-school programs

After school programs provide expanded learning opportunities to children after school hours, complementing their education experience with a variety of academic and extracurricular activities, such as tutoring, reading time, music, dance and sports. Between the Boys and Girls Club program, BJWL and other local initiatives, the Sto-Rox area offers a wealth of after school activities to local families. Although space in each of these programs is limited, Hays Manor families do not fully benefit from what is readily available. The Beverly Jewells Lovelace (BJWL) after school program is run by the non-profit Family Resources at the Hays Manor Community Center and offers a variety of options for kids age K-18. The organization partners with groups such as M-Powerhouse, ComputeReach and other local educational resources to bring regular programs in STEM, technology, arts and sports. To maximize involvement among Hays Manor families, ACHA and FOR will work in partnership with the Zellous Hope Project in efforts to disseminate information about existing programs and resources and to assess current needs driving future adjustments to the program.

C. Expand capacity at the existing after school program at the school campus

The Boys and Girls Club run an after-school program five days a week for kids in primary and upper elementary schools. The program follows the district's curriculum and supports after school learning with a focus on reading and math. Despite the consistent demand and a long waiting list, the program has capacity to serve only 32 students per academic year. Although funding for expansion is available, challenges with staff recruiting slow the plans for increased capacity.

D. Connect students to local summer programs

People partners are also looking to maximize attendance to summer programs among Hays Manor children. The Father Ryan Arts Center, BJWL, Boys and Girls Club and Steel City Impact are some of the local options in the area. Partial and full scholarships for participation at summer camps is being considered as an incentive to participation.

E. Encourage parents involvement with their children's education

The primary and upper elementary school has experienced an all time low parent participation at the local parent-teacher organization with no Hays Manor representation in recent years. To expand outreach and recruitment in the community, the school is currently forming a parents committee to gain insight and receive suggestions for parent engagement and after school programs. The school will be working with FOR and the ACHA to expand outreach among Hays Manor families and invite them to engage more closely in their children's education.

GOAL 7

Education

Young adults are prepared to graduate high school and are career ready

A. Academic skill building

Although high school graduation rates are reasonably high in the Sto-Rox school district, graduating children do not display the proficiency in academic skills they need to support their next steps towards training and professional development. This is a top concern in the community as organizations seek to connect young adults to employment opportunities.

One of the ways identified by People partners to bridge that gap is to encourage students to attend the local Career and Technical Centers (CTC). Awareness about the centers is limited and local families do not have a full understanding of the benefits of a CTC education compared to the standard high school path. CTCs are also outside of McKees Rocks and are seen by residents as a resource that is not available to them. Finding ways to overcome the geographic and social barriers preventing local kids from taking advantage of these existing resources is a top priority for the People plan. Open house sessions, scholarships and other financial incentives are some of the options under consideration.

B. Exposure to career exploration and higher-education

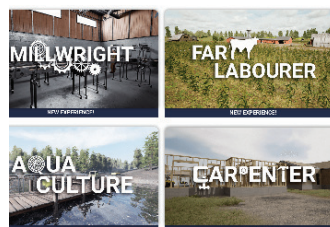
Programs exposing Hays Manor students to career information are another important path towards career development. Local organizations such as M-Powerhouse, Steel City Impact, Partner for Work and BlackTeaBrownSuga Network offer opportunities for career exploration in a variety of fields.



CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTERS PROVIDE A BALANCED MIX OF ACADEMIC EDUCATION WITH EXPOSURE TO PROFESSIONAL FIELDS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM RUN BY STEEL CITY IMPACT EXPOSES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO LOCAL COLLEGES AND CAREER OPTIONS



Explore Careers With The Immersive Power Of Virtual Reality

Curriculum of Career & Technical Centers (CTCs) is designed to be practical and career-oriented, providing students with the skills and knowledge needed to enter the workforce upon graduation.

[View Career Opportunities](#)

M-POWERHOUSE OFFERS A VIRTUAL REALITY PROGRAM EXPOSING STUDENTS TO VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

C. Connect Hays Manor youth to summer programs

Steel City Impact offers a multifaceted approach to summer enrichment programs in Sto-Rox, focusing simultaneously on activities that promote mind, body and spiritual growth. The program runs for 6 weeks from early June to late July and targets students entering 7th through 10th grades. The program includes a variety of classes (some of them in partnership with FOR's Father Ryan Arts Center), field trips and STEM / academic enrichment options.

The ACHA and People partners aim to advance solutions to increase enrollment among Hays Manor residents.



A RECENT FACEBOOK ENTRY REPORTS ACTIVITIES FROM THE FIRST WEEK OF STEEL CITY'S SUMMER PROGRAM ENGAGING STUDENTS IN STEM LAB.

D. Connect Hays Manor students to summer employment opportunities

Through its Learn & Earn program, Partner for Work offers young people opportunities to work part-time and gain experience in the professional world. The organization offers two optional programs in the summer targeting employment at community based organizations or corporate internships. Either option places youth for 6 weeks in opportunities to learn and develop professional skills while earning income.

GOAL 8

Organizational capacity

Expand ACHA's capacity to provide in-house case management for current and future residents

A. Establish a full-time position for in-house case manager

The ACHA has elected to fulfill case management responsibilities in-house and will expand its team to include a dedicated case manager for Hays Manor residents. The future position will allow ACHA to establish a case management system early in the implementation process and prior to resident relocation. ACHA's primary goal is to establish a channel of communication with Hays Manor families and assist them through all steps associated with the revitalization of Hays Manor. Details about the position and responsibilities will be developed on the next phase of the planning process.

B. Set up case management system that aligns with ACHA's goals for Hays Manor

The ACHA will adopt appropriate tools to track and maintain resident records according to HUD standards and general goals for the redevelopment of Hays Manor. As the future site manager, ACHA is committed to a state of the art case management system that can also be adopted for other housing communities in the region. ACHA will leverage HUD resources and connections with other Choice communities to learn about best practices and cost-effective approaches to case management.

C. Build resident services capacity through training and other capacity building opportunities

Training, attendance to conferences, and other tools will be used to prepare the enhanced resident services team at ACHA and provide team members the skills and resources to fulfill its future responsibility providing comprehensive case management services. The ACHA will seek HUD's guidance on potential approaches.

D. Conduct individual surveys with residents prior to relocation

As plans for the future of Hays Manor take shape, residents will be notified about a relocation schedule. Prior to relocation, it is recommended that the ACHA conduct a thorough interview with residents as baseline information about the specific needs of each household prior, during and after relocation. Surveys will be designed and led by the upcoming case manager with support from ACHA and FOR teams.

6.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

TO BE
DETERMINED

APPENDIX

The following documents are included for reference:

- 1. Hays Manor Household Needs Assessment**
- 2. McKees Rocks Community Survey**
- 3. McKees Rocks Real Estate Analysis**

