An Atlas of the Oakland Neighborhood of Pittsburgh 1977

OAKLAND

OAKLAND

PITTSBURGH NEIGHBORHOOD ATLAS

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Allegheny County Department of Elections
ACTION-Housing, Inc.
Department of City Planning of the City of Pgh.
Southwestern Penna. Regional Planning Commission
ACTION-Vista (Volunteers in Service to America)
Valley View Presbyterian Church

FUNDING SOURCES

Alcoa Foundation
Allegheny Conference on Community Development
Howard Heinz Endowment
Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation
Koppers Company
Richard King Mellon Foundation
City Council of the City of Pittsburgh
The Pittsburgh Foundation
Henry Oliver Rea Charitable Trust
Sarah Scaife Foundation, Inc.
Weld Tooling Company
University of Pittsburgh (In Kind)

Initiated by the PITTSBURGH NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

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

Oakland is approximately 2.2 miles east of downtown. It is estimated to be 863.0 acres in size, containing 2.5% of the city's land and 4.6% of its 1974 population. The voting districts in the neighborhood are #3 to #20, Ward 4; #9, Ward 5; and #5, Ward 8. (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-neighborhoods in Oakland are Terrace Village, South Oakland, Schenley Farms and Bellefield.
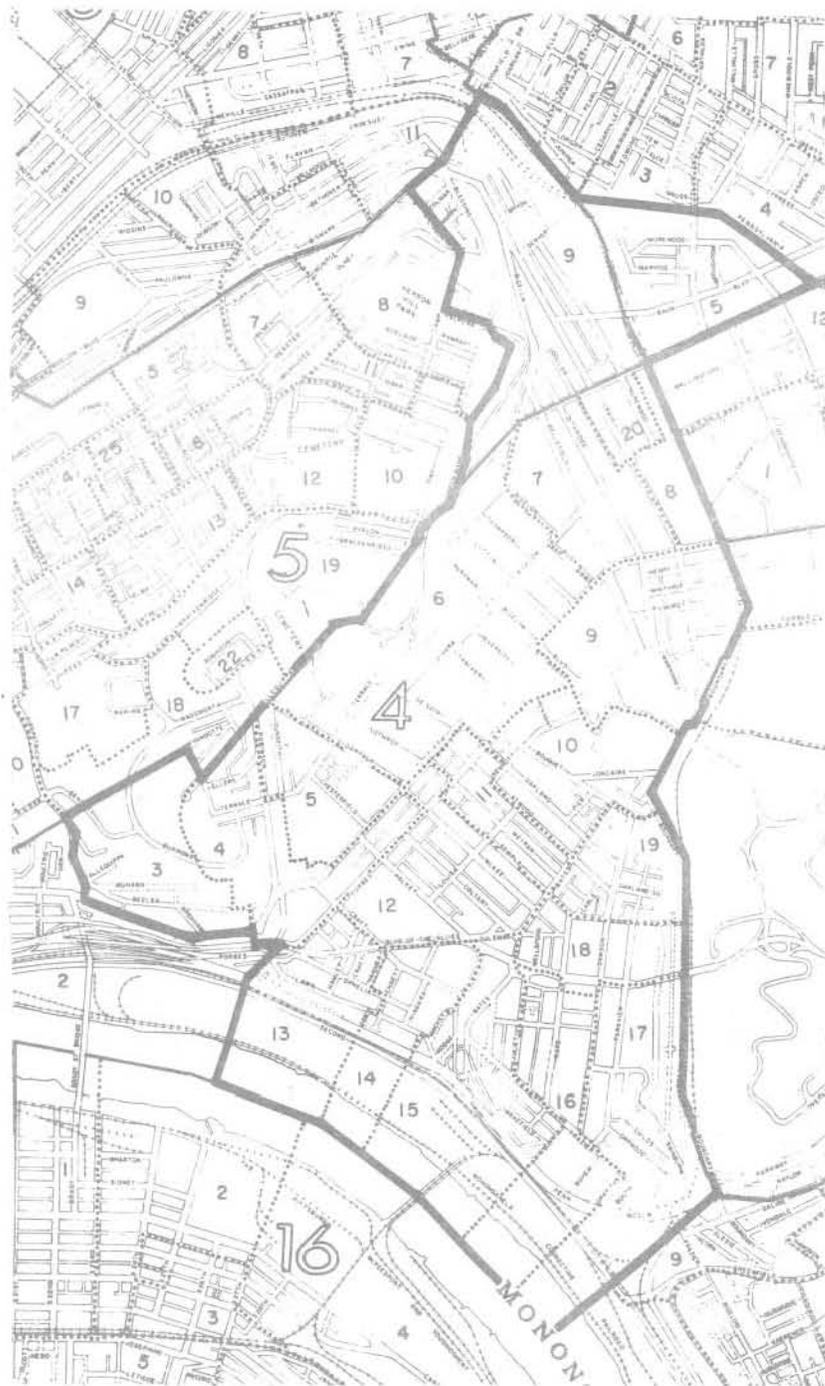
NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY
OAKLAND

Oakland received its name from the farm of one of the original settlers, William Eichbaum, whose property held many oak trees.

By the early 1800's, the area that is now Oakland was owned by a few businessmen and landowners, including Neville B. Craig, editor of the Pittsburgh Gazette from 1829 to 1841, who had a farm named "Bellefield". In 1836, an English immigrant, James Chadwick, sold nine acres to William Stewart. William Robinson, Jr., mayor of Allegheny, acquired these nine acres by sheriff's sale in 1840 and, that same year, sold it to Eichbaum. This became Eichbaum's farm.

Oakland developed rapidly following the Great Fire of 1845 in Downtown, with people moving out to what was then suburban territory. In 1850, the glass manufacturer, Dithridge, bought Neville Craig's "Bellefield" and developed housing there. By 1860, passenger rail service had encouraged residential growth as far as Bates and North Bellefield Streets, and commercial development along Fifth Avenue. Oakland Township incorporated in 1866 and was annexed to the City of Pittsburgh in 1868.

In 1889, Mary Croghan Schenley gave the city 300 acres in Oakland for a park. Officials bought another 100 acres from her for Schenley Park. Schenley later gave another gift, land for the Schenley Plaza. There, Andrew Carnegie built a library, museum and concert hall complex which opened in 1895. Businessman Frank Nicola built the Schenley Hotel on Forbes Street at the turn of the century. Nicola also bought land around Bellefield between Fifth and Centre Avenues and developed the Schenley Farms in 1905, spending $1.5 million on streets, utilities, and landscaping. Oakland was well on its way to becoming the Civic Center.

Development in a variety of fields - education, entertainment, organization, medicine - came in rapid succession. Carnegie Institute of Technology opened in 1905. The Western University of Pennsylvania relocated from Allegheny to Oakland in 1907, becoming the University of Pittsburgh. In 1909, Forbes Field was built. From 1908 to 1920, Soldiers and Sailors' Memorial Hall, Syria Mosque, Masonic Temple and Bureau of Mines all opened; numerous private clubs moved from downtown. Magee Hospital was the first of the many hospitals in the neighborhood, with the establishment of Children's, Montefiore, Presbyterian, Eye and Ear, and the Falk Clinic following throughout the years. Work began on the Cathedral of Learning in 1925, at that time, the tallest educational building in the world.

Oakland is perhaps the most ethnically mixed of all Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Italians, Blacks, Jews, Syrians and Poles have long been permanent residents. University students - rentors and commuters - reflect the diversity of background evident in Allegheny County and Western Pennsylvania. Approximately 88 foreign countries are represented in the student body of the University of Pittsburgh.

OAKLAND

SUMMARY STATISTICS

	Neighborhood	Pittsburgh
Population (1974)	21,926	479,276
% Change (1970-1974)	-14%	-8%
% Black population (1970)	16%	20%
Housing units (1974)	8,026	166,625
% Vacant	7%	6%
% Owner-occupied housing units (1974)	31%	54%
Average sales price of owner-occupied dwellings (1975)	$29,990	$23,518
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions (1975)	34%	59%
Crime rate (1975)	0.099	0.053
Average family income (1969)	$11,300	$10,500
Income index as % of city index (1974)	99%	
% Satisfied with neighborhood (1976)	35%	41%
Major neighborhood problems (1976)	Burglary Poor roads Trash and litter	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

Oakland residents are generally less satisfied with their neighborhood than residents city-wide. Table 1 shows that 35% 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 wrose than two years ago, 18% said that it was better which exceeded the city-wide response of 12%. Given the opportunity to move from the neighborhood, 48% 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
Oakland

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

	Satisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Neither (%)
Oakland	35	41	21
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 (%)
Oakland	18	53	27
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 (%)
Oakland	48	30	16
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 probems usually associated with urban communities and rate them for the neighborhood. Table 2 compares the problem ratings of the respondents from Oakland to those from all city neighborhoods. Areas of particular concern for the neighborhood include unsafe streets, burglary, trash and litter, and poor roads.

III. Satisfaction with Public Services

Table 3 shows the satisfaction of Oakland 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. Oakland residents are more satisfied with respect to garbage collection and the fire department, and less satisfied with respect to street and alley maintenance, and the condition and cost of housing.

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 Oakland 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: Streets in poor repair; inadequate repair and maintenance program; inadequate street cleaning services; poor traffic control for local streets; parking problems; alleys blocked; sidewalks dirty.

2. Public transportation: Inefficient transportation system; need to improve scheduling and routes to serve neighborhood; fares too high.

3. Condition and cost of housing: Cost of housing, rents too high; cost not related to condition; neighborhood housing in poor repair; problem of old, vacant buildings and absentee landlords.

TABLE 2

Neighborhood Problems
Oakland

Problem Category	Problem Rating - Percent Response		
	Not a Problem	Minor or Moderate	Big or Very Serious
Unsafe streets			
Oakland	14	44	35
All neighborhoods	25	45	21
Vandalism			
Oakland	11	45	31
All neighborhoods	13	49	28
Rats			
Oakland	29	31	15
All neighborhoods	34	33	12
Burglary			
Oakland	11	36	42
All neighborhoods	14	44	29
Poor roads			
Oakland	18	35	37
All neighborhoods	17	41	33
Trash and litter			
Oakland	22	33	37
All neighborhoods	27	41	24
Vacant buildings			
Oakland	41	34	11
All neighborhoods	49	24	13
Undesirable people moving into the neighborhood			
Oakland	37	25	19
All neighborhoods	42	28	15
Stray dogs			
Oakland	29	35	22
All neighborhoods	25	38	18
Dog litter			
Oakland	24	32	31
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
Oakland

Service	Percent Response		
	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied
Parks and Recreation			
Oakland	65	9	14
All neighborhoods	51	15	23
Schools			
Oakland	39	11	18
All neighborhoods	46	12	21
Street maintenance			
Oakland	31	15	49
All neighborhoods	32	15	49
Alley maintenance			
Oakland	17	13	38
All neighborhoods	20	13	39
Garbage collection			
Oakland	73	8	11
All neighborhoods	74	10	13
Police			
Oakland	52	19	19
All neighborhoods	51	17	23
Public transportation			
Oakland	61	12	22
All neighborhoods	61	11	23
Fire Department			
Oakland	70	8	2
All neighborhoods	78	7	3
Sewage system			
Oakland	55	12	9
All neighborhoods	63	10	13
Condition and cost of housing			
Oakland	36	15	35
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 increased over the last three years (Table 4). In 1973 the number of major crimes per capita was .070 compared to .099 in 1975. The crime rate in the neighborhood was greater than the city per capita rate of .053 in 1975.

TABLE 4

Crime Rate: Major Crimes
Oakland

Year	Major Crimes Number	Crime Rate Neighborhood	Crime Rate Pittsburgh
1973	1,527	.070	.043
1974	1,884	.086	.047
1975	2,162	.099	.053

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 Oakland was 21,926, down by 14% 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 16.1% of the neighborhood's population in 1970, compared to 20.2% for the city.

The average household size in the neighborhood was 2.07 persons in 1974, down from 1970. The percentage of the population 65 years and older was 15.0% in 1970, compared to 13.5% for the city as a whole.

TABLE 5

Population and Household Characteristics, 1970 and 1974
Oakland

| | Neighborhood | | Pittsburgh | |
	1970	1974	1970	1974
Population				
% Black	16.1%	....	20.2%	....
% 65 years and over	15.0%	....	13.5%	....
Households				
% One-person households	40.6%	42.6%	25.4%	25.5%
% Retired head-of-household	....	24.8%	....	26.3%
% Households with children	....	16.4%	....	32.7%
% Female head-of-household				
with children	....	3.8%	....	6.4%
% In owner-occupied housing unit	23.3%	31.4%	50.3%	54.2%
% Households changing place of				
residence within past year	....	41.0%	....	27.0%
Average household size	2.21	2.07	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, 41.0% 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 3.8% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 6.4% for the city as a whole. In 1974, one-person households consisted of 42.6% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 25.5% city-wide and to 40.6% for the neighborhood in 1970.

TABLE 6

Neighborhood Change: 1960-1970 and 1970-1974
Oakland

	Number	Percent Change	
	Neighborhood	Neighborhood	Pittsburgh
Population			
1960	27,405		
1970	25,482	- 7	-14
1974	21,926	-14	- 8
Households[1]			
1960	9,854		
1970	9,363	- 5	- 6
1974	7,491	-20	-12
Black households[2]			
1960	861		
1970	1,351	+57	+15
1974	(not available)		
Housing units			
1960	10,431		
1970	10,140	- 3	- 3
1974	8,026	-21	-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.)

[1] The number of occupied housing units equals the number of households.

[2] Non-white households in 1960.

NEIGHBORHOOD INCOME

The average family income in Oakland was $11,300, 108% 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 Oakland was 99% 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 16.4% of the neighborhood households in 1976, a lower proportion than for the city overall and an increase since 1974.

TABLE 7

Public Assistance: Households Receiving Cash Grants
Oakland

| Year | Neighborhood | | Pittsburgh |
	Number	Percent	Percent
1974	1,002	13.4	16.0
1975	1,108	14.8	17.2
1976	1,232	16.4	18.0

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 Oakland decreased during the decade of the sixties and decreased from 1970 to 1974. Of the occupied housing units, 31.4% were owner-occupied in 1974, compared to a city-wide rate of 54.2%. The vacancy rate for the neighborhood was 6.8% which was close to the rate for the city as a whole. (See Table 8.)

The average value of owner-occupied housing in the neighborhood was $14,500 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 Oakland, 49.5% 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
Oakland

| | Neighborhood | | Pittsburgh | |
	1970	1974	1970	1974
Housing units				
% Vacant	7.7	6.8	6.2	6.2
% One-unit structures	21.0	....	52.9	....
Occupied housing units				
% Owner-occupied	23.3	31.4	50.3	54.2
Average value: owner-occupied units[1]	$14,500	....	$14,800	....

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

[1]Average value rounded to nearest one hundred dollars.

*Percentage calculated only for the part of Oakland made up of census tracts #402 - #407, #507, and #803, which contained 80% 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 $29,990 in 1975. (See Table 9.) Although the average price was greater 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 34% in 1975 in Oakland 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
Oakland

	Neighborhood	Pittsburgh
Average sales price: owner-occupied dwellings		
1974	$21,011	$21,582
1975	$29,990	$23,518
Number of residential mortgages		
1973	65	
1974	52	
1975	48	
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions		
1974	45%	58%
1975	34%	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: 402 - 407, 507, 803; and part of 401 and 408.

c. Methodology: The opinions and characteristics of survey respondents, as well as voter registration, were recorded by voting district and then compiled for Oakland 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 Oakland 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 Oakland, 377 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 50; 63% female; 16% Black; 84% with at least four years of high school education; 39% homeowners; and an average of 18 years in the neighborhood. The median household income falls in the range of $10,000 to $14,999; the average household size is 2.95 persons; and 73% 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, 10,939 residents of the neighborhood were registered to vote, an increase of 184 (+1.7%) 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
those organizations that we were able to
make contact with in Oakland:

South Oakland Citizens Council
3339 Ward Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. (1965)
683-4531

Women in the Urban Crisis
4401 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213 (1969)
681-2250

Centre Craig Association
4609 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213 (1973)
681-1432

Pittsburgh Oakland American Association
 of Retired Persons #581
Church of the Ascension
Corner of Neville and Ellsworth
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213 (1969)
261-3477

People's Oakland
320 Atwood Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213 (6 years)
683-7958

Community Human Services
374 Lawn Street
Pittsburgh, Penna. 15213 (12 years)
621-4706

Husser-Powel Family Services
237 Oakland Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213 (10 months)
621-9562

South Oakland Citizens Council (CAP office)
Ward Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213
683-4531

Bellefield Area Citizens Association
St. Paul's Rectory
108 North Ditheridge Street
c/o Helen Schlenke - 681-0846
220 North Ditheridge Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

Note: Dates in parenthesis indicate when
organizations started.