

COREY O'CONNOR FOR MAYOR

Corey understands that we cannot look at economic development simply as something that happens in Downtown or Oakland. Instead, we need to spur investments all across the City so that everyone can benefit. Residents should feel that we value the economic success and vibrancy of a neighborhood business district as much as the Golden Triangle because their community's success is just as important.

Pittsburgh's local economy must deliver for its people. Communities have to be vibrant with strong business districts, giving entrepreneurs the chance to succeed and neighbors access to mixed-use amenities, goods and services where they live, and the power to support small businesses.

The current Mayor is content to do business as usual, and our neighborhood business districts, shop owners, and community members are feeling it. Corey knows that for Pittsburgh to thrive, we must commit to unlocking opportunity for everyone, developing and sharing resources for small businesses, and pursuing innovative economic strategies. And that starts at home in each and every one of our neighborhood business districts — our main streets.

Corey is committed to strengthening and revitalizing our main street business districts with a focus on a “main and main” approach that invests in areas near the primary intersections of neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors around which communities are built. We should not just invest in Downtown and a few select neighborhoods, but, rather, in all neighborhoods. Every Pittsburgh neighborhood deserves a strong main street, and all main streets deserve resources and a plan. That is why Corey will champion a Main Streets for All agenda, which will target 10 business districts across Pittsburgh for \$10 million in investment while providing financial and technical support to all of our other business districts to meet their unique needs.

The best main streets are welcoming, safe, designed well, and lit well. Under Main Streets for All, Corey will partner with communities to invest in streetscaping, street furniture, street lighting, vacant lot activation, wayfinding signage, sidewalk repair, mobility solutions, open space improvements, and other enhancements to the built environment to make every main street the ideal place to visit, shop, invest, and open a business.

If we want to bring Main Streets for All to every community, then the City must take infrastructure investments in our main street business districts just as seriously as it does roads and bridges. These business districts symbolize the unique character of their neighborhoods,

and we must make sure that the built environment is designed and maintained in a way that enhances small business' ability to attract residents and visitors.

A key part of Corey's vision for his Main Streets for All agenda is connectivity. Neighborhood business districts enhance community engagement and help our residents connect with their neighbors while also spurring economic activity across Pittsburgh. Marquee developments and new projects must be tied to neighborhoods, and these connections must ensure links to new or expanded opportunities. That means making sure that new investments and projects strengthen neighborhoods and benefit residents by offering real economic opportunities.

Vacant or under-utilized properties must be better used, including as commercial space available to entrepreneurs, which can help address the vacant lots that break up many of Pittsburgh's business districts. By modernizing permitting and zoning regulations, Pittsburgh can, under Corey's leadership, spur robust mixed-use developments to revitalize communities, encourage new commercial corridors, and strengthen existing ones. Our zoning code must incentivize first floor activation to improve business districts' walkability, increase density, and center intentional placemaking within our neighborhoods.

The most important part of a main street is people: the neighbors, the families, the visitors, the business owners, and the workers. Main Streets for All will provide resources and technical support to help every neighborhood business district create street festivals and other public events and activities to bring main streets, and the neighborhoods around them, to life.

The City must also grow its own internal capacity to support small businesses. These improvements can be achieved with the effective management that Corey will bring to the Mayor's office.

For example, the current permitting regime locks many would-be businesses and entrepreneurs out through its complexity and time-intensive requirements. The City must ensure that the permitting process is accessible, transparent, and efficient. Corey will create dedicated permitting liaisons for new small businesses. By establishing a dedicated point of contact to serve as a liaison, permit applicants will be able to work directly with them to resolve issues, get questions answered, and ultimately have greater success with their permit applications. With a primary liaison supporting them throughout the permitting process, applicants will be able to work with an ombudsman-like representative trained to solve problems and communicate both with the public and internal actors from the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections.

The City must also work with more small vendors, especially local entrepreneurs. Instead of relying on how contracting and procurement have always been done, the City should instead work diligently to bring more Pittsburgh-based businesses into the fold as vendors. This will open up new opportunities for growing businesses, as well as MWDBE firms. Under Corey's leadership, the City will prioritize purchasing from local vendors, which will see that taxpayer dollars make their way back to the neighborhoods from which they come.

Corey will also work to make sure that these local vendors are paid in a timely manner by reducing processing times. Smaller vendors have more difficulty enduring longer periods of

time between payments, so the City's internal accounts payable processes must be made more efficient to ensure that local businesses are getting paid for their work and getting paid on time.

Our small businesses represent more than just storefronts. They are a vital part of our neighborhoods. Whether it is a bar or restaurant, a small boutique, a service-provider, an art studio, or any other venture that would enrich our communities and make them more vibrant, small businesses should be able to find success here in Pittsburgh. That is why, as Mayor, Corey will make them a priority.