



'no more empty buildings'



E-Blast

December 2006

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After a 248+ year history, Pittsburgh has gone

Greetings!

We've packed our December E-Blast full of information as a treat to you this holiday season. This month, our neighborhood feature reaches outside of the Pittsburgh region to talk about the Central Square community of Cambridge, Massachusetts. We'll return to Pittsburgh to share the story of our client A+ Schools and preview some findings from the *Cool Deals* report we released in November. Finally, we'll introduce you to a new face at CSL.

We are currently seeking applicants for an Assistant Director - please check out the job description on our website and share with others that may be interested in applying for the position.

We wish you much warmth and good cheer this season and all of next year.

• **Capturing the Cool Space Market: The Businesses**



After six years of working to place businesses and organizations in cool space, we've been collecting incredible amounts of data. All of this work with customers and clients, along with some economic data from the Carnegie Mellon Center for Economic Development, have helped us determine who makes up the core market for creative, urban space. The product is a report called *Cool Deals: Capturing the New Market in Urban Commercial Real Estate*.

through many generations of infrastructure. In North Shore Riverfront Park, just a few yards away from Heinz Field, is a **bridge pier** left from the former Manchester Bridge. This bridge was the predecessor to the Ft. Duquesne Bridge, joining the Northside with the Point. Now, this stately historical artifact of the pre-Point State Park Pittsburgh towers over trail travelers, amateur anglers, football enthusiasts, and waterfowl.

If some Engage Pittsburgh participants' dreams about this pier come to fruition, it may not be relegated to relic status for much longer. At that Sprout Fund program this fall, some participants suggested that the pier be converted into a **climbing wall**. (Check out its page in the *Big Idea Book* for more details: <http://www.engagepittsburgh.org/node/216>.)

The Pittsburgh region is no stranger to adaptive reuse, even for public structures. Several public reuse projects have involved underused railroad right of ways, including the East and West Busways and the Eliza Furnace Trail along the Monongahela River.

What makes your community great?

Let us know! Your opinion could be featured in a future E-Blast. Email us at info@coolspacelocator.com.

The *Cool Deals* research report details which businesses and organizations are most interested in cool space, what offices they require, how they make their location decisions, and their real estate spending power. Over the next five months, the E-blast will feature a key finding from that report. The full document is available from our website as a PDF download.

Rising Stars of Pittsburgh's Regional Economy

The businesses most interested in cool space may be small, but they're leaders of the regional economy. Data on our customers and clients tells us the following about typical cool space consumers:

- *Industry:* Cool space consumers specialize in the region's emerging industries, like the fine arts, communications/media, information technology, entertainment, and health services.
- *Size:* Businesses that want cool space typically employ three to five persons, but many of these businesses employ just one - the principal.
- *Ownership:* According to US Census data, minority- and women-owned enterprises are better represented as cool space consumers than they are in the national economy.

These businesses begin their space search in recognizable ways. When looking for a new office, established businesses look for characteristics of their old one. Accordingly, many cool space consumers are businesses that have already been located in urban areas. They typically begin the space search due to the company's growth, although occasionally a downsizing or the need for improved infrastructure will lead to a move. Their relationship with us as a broker usually begins with a personal referral from community groups and public policy stakeholders.

Cool Space Delivers at Market Prices

Businesses prefer offices in mixed-use communities close to Downtown Pittsburgh, including the South Side, East Liberty, the Northside, Lawrenceville, and Downtown itself. Businesses can find the amount of space they need in these walkable neighborhoods, and they pay market rents. The typical cool space measures approximately 1,900 square feet and costs around \$12 per square foot.

Because we have placed our clients in these offices, we know these spaces exist. Cool space consumers have realistic expectations in an office search, and cool space delivers.

Next Month's Topic: Design and Neighborhood Amenities

To view the full *Cool Deals* report as a PDF download, visit our website, www.coolspacelocator.com.

• Placement Profile: A+ Schools



Who

A+ Schools, Pittsburgh's Community Alliance for Public Education

What

Founded in February 2004, in response to Mayor Tom Murphy's Commission on Public Education, A+ Schools is an independent community advocate for improvement in public education. The purpose of the organization is to be a community force advancing the highest educational achievement and character development for every public school student.

Where

Regional Enterprise Tower, Suite 1850 (Downtown)

Why

When the organization was started, A+ Schools was located in 1,500 square feet of space that the Mayor's Commission had borrowed in the Regional Enterprise Tower. But as the organization became a longer-term advocate on behalf of the community, it became clear that A+ Schools needed a space of its own. Because the temporary space wasn't designed with the organization in mind, poor space configuration meant that employees were cramped together in small offices with little room to work and almost no storage space. Although A+ Schools was meant to be a convener, they were constantly renting space outside of the office to hold meetings. A+ Schools needed a more functional space to do business if it was to continue as an organization.

Carey Harris, Deputy Director for A+ Schools, was tasked with finding new space for the organization. Having done a search in the past for another organization without a broker, she's grateful that Cool Space Locator was able to negotiate on A+ Schools' behalf. She also appreciated the way that CSL was able to compare potential spaces "apples to apples" so that she could determine the best deal. In the end, the organization decided to move up four floors into a new space at the Regional Enterprise Tower, measuring just over 3,000 square feet, allowing them to preserve their network and server functionality already in place in the building.

Cool Space Locator also made it easy for A+ Schools to connect with an architect to make the space really work for the organization. Now employees are comfortable at their workspaces, there is ample storage, windows on three sides of the office offer lots of natural light, and employees have access to their own 20-person conference room for meetings. An employee favorite is the kitchen – complete with running water! "We were giddy at first, watching water run into our own sink and knowing that we didn't have to go down the hall to wash dishes in the bathroom!"



What Else

Although A+ Schools' principals considered looking at space beyond the central business district, in the end they decided to stay Downtown to be near funders, collaborating organizations, and especially to make it easy for employees to access public transportation—all employees take the bus to work!

"Now the space just feels more civilized. We are all in a better state of mind, and have some privacy in our own offices." Carey Harris explains that they are now "able to feel like human beings at work instead of feeling like we're camping." A boardroom table left behind by Alcoa, the building's original occupant, has been creatively reused as a workspace countertop.

When asked what advice Ms. Harris would offer to others looking for space, she responded: "Taking the time to get what you really want is worth it. It's important that the space works well for you, even if it does take longer than you expect to find it."

- **Featured Neighborhood:**
Central Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts



Holmes Building on Central Square; farmers market

Central Square is the historical commercial and governmental seat of Cambridge, Massachusetts, an inner-ring suburb of Boston. Cambridge lays just northwest of the City of Boston across the Charles River, and the first bridge to link the two cities was built in the 1700s. Central Square lay on the major route leading through Cambridge. By the late 19th century, the growth of industry, commerce, and the nearby Cambridgeport residential area led Central Square to grow in scale. Central Square became Cambridge's seat of government and commerce. The entire area became a center for arriving immigrants.

Geographically speaking, Pittsburgh and Cambridge have different conceptions of "neighborhoods" and neighborhood boundaries. In Pittsburgh's walkable communities, most neighborhoods include major commercial districts, like Lawrenceville's Butler Street corridor, and Dormont's West Liberty Avenue corridor. In Cambridge, an inner-ring suburb of Boston, neighborhoods are defined as residential districts, and major commercial districts often center and spread out from large intersections - squares - on the borders of these neighborhoods. Central Square is the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, Western Avenue, Magazine Street, Prospect Street, and River Street. But when we speak of "Central Square" here, we're referring to the commercial district and larger community around the Square proper. Although Central Square isn't called a "neighborhood," it is both a diverse community in itself and the center of a larger one.

The development of Boston's metropolitan transportation network played a major part in shaping the current experience of the Square. The 1912 opening of the T, a light rail system, drew commerce toward downtown Boston and away from Central Square in Cambridge. Not long after, the introduction of the automobile allowed people to move farther into the metro area. Like many inner-ring suburbs in our region and across the country, Cambridge started to hollow out. Instead of reaching a regional market as it once did, Central Square businesses were serving a primarily local market. (Cambridge also includes campuses of MIT and Harvard.)



Pedestrian-friendly new development; Massachusetts Avenue

Today, as Central Square works to develop the assets of its business community, diversity has emerged as one of its most important values. There's a presence of both new economy and old economy. Biotech firms such as Novartis and Draper Labs exist alongside smaller retail shops that reach a huge variety of audiences. The Square has seen some tenants stay for the long haul, like Central Square Florist, which first opened in 1929. Some national chains, like the Gap and Starbucks Coffee, have arrived, but they haven't compromised the independent quality of the retail businesses. Teddy Shoes serves the general market for footwear, and it maintains a special selection of dance supplies. University Stationery, which has been in the Square since the 1940s, still offers unique variety and unmatched knowledge of stationery and office supplies. And because of continued immigration, ethnic shops and eateries still abound.

To keep the community pedestrian-friendly, the architecture and layout of the Square have undergone an historical throwback. During the 1990s, Massachusetts Avenue underwent a streetface improvement, which added benches, widened the sidewalks, and cut traffic lanes from four to two. Several new constructions promote the grid and walkability.

A Monday evening farmers market, to a visiting Pittsburgher, appropriately represented the mixing of past and present in Central Square. This farmers market is located in a parking lot just blocks away from a Red Line T-stop and a walkway lined with a mural, showing the influence of transportation and design on the Square. The market - its products and exchanges - represent the Square's commerce. And the people are a microcosm of the community itself: working professionals, residents, immigrants, and travelers.

"The feeling of it comes from the fact that [Central Square] is very diverse but also very integrated," said Marina Pevzner, executive director of the Central Square Business Association. The hallmark of this community is its mutual interdependence and connectedness.

Central Square Business Association

The Central Square Business Association (CSBA) is much more than an advocate for community commerce. Its commitment to preserving diversity helps it to focus on larger quality of life

issues.

The hallmark of CSBA's success is cooperation. Roundtable discussions on crime link business owners with Cambridge's public safety leadership. Their Unity Dinner recognizes outstanding work not only among the business community, but also to non-profit, faith-based, governmental, and artist stakeholders. CSBA works with larger, office-based businesses to harness their workforce's potential in the local retail market. In addition, CSBA also holds Meet n' Greet and shopping events that span sectors of the district. Businesses participating in the 2006 Holiday Central Shopping Extravaganza have agreed to donate a portion of their revenues to local non-profits.

For your next trip to Boston, check out CSBA's listing of member businesses on their website: www.centralsquarecambridge.com.

Thanks to Marina Pevzner for her assistance with this article.

• New Face at CSL: Keren



We would like to welcome our newest intern, Keren Shefet, who started at the end of November to coordinate planning for the Cool Space Awards in 2007. Here's a message from her.

My life theme? Fusion! I've always been mixing things up. My upbringing combined a traditional American lifestyle with my parents' Israeli culture. And now, my studies mix writing, design, and advertising, and my work unites rebuilding and redesigning with a purpose.

Merging the best parts of life always produces an amazing experience.

As the Cool Space Awards intern, I'm looking forward to working with some really unique spaces. Combining my internship experiences from the non-profit and advertising worlds with my Media Communications major at the University of Pittsburgh, I'm promoting businesses that help commercially develop the city of Pittsburgh. I'm excited to bring cool spaces to the forefront,

demonstrating how life and work can be done with fun, fusion, and a purpose to better our city.

About Us

Cool Space Locator, a project of the Tides Center (PA), is a non-profit real estate organization that connects neighborhoods, properties, and businesses in the revitalization of urban communities. We work in the community development realm to promote revitalization of urban areas and walkable communities and match companies with cool urban spaces to create a sustainable future. Aside from working as a licensed real estate brokerage to help companies find space, we work with government, economic and community development agencies, and commercial property owners to help boost the growth of office-based jobs in the great urban commercial districts of the Pittsburgh region.

We are supported by:

- The Heinz Endowments
- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- Surdna Foundation
- Garfield Foundation
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- Roy A. Hunt Foundation
- The Urban Redevelopment Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
- City of Pittsburgh, Mayor's Office

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