



# E-Blast

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**What's So Great About The City?**



Industry. At one time the view of smokestacks rising from factories meant income and prosperity, especially for those factory owners and workers that had steady jobs and a home nearby. While perceptions of smoke rising out of our cities today have certainly

Happy New Year! This month tell you about our next workshop, give you some information about live/work spaces, and look at the Borough of Braddock.

Also, as we transition to a new provider for our newsletter, please let us know what you think. Does our E-Blast show up in your spam folder? Is it easy to read? What else do/don't you like about it? (Note: if you only receive emails in text format, you can view the E-Blast archive with color photos on our website.)

We appreciate your feedback on how to improve!

- **Next Workshop Thursday, February 16th**

For those of you thinking about moving or growing your business in the new year, we hope you can attend our next "Right Size It" workshop on Thursday, February 16, 2006. Typically small, these workshops offer the opportunity to get your questions answered by a real estate professional and will help you determine next steps in the process of finding space for your business or organization.

Topics include how to determine if you're ready to move; how much money will be needed; lease vs. buy decisions; major issues to consider when choosing a space; and more. Cost is \$35 per organization.

[Visit our website or click here for workshop details and registration form.](#)

- **Live/Work Spaces**

At Cool Space Locator we often get calls from people interested in buying a building where they can both live and work, but in Pittsburgh (and many other cities) the concept of live/work can present a number of technical challenges related to zoning ordinances and building codes. Although, having evolved primarily out of artists successfully colonizing underutilized spaces

changed, there is still a beauty in the above scene of Braddock's Edgar Thomson Works steel mill near Pittsburgh.

in urban areas (SoHo in New York City, for example) live/work is now seen as a revitalization tool in many inner urban areas.

A wealth of information can be found at the website of [The Live/Work Institute](#), a non-profit founded by Thomas Dolan Architecture in California that works to “advocate, encourage and assist” in the development of live/work units. Their experience with clients who desire this type of arrangement has led to a greater understanding of live/work spaces, including a number of sub-categories of live/work space (live/work, work/live, live-near, live-with, live-by, etc.). As noted by the institute, “live/work is a strange animal which combines residential and commercial use, and is at once neither and both. It is intrinsically mixed use, in ways that fly in the face of planning regulations and building codes. Definitions of live/work use are far from standardized; for this and other reasons, most jurisdictions have elected to reinvent the wheel when it comes to regulating live/work”.

In Pittsburgh, for example, there are no zoning ordinances dedicated to live/work space, which is not to say that it's impossible to find. Those interested in developing or owning live/work and mixed-use space must get the building approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment as an exemption to the Zoning Code if they desire to erect or renovate space of this sort; something to which this board is amenable to granting, especially in certain more progressive areas of the city. But as we move forward it is clear that there will need to be more integration of zoning and building regulations because of the status of live/work as an emerging land use and building type.

The [Live/Work Network](#) is the United Kingdom's information service on live/work. While their definition of live/work—“a mixed-use of property for both business and residential purposes”—is rather broad, there are points that demonstrate what makes a space qualify as live/work by modern standards, including a design for true work use, helping reduce transportation use, and helping to cut costs by combining work and live environments ([http://www.urbanspaces.co.uk/about\\_livework.php](http://www.urbanspaces.co.uk/about_livework.php)).

Finally, aside from the obvious conveniences that live/work situations provide, it is also touted as a sustainable way to live. The combination of home and work decreases your footprint, and amenities can often be shared among residents.

At Cool Space Locator we are careful in advising customers appropriately when asked to help them find a live/work space. Moving a business into a space requires an occupancy permit (dependent upon both zoning ordinances and building codes). For example, the codes in Pittsburgh currently require that there be a fire separation between spaces used for commercial and residential. An option is to live in an upper level space above a commercial space below, which technically separates the spaces while the proximity provides the same convenience and sustainable benefits touted by proponents. We at CSL are hopeful that as a new administration takes hold in Pittsburgh that other cities' live/work codes are reviewed in an attempt to put zoning in place to make live/work space more feasible to develop and easier to attain.

- **Featured Neighborhood: Braddock**



Braddock, PA is a slow moving and quiet place now, but it hasn't always been that way. Named after Gen. Edward Braddock, Commander of British Troops in America during the French and Indian War, the town is located on the site where his army was ambushed in 1755 as he moved to capture Fort Duquesne. Because Gen. Braddock didn't survive the ensuing battle, George Washington, his subordinate officer, led the retreat. Incorporated in 1885, Braddock grew to become one of the liveliest towns in Allegheny County, riding the crest of industrialization; it was a destination for shopping, socializing and big business.

Like many towns adjacent to the Monongahela River, and located just 9 miles from downtown Pittsburgh, the steel industry flourished; Andrew Carnegie opened his very successful Edgar Thomson Works steel mill in Braddock. As money and resources were funneled into the town, Carnegie opened his first American public library as a resource for the workers at the Thomson plant, one of his first and most successful mills. Braddock Avenue, along with Talbot and Washington Avenues, attracted people from all around for the shopping, bars, and restaurants. At one point Braddock had nearly a dozen hotels to accommodate visitors!

Today you'll find a dramatically different climate as Braddock's new Mayor, John Fetterman, begins his first term. While the Braddock Carnegie Library and the Edgar Thomson Works still operate, little else is going on. The town's population has dipped below 3,000 people, down from more than 20,000 in its heyday; it has gone from a bustling shopping destination to a scarred and fractured business district. Aside from a UPMC branch hospital, there is still a strong light industry presence along the river bank but the employees have little reason to leave the confines of their warehouses. Schools have closed. Buildings fall down. Street activity is virtually non-existent. Predictably, as a result, Braddock has a rough reputation and is on the verge of being partially buried under a portion of the proposed Mon-Fayette Expressway. Fetterman is concerned that this action would slice the town in two and further marginalize its residents by cutting much of the town off from its riverfront.

Fetterman has been running the Youth-Out-of-School program in Braddock for the last few years and is also financially investing in the town. These investments represent an acknowledgement of the assets that Braddock does maintain, including the large amount of empty utilitarian space throughout the town. Livable homes can be purchased for as little as \$10,000 and larger historic edifices are also available. Fetterman also has bought an empty church, The First Presbyterian, which still has the old organ

pipes standing behind the chancel in front of a large, empty nave; a space which could potentially be used for all types of events and in which he hopes to open a community center. The Carnegie Library includes a music hall and basketball court; deep within, it also has a swimming pool and a bowling alley, both of which are being used currently as storage spaces.

Braddock is still very accessible and all one's basic needs can be easily accommodated in adjacent communities. The history of this once illustrious town can be sensed entrenched in the streets of Braddock; the ghosts of Library Street, Braddock Ave, and the steel mill which looms over them as a giant relic of past industrial glory. These attributes lend a beauty and dignity to this steel town. Hopefully Braddock finds the right recipe to be able to salvage and build upon the remaining structure of a once important place in the Mon Valley.

For more information, contact Mayor Fetterman at (412) 654-4041.

Thanks to Mayor Fetterman for his assistance in writing this article.

## 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 Pittsburgh.

We are supported by:

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