

From the Pittsburgh Business Times:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2025/01/31/waldrup-viewpoint-downtown-transformation-vision.html>

Commercial Real Estate

Waldrup's Viewpoint: Leading with vision, transforming with action



Copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

Jeremy Waldrup, president and CEO, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership

JORDANBECKHAM

By Jeremy Waldrup

Jan 31, 2025

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership has developed a three-year strategic framework.
- "Strategy in Action" focuses on Core, Activation and Transformation.
- Downtown Pittsburgh aims to double its residential population.

Thirteen years ago, my wife and I moved our young family from Brooklyn to Pittsburgh because I saw immense potential in Pittsburgh as a place to build a life and a career. Since then, I have witnessed the city evolve, not only as the

CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, but also as a parent, neighbor and proud city resident.

Over the years, Pittsburgh's Central Business District has transformed into something far greater than its name suggests. From establishing one of the country's premier arts and cultural districts to building a nationally recognized dining scene, downtown Pittsburgh is a hub of innovation and a city keenly aware of what a vibrant and diverse community needs. For nearly three decades, the PDP has worked hand-in-hand with property owners, government leaders, corporate, nonprofit and philanthropic partners to ensure the city's heart beats strong.

The past five years have reminded us of a profound lesson: The future is unpredictable. But, as so many leaders in our city and state demonstrated in 2024, collaboration and a shared vision are the keys to progress. We can work together toward a unified vision for downtown – one that empowers our organization, our partners and the public to turn strategy into action and results – in the days, months and years ahead. And so this is our moment when together we can chart a future for downtown that turns ambitious strategies into tangible results.

It's one thing to be an organization of [strategic thinkers](#); it's another to be strategic doers – and I'm proud to say the PDP is both. Over the past year, we've collaborated with over 100 stakeholders, including developers, corporate leaders, property and business owners, and government, philanthropic, and nonprofit partners, to develop a three-year strategic framework: Strategy in Action. This plan is designed to address downtown's most pressing needs while accelerating new opportunities. This is more than words on a page. It's about making connections, filling gaps, connecting dots and most importantly securing the resources to deliver meaningful impact.

Pittsburgh has always been a city of resilience and reinvention. With Strategy in Action, we're building on that legacy, ensuring downtown remains a place where businesses thrive, families flourish and communities connect. The future of downtown Pittsburgh is ours to shape, and together, we're ready to make it extraordinary.

Strategy in Action is built on three strategic tiers: Core, Activation and Transformation. These tiers guide PDP's efforts and reflect our commitment to revitalizing downtown.

Core: Clean, Safe and Welcoming Neighborhood: Clean, safe and welcoming public spaces form the foundation of a successful downtown. With support from the city and corporate and philanthropic partners, we have doubled our invaluable on-street teams and the vital services they provide. Our vision is for downtown Pittsburgh to be recognized as the safest and most welcoming city center in the country. While challenges remain, we hold ourselves to the highest standards – whether it's expanding access to essential resources for our most vulnerable neighbors or building a community that businesses and residents are proud to call home and visitors are eager to explore.

Activation: Year-Round Experiences: We aim to activate downtown with consistent, high-quality programming throughout the year. The PDP is known for creating memorable experiences through both annual traditions and new attractions, and we're striving to make them even better. With key public- and private-sector partners, we are reimagining spaces like Market Square and the Gateway medians, integrating public art and greenery to create beautiful, pedestrian-focused streetscapes. In 2024, the PDP delivered nearly 1,500 hours of programming. This year, we are expanding our festival lineup to include four major events – one for every season – that will bring the world to our doorstep.

Transformation: Building for the Future: This third tier, transformation, is new leadership territory for the PDP. Advocacy, investment and innovation will transform downtown into a more resilient and economically diverse district. Our ambitious goals include [doubling the residential population](#) to 15,000, breathing new life into our historic office buildings and increasing retail occupancy by 10% within the next decade. The addition of new residents will transform our streets, requiring us to increase our neighborhood amenities, from park space and schools to retail and service offerings. Transformation on this scale won't happen overnight, but it's the most exciting part of our work and will resonate for generations to come. I invite everyone to play an active role in making this vision a reality.

As I reflect on my 13th year in this incredible city, I remain inspired by the talent and drive within our community. The next renaissance of downtown Pittsburgh is here, and the PDP is ready to lead the way.

Here's to lucky number 13 – and to our collective hard work and bright future for years to come.

Jeremy Waldrup is president and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership.