



E-Blast

July 2006

In this issue

**Next Workshop
on July 27**

**Walkable
Communities Equal
Healthy
Communities**

**Pedestrian
Oriented
Development**

**Featured
Neighborhood:
Uniontown**

**What's So Great
About the City?
Your Response!**



E-Blast reader Jean
Krak writes:

Here is what I love

Greetings!

Welcome to July's edition of Cool Space Locator's E-Blast. This month we have devoted a couple of articles to the characteristics and benefits of walkable communities. We hope you enjoy and are inspired to take a walk around your own community. Our feature neighborhood is Uniontown, located in Fayette County.

We are still asking readers to submit what YOU love about YOUR city, neighborhood, or town (respond to info@coolspacelocator.com).

• **Next Workshop on July 27**

3:30-5:30 PM

Location: Riverside Center for Innovation

More than an Address: How to Plan and Execute a Working Office

Once you've found the right spot to put your business, your location effort is only half done. Most business location projects involve construction and improvements to the space to meet the specific needs of your business. How do you estimate needs, costs and time related to tenant improvements? What are the unique challenges found in retrofitting older properties for a new use? How do you negotiate who pays for these improvements? This advanced workshop gets into the details of tenant improvements so you are not blindsided as you move through these often complex transactions. The workshop is also appropriate for those that are preparing to renovate a current office space.

CSL welcomes Mike Testa of [Testa Consulting](#) and Lee Lewand of Lewand Business Solutions, LLC, who will be discussing the importance of build out, cost estimating, and how to properly prepare technology services in your new space.

about Pittsburgh - I lived in North Carolina on Emerald Isle, at the southern Outer Banks for three years. The beaches were beautiful, the climate was warm and the people were friendly. The real estate was even reasonable. But there was no big city culture around for 3-4 hours. I found myself very bored after a period of time living there. Growing up in Pittsburgh, I took for granted the opportunity to go to a Pirates game, check out the latest Imax movie at the Carnegie Science Center, explore the cultural district and it's many plays, musicals and performances. Then there are the Steelers to cheer for! The cultural depth that Pittsburgh offers is fantastic.

Thank you Jean for your response!

This workshop builds on some of the information introduced in the Right Size It workshop and is appropriate for those who have previously attended that workshop, but anyone is welcome.

[Click here for more information on the workshop or to register.](#)

• Walkable Communities Equal Healthy Communities



Walking for groceries, in the Strip District, Pittsburgh

Walkable communities mix residential, commercial and institutional land uses, and typically have a mix of incomes that may live or work there. Retail businesses tend to do well in these areas due a high amount of foot traffic. Some of the benefits of walkable communities include increases in social interaction between community members, cycling, and mixed transportation opportunities

Once very prevalent, walkable communities have declined since the late 1940's in the United States. The country has witnessed a similar decline in overall public health. Obesity, premature death, and type two, adult onset diabetes are linked to inactivity. Health, urban planning, and development professionals along with government officials have claimed that the decline in walkable communities is at least partially to blame for increased inactivity. In an article in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, April 6, 2006, Pittsburgh Health Department Director Dr. Bruce Dixon cites a link between poor sidewalks, dilapidated playgrounds, dangerous streets, and rising childhood obesity (for full article, see http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/tribune-review/health/s_440638.html).

All over the country, professionals are discussing and debating the importance of walkable communities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the *American Journal of Health Promotion* have been conducting studies to examine the differences in health between walkable areas and auto-oriented communities. One study found that people in the suburbs, which are generally too spread out to be walkable, had higher obesity levels than those in urban areas. The American South is a good example of that study. In the 1990s, it has experienced the highest growth of suburban development and had the greatest increase in obesity rates over the same period.

Most experts agree that a true collaborative effort between all people in communities- including citizens, businesses, property owners, and government officials –can make positive change in communities. This sort of community action makes a great foundation for new pedestrian-oriented development and walkable community initiatives.

So where's the Most Walkable Community? The American Podiatric Medical Association rates Portland, Oregon, #1 for 2006. Portland also

receives high ranks from both Walkable, Inc. and America Walks, two organizations promoting pedestrian-friendly communities.

To find out if your community is walkable, use the National Safety Council's checklist, found at <http://www.nsc.org/walk/wkcheck.htm>.

Resources on how to improve the walkability of your community can be found at www.walkable.org and www.aarp.com.

• **The 13 points of pedestrian-oriented development**

We know that a walkable community is a healthy one, so now what? One may begin to wonder what aspects constitute pedestrian-oriented development. Cooltown Studios and the planning firm Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company have developed the following 13 points that address this issue (read the full article at www.cooltownstudios.com/mt/archives/000530.html).

1. The neighborhood has a discernible center. This is often a square or a green and sometimes a busy or memorable street corner. A transit stop would be located at this center.
2. Most of the dwellings are within a five-minute walk of the center, an average of roughly 2,000 feet.
3. There are a variety of dwelling types — usually houses, rowhouses and apartments — so that younger and older people, singles and families, the poor and the wealthy may find places to live.
4. At the edge of the neighborhood, there are shops and workplaces (and/or transit stations leading to workplaces) of sufficiently varied types to supply the weekly needs of a household. (Collective neighborhood edges form a town center.)
5. An elementary school is close enough so that most children can walk from their home.
6. There are small playgrounds accessible to every dwelling - not more than a tenth of a mile away.
7. Streets within the neighborhood form a "connected network, which disperses traffic by providing a variety of pedestrian and vehicular routes to any destination.
8. The streets are relatively narrow and shaded by rows of trees. This slows traffic, creating an environment suitable for pedestrians and bicycles.
9. Buildings in the neighborhood center are placed close to the street, creating a well-defined outdoor room.
10. Parking lots and garage doors rarely front the street. Parking

is relegated to the rear of buildings, usually accessed by alleys.

11. Certain prominent sites at the termination of street vistas or in the neighborhood center are reserved for civic buildings. These provide sites for community meetings, education, and religious or cultural activities.

12. The neighborhood is organized to be self-governing. A formal association debates and decides matters of maintenance, security, and physical change. Taxation is the responsibility of the larger community.

13. For single-family homes: A small ancillary building is permitted within the backyard of each house. It may be used as a rental unit or place to work (e.g., office or craft workshop).

• **Featured Neighborhood: Uniontown**



Rotunda of the former
First National Bank



DiMaio Sisters Groceria
and Ristorante

The City of Uniontown in Fayette County, about 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, has found itself at many historical milestones since the birth of the nation. The first milestone was its own founding on July 4, 1776. Others include the building of the country's first federally funded highway, the National Road, through Uniontown during the 1810s, and the birth of famed World War II army general George C. Marshall in 1880. The most recent local milestone has been Uniontown's physical rehabilitation over the past three years.

After sharing in the Pittsburgh region's industrial decline, Uniontown received a big break that it dearly needed—infrastructure upgrades and façade improvements. A local philanthropist, the late Robert E. Eberly, cooperated with the Fayette Chamber of Commerce to lay the plans for an improved Uniontown before his death in 2004. Beginning that April, the Honorable Joseph Hardy, a Fayette County Commissioner and founder of 84 Lumber, invested millions of dollars to make this plan a reality by taking cues from the city's past. Mr. Hardy's "Marshall Plan II" has helped Uniontown rehabilitate its industrial era architecture for continued use. Improvements have ranged from coats of paint to new streetlights, benches, and reconstructed façades reminiscent of their original designs.

Uniontown now boasts amenities that some urban areas still lack in a walkable environment. A pharmacy, grocery store, cafés and restaurants, public parks, an arts center, and mixed housing and commercial uses are all available near the city center. Uniontown is also the Fayette County seat and home of the county courthouse, a hub of legal work. A day-to-day streetlife is already beginning to increase, already rivaling the pedestrians visible in old postcards.

Because of its rich architectural and industrial history, Uniontown has real estate opportunities with unique character. One “cool space” is the Fayette Building at the corner of Main and Pittsburgh Streets—the crossing of the National Road with Route 51. This building was originally the First National Bank Building, a mixed commercial and residential 11-story skyscraper built 1901-02. Bank president and coal magnate J.V. Thompson envisioned this building as the tallest in Uniontown and hired renowned skyscraper architect Daniel Burnham to design the building. Renamed the Fayette Building, it now houses professional offices and apartments giving a wide view of the surrounding city. The main bank lobby remains intact, featuring a rounded corner of windows, a service counter and floors of terrazzo marble, and the original crown moldings. Above the old bank, offices on each floor are easy to configure for tenants' needs. The building's continued integrity has earned it a place on the National Register of Historic Places. A number of the Fayette Building's spaces are currently available for lease. The building also occupies a Keystone Opportunity Zone, with many Commonwealth and local commercial tax abatements available through the end of 2013.

Uniontown also features a recently rehabilitated arts and recreational facility, the State Theatre Center for the Arts. Dating from the 1920s, the State Theatre presented movies and vaudeville performances. The new Center for the Arts now houses a multi-use performance space for musical, dramatic, and spoken performances from a variety of local and national acts.

Uniontown's physical improvements and the success of nearby four-star resort Nemaquin Woodlands have helped to incubate new businesses while supporting existing ones. The mix of services ranges from high-end luxury to the day-to-day, and everywhere in between. The DiMaio Sisters Groceria and Ristorante serves deli-style meals in a well-preserved interior, resembling a turn-of-the-century tavern with big city food offerings. The side of the building boasts that it's a piece of Pittsburgh's Strip District markets "without the trip." Uniontown takes pride in its small-town feel along and its urban advantages.

Life is returning to buildings and streets as Uniontown continues to rehabilitate its architecture and discover the opportunities of urban life. At its current milestone in history, Uniontown's success has come from celebrating the past.

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their assistance in preparing this article.



Fayette Building



State Theatre

Cool Uniontown Tenant: NuRelm E-Business Software

A pioneer in Uniontown's business community, NuRelm E-Business Software has taken an active role in finding its own "cool space". The company has recently purchased a 13,000 square foot former warehouse at 40 Iowa Street in Uniontown and has partnered with Pittsburgh-based inter*ARCHITECTURE to rehabilitate the building. When finished, it will house offices and a third story living space for its CEO. Since relocating to Uniontown from Austin, Texas, in March 2001, NuRelm has more than tripled in size.

According to co-founder Mona McGraw, Uniontown was the perfect place for the company to locate. The principals wanted to move closer to their native West Virginia, and a venture capital package with funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and private agencies helped to fuel their business aspirations. The company appreciates the closeness of Pittsburgh, the pace of life in a smaller city, and the nearby recreational opportunities of Ohiopyle State Park and Frank Lloyd Wright's southwestern Pennsylvania constructions.

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:

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Cool Space Locator | 279 45th Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15201
(412) 683-5790 | www.coolspacelocator.com