



PITTSBURGH ECONOMIC QUARTERLY

University Center for Social and Urban Research

Inside This Issue

Property Tax Collection and Neighborhoods ... 6

PNCIS User Conference..... 7

Pittsburgh's Role in National Emergency Preparedness

■ *By Leigh A. McIntosh and Ken Sochats*

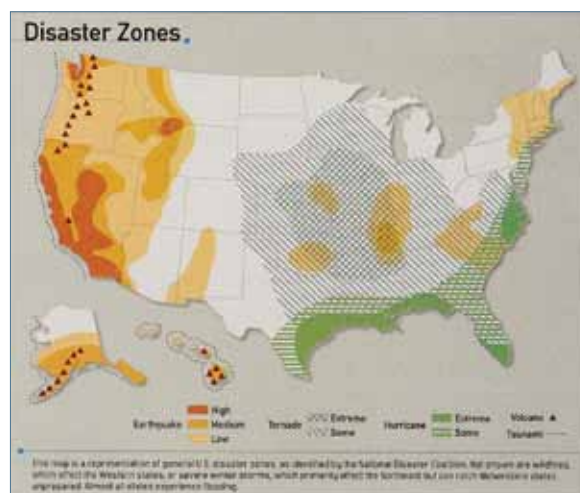
Hurricane Katrina taught us several valuable lessons about preparing for and responding to disasters. Perhaps the most important lesson is that we must start to think about evacuation as not simply an escape from a dangerous area but as an escape to a safe haven. The Pittsburgh region, in addition to having a history of being relatively immune to natural disasters, has an infrastructure that makes it ideal for supporting disaster response and accepting victims of disasters. And, with the Pittsburgh region's long-standing history of public/private partnership, and a track record of intergovernmental cooperation, the goal of the Joint Readiness Center is to establish Pittsburgh as a Center of Excellence for emergency response, recovery, and training.

Pittsburgh as a Safe Place

Pittsburgh's geological location precludes the occurrence of many kinds of natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanoes. Pittsburgh is far enough from a coast so the tsunamis and hurricanes have little or no effect. Ecologically, Pittsburgh has a very low likelihood of wildfires, mudslides,

and other natural effects. The National Disaster Risk Map, produced by the National Disaster Coalition, graphically depicts the areas of the United States that are prone to

Figure 1: National Disaster Risk Map



■ ■ ■ continued on page 2

Educational Attainment in the Pittsburgh Regional Workforce

■ *By Christopher Briem*

Change in the Pittsburgh economy is reflected in many ways, but probably no more profoundly than in the educational attainment of the workforce. When once the region's core manufacturing industries provided career-long jobs not requiring advanced degrees, few local industries today provide similar opportunities.

The composition of a regional labor force as measured by the educational attainment of its workers is viewed as an increasingly important factor of regional competitiveness. The Pittsburgh labor force today has become one of the most highly educated workforces in the country.

A region's labor force is not the same as either its total population or its entire working age population. Only those currently employed and those actively seeking work are counted in the labor force. At the same time, many people are not in the labor force. This includes the retired, students, those working full time within the home, and those who have dropped out of the labor force because of discouragement or for other reasons.

Data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) is compiled to benchmark the educational attainment of the Pittsburgh region's labor force. The CPS is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and is the primary source of information on the American labor force. Information on the unemployment rate and other labor force data reported at the national, state, and regional levels comes from the CPS.

We compared the educational attainment of the Pittsburgh labor force to the regional labor forces of the 40 largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the U.S. We are particularly interested in the educational attainment of workers aged 25–34, since this age bracket on average, separates those enrolled in school from those who have completed their education.

The educational attainment of this cohort provides a clearer picture of the changes going on in the regional labor force today. Younger workers typically have higher

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continued from page 1

certain classes of disaster. As one can see, Pittsburgh is among the safest U.S. locations for national disasters.

Another aspect of risk is related to potential terrorism. We will not enumerate potential targets in this paper; however, suffice it to say that Pittsburgh is significantly less at risk than other locations. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has identified terrorism threat profiles and Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR) sectors. According to the National Ocean Service, more than half of the U.S. population resides within 50 miles of a coast. Much critical infrastructure, such as ports, military bases, international airports, national monuments, and government are located close to a coast or are co-located with a population center.

Pittsburgh's Strategic Location and Access

Two other favorable criteria for Pittsburgh as a key emergency resource are its geographically central location and its emergency support capabilities. Pittsburgh is within a short drive or flight to many urban centers, with more than half the U.S. population within 500 miles (see Figure 2).

Convenient access to Pittsburgh includes:

- Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT), served by 13 air carriers, accommodating more than 10 million travelers and nearly 210,000 aircraft operations annually.
- One of only nine major metro areas served by at least four interstates.

Figure 2: Pittsburgh 500 Mile Radius



- Two Class I railroad mainlines (CSX and Norfolk Southern) and four Class II and 10 Class III railroads.
- Strong military presence with the 911th Airlift Wing, the 171st Air Refueling Wing, the 316th Sustainment Command and the Navy Operational Support Center.
- Second busiest inland port in the nation.

Additionally, Pittsburgh has a robust and quality infrastructure for accepting evacuees from disaster areas. Many Katrina victims were relocated to Pittsburgh. Its world-class health care and educational infrastructure are among the major community assets critical to supporting response and evacuation.

Region 13

Pennsylvania Region 13 is the emergency response organization established by an unprecedented intergovernmental cooperative agreement among the 13 counties in Southwestern Pennsylvania and the City of Pittsburgh.

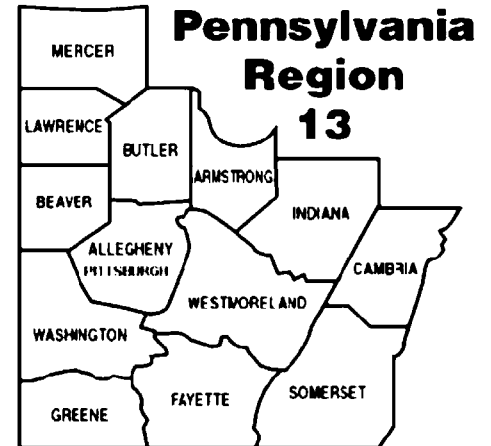
The group recognized that, during any significant "All Hazards" or terrorism event, the response assets of the entire region might be required and called upon to assist local responders. Region 13 assets include 713 fire departments, 392 police departments, 203 EMS agencies, 65 hospitals, 15 HazMat teams, two explosive teams, and an urban search and rescue (USAR) team. Region 13 participates in the Metropolitan Medical Response System.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Association of Counties, and the National

Domestic Preparedness Office have recognized Region 13 as a model organization for intergovernmental cooperation in fighting the threat and consequences of natural disasters and terrorism. Region 13 has significant experience in responding to major events, including 9/11.

The members of Region 13, as a practice, actively collaborate on training,

Figure 3



interoperable equipment and supplies acquisition, exercise participation, state and federal coordination, and other activities. The members are well positioned to support emergency missions in virtually any area of the U.S.

Establishing the Joint Readiness Center—Pittsburgh

Potential terrorist attacks and the possibility of naturally occurring emergencies, such as disease outbreaks or natural disasters, have raised concerns about our nation's ability to respond to mass casualty events.

The Joint Readiness Center—Pittsburgh (JRC) is working to plan and implement effective surge medical emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, resulting in saved lives, protected property and critical infrastructure, and ensured resiliency to communities and commerce that may be impacted by a natural or manmade disaster of a national scale. Building on previous public investment in and around the Pittsburgh International Airport, this model also brings strong involvement from private sector resources.

As part of a community-wide effort to support the presence of the military, more than 1,220 Air Force Reserve personnel, and an estimated \$93.6 million in economic impact, the Joint Readiness Center was established by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission in 2005. The JRC—Pittsburgh is mandated to "reorganize the Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station as a contiguous enclave collocated with the Pittsburgh International Airport to support continued

operations compatible with civilian and military Reserve and National Guard assets.”

The JRC–Pittsburgh’s mission is to provide civil-military operations, homeland security, and community-based medical support to the U.S. Department of Defense and DHS. It is intended to integrate and enhance national defense, homeland security and emergency and disaster readiness, and response and recovery efforts at the regional level.

The Military Affairs Council of Western Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh region community leaders established a grassroots, public/private partnership task force to refine the scope and breadth of the JRC–Pittsburgh and to support the nation in solving critical operational issues in readiness and response for disasters and catastrophic events. Since 2005, the JRC–Pittsburgh Task Force has been financially supported by Governor Ed Rendell and the Pennsylvania Base Development Committee, with the aim of fully operational implementation of the JRC–Pittsburgh.

Progress in achieving full implementation of the JRC–Pittsburgh as the operational, national center of excellence for surge medicine, as cited in 2005 BRAC law, begins with and depends on comprehensive planning efforts. Through this broad-based effort, under advisement of the JRC–Federal Interagency Working Group, a collaborative foundation has been established to serve as an effective tool to discuss the needs for a surge medical capability based on untapped resources of the region’s private sector.

The objectives of the JRC–Pittsburgh Task Force are:

- Identification of surge medical resources that can be applied to disaster efforts to achieve preparedness goals;
- Education and training of first-responders, medical personnel, and law enforcement, including drills and exercises, from tabletop demonstrations to full-scale trials;
- Development of a rapidly deployable, flexible surge medical capability to effectively address threats;
- Integration of these surge medical capabilities into assessments of threats and vulnerabilities to create integrated consequence management, across a civil-military platform; and

- Development of an operational model of a rapidly deployable, flexible surge medical response.

G-20 Pittsburgh Summit: Testing the JRC–Pittsburgh Hypothesis

Shortly after the April 2009 G-20 London summit, President Barack Obama announced the selection of Pittsburgh as the location for the next meeting of the G-20 leaders, in conjunction with the opening of the United Nations General Assembly. The meeting, held September 24-25, 2009, would allow Pittsburgh regional leaders to showcase the community’s economic recovery following the collapse of the manufacturing sector in the 1980s. In addition to showcasing the Pittsburgh region’s transformation and community assets, the strong relationships between the public and private sectors would also become a best-practice model of community cooperation.

With three months’ time to plan for the G-20 Pittsburgh Summit, DHS declared the event a “National Special Security Event.” With this declaration, a three-month planning process for one of the most complex and high-profile events ever held in the Pittsburgh region began in late June 2009.

Based on previous meetings of the G-20 and world leaders, thousands of protestors were expected to converge on the City of Pittsburgh, in addition to the roughly 5,000 official attendees. The high-level risks of violent protestor demonstrations, which could include terrorist attacks or the use of weapons of mass destruction, required the development of integrated security and medical response plans.

Led by the Secret Service, an Executive Steering Committee, comprised of other federal, state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations, was assembled to develop and implement an integrated security and medical response planning for the G-20 Summit. The committee was organized into 21 subcommittees, addressing a range of issues, such as emergency management, health and medical care, and business continuity.

Even with the short timetable, the result was a highly efficient and effective planning process. While minor disruptions occurred throughout the week of the G-20 Pittsburgh Summit, no major violence was reported. No

vehicles or equipment were damaged; no emergency or medical personnel sustained injury or were the target of protestors. Emergency medical personnel cared for 22 patients with non-life-threatening conditions, of whom only 11 were transported to hospitals for medical care.

Conclusions

The JRC–Pittsburgh continues to develop a robust medical infrastructure, bringing together first responders and providers through Region 13, more than 60 hospitals, and the private sector, which serve as a resource for disaster planning modules, and as a deployable surge medical resource for response and recovery efforts.

The Pittsburgh region and Southwestern Pennsylvania generally are well known nationally for having in-depth medical resources and surge capacity, including two large and advanced medical care systems, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and the West Penn-Allegheny Health Care System. The presence of 35 colleges and universities in the region makes Pittsburgh a center for excellence and innovation in the delivery of health care.

The JRC–Pittsburgh thus takes advantage of decades of public investments, including road and highway projects, the Pittsburgh International Airport, education and training, and defense spending. Given the unique geographic location, the JRC–Pittsburgh is outside of the busy east coast corridor and removed from the threat of most natural disasters. For these reasons, Pittsburgh is well positioned to serve as a strategic center of excellence for preparing for and responding to natural or man-made disasters and takes full advantage of the region’s reputation for world-class healthcare, long-standing intergovernmental cooperation agreements for emergency response, previous public and private investments, and civil-military collaboration.

For more information, please contact Joint Readiness Center–Pittsburgh Task Force, Leigh A. McIntosh, CECD, Langley Group, leighamcintosh@yahoo.com, and Ken Sochats, UCSUR and Center for National Preparedness, University of Pittsburgh, sochats@pitt.edu.

continued from page 1

rates of educational attainment than older workers; they also tend to be the most mobile both geographically and by job tenure. Because of their mobility, they are an important factor in firms' recruitment and retention efforts.

In 2009, the percentage of workers in Pittsburgh with a bachelor's degree or higher exceeded the U.S. average for younger age cohorts (see figure 1). For workers aged 25–34 in the Pittsburgh region, 48.1 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2009, well above the U.S. average of 34.7 percent. This gap was the largest for any cohort. The gap narrowed with age, until, for the oldest age groups,

Pittsburgh workers were less likely to have a bachelor's degree than workers nationally.

How does Pittsburgh's level of educational attainment compare to other regions in the country? Workers aged 25–34 in the Pittsburgh region who had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2009 ranked fifth among the 40 largest MSAs, following Boston, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Austin (see figure 2). Conversely, Pittsburgh ranked lowest in terms of the proportion of the labor force with less than a high school degree or equivalent (see figure 3). In 2009, only 2.2 percent of workers aged 25–34 in the Pittsburgh region had less than a high school degree or equivalent.

Finally, how does the Pittsburgh region

fare compared to other places in the nation in regard to workers with a graduate or professional degree? In 2009, 21.5 percent of workers aged 25–34 in the Pittsburgh region possessed a graduate or professional degree, virtually tied with the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C., along with Boston, were the only regions in the country to have at least 20 percent of workers in this age range with advanced degrees (see figure 4).

Educational attainment of today's younger workers shows once again the depth and breadth of the changes and resilience of the Pittsburgh regional economy. Pittsburgh's younger workers are among the most educated in the nation today.

Figure 1: Proportion of Labor Force with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, Pittsburgh Region and U.S., 2009

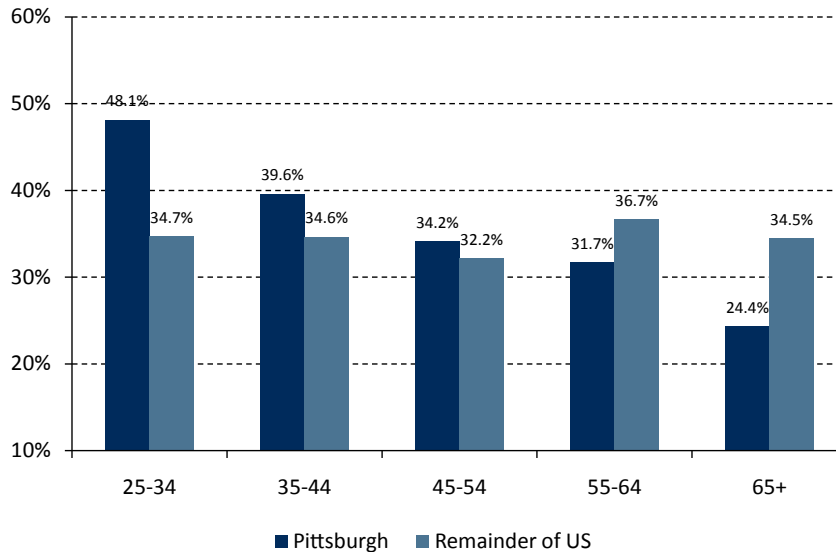


Figure 2: Proportion of Labor Force Aged 25-34 with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, Forty Largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 2009

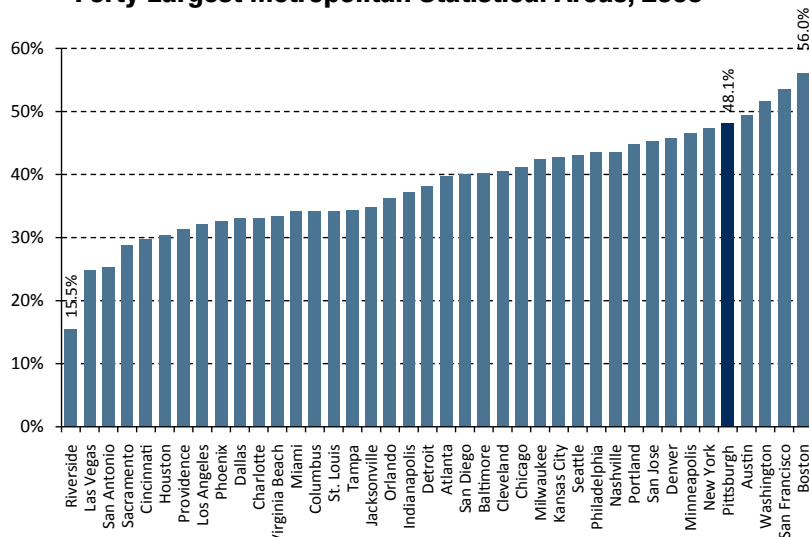


Figure 3: Proportion of Labor Force Age 25-34 without a High School Degree or Equivalent, Forty Largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 2009

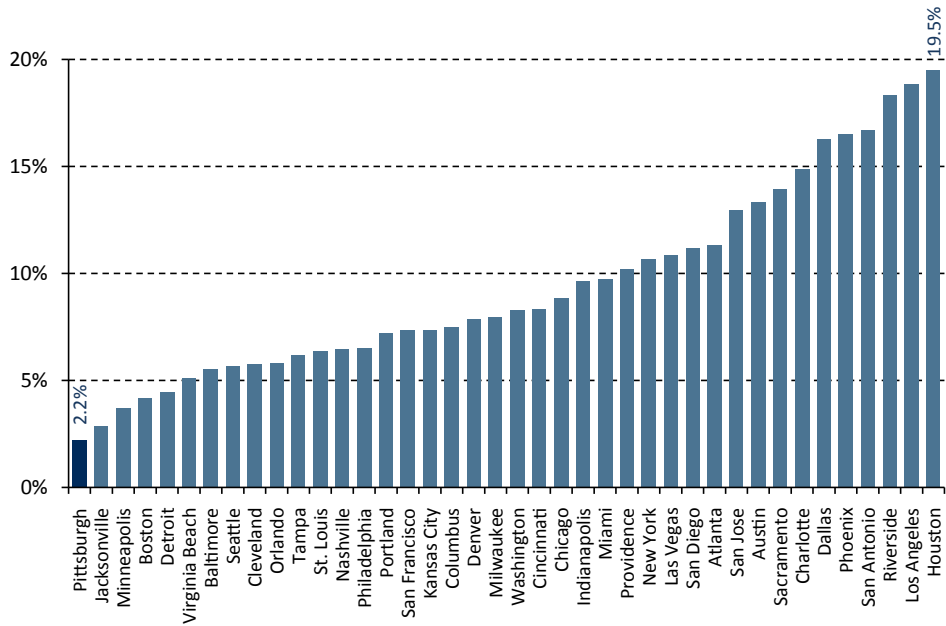
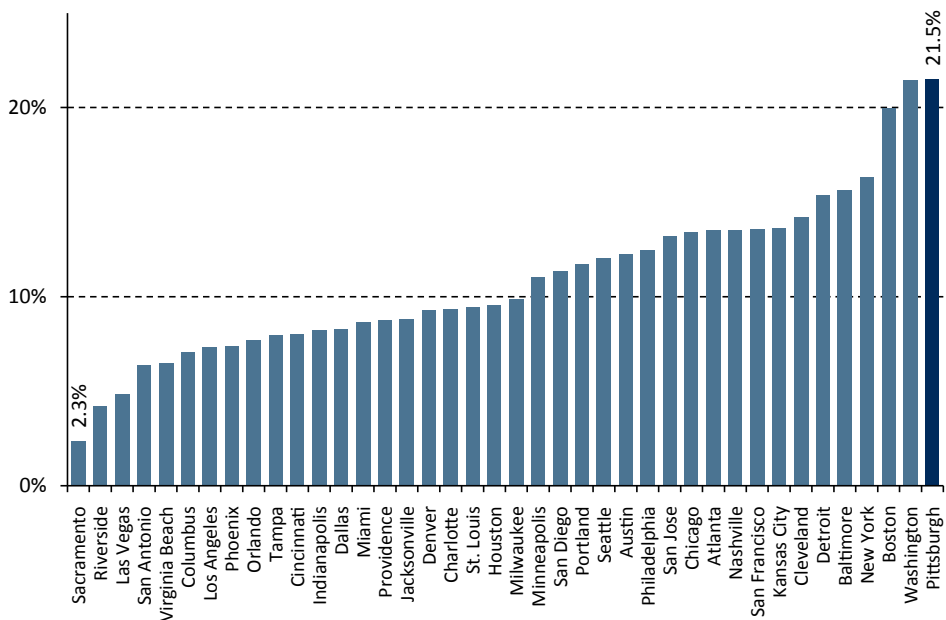


Figure 4: Proportion of Labor Force Age 25-34 with a Graduate or Professional Degree, Forty Largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 2009



Property Tax Collection and Neighborhoods

■ By Christopher Briem and Sabina Deitrick

Understanding city finances and sources of revenues is critical to making quality-of-life improvements in any location. In 2004, *Governing* magazine summed up the relation between the City of Pittsburgh's economic vitality and fiscal distress as "the Pittsburgh Paradox." Construction boomed, brownfield sites turned green, and the view from the hill was one of prosperity. At the same time, however, the City of Pittsburgh had just entered into fiscal distress under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Act 47 designation, with two state oversight boards taking power over finances and operations.

What can we learn now about the City of Pittsburgh's taxing ability and revenue sources? The Pittsburgh Neighborhood and Community Information System (PNCIS) can be used to compile the effective property tax generating capacity of City of Pittsburgh at the neighborhood level. At the same time, this information

can reinforce previous PEQ articles showing the impacts of fiscal distress on our neighborhoods and need for revitalization strategies.

Real estate taxes are the largest revenue source for the City of Pittsburgh. Revenues from direct real estate taxes generated \$128 million in 2008 (latest year available), 29 percent of all City of Pittsburgh revenue that year. That includes both current and past year collection on annual property taxes assessed on each non-tax-exempt parcel in the City of Pittsburgh. An additional \$17.6 million was raised in 2008 from realty transfer taxes that accrue on parcels that change ownership. Other significant sources of revenues for the city in 2008 included the earned income tax (\$65.3 million), parking taxes (\$44 million), and the Payroll Preparation Tax (\$46.4 million).

Real estate in the City of Pittsburgh is assessed by Allegheny County's Office of Property Assessments. The current property

assessments are based on a 2002 base-year system intended to reflect market valuations at that time. All properties are expected to receive new property assessments in upcoming years as part of a court-ordered mass reassessment.

The PNCIS was used to compile the total assessed value of all taxable real estate parcels in each neighborhood along with the total value of property delinquent in the payment of municipal and school property taxes in 2009. The net amount represents the effective real estate revenue generating capacity of each neighborhood at that time.

Where do property taxes come from? First, and most obviously, the generation of property tax revenue is uneven across neighborhoods within the city. The sizes and number of parcels within neighborhoods vary, as do the average value of properties, the incidence of tax delinquency, the mix of commercial and residential property, and the concentration of tax-exempt properties.

Taxable Property and Delinquency by City of Pittsburgh Neighborhood—2009

Neighborhood	Number of Taxable Parcels			Assessed Value			
	Total	Delinquent		Total	Delinquent Parcels	Total Non-delinquent	
Golden Triangle/CivicArena	544	45	(8.3%)	\$2,466,535,596	\$36,405,050	(1.5%)	\$2,430,130,546
Shadyside	2,644	195	(7.4%)	\$817,389,593	\$58,868,950	(7.2%)	\$758,520,643
Squirrel Hill North	2,519	125	(5.0%)	\$752,306,230	\$38,866,200	(5.2%)	\$713,440,030
Squirrel Hill South	4,000	212	(5.3%)	\$736,387,355	\$34,816,610	(4.7%)	\$701,570,745
South Side Flats	2,923	308	(10.5%)	\$543,428,543	\$42,388,265	(7.8%)	\$501,040,278
Point Breeze	2,115	107	(5.1%)	\$405,990,140	\$18,189,100	(4.5%)	\$387,801,040
Brookline	6,083	548	(9.0%)	\$400,406,712	\$31,461,300	(7.9%)	\$368,945,412
Bloomfield	3,550	372	(10.5%)	\$382,665,700	\$43,984,500	(11.5%)	\$338,681,200
Mount Washington	4,043	587	(14.5%)	\$312,120,619	\$27,736,720	(8.9%)	\$284,383,899
Carrick	4,390	526	(12.0%)	\$254,812,569	\$26,950,980	(10.6%)	\$227,861,589
Strip District	605	63	(10.4%)	\$244,698,700	\$21,073,700	(8.6%)	\$223,625,000
Highland Park	2,090	174	(8.3%)	\$232,750,265	\$16,398,600	(7.0%)	\$216,351,665
North Shore	170	15	(8.8%)	\$210,398,325	\$549,400	(0.3%)	\$209,848,925
Greenfield	3,445	377	(10.9%)	\$223,614,831	\$19,582,600	(8.8%)	\$204,032,231
Beechview	3,929	532	(13.5%)	\$206,866,470	\$22,479,220	(10.9%)	\$184,387,250
Brighton Heights	3,089	410	(13.3%)	\$202,527,551	\$21,932,700	(10.8%)	\$180,594,851
Banksville	1,423	99	(7.0%)	\$164,147,245	\$6,664,700	(4.1%)	\$157,482,545
Herr's Island	1,224		(0.0%)	\$146,170,125		(0.0%)	\$146,170,125
East Liberty	1,339	231	(17.3%)	\$149,968,673	\$21,847,400	(14.6%)	\$128,121,273
North Oakland	257	12	(4.7%)	\$133,798,820	\$5,694,000	(4.3%)	\$128,104,820
Top 20 Total	50,382	4,938	(9.8%)	\$8,986,984,062	\$495,889,995	(5.5%)	\$8,491,094,067
All Other	74,107	20,125	(27.2%)	\$3,951,322,705	\$567,233,266	(14.4%)	\$3,384,089,439
City Total	124,489	25,063	(20.1%)	\$12,938,306,767	\$1,063,123,261	(8.2%)	\$11,875,183,506

Those areas with the largest concentration of high-value commercial properties will be the largest property tax generators.

As expected, with several of the most valuable properties in the region, the city's central business district, the Golden Triangle, generated the largest property tax revenue in 2009. With over \$2.4 billion in nondelinquent taxable assessed value (see table), the Golden Triangle generates roughly 20 percent of all property tax collected by the City of Pittsburgh.

Some East End neighborhoods, with a mix of high-value residential property and extensive commercial businesses, have the next greatest valuation of taxable property after downtown. The assessed value of nondelinquent taxable properties in Squirrel Hill totaled \$1.4 billion in 2009, with \$713 million in Squirrel Hill North and \$702 million in Squirrel Hill South, the city's official neighborhood designations. Nearby Shadyside's value of total nondelinquent taxable assessed property registered \$759 million in 2009.

The amounts shown do not include the assessment for the Rivers Casino, which received an initial assessment of \$200 million in 2009. The casino is technically located in the Chateau neighborhood of the city, a mostly unpopulated district. The Casino is now one of the most valuable taxable properties in the city.

The top 20 neighborhoods account for nearly \$8.5 billion or 71.5 percent of the \$11.9 billion in nondelinquent taxable assessed valuation within the city, with the top 10 neighborhoods alone representing 56.5 percent of the nondelinquent taxable assessed valuation.

Delinquent properties remain a problem both for the city as a whole and for specific neighborhoods. They remain a problem for the city's revenues. Delinquent properties in 2009 represented 20.1 percent of city's taxable properties and 8.2 percent of the assessed value.

Many city neighborhoods have relatively low average assessed values, or have significant concentrations of properties with delinquent real estate taxes or, increasingly commonly, both. In eight neighborhoods, 50 percent or more of the taxable properties were delinquent in 2009.

Twenty-seven neighborhoods represented 50 percent of the number of tax-delinquent properties and in the city in 2009. (There are 90 city designated neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh.) In these 27 neighborhoods, tax-delinquent properties represented 30 percent or more of their total taxable properties in 2009.

Tax delinquency occurs for many reasons. People enter into financial personal problems. Delinquency is one of the early indicators of potential further losses in homeownership and mortgage obligations. Estates don't get settled, and delinquency prolongs over years. Sometimes, governments do not have adequate contact and collection measures, so problems recur without retribution.

Concentrated delinquency is an indication of additional neighborhood effects. Property values can drop for responsible owners and their homes. Absentee ownership and real estate-owned investments can contribute to property deterioration, with negative neighborhood effects. Problems persist and are cumulative. For properties delinquent in both 2004 and 2005 in the City of Pittsburgh, nearly 75 percent remained delinquent in 2009.

Governing magazine pointed to the problems inherent in the city's tax structure. Adding additional property tax delinquencies exacerbates the problems of the Pittsburgh paradox. Nonetheless, important steps are already underway. Data available through the PNCIS provides communities with important information on ownership, ownership changes, and problem properties. The City of Pittsburgh is taking proactive steps to improve the transition of problem properties to productive re-use options through the Mayor's Land Recycling Task Force. In 2010, it has also outsourced collection of delinquent property taxes to attempt more successful recovery. Additional means are needed, but recognizing the aggregate impact of these properties is an important awareness step.

Listen to Chris Briem on UCSUR Podcast

UCSUR regional economist Chris Briem talks about the Census 2010 and changes to expect. This supplements "The 2010 Census is Almost Here: Or, All You Want to Know about the Upcoming Census but Were Afraid to Ask" in PEQ, December 2009 (www.ucsur.pitt.edu/publications.php). In the podcast, Chris addresses additional issues of concern with the Census Bureau's new approach, including how the elimination of the long form and the expanded American Community Survey will affect neighborhood studies. Visit our Web site at www.ucsur.pitt.edu to hear more about Census changes from Chris!

Pittsburgh Neighborhood and Community Information System (PNCIS) Users Conference

The Pittsburgh Neighborhood and Community Information System will host its first ever PNCIS Users Conference on June 11, 2010. This inaugural conference will bring together PNCIS users, national neighborhood experts, and others interested in using information more effectively to reduce blight, promote neighborhood investment, and revitalize communities in the Pittsburgh area.

National experts will share how data has been used to improve conditions in other communities through planning, community building, and urban problem solving. Current policy initiatives and programs at agencies including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will also be addressed.

Local users will share stories of how the PNCIS was used to assess conditions, inform plans and strategies, and effect positive change in their neighborhoods.

Additional information will be available on new data sources, foreclosure and housing analysis, and Census 2010 applications.

The PNCIS user conference will be held June 11, 2010, from 1–5 p.m. at the University Club, 123 University Place, in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh. To register, please contact Bob Gradeck at pncis@pitt.edu or 412-624-9177.

PNCIS is a partnership of the Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development (PPND), City of Pittsburgh, and other local and state stakeholders. UCSUR operates PNCIS in agreement with PPND, who was instrumental in securing the financial support to build the PNCIS. PNCIS is also a partner of the National Neighborhood Indicator Partnership, a collaborative effort by the Urban Institute and local partners to further the development and use of neighborhood-level information systems in local policymaking and community building.



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