Engaging in conversation to identify the issues facing Wilkinsburg and to become part of the solution.

Project Team
Tracey Evans, WCDC
Bill Schenck, Tri-State Capital
Jordan Pallitto, The Hill Group
Gordon Manker, WCDC
Marina Balko, WCDC
Bernard Wetzel, WCDC Board President
Ellen Ruddock, Facilitator

Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation
Wilkinsburg Focus Group 2020

Report

The Focus Group 2020 was charged by the WCDC Steering Committee with the task of building consensus with input from stakeholders on vision, challenges, priority issues to be addressed and a path forward toward continued revitalization of Wilkinsburg. The process resulted in more than adequate input, in less time than expected, during the COVID-19 restrictions. This report highlights the outcome. The appendices following the report give detail of the feedback from 134 participants. Input was gathered through a series of surveys and eight 90-minute online discussion sessions over a three-month period. Participants came to the process as residents, members of the workforce, business owners, retirees, renters, property owners, board members - all stakeholders in Wilkinsburg’s future. Their passionate vision of the future of the community is clear. There is lots of enthusiasm and a commitment to work toward this stated vision (Appendix A).

Wilkinsburg is a diverse and welcoming regional destination with a vibrant business district and visibly strong neighborhoods.

Participants agree that Wilkinsburg has distinct strengths of location; community ties; resilient, friendly and positive people; prominent churches; and existing racial and economic diversity (Appendix B). They offered examples of successful revitalization programs in other communities (Appendix C). They want an inclusive community and a viable business district with pedestrian activity day and night. Stakeholders want governance that provides infrastructure improvements and attractive amenities - governance that strives to be green. They deserve the best possible education and training for their children and employees. And they demand open and honest communication.

Consensus is that despite many successful public projects of improvement over the past fifteen years, Wilkinsburg has not reached the tipping point of investment, growth, and change. There is still much to be done. Although some improvements have been significant, the visible image of Wilkinsburg to visitors and residents has not reached the main thoroughfare and neighborhoods of the most vulnerable. Participants agree that the following roadblocks need to be addressed before real change will be visible. The challenges that have been identified in Focus Group 2020 work are listed here by priority (Appendix D).

High Property Taxes
Blighted Neighborhood
Visible State of the Business District
School District Performance
Stigma of Crime
Resistance to Change

Participants suggested potential next steps to address the challenges. There is agreement that high property taxes is the number one issue and should be addressed first. Participants gave specific examples of how high property taxes are affecting them. Some of the examples were alarming.
• “High taxes led a new business owner to buying a house in Swissvale instead of Wilkinsburg which is where she wanted to live.”
• “Property taxes are half of a commercial mortgage payment, so there is no reason to stay in Wilkinsburg. If taxes don’t change, I will go to new location. I employ 30 people with decent wages and they all bike to work.”
• “Employees of this company looked in Wilkinsburg for houses but ruled-out buying due to high taxes.”
• “Developers who work on low margins in developing communities, say the high property taxes are cost prohibitive; and won’t pursue development due to cost deterrent”

High property taxes seem to be the cause of increasing numbers of people abandoning their properties, families moving from Wilkinsburg, lack of investment and improvement in the business district, and the image of a crime ridden community with significant resistance to change (Appendix E).

The Steering Committee provided current information regarding the outmigration of population, vacant lots, a comparison of municipal property taxes, and delinquent taxes (Appendix F.) This information was new to many participants and generated many questions, concerns, and comments (Appendix G).

Participants ranked the most important issues in a survey and suggested solutions (Appendix H). Lack of education on the facts is keeping Wilkinsburg from achieving desired change. This education and communication have been exacerbated with COVID-19 (Appendix I). However, there is energy and a commitment to change through social media and a grass roots effort. The desired outcome is change that would be a spark to investment – change that brings about a community where everyone can share the pride.

Many participants have made a commitment to join or be assigned to committees and continue to work toward change in the community they love. Consideration of a merger is the consensus. A plan of next steps will be developed over the next few months addressing the issues of high property taxes, neighborhood blight, business district blight and communication. A complete report will be available on the WCDC website by the end of the year.

Reflecting on the work done by Focus Group 2020, “The time is now”.

WCDC Steering Committee:
Tracey Evans, WCDC
Bill Schenck, Tri-State Capital
Jordan Pallitto, The Hill Group
Gordon Manker, WCDC
Marina Balko, WCDC
Bernard Wetzel, WCDC Board President
Ellen Ruddock, Facilitator
APPENDICES

Wilkinsburg Focus Group 2020 Report

Table of Contents

Appendix A – Vision of Wilkinsburg .............................................................................................................. 2
Appendix B – Dreams for the Future of Wilkinsburg .................................................................................... 2
Appendix C – Community Strengths ............................................................................................................. 4
Appendix D – Successful Revitalization Programs ........................................................................................ 4
Appendix E – Challenges ............................................................................................................................... 5
Appendix F – Next Steps ............................................................................................................................... 7
Appendix G - The Status, Facts and Trends................................................................................................... 8
Appendix H – Participant Questions, Concerns and Comments ................................................................. 16
Appendix I – Ranking the Most Important Issues and Suggested Solutions ............................................... 19
Appendix J – The need for Communication ................................................................................................. 23
Appendix K – Consideration of a Merger with the City of Pittsburgh ....................................................... 25
Appendix L – Summary ............................................................................................................................... 27
Appendix M – Participant List ..................................................................................................................... 28
Appendix A – Vision of Wilkinsburg

Participant residents and stakeholders of Wilkinsburg have prescribed to the same vision of their community for several decades. They clearly see their vision and have a passionate desire to work toward achieving their vision.

*Wilkinsburg is a diverse and welcoming regional destination with a vibrant business district and visibly strong neighborhoods.*

Appendix B – Dreams for the Future of Wilkinsburg

Focus Group 2020 began in June with input from 134 participants during the COVID-19 crisis. A survey was conducted, and the first 90-minute session was held on June 24th. Participants came to the process as residents, members of the workforce, business owners, retirees, landowners, renters, property owners, board members – all stakeholders in Wilkinsburg’s future. Participant responses to the surveys are on occasion depicted in word clouds in this report. Participant comments are often summarized; some are quoted. Most participants responded to a brief survey asking for their input regarding dreams for the future, strengths, and challenges that the community is facing in that progress. Their responses follow:

**PARTICIPANT COMMENTS ON DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE OF WILKINSBURG**

**Neighborhoods**
- “The best community” in which to raise a family
- An increased effort to protect and help the most vulnerable
- Future development that is inclusive, sustainable and without displacement of the most vulnerable
- “Stewardship” and “community” have meaning to the people of Wilkinsburg
- Wilkinsburg is a community practicing “Community”
- People come together and work together social distancing or not
- Beautiful parks and intergenerational spaces without fees
- Attractive vacant lots that show progress, signs of welcome and neighborhood stability
• Partnerships with foundations for affordable housing rehab projects

**Business District**
• Wilkinsburg businesses are the resource for all basic residents’ needs
• Recruit business owners who will become job creators while protecting existing businesses
• Develop Penn Avenue
• Develop small businesses owned by local people
• Improve promotion of all local companies
• Create community guidelines on desired businesses
• Establish year-round markets that become incubators for businesses
• Develop an inviting, attractive business district with vibrant pedestrian activity both day and night
• Improve store fronts for locally owned businesses and make them structurally sound
• Focus on the arts and artists in a large space for arts events and commercial art
• Provide technology assistance and training for businesses to become digital

**Government and Infrastructure**
• Improve transportation infrastructure and access to the community
• Expand bike paths into Wilkinsburg from neighboring communities
• Seek funding for parks, infrastructure improvements, storm water management, safe sidewalks, signage, walkways, bike lanes and year-round space
• Improve wheelchair accessibility
• Access Multi-borough Eco District plus more connectivity to neighboring boroughs
• Increase opportunities with vacant properties. Make it easier to buy and less expensive to renovate.
• Turn vacancy weakness into strengths by leveraging Wilkinsburg’s great architecture
• Take advantage of the great asset of traffic through Wilkinsburg
• Improve effort to be a “green” community
• Easy access to Wilkinsburg without a car
• Improve Wilkinsburg with inviting, safe, well-lit streets for pedestrians and bikes after dark

**Communication and Image**
• Information is accessible and communication is distributed from a one-stop-shop, physical and digital resource.
• Wilkinsburg has a Community Manager to manage all communications, i.e., newsletter, information on Borough projects, events, etc. Community Forge would be open to host.
• Wilkinsburg will always be Wilkinsburg regardless of mergers.
• Visitors get a positive impression from driving through the community
• An inviting community that focuses on housing and attracts more residents who demand more business

**Education and School District**
• Expand training programs for businesses.
• Initiate training programs for existing residents to create future employees. Some companies are willing to invest in training and offer equity.
• Wilkinsburg Library is a household word.
Appendix C – Community Strengths

Themes in the survey responses to questions of strengths of the Wilkinsburg community were identified by participants. Location; community ties; resilient, friendly people with positive energy; prominent churches; and existing racial and economic diversity are key.

Appendix D – Successful Revitalization Programs

The survey and online discussion asked for input on other revitalized communities that participants have visited and experienced and would be excited to emulate if appropriate for Wilkinsburg. Their comments follow:

REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS WITH POTENTIAL TO RESEARCH AND EMULATE

- Braddock Library serves as a place to convene planned community events and activities that bring people of the community together.
- Beltzhoover Hilltop Alliance is a free legal help program to ensure that properties are not targeted upon death or transfer of ownership.
- Millvale and Etna have attractive pedestrian shopping districts.
- Sharpsburg and Carnegie have keen sense of community and are good at getting resident and business input regularly.
- Garfield uses arts and artists initiatives to improve their business district.
- Garfield has easy re-zoning for single family home to multi-unit if the property is owner occupied.
- Homewood has a “cluster land use plan” and intentional outreach to all which empowers residents to give input and ideas for improvement. Survey results and plans are sent to every single address.
- Braddock has a financial program to help property owners one time to buy their properties.
- Lawrenceville has a Cluster Land Trust with City of Bridges and can lock down property to reserve for low income housing or other development.
• Northwood Village near West Palm Beach, FL, has small, “bite-sized” square-foot shops with local providers and businesses owned by residents. It is a creative space with arts, lots of vegetation, outdoor seating, a small coffee shop, small restaurant, small distillery, small brewery, and an inviting atmosphere.
• Richmond, VA is using public art to bring people together. There is also a big focus on food security and farmers markets. There are parks in every neighborhood. Public spaces are open and accessible. Activities are affordable. Cost of housing has been well matched to local incomes.
• Communities in Europe are all well connected with public transportation. People feel safe on the streets despite diverse cultures.
• The Villages, FL is a retirement community built around multiple squares of social interaction centerpieces where entertainment, commercial art sales, musicians, artists, public gatherings, and performances are scheduled weekly and people gather daily.
• Reading Terminal Market, Philadelphia, PA is an indoor market space that is a hub of activity and commerce year-round.
• Minneapolis, MN has neighborhood associations that act as a hub of information and resources to residents.
• Asheville, NC has brought artists and creative restaurants successfully to a totally abandoned downtown.

Appendix E – Challenges

Participants were asked to identify several challenges and gaps to the dreams they hold for Wilkinsburg. Those identified are issues that have been unresolved for decades and without being addressed will continue to impede progress and solvency for Wilkinsburg Borough and the Wilkinsburg School District. The following are the issues they reported:

Participant Comments on the Challenges and Gaps to Dreams of the Future

• It is disheartening to see so many vacant lots, houses, and businesses.
• Wilkinsburg borough has an inadequate, small budget.
• Property taxes are most punitive to those with the least amount of resources.
• Progress is being made to reduce taxes and to offer tax abatements. This is a positive sign and needs continued momentum to reduce one of the highest property tax rates in the state.
• The tax millage rate is too high and discourages people from buying homes.
• Approved tax abatements are an advantage for flips but result in a property owner squeeze on renters in the form of higher rents.
• Taxes discourage business owners and residents to make repairs out of fear of increased property reassessment.
• The stigma of crime and high taxes impede private development.
• Wilkinsburg is in a Catch 22 with vacancies that are causing high taxes and the lack of a solution.
• Consideration should be given to merging with another municipality.
• There is a need to determine the advantages and disadvantages of merging Wilkinsburg with the City of Pittsburgh.
• Retired residents cannot afford costly repairs to their properties.
• There are no incentives for businesses to move to Wilkinsburg.
• There is a need for creative code enforcement to address difficulties. Code enforcement is not willing to be flexible.
• The Borough says “That’s the rule” to block ideas for change. This attitude impedes business development and property improvement. There is resistance from borough in code and in policy for simple things like having a garden. There is a need to break down “that’s the way it is” mentality, rewrite, and update some of the rules.
• There is a need to hold property owners accountable for vacant and blighted properties both commercial and residential.
• There is a need to take vacant and abandoned properties away from tax delinquent landlords.
• Focus on local laws, codes and ordinances requires a more effective effort and more people involved. Encourage those interested to get involved in Wilkinsburg Borough Council and Wilkinsburg School Board.
• It is troubling that some people have been on council for decades. People who want to bring change and improvement have been discouraged and have become worn out.
• Contractors feel that fines and fees create a burden on contractors doing remodeling and service in Wilkinsburg. Some significant companies say they are not supported and feel that they are subjected to illegal fees and will no longer work in Wilkinsburg.
• Political in-fighting is exacerbated when borough employees do not have a good relationship with Council members and others.
• The Busway is an advantage to transportation and a disadvantage because it cuts the community in half.
• It is not easy to get to Wilkinsburg if you do not drive or take a bus. Walkways, bike lanes and slowing traffic would be an improvement to accessibility.
• Many properties require a fair amount of work. Significant money is needed for renovation and to bring buildings up to code.
• Constituencies do not have or have not demonstrated a single voice, vision or aligned purpose including the WCDC, Chamber of Commerce, Mayor, Borough Council and School Board.
• Any revisioning or revitalization effort will require creative options to get people of all backgrounds involved.
• There is a need for plans that set guidelines and standards that arise from community consensus.
• There are two sets of barriers to change – (1) bringing in outsiders and (2) activating those who are already here.
• There is a need for plans that set guidelines and standards that arise from community consensus.
• Borough Council and School Board cannot compete with the grants and opportunities that are offered by the City of Pittsburgh to businesses and property owners.
• Wilkinsburg is a transient community. Property owners are needed who encourage people to stay here long term.
• Wilkinsburg has a separation of class and race.
• Racism is present. Let us recognize it and let us develop a new narrative.
• There are pockets of the community that are not integrated. The residents of Ward 2 feel left out. There is a need to engage residents and build consensus with all segments of the community.
• There are lots of young people with ideas and enthusiasm, but they do not have access to tools to turn them into reality.
• People who want to help and get involved have trouble plugging into organizations, boards, etc.
• Small town politics where nobody gets along is not the desired image.
• There is disparity in where the funding is directed.
• It is harder to get bank financing if you are black.
• There is a need to listen to each other.
• There is a critical need for affordable housing.
• The quality of education needs to be addressed.
• Walk-in businesses are not able to survive.
• Blight on Penn Avenue is being addressed buy very slowly.
• The WCDC is effective and should focus more on housing.
• There is increasing unemployment with COVID-19.
• Connection to neighbors provides further public safety and is sacrificed in this transient community of Wilkinsburg.
• Public safety issues are ignored due to inadequate patrolling.
• The stigma of crime and high taxes impede private development
• There is a crime stigma of Wilkinsburg.
• WTAE is an issue.

Appendix F – Next Steps

Participants were asked for their thoughts and suggestions for immediate next steps. They have offered the following ideas to begin addressing the challenges and gaps identified.

Suggested Immediate Next Steps Recommended for Consideration

• Attend the Borough Council and School Board meetings. Every effort should be made to broadcast these meetings to the public virtually through Zoom or other means. Minutes should be accessible.
• Make everyone welcome to Borough Council and School Board meetings. Provide childcare, refreshments and transportation for important meetings.
• Find a physical space for community forums. Invite and involve all with Zoom meetings. (see Candy Cheng’s Participation Work http://candychang.com/
• Share info about what Wilkinsburg Borough Council controls and what the Wilkinsburg School Board controls.
• Share information with interested candidates of how to run for Borough Council or School Board.
• There is a group of like-minded people who want to bring about positive change.
• Work with the Joint Tax Committee.
• Forgive back taxes for new homeowners.
• Work on a further reduction of school tax mills now that some municipal finances are in better shape.
• Collect the facts of what Wilkinsburg Borough and Wilkinsburg School Board are facing and make that information available to all residents, property owners and businesses.
• Create a diverse and inclusive campaign to keep people informed.
• Use a shared resource hub of information to communicate to business owners, workforce, and residents.
• Use Facebook and other social media to share information and publicize meetings.
• Find a foundation who would be interested in funding the rehab of 20 houses (approximately $3 million) and sell to residents at below market rate.
• A demographic census report of Wilkinsburg population with age, gender, family unit, income, number of businesses, etc. would be helpful in planning.

Appendix G - The Status, Facts and Trends

There have been millions of public dollars invested in Wilkinsburg projects over the past 15 years and still the lack of private investment persists in residential and business district properties. Participants identified the issues preventing achievement of the vision for Wilkinsburg and dreams for the future. The number one challenge is high property taxes. Many believe that this is the major cause of all of Wilkinsburg’s problems. It is also believed that if the taxes could be reduced, the tipping point of revitalization could be realized in neighborhoods and the business district.

High Property Taxes
Blighted Properties
Visible State of the Business District
School District Performance
Stigma of Crime
Resistance to Change
The Current Status, Facts and Trends

During the July virtual discussion sessions, the WCDC Steering Committee shared slides of facts and trends affecting these many challenges and the lack of progress. The information presented generated the participant questions that follow.

Focus Group 2020
The Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation

A Vision for Wilkinsburg

We want Wilkinsburg to be...

- A vibrant business district
- Visibly strong neighborhoods
- Diverse and welcoming for all
- A regional destination
Challenges & Gaps

What is keeping us from achieving our vision?

- High property taxes
- Blighted properties
- Visible state of the business district
- School district performance
- Stigma of crime
- Resistance to change

Residential Property Taxes

In Wilkinsburg

the average home's assessed value is $47,000

For this home at the millage rate of 48 the property tax bill is $2,265

In Pittsburgh

property tax for a $47,000 home at the city millage rate of 23 $1,060

even the average Pittsburgh home assessed at $95,000 property tax is $2,150
All Residential Taxes

Combined Earned Income and Property Tax Payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Income: $200,000</th>
<th>Income: $60,000</th>
<th>Income: $20,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Value: $250,000</td>
<td>Home Value: $100,000</td>
<td>Home Value: $45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>$11,685</td>
<td>$3,994</td>
<td>$1,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg</td>
<td>$14,058</td>
<td>$5,423</td>
<td>$2,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra cost to live in Wilkinsburg</td>
<td>$2,372</td>
<td>$1,349</td>
<td>$748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Difference</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Property taxes are a disincentive for homeownership.

The impact on households with lower incomes is disproportionally higher. The lower income household is penalized nearly twice as much (32%) as the wealthiest (17%).

---

Commercial Property Tax

Property taxes are an even greater disincentive for businesses.

The ♥CVS pharmacy♥ building in Wilkinsburg as compared to a CVS in Pittsburgh:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assessed Value</th>
<th>Annual Tax *2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg</td>
<td>$1,291,500</td>
<td>$62,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
<td>$29,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City of Pittsburgh: income tax 1%, real estate tax 23 mills
Wilkinsburg: income tax 1% real estate tax 45 mills
New Commercial Construction Comparison

Example: If Shannopin Village project moved from Lawrenceville to Wilkinsburg:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lawrenceville</th>
<th>Wilkinsburg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction Cost</td>
<td>$1.4M</td>
<td>$1.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Rent per SF</td>
<td>$1.55</td>
<td>$.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Rent per SF</td>
<td>$19</td>
<td>$11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Operating Costs as % of Rent</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Net Operating Income</td>
<td>$100,990</td>
<td>$57,210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vacant Properties

Wilkinsburg Housing Units (2000-2017)

Over 17 years:
Occupied units decreased by 1400
An average of 82 properties a year were abandoned
Vacant and Abandoned Properties
Wilkinsburg has the highest number of vacant properties among Allegheny County Municipalities

In 2010, 19% of Wilkinsburg homes were vacant.
In 2017, 23% were vacant.
2014 to 2017:
52 vacant properties were acquired
But an additional 250 were abandoned

Population Decline

Wilkinsburg Population since peak in 1950

4000 people have left Wilkinsburg since 2000
Over the last 20 years an average of 4 people a week leave Wilkinsburg
Borough Finances

Without significant changes, Wilkinsburg will experience an increasing deficit as police and personnel costs continue to grow while the Borough’s property tax base remains stagnant.

School District Finances

In a baseline scenario, assuming a strong economy, despite the School District’s recent surplus a growing deficit will lead to a negative fund balance over time.

*charts in slides 11 & 12 have updated since group meeting*
Conclusion

We want Wilkinsburg to be...

- A vibrant business district
- Visibly strong neighborhoods
- Diverse and welcoming for all
- A regional destination

Conclusion

But...

- Wilkinsburg’s population continues to decline, placing the tax burden on fewer residents
- Occupied housing units continue to decline with more properties going vacant
- The Borough’s and School District’s financial viability is not sustainable without increasing revenue and/or decreasing expenses
- High tax rates have made the Borough uncompetitive for private commercial investment
- Wilkinsburg residents pay the highest property taxes in the county with low income residents being the hardest hit
Appendix H – Participant Questions, Concerns and Comments

• Is the Focus Group intended to solve a budget problem or a revitalization problem or both?
• Is there consensus on the vision of the Borough and dreams for the future? Is it security, pride in ownership or other?
• How can you get everybody in the room to craft a common vision? The demographics of the Focus Group are not representative of the Community. How do we engage People of Color in these conversations?

High Taxes and Neighborhood Blight
• What defines abandoned?
• Are there repercussions for property owners who do not maintain their properties?
• How can residents be empowered to hold property owners accountable?
• How can processes be made palatable for people to invest in properties?
• Will the decent job that MBM was doing with delinquent tax collection of payment or payment plans continue through the pandemic?
• Is there enough housing stock and if all vacant homes were filled, would it be enough to solve the revenue problems?
• Are there new, interesting, and affordable housing options that can be brought to Wilkinsburg such as tiny homes, land trust, etc.?
• What are the steps to lowering property taxes?
• Is it reasonable to continue to patch this dyke of lowering property taxes or should we find new, innovative solutions?
• Are there programs to help with home repairs and enhancing viability of home ownership? Who has the power to institute such programs?

High Taxes and Business District Blight
• Other than proximity to Penn Avenue, are there other differences between “no vacancy” and “high vacancy” areas? Are the vacancies represented both commercial and residential?
• Is there concern about investors buying up all commercial properties when they are cheap and sitting on them?
• Can major investors be vetted?

High Taxes and Government Resistance to Change
• Do we know and understand what drivers would lead to development?
• Is Wilkinsburg underfunded? Are tax dollars being spent as efficiently as other communities?
• What is the community engagement approach that will bring change as attending council meetings and working on committees is not enough?
• Are there repercussions for property owners that do not maintain their properties? Who has the power to enforce those repercussions?
• Is there a Wilkinsburg Community Plan?
• Can Wilkinsburg keep its identity and the WCDC if it is necessary to consider municipal collaboration with the City of Pittsburgh?
• Is there evidence of success with the mergers of Wilkinsburg and Pittsburgh fire departments and garbage collection?
• What would residents lose by merging with the City of Pittsburgh?
• Would Pittsburgh have an interest in Wilkinsburg merging with the City?

**High Taxes and School District Performance**
• Would Turner and Kelly remain neighborhood schools if Wilkinsburg joined the Pittsburgh Public School (PPS) system?
• Will these schools suffer more in the future without the school district merging with PPS?

**Participant Comments on the Priority Issues**

**High Taxes and Neighborhood Blight**
• There is a need to make policy makers drive action.
• There is a need to examine the advantages and disadvantages of changes that come with gentrification. (Gentrification is the process of renovating and improving a house or district so that it conforms to middle class taste. Pros are improved housing stock, revamped parks, new bike lanes, grocery stores, and other amenities. Cons are potential displacement of the most vulnerable residents.)
• Neighborhood Allies has studied what it takes to help communities of color to take ownership and not get pushed out by gentrification. The number one cause is high property taxes because low income families are most impacted by high taxes. Neighborhood Allies has been good for Wilkinsburg.
• People are tired of having such a significant percentage of income going to property taxes and income tax. Some of the issues are not going away and people are tired of subsidizing inaction with tax dollars.
• City of Bridges is willing to have a conversation about starting a Community Land Trust in Wilkinsburg.
• A leap of faith to lower millage is needed to raise more tax revenue in the long term.
• Abandoned homes must go through court process and a tax or sheriff sale which can take years to complete. This leads to deterioration instead of transition to new ownership.
• 38% of households in Wilkinsburg are owner occupied.
• Median gross monthly rent is $810.
• One participant has an idea for tiny houses.
• The costs to repair homes plus paying taxes mean that it rarely pays to repair and rent vacant homes. Blighted homes with roof and structural damage mean the building must be razed ($20k) or structurally rebuilt ($150k) for the most basic home. The result is higher property taxes, and it is not feasible to rent it out.

**Business District Blight**
• There are good improvements especially on Wood St.
• Pittsburgh and Wilkinsburg have significant hoops to jump through regarding properties. Wilkinsburg’s hoops are appalling.

**Government and Resistance to Change**
• There is a need to encourage policy makers to drive action.
• Public safety needs to be addressed starting with an evaluation of the police department.
• There are many good plans, studies, and ordinances but there is still a lack of staff capacity to successfully implement these plans.
• The borough needs a plan without barriers to buying and renovating for people who want to buy abandoned property.
• There is a need to vote new people into office. There are organizations such as UNITE that can help people find a board or organization to serve the community with their specific talents and gifts.
• There is an excellent Wilkinsburg Community Plan 2010 as well as other plans that can be shared with all.
• Wilkinsburg is due for a new Comprehensive Borough Plan.
• Allegheny County reassessed property values in 2013. Most neighborhoods’ properties in Wilkinsburg went down. The Business District properties decreased in value by 23%.
• The median house price has gone up from $54k to $80k, but the borough-wide tax assessment has remained stagnant.
• Those interested are welcome to join the City of Bridges Community Land Trust on a call. Contact Rayden Sorock at raydensorock@gmail.com.

Education and School District Performance
• It is encouraging that Wilkinsburg school district enrollment is increasing at lower age grades.
• There is a need to find more good people to serve on the Wilkinsburg School Board and Wilkinsburg Borough Council.
• There is concern that closing the school district and moving all kids to PPS might not be best for the children.
• There is a need to keep and support the neighborhood schools.
• The millage rate can only be continued to be lowered if all sides of the story are told.
• School district partnership with PPS has enabled access to more courses and laptops.
• PPS does not have more to offer.
• Everyone at Wilkinsburg schools are working hard to improve the community school.
• If we merge with PPS, we can never go back.
• There is a need for more trades training for unemployed people in Wilkinsburg. This would help with getting home improvement work done on local homes.
• Pitt’s Homewood Community Engagement Center is a resource for trades training. The Trade Institute of Pittsburgh in Homewood is doing fabulous work.
• The Center for Civic Arts is offering a program in carpentry.
• The Wilkinsburg Community Ministries offers free education classes for Wilkinsburg residents in plumbing, electrical and carpentry as well as access to maker space.

Communication
• Now is the time for change.
• Not everyone has the time or ability to be a part of the Focus Group. Many people feel left out or let down by the powers that be.
• Voter turnout percentage is not good in Wilkinsburg.
• People involved in the Focus Group are good but do not have authority to make changes.
• There is a need to create a space and a number to call for easy and consistent access to updated information.
• Google Classroom is and could be an option for sharing information and facilitating communication on specific topics.
• There is no need to reinvent the wheel; it is better to connect to what is working well.
Appendix I – Ranking the Most Important Issues and Suggested Solutions

By August 2020, 134 participants were responding to the Focus Group 2020 survey and joining in the online discussions. A third survey was distributed, and an online discussion was held August 18. Participants were asked to rank by priority the issues they have experienced. They identified once again high taxes, blighted properties in residential neighborhoods, blighted properties in the business district, quality of education and the school district as top priority issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Overall Rank</th>
<th>Rank Distribution</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>No. of Rankings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High property taxes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blighted property in residential neighborhoods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blighted property in the business district</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the school district</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants offered specific suggestions of how the issues and challenges could be addressed and what should be the community’s immediate next steps to addressing them.

Participant Comments

**High Property Taxes**
- Lower the taxes or provide a great school district that will offset the tax.
- Fire the tax collector. Other boroughs do not allow properties sit for 10 years tax delinquent. A house vacant for 10 years is certainly ruined. A committee needs to be created to move properties block by block to sheriff sale or offer them up free and clear for purchase by people with the experience and money to rehab them and sell them so that they are lived in again.
- Taxes must be addressed as part of the solution to resolving business district blight, neighborhood blight and the school district issues.
- The taxes are too high.
- High property taxes are part of the other issues. If Wilkinsburg was part of PPS, we would have quality schools and better choices and significantly lower property tax rate. The lower tax rate would encourage personal and commercial investment in the area reducing blight and increasing long-term residency. The tax issues should not be divorced from the other issues.

**Neighborhood Blight**
- Find a quick way to clear vacant properties.
- Work with property owners to renovate, sell or demolish property.
- Encourage occupants to buy vacant properties in their immediate vicinity. Mobilize neighborhood resources to ensure that the property owners have access to the tools they need to smoothly transition vacant tax delinquent properties into the ownership of neighbors who have the resources to care for these spaces. Encourage the development of affordable housing units in underutilized vacant property.
- Vacant properties need to be occupied so that the Borough has the taxes to operate.
- Many vacant houses are a hazard and unsafe and need attention to improve our community.
- Create a partnership with a non-profit housing group and a developer to renovate for sale and rental homes.
- Support the existing base of homes through free renovations which encourages owners to pass their homes onto family.
- Encourage more people to move into Wilkinsburg with incentives.
- Utilize Hosanna House to help in getting properties up to date. Offer reduced labor to owners to make properties livable. Owners buy property at a reduced rate and pay for materials and reduced labor costs. Young adults help to bring homes up to code. Property gets back on tax rolls. Young adults would learn a trade supervised by a professional donating some time.
- Use Borough surplus to tear the vacant buildings down.

**Business District Blight**
- Initiate a multi-disciplinary approach that welcomes new businesses into the area like the Tech Sector growth in the East Liberty area of the City.
- Take advantage of PA Main Street programs to provide financial assistance. Encourage with incentives the cleanup of blighted properties; enforce code violations; consider condemnation proceedings; encourage people to purchase properties and freshen them up, consider doing what Northside/East Ohio Street has done by checking with the Northside Chamber of
Commerce; put outside coverings on vacant properties. This is the main drive through for visitors and gives the impression Wilkinsburg is downtrodden and crime infested.

- Approach property owners, purchase some of the building. Raise funds to buy some of the buildings in the 800 block.

**Government and Public Safety**
- There is a lack of leadership in the police department. There needs to be accountability, honesty, and transparency. There must be accurate information available to the public and a willingness to listen and learn from the public. The blue code of silence has no place. The police department cannot be run like a secret society. Neighborhoods are not being properly patrolled. Many more avenues of communication need to be open. Most of the issues in Wilkinsburg are in one way or another related to public safety.
- Fair, honest, and open dialog is needed. There is a perception that candidates for council are pre-determined and most people do not stand a chance of running and winning.

**Education and School District**
- The quality of the school district may lie in the way we advertise for teachers and how we work to keep the good teachers with pay and benefits.
- The school district will improve if more industry is brought to Wilkinsburg.
- Merge the school district with Pittsburgh Public Schools and eliminate overhead costs.

**Communication**
- Accomplishment of goals encourages engagement of others.
- Recognize that access to reliable internet and online surveys presents a barrier to many Wilkinsburg residents. Be sure to conduct outreach that meets residents where they are.
- COVID-19 has limited functions where we could pass on the word to involve others. As churches are starting to reopen, asking Religious Architectural Heritage to pass information onto congregations would help to communicate information.
- Wake Up the Vote Wilkinsburg, Peace of Mind, Community Forge, Barrels to Beethoven, Family Support Center at Hosanna House, Wilkinsburg Historical Society, The Sleeping Octopus, events like the Two-Way Street Festival and the Sacred Spaces Tour are all good avenues of communication. Vibrant art activities are another avenue for communication.
- Effective communication requires more grass roots work by getting out in the neighborhoods.
- Pay attention to what people are saying instead of saying what you are going to do and do not do it.
- Arrange more face to face conversations either virtual or in person.
- Communication is difficult because we have lots of transient residents that seem not to care. We can develop our own press and news releases to reach out to renters.
- Make property owners accountable to maintenance and upkeep of property.
- Use online ad advertising for borough manager and council in their reports.
- Have people that are connected to the community reach out to people and get them involved.
- Make sure all demographics are being reached even those who are not online. Do flyers and radio ads. Provide childcare to participants in a zoom call. Send mail surveys.
- Many neighbors would be delighted to take part because they are sick of the high taxes and people leaving for other school districts. Participation is a matter of available time and confidence in the process. A quick census asking about property tax, school district and other issues would bring a quick response. If you ask people to sit in hours of meetings to discuss something, they feel is clear as day, they feel it is as waste of time. Send out a mailer
with basic facts and a link to a website that can take a poll and serve as a petition. Go door to
door to fill in the gaps instead of conducting the entire petition in person.

- Create neighborhood task forces.
- Use local block watch groups to discuss issues and solutions.
- Even those who did not live in Wilkinsburg were excellent contributors to the Wilkinsburg
  Church Project.
- Go to the local churches to speak to the community about the issues in Wilkinsburg.
- Find various groups in Wilkinsburg to talk to renters, owners in prosperous corners of the
  borough, owners in the struggling parts of the borough, business owners, borough employees,
  teachers, parents of school age children, etc. Then determine the best way to communicate
  with them, i.e., calls, surveys, through businesses, email, etc.

The third online discussion on August 18th brought all but two participants to agreement that high
property taxes is the number one issue and should be addressed first. There is also agreement that the
vacancies are due to high property taxes – the root cause of all of Wilkinsburg’s high priority issues.
Participants gave specific examples of how high property taxes are affecting them. Some of the
examples were alarming.

- “High taxes led a new business owner to buying a house in Swissvale instead of Wilkinsburg
  which is where she wanted to live.”
- “Property taxes are half of a commercial mortgage payment, so there is no reason to stay in
  Wilkinsburg. If taxes don’t change, I will go to new location. I employ 30 people with decent
  wages and they all bike to work.”
- “Employees of this company looked in Wilkinsburg for houses but ruled-out buying due to high
  taxes.”
- “Developers who work on low margins in developing communities, say the high property
  taxes are cost prohibitive; and won’t pursue development due to cost deterrent”
- “High property taxes make viability difficult and out-of-reach for entrepreneurs.”
- “I’d love to buy a house here, but I can’t pay those taxes.”
- “If a newly purchased home gets reassessed, it can be a significant new financial burden”
- “One-third of my income goes to pay property taxes, and COVID-19 has eliminated other income
  which places an extra burden.”
- “The tax abatement program has attracted a new neighbor, but the tax bill is already high, and
  the school district wants even more after a re-assessment.”
- “Realtors do not always disclose to the buyer that the property could be re-assessed and lead to
  significant tax increases.”
- “Re-assessments will drive-out long-time residents.”
- “Developers are doing major projects in city neighborhoods, but high property taxes keep them
  out of Wilkinsburg. The tax rate makes projects unsustainable.”
- “Reasonable sale prices attract new homeowners to Wilkinsburg, but they have no clue about
  high property taxes and likely re-assessment to make property taxes even higher once
  purchased.”
- “The County property value assessment process seems haphazard and arbitrary.”
- “Renters decide not to buy knowing the high property tax rates.”
- “Property owners place high property tax burdens on the shoulders of renters.”
- “The school district re-assesses buildings as soon as they are purchased, which adds insult to
  injury; and new homeowners aren’t aware that the increase is coming.”
• “Note that tax abatement is only offered if you make significant improvements.”
• “Public safety is probably easier to solve than the tax issue and the Borough in cooperation with the State has done this in the past.”
• Lots of crime in Wilkinsburg comes from outsiders not residents of the community. Wilkinsburg attracts criminals from other areas due to the vacant properties.

Appendix J – The need for Communication

Discussion also generated additional questions indicating a need for information and education that should be addressed in the months to follow.

• How did we get here with taxes? How does delinquency impact the tax situation?
• Is there a way to change or lower the property taxes? What are the drivers of high property taxes? What can we do about it?
• The Focus Group without authority is going to be difficult to make any changes – what is the game plan?
• There is a need to do more than exchange great ideas and get to action – how will this be received by elected leaders?
• It is good that we are partnering with Pittsburgh on some things, but what are other ways? What are the other opportunities to partner and build ethos and passion for change?
• It seems like the “chicken or the egg” syndrome. What levers can we pull to make change?
• Can we expand the tax base to bring new revenue and lower taxes? Would that be adequate or enable more competitive tax rates that would be closer to the City of Pittsburgh’s 23 mills?
• Can we collect all the delinquent taxes?
• Can we lower taxes to also decrease tax delinquency?
• Can the Borough dramatically reduce its costs?
• If we got rid of the school district, would the savings allow us to make tax rates competitive? Would it be determined by how much we would pay PPS? This idea assumes that the school district and not the Borough is the major source of the cost inefficiencies. Some analysis is being done on this and the economics would probably work but the transition period will be difficult.
• Does the Borough just give up on tax delinquency? What are the consequences?
• Clearly understand how taxes are created and the process needed to validate and/or change the current tax structure.

Several participants involved in past efforts of change made the following comments to help everyone understand the complexities and difficulties involved with change. Others offered suggestions from their experiences.

• To discuss potential solutions, we need to see the data on borough and school district financials.
• Partnerships with other municipalities or raising revenue seem to be the only two options.
• There is a need to communicate the strides that have been made but also the challenges ahead.
• Property tax revenue has remained flat.
• The costs of providing municipal services always goes up.
• Borough and school district have not raised taxes in a long time, which is good. The school district even lowered taxes recently.

• There is a lack of grants for façade improvement, renovation, 10-year tax abatement, CDBG for commercial development, parks, and other amenities, URA resources for gap financing available for developers versus what the City of Pittsburgh and other municipalities offer.

• The market has communicated that there is a demand to live in Wilkinsburg. We may want to take a risk to reduce tax rates immediately and hope that many move in. Perhaps State funding could help to support this idea and fill the gaps.

• If taxing bodies currently have a surplus, the millage rates could be reduced quickly and temporarily as a test to see how many people move in.

• There is a County-level log jam to take properties to sheriff sale.

• There are enforcement issues in the Borough. Some owners go decades without paying their taxes.

• The Borough does not have the administrative capacity to address these issues. There are too few people and there is too much to do.

• Wilkinsburg may be too small to be viable with our current state of government.

• A “clean slate” could be provided for delinquent owners at the new lower property tax rates but with compliance built in from this point forward.

• Some delinquent property tax bills are just too high. They will never be paid.

• It is necessary to either fix up the properties or pay the property tax bills with the current stigma and keep rents affordable.

• “Property owners are just walking away. It may not be that they can’t pay; it’s that it doesn’t make sense to pay.”

• The school district needs to think about non-traditional avenues like charter schools.

Lack of education on the facts is keeping Wilkinsburg from achieving desired changes. Education is difficult especially during this pandemic. Participants offered suggestions that they are willing to spearhead on communication and outreach.

• This is a difficult challenge during COVID. The best thing to do might be to work through organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Hosanna House, and others.

• There is a need to focus on registered voters to prepare for an eventual referendum.

• An honest attempt to engage people is key; even if people do not engage, we need to show evidence that we tried our absolute best to do so.

• Engaging the Black community requires new strategies such as working with organization that do this well. Keep in mind that the Black community has suffered more than others related to barriers to wealth creation.

• There is a need to heavily market that we are working to reduce taxes. The interest will be there.

• Door to door outreach is helpful.

• People can be reached at barbershops and salons.

• There is a concern that people are tired of talking about the issues. The community has talked for decades about crime and taxes.

• Some constituent groups may not realize how affected they are by high taxes. There is an opportunity for education. Explain that lower taxes will lead to better neighborhoods and amenities.
• How much time do we want to spend engaging people who may not want to be engaged? Instead, should we proceed after a good effort towards engagement?
• Consider working with the 100+ people who do want to be engaged in this process; then engage as many as possible to approve and endorse the ideas instead of helping to formulate them.
• Might want to engage commercial realtors.
• “If our taxes were lower, is there anything here you would want to purchase?”
• Regarding a merger with the City, what’s in it for them? Why would they want to do this?
• Many issues facing Wilkinsburg are not isolated at its borders; a big circle of the East End and eastern suburbs share these issues.

Appendix K – Consideration of a Merger with the City of Pittsburgh

The discussion brought positive feedback with some reservation. Participant questions and comments along with pros and cons regarding a merger with the City of Pittsburgh follow:

• “I would support a merger with Pittsburgh schools to take advantage of more and better programs for kids.”
• “Let’s do it!”
• “Merging city governments may be problematic as evidenced by recent police/district attorney issues.”
• “It is possible that the white male establishment” of the City of Pittsburgh would not prioritize our community.”
• Because most Wilkinsburg residents are renters, there is some perception that the issues do not matter as much. In other words, “We rent, we don’t pay property taxes.”
• There is a need for some additional education to help renters (and others) better understand the tax situation and how it affects them.
• Education and communication will be key
• There is a need for the data – what services could be merged? What are the possibilities?
• There is a need to consider the social and institutional dynamics that “make Wilkinsburg, Wilkinsburg.” Don’t carelessly move toward merger without regard for impacts
• Needs and wants will vary by various constituencies.
• There is a need to understand what is important to everyone to reach a common goal.
• We need to define how high taxes affects each group or constituency. This can be done through newsletters, box and comment cards, Hosanna House, and other organizations.
• Build relationships of trust. This has been a key to success of Hosanna House, but it is a challenge.
• Recognize that many people have barriers to participation and may need to take it slowly.
• The elderly population is traditionally difficult to engage.
• It is possible that a merger might not address the high priority issues.
• Conversations and decisions need to be driven by a vision and common goal for the community, and only then can we decide if a merger is a means to that end.
• Safety is still an issue. People need to feel safe in their homes.
• Leaders are needed in the borough who want change and will work for change.
• Think about collaborative economic (crowdsourced fundraising) to provide needed funds to make investment in these sorts of changes.
• Why is there so much push back on charter schools? Wouldn't a collaboration offset the cost?
• The school district needs to stop attaching new reassessed values to latest sales.
• Some communities and the City of Pittsburgh also reassess latest sales immediately.
• Appeals on these latest sale reassessments have been won.
• “I now have to raise rents on low income residents to cover the new doubled taxes
  but the taxes in Pittsburgh are 2/3 less than Wilkinsburg
• The Joint Tax Committee already exists and meets the last Monday of each month. Every few years we start over with new attendees to reinvent the wheel.
• Property tax issues would be resolved
• City of Pittsburgh difficult to work with for permitting, etc.
• Should investigate if we can keep Wilkinsburg processes streamlined and be part of the City of Pittsburgh
• What would this process look like?
• Why is this appealing to the City of Pittsburgh?
• The harder sell might be to voters in Pittsburgh because they have misperceptions of Wilkinsburg.
• Erroneous fear that Wilkinsburg would lose its identity.
• Elected officials and Wilkinsburg public employees will work against this effort because their jobs are on the line.
• The Fire Department example was a win-win-win for Borough, City, and fire employees.
• What are the downsides of merging?
• The lengthier permit process of the city is a disadvantage.
• There also seems to be a range of opinions on what a full school district merge might mean.
• Which identity would we have?
• Changing the perception is the point.
• Yes, people want to come here. The interest from larger companies is coming, but there are so many hurdles.
Appendix L – Summary

There is an abundance of enthusiasm for change. Focus Group 2020 has recognized a few participants who would be interested in running for elected positions, and they should be encouraged. Change cannot come without the help of volunteers working with committees to strategize and prioritize ideas and provide the work that is beyond the capacity of the Borough Council and the School Board. The Focus Group 2020 Management Team is gathering current statistics and trends to share with participants and community constituencies as well as starting a grass roots outreach. Participants have indicated their area of interest and desired changes on which they would like to work. Most have made a commitment to continue to work on a plan of action with next steps for addressing the issues of high property taxes, neighborhood blight, business district blight, and communication. A written plan of action will be completed in the next few months.

Reflecting on the results of the work done by Focus Group 2020, “The time is now”.

WCDC Steering Committee:

Tracey Evans, WCDC
Bill Schenck, Tri-State Capital
Jordan Pallitto, The Hill Group
Gordon Manker, WCDC
Marina Balko, WCDC
Bernard Wetzel, WCDC Board President
Ellen Ruddock, Facilitator
### Appendix M – Participant List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert, Marilyn</td>
<td>Eliza-Christie, Aya</td>
<td>Leech, Jeff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alschuler, Steven</td>
<td>Evans, Tracey</td>
<td>Lefebvre, Michael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrews, Ash</td>
<td>Fitzpatrick, Katie</td>
<td>Lehman, Dawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auria, Joseph</td>
<td>Freund, Glenn</td>
<td>Lipsky, Eric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batroney, Amber</td>
<td>Gamble, Sharmaine</td>
<td>Lockhart, Leslie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batroney, Tom</td>
<td>Gaudi, Jerry</td>
<td>Lockley, Katie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belloli, Lisa</td>
<td>Hall, Alicia</td>
<td>Lovett, Jeff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bentley, Tani</td>
<td>Halling, Kelsey</td>
<td>Makarov, Elvira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueford, Don</td>
<td>Hammonds, Rosita</td>
<td>Marchioli, Marc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breuer, Paula</td>
<td>Harris, Jamila</td>
<td>McKoy, Jason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffry, Vanessa</td>
<td>Haughton, Ariel</td>
<td>Michael, Stephanie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler, Jodi</td>
<td>Heintz, Chloe</td>
<td>Milberger, Mike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalmers, Chad</td>
<td>Heldstab, Katherine</td>
<td>Mongalo, Ivette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherney, Vicki</td>
<td>Hellner-Burris, Steve</td>
<td>Morris, Anne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chute, Ken</td>
<td>Hiller, Mike</td>
<td>Morton, Deborah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohn, Jason</td>
<td>Hood, Taj</td>
<td>Moss, Lisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohn, Pam</td>
<td>Hughes, Gabi</td>
<td>Newborg, Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comans, Ashley</td>
<td>Iorii, Joe</td>
<td>Noll, Charles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connolly, Randy</td>
<td>Irwin, John</td>
<td>Nuss, Suzanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conturo, John</td>
<td>Jackson, Aaron</td>
<td>Pamela, Stimac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conturo, Lisa</td>
<td>James, Yvonne</td>
<td>Patterson, Leslie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis, Joe</td>
<td>Jefferson, Ardana</td>
<td>Peterson, Joanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davoli, Katherine</td>
<td>Jehn, Michael</td>
<td>Petrina, Joe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawson, Jeannette</td>
<td>Joyce-May, Brenda</td>
<td>Petrulli, Ian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DiTommaso, Richard</td>
<td>Kaczkowski, Staci</td>
<td>Pinder, Oliver Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolney, Renee</td>
<td>Kerr, Cindy</td>
<td>Porter, Ron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donovan, Ed</td>
<td>Kittner, Ruth</td>
<td>Raubenstrauch, Debra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doswell, Willa</td>
<td>Lee, China</td>
<td>Reid, Walter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Renee Shively, Casey
Robarge, Jordan
Rogers, Melissa
Rose, Deb
Rose, Lindsey
Ross, Christa
Rudkin, Alana
Saling, Michele
Salzer, Deborah
Santella, Nicole
Sapienza, Kristina
Sayles, Masoud
Sevick, Dave
Sieffert, Brian
Simien, Darchini
Simon, Lisa
Skirpan, Michael
Smith, Brenda
Smith, Jae
Smith, Pete
Smith, Stefani
Solomon Pugliano, Leigh
Sorock, Rayden
Soso, Kerry
Steadle, Eric
Stefl, Terry
Sullivan, Meg
Tillman, Derrick
Turner, Diane
Walter, Clark

Warren, Deborah
Wells, Brenda
Wetzel, Bernie
Whitted, Greg
Whittington, Tracy
Williams, Cynthia
Willis, Dottie
Wilson, Harriet
Winston, Gerrod
Wise, Bud
Yearick, Ralph