



PCRG Public Policy – 2022 First Quarter Recap

The Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG) is a consortium of community leaders working for economic justice, equitable investment practices, and sufficient financial resources to revitalize communities throughout the region. PCRG utilizes strengths of engagement, advocacy, and policy formulation to focus efforts on ensuring equitable access to land, capital, and mobility choices to improve the health and wealth of communities.

Federal

Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Reform and Modernization

- The CRA was established in 1977 to help combat redlining and encourage banks and lending institutions to increase credit lending in low and moderate areas. **The CRA is a cornerstone of PCRG's history and mission.**
- The CRA is set to be **updated and modernized for the first time since the 1970's**. In June of 2021, all three regulatory federal agencies—The Office of the Comptroller of Currency (OCC), The Federal Reserve, and The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) agreed to work together and cooperate on a joint interagency rule making process.
- During the previous Administration, the OCC set its own unilateral rules, which confused regulators, banks, and community practitioners in the process.
- The regulatory agencies are set to announce the CRA reform plan in the coming days/months, which is expected to address non-bank lenders, environmental remediation in LMI tracks and communities of color, and adding consideration of race on CRA bank exams.
- [PCRG was proud to support and sign NCRC's position paper on CRA reform](#). NCRC is our national partner organization working to end discrimination in housing, lending, and business.

Federal Reserve Board Appointments

- There are **seven members of the Federal Reserve board of governors**, appointed by POTUS and confirmed by the US Senate. They help oversee Federal Reserve banks and implement monetary policy. Each governor serves a 14-year term.
- There are currently **3 vacancies on the Federal Reserve board**. **Lisa Cook** was nominated by President Biden and after a Senate Banking Committee voting deadlock (along party lines), was moved to the full Senate for discharge of her nomination out of the committee by 50-49 vote (mechanism to move a tie out of committee) and is awaiting a confirmation vote by full Senate. **If confirmed, Lisa Cook will be the first Black woman to serve on the Federal Reserve board.**
- **Philip Jefferson**, nominated in January 2022, is **awaiting full Senate confirmation**. Banking Committee approved his nomination 24-0.
- **Lael Brainard**, nominated in January 2022 (as Vice Chair), is **awaiting full Senate confirmation**. Banking Committee approved her nomination 16-8.

Build Back Better Agenda

American Rescue Plan Act

- **\$1.9 trillion recovery plan** signed by President Biden in March 2021, through the Congressional reconciliation process.
- **Allegheny County was awarded \$380 million total in direct funding**, including **\$99.75 million** that was invested for public health and government services funding in September 2021. County funding was determined by department/agency line items requests and voted on by County Council. **\$190 million is expected in funding for 2022.**
- **City of Pittsburgh received \$335 million total** and has received **\$165.5 million thus far** to fill in gaps in the operating budget caused by the lack of revenue because of COVID-19 and capital projects by the Peduto Administration and confirmed by Council. **The remaining \$167.5 million is expected by May 2022.**
- In March 2022, City Controller Michal Lamb, launched an online ARPA tracker which allows the public to monitor spending and review cooperative agreements.
- The Gainey Administration can request City Council to reopen the budget through the amendment process and request the relocation of ARPA funding.
- **Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) received \$100 million** in direct federal funding relief through ARPA, with most funding going towards investment in instructional technology materials, teacher and staff development, partnerships supporting families and wrap around services to schools. Committees were created to public feedback on funding priorities.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)

- Originally signed by POTUS in November 2021, the **\$1.2 trillion transportation and infrastructure spending bill is making its way towards projects in southwestern Pa**, including improving roads/bridges, broadband investment, sustainable public transit, replacing lead water lines, improvement airports and much more.
- To find out project funding information made possible by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (and other federal investment), check out this fun, interactive map made possible by Senator Casey's office: <https://www.casey.senate.gov/commonwealth/>

Build Back Better (BBB)

- Designed to achieve elements of President Bidens “Build Back Better Agenda” **as a \$2.2 trillion package that includes climate change and social/human infrastructure spending**. Passed the House of Representatives 220-213 in November 2021. **Democratic Senators Manchin (WVA) and Sinema (AZ) pulled their support for the bill citing spending amounts and bi-partisan support.**
- PCRG is paying attention to elements of the House bill that was passed, as Senators have agreed to take an incremental approach of the bill and introduce as stand-alone bills. Of particular interest is the Housing component of the BBB:
 - **\$65 billion to address repairs and rebuild public housing**—including climate and energy efficiency.
 - **\$24 billion for a new Housing Choice Vouchers** to support families struggling to afford rent.
 - **\$10 billion in down payment assistance** for millions of mortgage ready, first-generation homebuyers.

- **\$10 billion** in [HOME Investment Partnership Program](#):
- **\$3 billion** for increase of CDBG funding
- **\$3 billion for a Community Restoration and Revitalization Fund**
- **\$750 million** for a Housing Investment Fund ([Capital Magnet Fund](#))
- **\$500 million** for [HUD Section 202 Housing for the Elderly](#)

Omnibus Spending Bill

- On March 15, 2022, President Biden signed the Omnibus Spending-Consolidated Appropriations Act that will fully fund projects for the federal government through September 2022.
- Additional funding towards transportation and infrastructure projects for Pennsylvania roads and bridges, as well passenger rail projects (Amtrak).
- Funding for the [Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) program](#)
- The Omnibus bill increases funding for CDBG program, support for housing choice vouchers and Project Based Rental Assistance.
- Includes many community projects (formerly known as earmarks) from the Pittsburgh region. Congratulations to local organizations receiving funding for their projects including:
 - ACTION Housing, Inc-\$2.5 million for Flats of Forward project-mixed use project, including 43 units of affordable housing in Squirrel Hill.
 - City of Pittsburgh-\$2 million in streetscape improvements to North Avenue curb extensions, modernizing traffic signals/sidewalks/street lighting.
 - URA-\$2 million for Avenues of Hope project for the revitalization of Centre Ave corridor.
 - McKees Rocks Community Development Corporation-\$500,000 for 602 Chartiers Ave project and the further remediation of hazardous material and building revitalization efforts.

State

SB 811 (MCTLL)

- After months of advocacy with local and regional stakeholders, [The PA Housing and Urban Affairs Committee scheduled a hearing and vote on SB 811, which would amend the Municipal Claim and Tax Lien Law \(MCTLL\)](#). This legislation will provide land banks located within Allegheny County—including the Pittsburgh Land Bank, with an expedited sheriff's sale process and lower the redemption period of a property. SB 811 passed unanimously 11-0.
- PCRG will continue to provide updates to members as SB moves forward.

SB 1135 (Whole-Homes Repair Act)

- [Senator Nikil Saval introduced legislation](#) that would create a home repair and weatherization fund through the Department of Community and Economic Development and would permit grants up to \$50,000 for PA residents to fix their homes, administrative assistance, training, and support for training and pre-apprenticeship programs to build the skilled local workforce. [Rep. Innamorato introduced companion legislation in the House](#).
- PCRG will continue to work with both offices as a regional stakeholder.

SB 460 (Pennsylvania CRA)

- [Senator Hughes has introduced legislation that would establish a PA Community Reinvestment Act.](#) This bill would provide additional protections in the residential mortgage market beyond the federal CRA.
- Legislation would also include language to force non-traditional mortgage lenders to comply with the regulations.
- This legislation is not scheduled for a Banking Committee hearing at this time, thus not likely to pass this legislative session. PCRG will continue to have conversations with legislative staff, as well as banking industry stakeholders regarding SB 460.

Local

City of Pittsburgh

Mayoral Transition Update

- Mayor Gainey announced his transition team in late December 2021, a few weeks before his inauguration. In January 2022, his transition team committees, along with the transition consultant, [Thomas Consultant Group](#), began meeting with the committees and forming the transition framework.
- This past February, Mayor Gainey's transition teams (Equitable Development, Education & Workforce Development, Infrastructure and Environment, and Community Health & Safety) held public listening and feedback sessions to gain a better understanding and solicit policy ideas. Based on feedback, each committee will be reporting recommendations to the mayor and his administration.
- The transition committee is set to release its findings and recommendations in April 2022.
- In November 2021, [PCRG highlighted its recommendations and priorities to then mayor-elect Gainey, including land use, equitable development, transportation/infrastructure and affordable housing.](#)

Pittsburgh Land Bank (PLB)

- The PLB was created in 2014 as a land recycling tool for the city to return unproductive real estate properties in an equitable, and transparent process to help revitalize neighborhoods and increase tax revenue for the City.
- In 2020, the PLB was integrated into the URA as an affiliate entity to better utilize resources and increase capacity. In late 2021, PLB Manager Greg Miller left the organization.
- Thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act, the PLB received \$10 million in dedicated funding, which has yet to be allocated to the PLB.
- As of 2022, the PLB has not moved a property through the disposition process. This is due to numerous factors, including lack of organizational capacity, dedicated resources, state law in Harrisburg (see SB 811) and political will.
- PCRG is cautiously optimistic by commitment by the Gainey Administration and URA leadership to strengthen the PLB. PCRG will continue to advocate for the increase in transparency and clarification of process in which community organizations can pursue properties through the PLB.
- **Representatives from the PLB will be attending the upcoming Vacant Property Working Group (VPWG) meeting on April 8, 2022, at 9:00AM.** For more information, please contact Ruby Velasco at ruby.velasco@pcrg.org.

Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)

- Dr. Diamonte Walker, Deputy Executive Director will leave the URA for a job in the private sector and her last day will be on April 14.
- At the March URA board meeting, Kyle Chintalapalli, Chief Economic Development Officer for the City of Pittsburgh, was named Chair of the URA Board and State Representative, Sara Innamorato was named Treasurer of the URA Board.

City Council

- PCRG continues to monitor applicable current and approved legislation by City Council as it relates to housing, land use/zoning and development-oriented projects. Priority bills include:
 - [2021-1701 Inclusionary Housing Zoning Overlay District](#) (Gross) adding Bloomfield, Polish Hill, Friendship, Upper Hill, Middle Hill, Crawford-Roberts, Bedford Dwellings, Terrace Village, Bluff, North Oakland, West Oakland, South Oakland, and Hazelwood.

Status: Public Hearing Scheduled for 4/5/22

- [2022-0190 Historic Designation of the Tito House](#) (Committee on Hearings) Resolution to designate the house located in the Uptown neighborhood historic. The Historic Commission recommended that City Council not designate structure historic, and the owner is against historic designation.

Status: Public Hearing Scheduled for 4/20/22

- [2022-0095 Resolution establishing the Pittsburgh Affordable Housing Implementation and Finance Committee](#) (Burgess). Purpose of committee is to recommend housing financing and programs to the administration and city council and report quarterly on findings.

Status: Passed on 3/8/22

- [2022-0121 Resolution establishing the Pittsburgh Infrastructure Joint Task Force](#) (Coghill/O'Conner) Allows Mayor to establish a task force to advocate and oversee equitable transportation and infrastructure funds.

Status: Passed on 3/1/22

- Reapportionment Advisory Committee (RAC)-City Council Districts
 - The RAC committee has released its proposed map of new City Council districts after months of meetings incorporating the new census data. District lines must be continuous, must be compact, and must be nearly equal in population. The RAC is made up of one appointee from each member of council (9) and the final map is voted on by City Council.
 - [RAC has scheduled a series of public meetings, copies of the current map and proposed map and electronic comment available through a portal.](#)
- Wilkinsburg Annexation
 - PCRG continues to monitor the City of Pittsburgh annexation of Wilkinsburg borough. In December 2021, the Wilkinsburg CDC filed annexation papers to the Court of Common Pleas—mandating a vote by Pittsburgh City Council. In January 2022, the Court approved the petitions. In early February 2022, Pittsburgh City Council voted 7-2 to not take up the annexation measure.

- However, most members of City Council agreed to continue the discussion of annexation (of Wilkinsburg and other municipalities) by researching the cost/benefits and holding public hearings before voting and bringing it to a referendum for Wilkinsburg voters.
- Proponents of annexation point to the tax benefits, a way to increase Pittsburgh population for more federal formula funding and efficiencies in public safety services.
- Opponents of annexation point to the possibilities of longtime resident being displaced by new development and gentrification.
- City Council has scheduled a series of public meetings for public comment on the Wilkinsburg annexation. **The next meeting is scheduled for 4/14/22 6PM at the Homewood-Brushton YMCA.**

PCRG Policy Research

Black Homeownership Report

Attached is a copy of PCRG's Black Homeownership report, which details the changes in Black homeownership rates in the Pittsburgh region. This report examines lending trends for Black and low- and moderate-income (LMI) borrowers through HMDA data and creates a metric to assess the level of need for neighborhoods and municipalities in Pittsburgh/Allegheny County. The result shows how Black and LMI borrowers face lower rates of lending compared to white and non-LMI borrowers and are more likely to live in the bottom 50% percentile of median income neighborhoods – despite generally improving conditions for everyone over the last decade. This research drew inspiration from a number of similar papers from the [Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia](#), [Allegheny County Department of Human Services](#), and [Pitt's University Center for Social and Urban Research](#).

Housing Affordability Map

Using American Community Survey data and the Federal Housing Finance Agency's House Price Index, PCRG is in the process of creating a map of neighborhood housing affordability. This map will examine which neighborhoods are most/least affordable at 100% area median income, and at tract-level median family income. Future analysis is required to calculate the availability of affordable units in each neighborhood/tract.

Banking and Finance

PCRG is monitoring the proposed acquisition of Community Bankers Collaborative Council member Farmers National Bank of Emlenton (PA) by Farmers National Bank of Canfield (OH). This is the second attempt by Farmers National Bank of Canfield to enter the Pittsburgh market, and their third acquisition within the past two years. Farmers National Bank of Canfield is based in Mahoning County, OH and does most of their lending in the Youngstown MSA and non-MSA areas of Ohio. PCRG has initial concerns about Farmers National Bank of Canfield racial and LMI lending patterns based on HMDA data over the past three years. The acquisition is not expected to close until the second half of 2022.

PCRG is requesting a meeting with the President and CEO of Farmers National Bank of Canfield to discuss these issues and to continue the existing relationship with Farmers National Bank of Emlenton. If you would like to participate in future meetings with Farmers National Bank of Canfield, please reach out to John Boyle, PCRG Policy Researcher at jboyle@pcrg.org.

Friday Forum Series

This year PCRG launched a new series to connect our members to elected officials. On the final Friday of every month, PCRG invites elected officials from local, state, and federal office to discuss public policy initiatives and programs that impact communities that PCRG serves. The goals of the Friday Forum series are to keep members informed of current public policy issues, promote engagement with elected officials and gain a better understand of how you can work with your elected officials and their offices.

January: Pittsburgh City Controller Michael Lamb

- On the same morning of the Fern Hollow Bridge Collapse, Controller Lamb kicked off our Friday Forum series as our first guest. Controller Lamb discussed the importance of investing in the region's infrastructure. Controller Lamb also reviewed the process of the City of Pittsburgh American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation and how his office will monitor the spending. Lamb also discussed the need to update Pittsburgh's Responsible Banking Ordinance (RBO).

Follow up: Work with Controllers office, incoming City Treasurer, City Council on RBO.

February: Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey

- Mayor Gainey talked about his background and experience in public service and how he got involved as an elected official. Gainey reflected on starting out as a community development practitioner and volunteer in East Liberty and the lessons he learned along the way. During the conversation, Mayor Gainey reaffirmed his commitment to increasing affordable housing in the City of Pittsburgh, making the Pittsburgh Land Bank more efficient and making the City of Pittsburgh inclusive to everyone. ***Follow up: Quarterly meetings with the Gainey Administration and PCRG members.***

March: PA Senator Wayne Fontana and State Rep. Sara Innamorato

- Our March guests provided an overview of the current legislative environment in Harrisburg, affordable housing programs and bills, the priorities of their respective districts and how policies exceed neighborhood boundaries and gave updates on the URA and the Pittsburgh Land Bank.

Follow up: Continue to work with Senator Fontana's office on SB 811 (MCTLL) and Rep. Innamorato on advocacy for Whole-Home Repairs.

Registration is open for PCRG's [12th Annual Community Development Summit](#).

