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Root Shock

Cities are our roots; they give us a sense of place and are a backdrop for our memories. With destruction caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita in New Orleans, many people have experienced root shock as they left their city. Root shock is "a traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of one's emotional ecosystem".

According to Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, root shock "ruptures bonds, dispersing people to all the directions of the compass," and causes destruction of the interconnections that are

Greetings!

In this issue we look beyond Pittsburgh to feature the Mission neighborhood of San Francisco. We also welcome Erin Denham, CSL's new Placement Director, tell you about a research project we're working on, and announce our next space planning workshop.

Thanks for reading, and as always, we appreciate your feedback!

• Featured Neighborhood: The Mission, San Francisco

Located in the center of San Francisco and famous for Mission Dolores, which was founded in 1776 and attracts tourists from all over, the Mission neighborhood is full of life.



Take the Bay Area Rapid Transit system (BART) to either 16th or 24th Streets and you will enter a world where Spanish is the local language and the streets are full of vibrant colors. You'll notice that murals and other public art is easily found, tall palm trees line the streets, and people say hello (or Hola) as you walk along Mission Street, which is lined with neighborhood serving businesses. Grocers sell fresh fruit, vegetables, and fish to passersby; ladies enter salons; books are sold on the sidewalk; and decorative scenes make up the window displays, a result of a MEDA-sponsored contest in celebration of the traditional spring festival, Carnaval. Colorful "Our Mission" and "Nuestra Mission" banners also hang along Mission Street.

Walk a few blocks to Valencia Street, which runs parallel to Mission St., and you'll find newer, swankier retailers, high-end boutiques, and restaurant chains, all a product of gentrification. While most of the vibrancy of the original neighborhood has been taken away with the gentrification, Valencia St. is still colorful in its own way.

On 18th & Dolores Streets you'll find Dolores Park, where

"essential to the survival of [communities]".

Despite the problems that have been exposed to us all by Katrina, including high rates of poverty and poor disaster planning, many are going back to find their roots, driven back by their memories. While the rebuilding efforts will take months and years, we hope that the people of those communities are able to find a new sense of place and belonging, as well as strong soil, in other cities across the nation, at least until their home is rebuilt.

For more information on how root shock affects people and communities, visit www.rootshock.org.

artsy signs are posted to remind people to "Litter Me. Not!" likely put there by some of the Mission High School students who spend their days in class across the street from the large park (see Mission High School in photo). Not far is the Mission Dolores and Mission Dolores Catholic Church (tours available for five dollars), which shares the intersection of 16th & Dolores with a Jewish Synagogue and a Methodist Church, yet another reflection of diversity in the neighborhood.

The Women's Building on 18th Street between Valencia and Guerrero Streets is a community center, "providing women and girls with the tools they need to participate fully in society". The "Maestrapeace" mural covers the exterior walls and reflects not only the diversity of the neighborhood, but the many contributions by women throughout the world. It was painted in 1994 by a "multi-cultural, multi-generation collaboration of seven women artists". See www.womensbuilding.org for more information on the building and the mural.

While you won't find anything quite like the Mission neighborhood in the City of Pittsburgh, it's interesting to note some of the similar challenges they face, albeit for different reasons. In the Mission, it's the market that's driving businesses out of the neighborhood, but they're not leaving by choice. There are very few vacant spaces in their neighborhood, and so the value of the spaces are sky rocketing. In the Pittsburgh region, there has been a trend of businesses leaving city neighborhoods to go to the suburbs, although it's because of the preferences of business owners rather than the lack of available spaces and skyrocketing rents.

Visit www.sfgate.com, San Francisco's Neighborhood Guide, to learn more about the Mission and other San Francisco neighborhoods.

Thanks to Ruby Harris of MEDA for her assistance in writing this article.

- **MEDA: Mission Economic Development Agency**

MEDA, the Mission Economic Development Agency, works to maintain and strengthen the Mission neighborhood's cultural integrity by facilitating asset building within the community. They use a community-based planning approach that looks towards the long-term health of the neighborhood, working in a manner that is culturally inclusive and able to sustain economic diversity.



Formed in 1973, MEDA's original focus was on helping small businesses get access to capital. But in 1999 the

neighborhood had an influx of dot com businesses which drove up market value and fueled the displacement of businesses and residents alike. At the time, 82% of residents and 80% of businesses were renting space. Because many had very weak leases or no lease at all, their interests were not protected. Absentee landlords raised rents (often tripling in one month's time!) and evicted many of their month-to-month tenants to make room for new, higher paying tenants.

MEDA found that the displacement of residents and businesses was the biggest challenge facing the neighborhood. Their focus changed from helping businesses get financing to building stronger and lengthier leases to ensure stability of the neighborhood serving businesses, as well as help increase home ownership. Since 2000 MEDA has assisted around 250 people per year with their homeownership program; 120 of these now own their own home. Plus, a legal consultant helps conduct workshops to teach lease negotiation, both in English and en Español (over half the neighborhood is Latino). MEDA is also partnering with community members and other non-profits on neighborhood revitalization and better land use codes to prevent further displacement. In sticking with their mission, they are careful to improve the quality of life for current residents and business owners without replacing them.

For more information about MEDA and the Mission neighborhood, visit www.medasf.org.

- **Research Project: Business Relocation Decisions**

Cool Space Locator is doing some research to help determine how businesses choose their locations. If you are a business owner that has recently relocated (regardless of whether you moved the business 1 floor, 1 block, 1 mile, or 1000 miles, or whether it was into or out of a city or the suburbs), please contact [Robyn Barber](#) to request a link to our email survey. Completed surveys will be entered into a drawing for a \$75 Amazon.com gift certificate. We would very much appreciate your response if you have recently relocated!

- **Placement Director Erin Denham**

Erin Denham joined Cool Space Locator this month as our new Placement Director. With her degree in interior design from La Roche College and her real estate license, Denham brings together her interest in architectural design and real estate by using her knowledge as a commercial space planner to help clients visualize potential business spaces before making important real estate decisions.



:: [email us](#)
:: [visit our site](#)

phone: 412-683-5790

"For as long as I can remember I have always found buildings to be enchanting. I grew up in the suburbs but my mother would often bring me and my sister to the city; those were magical times to me. I fell in love with buildings and the parts and pieces that make them tick, I take a special interest in old buildings and the quirky personalities they have."

"I feel lucky that I have been able to turn my passion into a career. It thrills me that I am not the only person who wants to preserve and revitalize our region's urban areas. I see the positive changes that are happening in and around Pittsburgh and am excited to be able to make a contribution towards these changes and be part of the action."

- **October 11th Workshop**

Right Size It: Find the Right Space for Your Small Business

Are you a start-up or existing business in need of office space and don't know the first thing about the current commercial real estate market? Or are you an existing business with future downsizing or expansion space needs?

On Tuesday, October 11 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., Cool Space Locator will offer an office space planning workshop for start-up and/or existing small businesses, artists, and arts organizations. The workshop will provide you with basic and essential tools necessary to find the right office or studio space for your business and will help you identify your true space needs to make effective and financially healthy space planning decisions.

Typically small, these workshops offer the opportunity to get your questions answered by a REALTOR® and will help you determine next steps in the process of finding space for your business or organization.

More information, including the registration form, is available online at www.coolspacelocator.com.

Can't make the October 11th workshop? Cool Space Locator offers the Right Size It workshop on a regular basis. Revisit the website to view future workshop dates and times.

- **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 forward-thinking companies with cool urban spaces to create a sustainable future. Aside from working directly with companies to 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:

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