

Transportation and Gateways Existing Conditions Map

**Introduction**

The Transportation and Gateways Working Group worked closely with the Open Space and Art working group to explore ways of improving biking, walking and gateway connections in Polish Hill, and indeed there was much overlap in each group’s recommendations. The community process established that Polish Hill residents desire safe, unique and complete streets with ample public space to promote walking and community cohesion. They would also like to maintain the urban grid and create a green, walkable community that reduces auto-centrism and promotes multi-modal, safe transportation options. One of the values that inform all these potential projects is the desire to preserve the walkable character of the neighborhood.

**Discussion Topics**

- ▶ Herron Avenue Gateway/TOD Development: (Coordinate with Housing and Building Working Group)
- ▶ Beethoven/Bloomfield Bridge Gateway
- ▶ Bigelow Boulevard Proposals
- ▶ Melwood/Gold Way Gateway
- ▶ 28th Street Gateway
- ▶ Stair Proposals: (Coordinate with Open Space and Art Working Group)
- ▶ Biking Recommendations

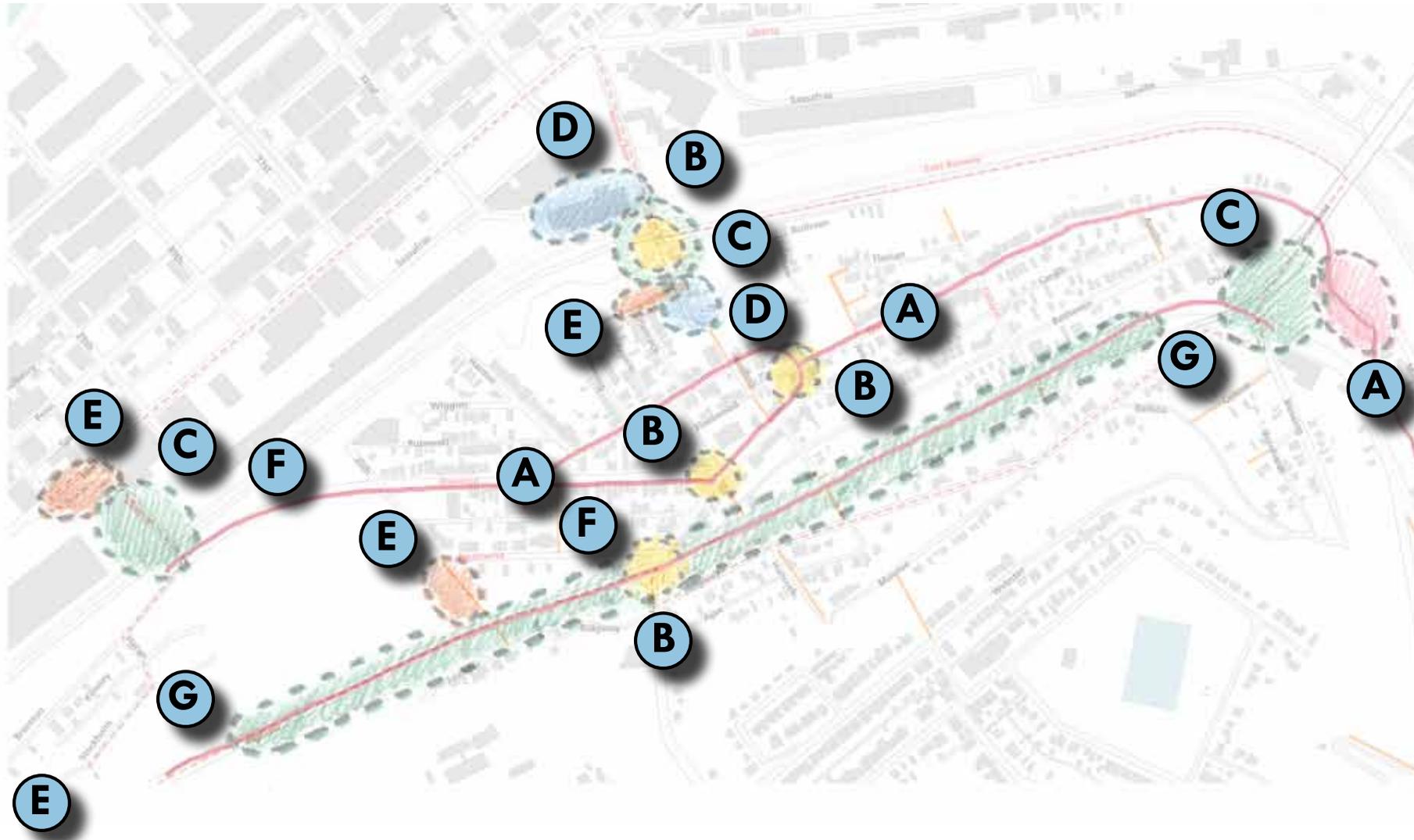
**Values and Vision**

- ▶ Transportation planning should put people first rather than cars.
- ▶ Quality of life is more important than efficiency or speed.
- ▶ Pedestrian and bike safety are paramount.
- ▶ Make connections without creating thoroughfares.



## Recommendation Summary

- A. **Traffic Calming:** Implement traffic calming along Bigelow, Melwood, Brereton and Dobson. Potential traffic calming measures may include intersection art, crosswalk upgrades, and creative signage to remind people of the dangers of speeding.
- B. **Pedestrian Crossings:** Improving pedestrian crossings along Herron Avenue will help connect the east and west residential districts. Lighting, street tree, and crosswalk upgrades will unify the street and connect the neighborhood to the Allegheny River Trail.
- C. **Gateways:** The Bloomfield Bridge, Lower Herron Avenue, 28th Street Bridge, Bigelow Boulevard Gateway improvements will identify the neighborhood, improve image ability, and calm traffic. Polish Hill seeks to green these public spaces and encourage public art projects for the neighborhood.
- D. **Transit-Oriented Development:** Support a transit-oriented development along Lower Herron and Liberty Avenue to take advantage of the East Busway. Improve community awareness of the busway and upgrade the stairs and sidewalks that connect it to Polish Hill.
- E. **Stair Improvements:** Repair and upgrade the City stairs at Downing, 28th Street, and Frank Curto Park. Integrate pedestrian scaled lighting for safety.
- F. **Billboard Removal/ Reuse:** Reduce the saturation of billboards contributing to visual pollution in the neighborhood by teaming with Scenic Pittsburgh to remove or reclaim billboards for other uses.
- G. **Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvements (Long-Term):** Create new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that connects Polish Hill to Oakland and Downtown Pittsburgh.



**Key Recommendations Map**

Stairs to Downing at lower Herron



BRT Station at Lower Herron



Billboards on Bigelow Boulevard



Bigelow Sidewalks and Fences



Closed Steps at Paulowna





**Bump-outs and Thermo-infused Crosswalk Paving**



**Traffic Calming Signs**



## Traffic Calming

High-speed traffic along Bigelow Boulevard, Brereton, Herron and Melwood Avenue has had a negative impact on residential quality of life. Commuters use Polish Hill as a convenient cut through during rush hours. Due to the high volume and speed of traffic, traffic-calming measures have been recommended to make the neighborhood more walkable, livable and safe. Specific recommendations include redesigned crosswalks with bump outs, traffic calming signs, intersection art/texture and a yellow brick plaza at Brereton and Dobson to reduce traffic speeds.

### Crosswalk Bump-outs

Crosswalk bump-outs reduce the crossing time and distance for pedestrians while slowing traffic. Bump-outs are an important tool in the process of reclaiming part of the street for pedestrians and increasing walkability, safety and pedestrian connections. Potential sites for bump-outs include 30th and Brereton.

### Traffic Calming Signs

Signage can be an effective tool for slowing the speed of automobiles. Creative signage can capture the attention of motorists and alert them to the presence of children and pedestrians. Polish Hill is home to a number of artists and creative professionals who could form a committee to explore traffic-calming signage and create unique and effective signage. Signage can be placed along Melwood, Brereton, Dobson, Herron and Bigelow Boulevard.

### Intersection Texture/Art

By changing the texture of the intersection or introducing art onto the street, drivers reduce speed. Herron and its cross streets are a prime location for intersection art and new textures.

### Yellow Brick Plaza

The concept of a 'piazza' at the intersection of Dobson and Brereton was one of the more popular proposals coming out of community workshops. A plaza would reduce the speed of traffic by announcing a public space to motorists. In addition to reducing the speed of motorists, the plaza could be used as a central communal space when Brereton Street is closed off to traffic. This traffic-calming feature would further distinguish the community of Polish Hill to newcomers, visitors and motorists.



**Intersection Texture/ Art**



**Yellow Brick Plaza**



Benchmark: Dedicated Bike Lanes



Intersection Art



Shared Roadways



Brick Main Street Plaza



Intersection Art

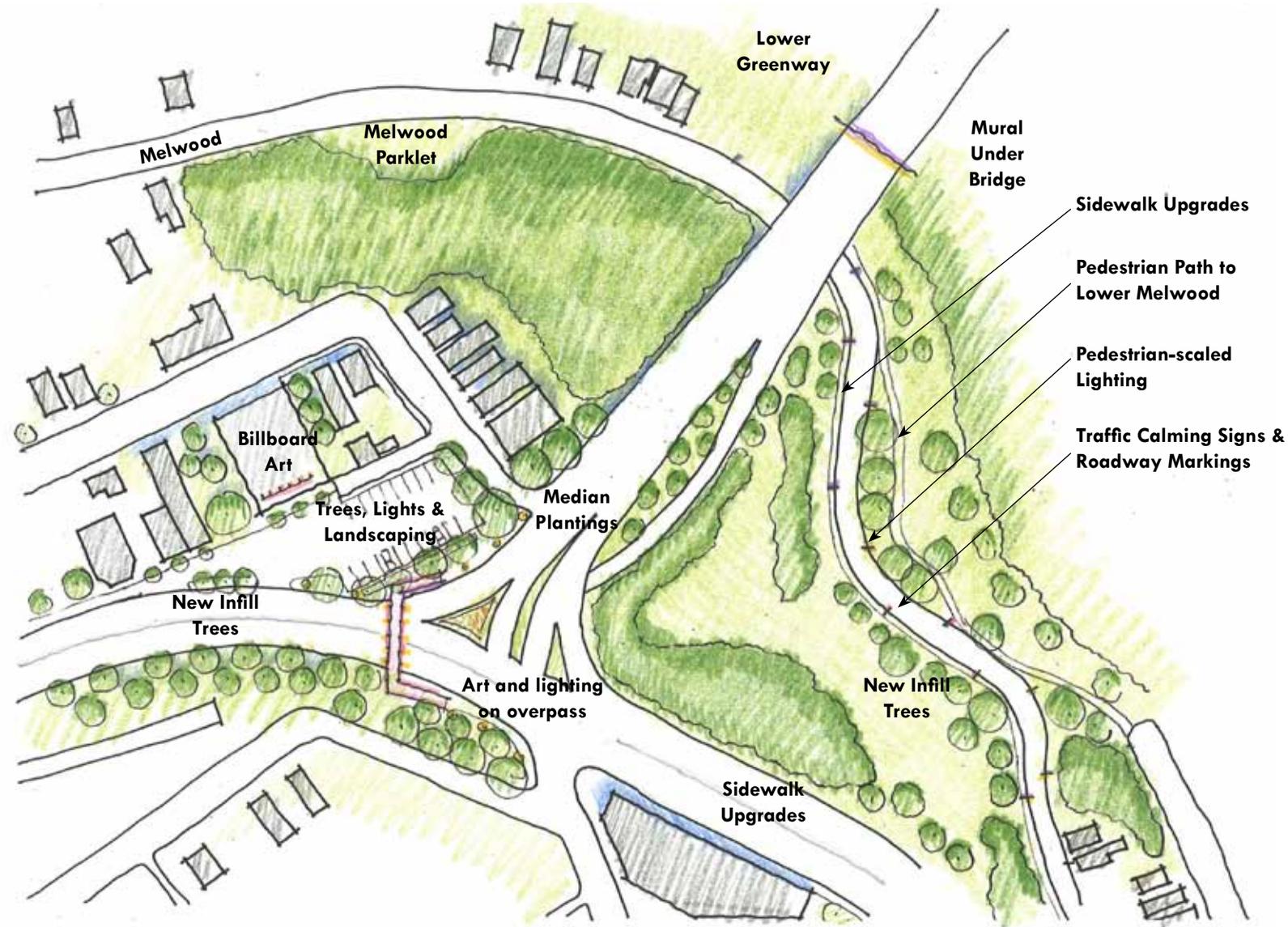


## Melwood/Gold Way Gateway

While the Melwood-Gold Way connector resembles an alley in its width and road condition, the street carries a high volume of pedestrian, bike and vehicular traffic, connecting Polish Hill to Oakland at a relatively level grade. The roadway's narrow width, sharp turns and overgrown vegetation create dangerous blind spots and a potential for head-on collisions. The absent or overgrown sidewalks and lack of bike lanes only compound these unsafe conditions.

The community and planning team brainstormed ways to improve this corridor and developed the following improvements.

- ▶ Connect Upper Melwood to Lower Melwood through the creation of continual sidewalks, public space and through the development of a pedestrian trail.
- ▶ Improve the sidewalk conditions and look at the possibility of creating a pedestrian trail away from the road.
- ▶ Develop signs and art to reduce traffic speeds. This may include strategic art crosswalks or intersection art indicating unsafe conditions ahead.
- ▶ Develop murals on the underside of the Bloomfield Bridge to announce the neighborhood and call attention to the fact that motorists are entering into a residential area.



**Plan Recommendations**

Pedestrian Bridge- Bigelow Boulevard



Billboard Close-up Art Opportunity



Benchmark Strip District Lighting



Kaulen Sculpture



Walkway Paving



Artful Signage



## Herron Avenue Improvements

Herron Avenue is a major city street that connects the Hill District and Polish Hill to Lawrenceville and the Strip District. It is the only street in Polish Hill that traverses the neighborhood edge to edge, bisecting the neighborhood east to west. It establishes two neighborhood gateway entrances into the community and negotiates a steep change in grade with s-curves and shifts in direction.

The community workshops developed a series of streetscape and gateway improvements for Herron. The goal of these proposals was to unify and enhance safety, calm traffic and unify the street, knitting the eastern and western portions of the neighborhood.



### Plan Recommendations

#### Lower Herron

- A. Improve sidewalk and stair conditions.
- B. Green and screen the parking lot.
- C. Improve connections to and awareness of the Herron Avenue Busway.
- D. Add lighting along the Herron Bridge as well as Lower Herron and the Busway.

#### Middle Herron

- E. Create a pedestrian-only landscaped connection along Melwood from Herron to Harding.
- F. Add clearly designated crosswalks and intersection art along Herron at Melwood and Dobson.
- G. Plant new street trees along Middle Herron to act as a buffer between pedestrians and automobiles.

#### Upper Herron

- H. Reduce the number of billboards along Bigelow. Work with Scenic Pittsburgh to remove or reclaim billboards.
- I. Improve crosswalks for safer pedestrian crossings.
- J. Improve the conditions of the pedestrian underpass that spans Bigelow along Herron.
- K. Green the Bigelow median, plant new street trees at the intersection, and improve bus stops.
- L. Implement traffic calming strategies to reduce the speed of traffic along Bigelow.

Lower Herron Avenue Bridge



Lower Herron



Melwood and Herron



Melwood and Herron



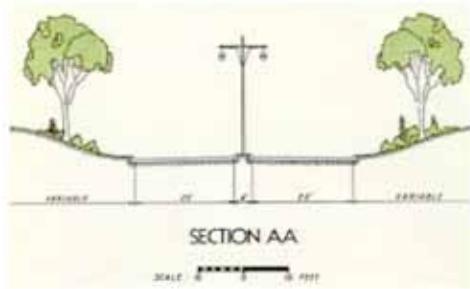
Upper Herron & Bigelow



## Bigelow Boulevard

Bigelow Boulevard is a historic urban boulevard that connects Downtown to Pittsburgh's East End neighborhoods. Between Downtown and Herron Avenue the character of the arterial roadway is quite attractive and lined by wooded hillsides, historic fences, and Frank Curto Park. As it traverses the eastern half of Polish Hill, the character of the roadway changes dramatically. A mix of vacant lots, underutilized commercial buildings, billboards, and houses define the roadway.

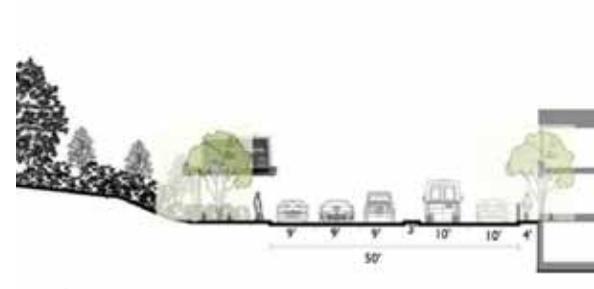
For Polish Hill residents, Bigelow Boulevard functions as a linear gateway to the neighborhood that defines the neighborhood's northern edge. Workshop participants spent a great deal of time discussing how to calm traffic, improve bike and pedestrian connections along the Boulevard to Downtown and Oakland, and mitigate the impact of the roadway on Polish Hill.



Historic Bigelow Blvd. Section



Infill Trees at Hillside Edge



Infill Trees in Commercial Areas



### Key goals for Boulevard improvements

- ▶ Traffic calming along Bigelow where current speeds far surpass posted speed limits.
- ▶ Greening the median and the vacant parcels along the commercial edge.
- ▶ Improving the crosswalks and bus stops along the Boulevard.
- ▶ Modifying the timing of traffic lights at the intersection of Bigelow, Paulowna and Herron.
- ▶ Improving connectivity to Downtown for pedestrians and cyclists.
- ▶ Improving access to Frank Curto Park.
- ▶ Reducing the number and visual impact of billboards.

### Proposed Improvements

- A. New Infill Trees
- B. New fence & pedestrian links to Frank Curto Park
- C. Traffic Calming along Bigelow
- D. Improved Pedestrian connections to Oakland and Downtown
- E. Reclaim billboards, Lamar opportunity
- F. Lighting along the Herron Trail
- G. Timing of lights to facilitate pedestrian crossing
- H. Art Announcing Polish Hill

Historic Postcard of Bigelow Blvd.



Historic Photo of Bigelow Blvd.



Bigelow & Herron Avenue



Bigelow Hillside Sycamores



Traditional Blvd Street Section





**Creative Traffic Calming**



**Complete Streets Planning**



**Green Transportation Advocacy**



**Public Transportation Advocacy**

## General Transportation Policy

Healthy and equitable transportation policy supports the development of accessible, efficient, affordable and safe alternatives to the automobile. For Polish Hill this means creating neighborhood transportation policies that de-emphasize the car, and put people first.

### Policy Goals

- › Develop transportation policies and plans that support health, equity and environmental quality.
- › Emphasize accessibility instead of simply mobility in transportation policies and programs.
- › Prioritize investments in public transportation.
- › Prioritize investments in bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
- › Encourage equitable transit-oriented development by creating incentives for integrated land-use and transportation planning.
- › Support policies that increase access to healthy foods, goods and services, as well as schools and businesses.

### Policy Action Items

- › Promote traffic calming throughout Polish Hill and efforts to decrease the amount of cut-through traffic coming through the neighborhood. Work with the City and collaborate with neighboring communities to step up traffic calming and enforcement.
- › Establish a plan for “complete streets” in Polish Hill.
- › Advocate green modes of transportation, such as bicycling, walking and public transit, over traditional automobile use. Incentivize modes of transit that are more environmentally sound and healthier for the neighborhood.
- › Protect and preserve existing bus service.

## Auto, Pedestrian, Bus & Bike Policy

In the Transportation and Gateways Working Group, residents discussed strategies to promote biking, walking and use of public transit in the neighborhood. Residents recognized that a balanced approach to transportation is necessary, one that supports all modes of transportation. A series of policy recommendations was put forward.

- A. Update the Bike Pittsburgh plan for Polish Hill, incorporating where possible:
  - Dedicated bike lanes
  - Allegheny River Trail connections
  - Downtown pedestrian and bike connections
- B. Develop a neighborhood parking plan:
 

The Polish Hill community has to identify creative ways to meet its demand for parking while maintaining its commitment to the expansion of green and open space. A committee can explore potential sites for parking in the neighborhood that will have the least impact on the livability of the neighborhood.
- C. Explore bike and car sharing opportunities: Currently bike sharing is being developed for Downtown, the Southside and the Strip District. It would be great to be able to expand this to include residential districts like Polish Hill.
- D. Increase and expand awareness of the Herron Ave. Busway Station, an important Bus Rapid Transit network serving the Polish Hill community.
- E. Work with City of Pittsburgh to improve the conditions of stairs and sidewalks.



Polish Hill Bike Plan



Neighborhood Parking Plan



Bike and Car Sharing



BRT Advocacy