

*An Atlas of the Central North Side Neighborhood  
of Pittsburgh 1977*



**CENTRAL NORTH SIDE**

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# PITTSBURGH NEIGHBORHOOD ATLAS

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## INTRODUCTION

The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Alliance was formed in 1969 by a number of neighborhood organizations that were concerned with improving the city's neighborhoods and their relations with city government. The members of the Alliance recognized that in order to negotiate effectively with city government about such major concerns as public service needs, capital improvements and transportation, it was necessary to obtain accurate, up-to-date information about the neighborhoods. Unfortunately, this information was not available.

To remedy this situation, the Alliance developed its Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas project. First, the boundaries of the city's neighborhoods had to be determined. The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas asked people attending community meetings to name and describe the boundaries of the neighborhoods in which they lived. This information was also provided by an Atlas-initiated survey. Responses from every voting district of the city were analyzed to assure citizen involvement at the neighborhood level. Seventy-eight neighborhoods were thus identified, each made up of one or more whole voting districts in order to comply with provisions in Pittsburgh's home rule charter relating to the election of community advisory boards.

The Atlas then gathered a body of useful and up-to-date information for every neighborhood. It is the beginning of a neighborhood information system that more closely reflects neighborhood boundaries as defined by residents instead of by public officials. In the past, statistics about sections of the city have been based on information published for relatively large areas such as census tracts. For the atlas, much of the material describing neighborhood characteristics came from figures compiled for smaller areas: voting districts or census blocks. As a result, detailed information is now available for neighborhoods whose boundaries differ substantially from census tract boundaries.

The information in this atlas provides an insight into current neighborhood conditions and the direction in which the neighborhood is moving. The best indicators showing the health of the neighborhood are provided by citizen satisfaction with the neighborhood, and changes in residential real estate transaction prices. Comparison of these statistics to those for the entire city provide a basis to begin understanding issues of neighborhood stability. In the years to come, as additional data are gathered for each of these indicators, trends will become more obvious.

It is important to recognize that neighborhood change is a complex process and that one indicator by itself may not be useful. Neighborhoods may be healthy regardless of their level of income, and therefore income-related statistics may not be useful guides by themselves. Neighborhoods must be viewed over time in terms of relative changes compared to the city as a whole, and any analysis of neighborhood conditions must focus upon all of the data in order to provide a comprehensive understanding.

To learn about specific sections of the neighborhood, figures by individual voting district or census tract may be obtained. Additional information on the neighborhood or the information system is available through the Center for Urban Research of the University of Pittsburgh, which has made an outstanding contribution to the development of this atlas.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Central North Side is approximately 1.4 miles north of downtown. It is estimated to be 187.1 acres in size, containing 0.5% of the city's land and 1.1% of its 1974 population. The voting districts in the neighborhood are #8 and #9, Ward 22; #1 to #3, #5, and #11, Ward 25. (See Appendix for a listing of the neighborhood's census tracts.)

In some neighborhoods a significant proportion of the residents identified a section of the neighborhood by another name, therefore this section is called a sub-neighborhood. The sub-neighborhood in Central North Side is Mexican War Streets.



NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY  
CENTRAL NORTH SIDE

The North Side, a city in its own right until its 1907 annexation to Pittsburgh, was formerly known as Allegheny. This name is derived from the "Allegewi" or "Alleghans", an Indian tribe who settled along the banks of the Allegheny River.

The first known inhabitant in the area was Andrew Long who settled at the base of Monument Hill in 1740. By 1800 Allegheny had a population of 275, most of whom were farmers. This grew to 450 by 1810 and, in 1828, had reached 1,000. The development of steam boat transportation aided the town's settlement and growth.

Allegheny was incorporated as a city in 1840. It had moved from wild terrain to farmland; from village to canal town to industrial city. Its inhabitants worked as bow string makers, wagoners, porter bottlers, plane and chair makers and spinners. Others cut nails, manufactured swords, boiled soap, and made brushes, hair caps, sails, shoes, saddles and harnesses.

By the late 19th century, Allegheny was both self sufficient and prosperous. The canal and, later, the railroad brought new business. Steel mills, textile, glass and cotton factories were established.

As Allegheny grew economically it sought political expansion. Surrounding communities were annexed to the burgeoning borough. Troy Hill, the East Street Valley and Spring Garden were incorporated in 1868, Manchester became part of Allegheny in 1869 and Woods Run in 1870. By 1870, Allegheny's population was 53,000.

Alleghenians were an ethnic mix. The English settlers had been followed by the Scotch-Irish, the Scots and the Irish. Germans came in large numbers. The Croatians, Czechs, Lusatian Sorbs (Wends), Slovaks, Carpatho-Rusins, Ukrainians and Greeks were all drawn by the city's promise of employment. Blacks migrated to the North Side later.

Allegheny was a town of many faiths; Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Roman and Byzantine Catholics, The Eastern Orthodox and Jews were all represented.

Reflecting perhaps the variety of work activity there, Alleghenians achieved great prominence in numerous fields. Andrew Carnegie, H. J. Heinz, Samuel Pierpont Langley and Stephen Collins Foster all worked there. Two apostles of the avant-garde, Gertrude Stein and Martha Graham were both born there. Mary Roberts Rinehart wrote many mystery novels with old Allegheny settings.

A racially mixed, residential business community, the Central North Side has seen a concerted effort to halt urban decay. In the mid 1960's, a group of area residents and leaders from Pittsburgh financial institutions created the Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) program. Since 1968, NHS has made in excess of one million dollars of home improvement loans to area residents with funds provided by a local foundation, and has served as a model for a national program. Additionally, the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation has assisted in the restoration of many houses in the Mexican War Streets section of the neighborhood.

CENTRAL NORTH SIDE  
SUMMARY STATISTICS

	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
Population (1974)	5,499	479,276
% Change (1970-1974)	-21%	-8%
% Black population (1970)	45%	20%
Housing units (1974)	2,229	166,625
% Vacant	13%	6%
% Owner-occupied housing units (1974)	38%	54%
Average sales price of owner-occupied dwellings (1975)	\$10,310	\$23,518
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions (1975)	30%	59%
Crime rate (1975)	0.106	0.053
Average family income (1969)	\$ 7,200	\$10,500
Income index as % of city index (1974)	88%	
% Satisfied with neighborhood (1976)	23%	41%
Major neighborhood problems (1976)	Vandalism Trash and litter Burglary Vacant buildings	Poor roads Dog litter Burglary

CITIZEN SURVEY

The purpose of the citizen survey was to obtain attitudes about the quality of the neighborhood environment. Citizens were asked to respond to questions concerning the neighborhood as a whole, neighborhood problems, and public services. The attitudinal data, heretofore not available, are key indicators of the relative health of the neighborhood. By specifying neighborhood problems or public service needs, the information may be a useful guide for public investment or service delivery decisions.

The city-wide survey was mailed to a randomly selected sample of registered voters. Of approximately 35,000 households contacted 9,767 responded. The sample provides a 5% response rate for each of the city's 423 voting districts. (See Appendix for a profile of the respondents as well as for statistics on voter registration.)

I. Neighborhood Satisfaction

Central North Side residents are generally less satisfied with their neighborhood than residents city-wide. Table 1 shows that 23% of the citizens responding to the survey were satisfied with their neighborhood compared to 41% in all city neighborhoods. When asked to state whether the neighborhood is better or worse than two years ago, 26% said that it was better which exceeded the city-wide response of 12%. Given the opportunity to move from the neighborhood, 39% said they would continue to live there compared to a response of 45% for the city as a whole. The responses to these satisfaction questions indicate a mixed attitude of residents toward their neighborhood compared to citizens city-wide.

TABLE 1

Neighborhood Satisfaction  
Central North Side

Question 1: Generally, how satisfied are you with conditions in this neighborhood?

	Satisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Neither (%)
Central North Side	23	59	16
All neighborhoods	41	37	21

Question 2: Do you think this neighborhood has gotten better or worse over the past two years?

	Better (%)	Worse (%)	Not Changed (%)
Central North Side	26	49	21
All neighborhoods	12	49	36

Question 3: If you had your choice of where to live, would you continue living in this neighborhood?

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
Central North Side	39	39	14
All neighborhoods	45	32	18

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The percent responses to each question do not add up to 100%. The difference is accounted for by the following: "don't know", "unable to evaluate", or no answer.

## II. Neighborhood Problems

In order to identify specific neighborhood problems, residents were asked to consider twelve problems usually associated with urban communities and rate them for the neighborhood. Table 2 compares the problem ratings of the respondents from Central North Side to those from all city neighborhoods. Areas of particular concern for the neighborhood include burglary, vandalism, trash and litter, and vacant buildings.

## III. Satisfaction with Public Services

Table 3 shows the satisfaction of Central North Side residents with their public services and compares the responses to data for all city neighborhoods. City-wide, residents are least satisfied with street and alley maintenance. Central North Side residents are more satisfied with respect to the fire department and public transportation, and less satisfied with respect to street and alley maintenance and police.

The Citizen Survey also asked the respondents to list the services with which they were the least satisfied and to explain the reasons for their dissatisfaction. Residents from Central North Side gave the greatest number of reasons for dissatisfaction to the services listed below. Included is a summary of the major reasons for their dissatisfaction.

1. Street and alley maintenance: Need better street repair and maintenance program; poor quality of street cleaning services; problems with dirty street sidewalks.
2. Police: Insufficient police services; not enough police protection.
3. Garbage collection: No regular garbage pick-up service; poor quality of service; collectors not on time; all trash not collected.



TABLE 2

Neighborhood Problems  
Central North Side

Problem Category	Problem Rating - Percent Response		
	<u>Not a Problem</u>	<u>Minor or Moderate</u>	<u>Big or Very Serious</u>
Unsafe streets			
Central North Side	8	40	38
All neighborhoods	25	45	21
Vandalism			
Central North Side	9	34	54
All neighborhoods	13	49	28
Rats			
Central North Side	9	33	33
All neighborhoods	34	33	12
Burglary			
Central North Side	9	26	44
All neighborhoods	14	44	29
Poor roads			
Central North Side	18	38	27
All neighborhoods	17	41	33
Trash and litter			
Central North Side	7	23	48
All neighborhoods	27	41	24
Vacant buildings			
Central North Side	8	31	44
All neighborhoods	49	24	13
Undesirable people moving into the neighborhood			
Central North Side	22	26	25
All neighborhoods	42	28	15
Stray dogs			
Central North Side	10	39	29
All neighborhoods	25	38	18
Dog litter			
Central North Side	13	31	33
All neighborhoods	21	38	32

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The percent responses to each question do not add up to 100%. The difference is accounted for by the following: "don't know", "unable to evaluate", or no answer. The problem categories of alcoholism and drug abuse are not included in the table because the response rates to these questions were low.

TABLE 3

Satisfaction with Public Services  
Central North Side

Service	Percent Response		
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>
Parks and Recreation			
Central North Side	62	8	10
All neighborhoods	51	15	23
Schools			
Central North Side	51	8	9
All neighborhoods	46	12	21
Street maintenance			
Central North Side	29	20	39
All neighborhoods	32	15	49
Alley maintenance			
Central North Side	14	8	61
All neighborhoods	20	13	39
Garbage collection			
Central North Side	40	20	26
All neighborhoods	74	10	13
Police			
Central North Side	36	9	42
All neighborhoods	51	17	23
Public transportation			
Central North Side	65	10	8
All neighborhoods	61	11	23
Fire Department			
Central North Side	70	10	3
All neighborhoods	78	7	3
Sewage system			
Central North Side	59	8	10
All neighborhoods	63	10	13
Condition and cost of housing			
Central North Side	27	23	31
All neighborhoods	44	17	22

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The percent responses to each question do not add up to 100%. The difference is accounted for by the following: "don't know", "unable to evaluate", or no answer. Public health and mental health/mental retardation services are not included in the table because the response rates to these questions were low.

CRIME RATE

The crime rate for major crimes has fluctuated over the last three years (Table 4). For 1973 the number of major crimes per capita was .098. The crime rate increased in 1974 to .107; then decreased slightly to .106 in 1975. The crime rate in the neighborhood was greater than the city per capita rate of .053 in 1975.

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TABLE 4

Crime Rate: Major Crimes  
Central North Side

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<u>Year</u>	<u>Major Crimes</u>	<u>Crime Rate</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
1973	541	.098	.043
1974	591	.107	.047
1975	585	.106	.053

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SOURCE: City of Pittsburgh, Bureau of Police.

NOTE: Major crimes are murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, and theft. The neighborhood crime rate is computed by dividing the number of crimes committed in the neighborhood by its adjusted population for 1974.

THE PEOPLE

Table 5 and Table 6 present data on the characteristics of the neighborhood population and compare them to city-wide statistics.

In 1974, the estimated population of Central North Side was 5,499, down by 21% since 1970. This compares to a city-wide population decline of 8% during the same period. Information on the racial composition of the neighborhood is not available for 1974; however, the number of Black households in the neighborhood increased during the decade of the sixties, and the Black population was 45.3% of the neighborhood's population in 1970, compared to 20.2% for the city.

The average household size in the neighborhood was 2.55 persons in 1974, up from 1970. The percentage of the population 65 years and older was 15.5% in 1970, compared to 13.5% for the city as a whole.

TABLE 5

Population and Housing Characteristics, 1970 and 1974  
Central North Side

	<u>Neighborhood</u>		<u>Pittsburgh</u>	
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>
Population				
% Black	45.3%	....	20.2%	....
% 65 years and over	15.5%	....	13.5%	....
Households				
% One-person households	44.7%	32.8%	25.4%	25.5%
% Retired head-of-household	....	27.2%	....	26.3%
% Households with children	....	32.2%	....	32.7%
% Female head-of-household with children	....	14.3%	....	6.4%
% In owner-occupied housing unit	28.6%	37.7%	50.3%	54.2%
% Households changing place of residence within past year	....	42.4%	....	27.0%
Average household size	2.37	2.55	2.82	2.67

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

NOTE: Dotted lines (....) indicate data unavailable for that year.

The turnover rate of households in the neighborhood exceeds that for all of the city's neighborhoods. During 1973, 42.4% of the households in the neighborhood changed their place of residence compared to a rate of 27.0% for the city. (The figures represent households who have moved within the neighborhood or city as well as those moving into or out of the neighborhood or city.)

Female-headed households with children in 1974 comprised 14.3% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 6.4% for the city as a whole. In 1974, one-person households consisted of 32.8% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 25.5% city-wide and to 44.7% for the neighborhood in 1970.

TABLE 6

Neighborhood Change: 1960-1970 and 1970-1974  
Central North Side

	<u>Number</u> <u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	
		<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
Population			
1960	10,630		
1970	6,967	-35	-14
1974	5,499	-21	- 8
Households <sup>1</sup>			
1960	3,690		
1970	2,894	-22	- 6
1974	1,922	-34	-12
Black households <sup>2</sup>			
1960	939		
1970	1,039	+11	+15
1974	(not available)		
Housing units			
1960	3,959		
1970	3,335	-16	- 3
1974	2,229	-33	-12

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1960; 1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

NOTE: The population figures reported by Polk are adjusted to account for under-reporting. Population includes persons living in institutions and other group quarters, such as nursing homes, dormitories or jails. Differences in the population, household, or housing unit count between 1970 and 1974 are due primarily to changes occurring in the neighborhood. A small percentage of the difference may be accounted for, however, by variations in data gathering techniques. Census statistics were compiled from information provided by all city households answering a standard questionnaire either by mail or interview on or about April 1, 1970. R. L. Polk collected its information by a door-to-door survey carried out over a period of several months. (See Appendix.)

<sup>1</sup>The number of occupied housing units equals the number of households.

<sup>2</sup>Non-white households in 1960.

NEIGHBORHOOD INCOME

The average family income in Central North Side was \$7,200, 69% of the city average, for the year 1969. R. L. Polk and Company computes an income index for each city census tract. This index, derived from the occupation of heads of households, was used to calculate the income index of the neighborhood. In 1974, the index for Central North Side was 88% of the figure for the city as a whole.

Table 7 shows the number of neighborhood households receiving cash grants in 1974, 1975 and 1976 under the public assistance program of the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare. Public assistance in the form of food stamps, Medicaid, and various social services are also available to these households, as well as to other households in need. Public assistance payments were made to 45.7% of the neighborhood households in 1976, a higher proportion than for the city overall and an increase since 1974.

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TABLE 7

Public Assistance: Households Receiving Cash Grants  
Central North Side

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<u>Year</u>	<u>Neighborhood</u>		<u>Pittsburgh</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1974	830	43.2	16.0
1975	855	44.5	17.2
1976	878	45.7	18.0

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SOURCE: Allegheny County Board of Assistance.

NOTE: The percentages are based on 1974 Polk households. Only households receiving cash grants under Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to Dependent Children-Unemployed Parent; General Assistance, and State Blind Pension programs are tabulated. The count is of those on assistance as of April 5, 1974, February 28, 1975, and February 27, 1976; households whose grants were terminated between reporting dates are not included.

HOUSING

Table 6 shows that the number of housing units in Central North Side decreased during the decade of the sixties and decreased from 1970 to 1974. Of the occupied housing units, 37.7% were owner-occupied in 1974, compared to a city-wide rate of 54.2%. The vacancy rate for the neighborhood was 12.6% which was greater than the rate for the city as a whole. (See Table 8.)

The average value of owner-occupied housing in the neighborhood was \$7,600 in 1970, compared to a city-wide average of \$14,800.

A housing expenditure greater than 25% of household income is often considered to be excessive and a problem associated with low income households. In 1970, for the city as a whole, less than 1% of renter households earning \$10,000 or more a year spent 25% or more of this income for rent; of those earning less than \$10,000, 43.7% spent 25% or more of their income on rent. In Central North Side, 55.1% of renter households in the lower income category paid out 25% or more of their income on rent.\* These percentages suggest a lack of housing choice for renters with limited incomes, both in the neighborhood and the city.

TABLE 8

Housing Characteristics, 1970 and 1974  
Central North Side

	<u>Neighborhood</u>		<u>Pittsburgh</u>	
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>
Housing units				
% Vacant	13.2	12.6	6.2	6.2
% One-unit structures	36.1	....	52.9	....
Occupied housing units				
% Owner-occupied	28.6	37.7	50.3	54.2
Average value: owner-occupied units <sup>1</sup>	\$7,600	....	\$14,800	....

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

<sup>1</sup> Average value rounded to nearest one hundred dollars.

\*Percentage calculated only for the part of Central North Side made up of census tracts #2202 and #2503, which contained 86% of the neighborhood's renter-occupied housing units in 1970.

REAL ESTATE AND MORTGAGE LOAN TRANSACTIONS

The average sales price of owner-occupied housing was \$10,310 in 1975. (See Table 9.) Although the average price was less than the city-wide average, the implications of this divergence are difficult to judge because of variations in the quality and size of the structures among city neighborhoods. As additional data are obtained, however, the trend in real estate prices for the neighborhood can be compared to the trend for the city as a whole in order to determine relative differences.

In order to evaluate the extent to which private lenders are involved in the neighborhood, the number of mortgage loans made on residential property each year must be divided by the number of residential real estate transactions for that year. The percentage of residential real estate transactions financed through financial institutions was 30% in 1975 in Central North Side compared to a city-wide rate of 59%. The implications of the difference between the two rates are difficult to discern because of variations in risk factors and income levels among city neighborhoods. However, as additional data become available, trends in lending activity within the neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods or to the city as a whole can be assessed.

TABLE 9

Real Estate and Mortgage Loan Statistics  
Central North Side

	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
Average sales price: owner-occupied dwellings		
1974	\$ 8,654	\$21,582
1975	\$10,310	\$23,518
Number of residential mortgages		
1973	26	
1974	19	
1975	25	
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions		
1974	25%	58%
1975	30%	59%

SOURCE: City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning.



APPENDIX

a. Data Sources: Information for the atlas was obtained from the 1960 and 1970 U. S. Census of Population and Housing; R. L. Polk and Company's "Profiles of Change" for Pittsburgh in 1974; Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning and Bureau of Police; the Allegheny County Board of Assistance, and Department of Elections and Voter Registration; Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission; and the Citizen Survey conducted by the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas.

b. Neighborhood Census Tracts: 2202, 2503, part of 2501, and part of 2502.

c. Methodology: The opinions and characteristics of survey respondents, as well as voter registration, were recorded by voting district and then compiled for Central North Side by the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas in conjunction with the Center for Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh. Other material in the atlas was drawn from statistics tabulated for city census tracts or census blocks.

The neighborhood boundaries, which were determined on the basis of whole voting districts, do not conform exactly to census tract boundaries, so minor boundary adjustments were made wherever possible to simplify data collection efforts. In Central North Side and in other parts of the city where substantial portions of a census tract fall in more than one neighborhood, the neighborhood characteristics for 1960 and 1970 were arrived at by adding together data for the census blocks in the neighborhood, item by item. The statistics from sources other than the U. S. Census were made available only by census tract, not by census block; therefore a method for prorating the data among neighborhoods was developed. The procedure allocated data for each neighborhood containing partial census tracts on the basis of the proportion of total tract population, households, or housing units contained in each sub-section.

To compensate for under-reporting, the 1974 figure for the neighborhood population has been increased by 1.11, a factor that was derived from the U. S. Bureau of the Census 1973 population estimate for Pittsburgh. An additional adjustment has been made where applicable, since Polk and Co. does not count persons living in institutions or other group quarters. To arrive at the total estimated population for 1974, the neighborhood population was further increased by adding the number of persons in group quarters for the neighborhood according to the 1970 Census.

d. Characteristics of the Sample: In Central North Side, 77 citizens answered the questionnaires. Based on the number of replies to each question, the characteristics of the respondents can be generally described as follows: an average age of 54; 51% female; 43% Black; 68% with at least four years of high school education; 62% homeowners; and an average of 19 years in the neighborhood. The median household income falls in the range of \$7,000 to \$9,999; the average household size is 2.71 persons; and 67% of the households have no members under 18 years old living in the home.

The total sample (all respondents to the survey) was over-represented by homeowners (68% compared to 50% for Pittsburgh in 1970) and under-represented by Blacks (14% compared to a city Black population of 20% in 1970).

e. Voter Registration: In November, 1976, 1,999 residents of the neighborhood were registered to vote, a decrease of 48 (-2.3%) since November, 1975. In this period, city registration increased by 1.3% to 233,028.

In the process of collecting data for this publication, the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas staff was assisted by many community organizations. The following list reflects the organization that we were able to make contact with in Central North Side:

Central North Side Neighborhood Council  
1110 Resaca Place  
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15212 (15 or 20 years)  
President, Mr. Johnson

Note: Dates in parenthesis indicate when organization started.