



**Embargoed until 3:30 p.m.**

March 8, 2017

**Contact:** Leigh White  
(412) 325-0163 - office  
(412) 606-9877 - cell  
lwhite@downtownpittsburgh.com

**Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership Annual Meeting  
Announces New Initiatives to Continue Thriving Downtown Transformation**

- *2016 Accomplishments and 2017 Plans Shared*
- *Tremendous Increase in Programming Planned for Summer*
  - *Release of the 2016 Annual Report & Video*
- *Keynote Panel Discusses Creating a Live Music Initiative in Downtown Pittsburgh*
  - *Second Round of BetaBurgh Grant Recipients Announced*
  - *Election of New PDP Board Members and Officers*
    - *Golden Triangle Awards Presented*

**DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH, PA** – At the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership’s Annual Meeting today, at the JLL Center at Tower Two-Sixty, new initiatives were presented, 2016 accomplishments were celebrated, plans for 2017 were shared, and participants were inspired by a keynote panel discussion featuring local experts in the music industry.

**2016 Accomplishments and New PDP Initiatives**

At today’s meeting, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership President and CEO, Jeremy Waldrup, provided an overview of the successes the organization experienced in 2016. Highlights included:

- PDP Clean Team removed 660,000 pounds of trash from the Central Business District. Additionally they answered 6,176 inquiries from visitors and Downtown users.
- The PDP Volunteer program welcomed 2,689 participants who provided a combined 9,815 hours of service. Included in this number was a new alley cleanup program with Renewal Inc. from which 73 Downtown businesses benefited.
- PDP Programming continued to grow and expand, including more than 260 days of events and activities, which was a 30% increase over 2015. 2016 programming engaged more than one million people.
- The Paris to Pittsburgh Sidewalk Activation and Façade Restoration program approved 10 grants in 2016, totaling \$237,464 which supported \$878,566 in total project costs.
- The PDP provided \$8,000 in grants to support restaurants participating the Sustainable Pittsburgh’s Sustainable Restaurant Program.
- In the inaugural year of the BetaBurgh program, four unique projects were debuted throughout Downtown Pittsburgh and were supported by \$40,000 in grants.
- The PDP also enhanced outreach and services to the local business community in 2016 through the Small Business Spotlight program where 11 Downtown merchants were highlighted at the Market Square Farmers Market. Additionally, the PDP produced a holiday gifting guide highlighting the more than 150 Downtown retailers with 10,000 copies distributed at locations throughout Downtown.
- Transportation initiatives in 2016, focused on complex multi-year initiatives including the multi-phase wayfinding system and advancing advocacy for increased passenger rail trips by the Amtrak Pennsylvanian.
- The PDP also released a multi-phase safety campaign aimed at discouraging distracted behaviors. The campaign included a viral video, ads which were viewed by more than 58,000 people in the 10 weeks, and generated more than 130 stories in national and local media outlets.
- Envision Downtown completed 4 public space improvement projects including the successful transformation of Strawberry Way, safety improvements including a graphic crosswalk and enhanced bike crossings at Penn Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the relocation of a busy bus stop including new amenities and, the creation of a mobile parklet that was placed in variety locations in Downtown.

- MORE -

According to Waldrup “2016 was an incredibly active year for Downtown, we saw an unprecedented increase in the amount of activities and events occurring in Downtown Pittsburgh. It’s difficult not to be excited by the positive things that are occurring in our neighborhood. Our plans for 2017 will capitalize on this vibrancy and bring even more partners into programming and supporting Downtown.”

### **2017 Initiatives**

At the meeting, Waldrup also provided insight into initiatives and plans that will be employed throughout 2017. Notable new initiatives include:

- The PDP will work collaboratively with the Downtown Ministerium to support their outreach to homeless and at-risk individuals.
- Envision Downtown will be launching a week long “Liberty Lab” from March 20-25 at 813 Liberty Avenue. Visitors to the “lab” will be able to interact with various conceptual ideas for Liberty Avenue and prioritize improvements.
- The PDP will be greatly expanding programming throughout Downtown. This includes the creation of new, regular markets including weekly Saturday Night Markets from May to October and recurring Fashion Markets. There will also be expansions of existing programming including KidsPlay, Yoga in the Square, Dancing in the Square, and more.
- The PDP will work with a variety of partners to develop a Downtown Music Initiative aimed at cultivating a vibrant Downtown music scene. (See more about the panel discussion held on this topic below).
- At the meeting, the PDP debuted a new Retail Snapshot brochure. This overview will help the organization tell the story to retailers large and small about why they need to be Downtown. There is demand for more neighborhood-orientated retail and the PDP will lead efforts with the real estate community to ensure that Downtown is just as vibrant a retail destination as it has become a restaurant destination.

More information about the PDP’s work in 2016 and 2017 plans may be found in our Annual Report and video which are located on our [website](#).

### **BetaBurgh**

Three new recipients of BetaBurgh grants were announced at the meeting. BetaBurgh is an initiative that invests in innovative ideas from the startup, entrepreneur, non-profit, and small business communities in Pittsburgh. The program is designed to create an opportunity to test and launch products and services within Downtown’s marketplace. BetaBurgh is funded by the BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

The three new projects chosen to be implemented in the second round of funding are:

- **STUDIOGRUBER** will present Time Machine, which will invite passersby to climb onto a fitness bike and pedal into another reality. It’s a one-person operated movie theater that will transport you, and passersby, to Pittsburgh’s past or future, but in order to travel you will need to exercise as pedaling generates electricity that activates the projection to propel you through time. STUDIOGRUBER is an architecture and urbanism office with expertise in the design and activation of public space.
- **OASIS Creative Space** will repurpose a 20-foot shipping container into a tech mobile art gallery. Each Downtown visitor will experience diverse art and be able to hear directly from the artists using visual and audio technology. The mobile gallery will provide an outlet for local emerging artists to gain entry into a regular marketplace. Oasis’s mission is to cultivate platforms for new and upcoming artists to promote sales of their art in cool places while helping people think about art in social and experiential ways.
- **Wahila Creative** is building a network of cubes onto which limitless games and interactions can be crafted while lighting spaces in Downtown. Imagine approaching a collection of cubes, seeing a phone number, and texting “Purple” to it. The cube would light purple. Wahila Creative is a Pittsburgh-based web design and development company, comprised of a team of designers, developers, and comedians who build inspired, reliable, and intuitive solutions.

### **Keynote Panel Address on Creating a Live Music Initiative in Downtown Pittsburgh**

- A panel discussed the City-wide opportunities and challenges to increasing the amount and diversity of live music, and support for local musicians. While a local music scene has both cultural and economic benefits in any neighborhood, it's of particular importance in Downtown where it is also a contributing factor for increasing tourism and conventions.
- The panel was moderated by Abby Goldstein, General Manager of WYEP. Panelists included: Allison Harnden, Nighttime Economy Coordinator, City of Pittsburgh, Janis Burley Wilson, Vice President, Strategic Partnership and Community Engagement/Director of Jazz Programs, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Ed Traversari, Music Promoter and Associate Professor, Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management, Point Park University, Justin Strong, General Manager, Spirit Night Club, Margaret Welsh, Pittsburgh City Paper Music Critic, and Russell Howard, Vice President Special Events & Development, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership.

### **Election of New PDP Board Members**

As part of the order of business for the day, the organization elected four new Board Members to serve three-year terms. New members are Jack Barbour, Executive Chairman Buchanan, Ingersoll and Rooney PC, Marisa Williams, Regional Executive Director at YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, Ashlee Yingling, Manager, External Communications, Duquesne Light Company, and Anthony Young, President of BOMA, Pittsburgh.

### **Golden Triangle Awards & Presentations**

The Golden Triangle Awards, established in 2012, acknowledge exceptional efforts of individuals and organizations that benefit Downtown Pittsburgh and the mission of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. Two Golden Triangle Awards were presented today.

- The Chairman's Award is presented to a Board member whose dedication to the PDP goes above and beyond the duties of serving the organization. This award was presented to Mariann Geyer. In her role as the Vice President of External Affairs at Point Park University, Mariann has worked in tandem with President Hannigan to bring to fruition the Academic Village Initiative at Point Park, which has transformed the corridor around Wood Street and Boulevard of the Allies. Mariann is an extraordinarily active member of the Board of Directors. Not only does she provide excellent advice, she is frequently seeking ways to engage the work of the PDP with other meaningful organizations and businesses. Over the past year, she assisted the PDP in developing a unique, new volunteer partnership with Renewal, Inc. Through this partnership, men and women transitioning from the criminal justice system, have volunteered time to perform clean ups of alleys throughout the Central Business District. For the inaugural year, 73 business benefited from the clean-up program.
- The Downtown Champion Award is presented to an individual, company, or organization that truly embraces the vision of the PDP. The 2017 recipient is McKnight Realty. McKnight Realty has supported the work of the PDP and Downtown in a variety of ways. First, they have provided not only the PDP, but many other entities with retail spaces, to activate Downtown in unique ways. In particular, the former Office Depot space, located on Smithfield Street was home to Night Markets, a 5-week long juried art-show, an educational activity space during the RE:New Festival, and a full weekend as a bustling "I Made it Market" during the holiday season. Additionally, McKnight realty worked with unique retailers, ModCloth and Steel City Media, to produce two highly successful pop ups. Steel City found their pop up to be such a success that they signed a lease and now have not only a street-level retail business on Smithfield Street, but also have moved their online fulfillment center to the location.

### **About the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership**

*The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) is a dynamic, nonprofit organization comprised of business and community leaders, property owners, civic organizations, foundations and residents who provide energy, vision and advocacy for Downtown Pittsburgh. Working collaboratively with its partners, the PDP strives to create a positive Downtown experience for residents, workers and visitors alike. The PDP's strategic initiatives include clean and safe services, transportation, economic development, and advocacy. For more information, visit [www.DowntownPittsburgh.com](http://www.DowntownPittsburgh.com), follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/downtownpitt> and "like" us on Facebook.*

###