

Symposium: Race and Displacement in Pittsburgh:

***Commemorating the 75th and 10th Anniversaries of
The Lower Hill and Penn Plaza Mass Displacements***

November 13-14, 2025

Thursday November 13, 4:30-6:00PM William Pitt Union, Dining Rooms A, B

Keynote address: ***Dislodgings: The record of racialized displacement in the U.S.,***

[Prof. Edward Goetz](#), Director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs University of

Minnesota, author of *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice and Public Housing Policy*; and

Clearing the Way: Deconcentrating the Poor in Urban America

Friday November 14 9:00AM-4PM Symposium William Pitt Union, Lower Lounge

Please register: <https://shorturl.at/PFEbh>

We commemorate the 75th and 10th anniversaries of two major mass evictions of Pittsburgh residents done in the name of “urban renewal” and post-industrial “renaissance.” Federal housing policies have produced sequential displacements of urban residents, and Pittsburgh’s Black population has been particularly affected. Nearly 2,000 families were displaced from the Lower Hill in the mid-1950s, joined by hundreds more with East Liberty’s redevelopment in the 1960s. Another 200 families were displaced when the Penn Plaza apartment complex was demolished a decade ago. Keynote speaker, Professor Edward Goetz, will discuss the long history of racialized displacement in U.S. housing policy and how things can be different. Friday’s panels will include residents of these displacements, community organizers, faculty, student researchers, and policy makers who will explore impacts of displacement on Pittsburgh residents and advocate for strategies for ending displacement and reducing housing insecurity in our region.

Co-sponsors: University of Pittsburgh Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR), Department of Sociology, School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), and Urban Studies Program; Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance; Hill District Consensus Group; Remaking Cities Institute-Carnegie Mellon University; and the NAACP Pittsburgh Branch.

Program

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Clearing the Way: Deconcentrating the Poor in Urban America

Welcome by **Shannon Wanless**, Director, University Center for Social & Urban Research

Facilitator: Randall Taylor, Penn Plaza Support & Action Coalition & Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance

Friday: November 14, 9:00AM – 3:45PM, William Pitt Union, Lower Lounge

9:00 AM -Registration and coffee

9:30-9:50 AM Welcome remarks by **Shannon Wanless**, Director, University Center for Social & Urban Research

Overview of themes and program by organizing team: Omer Ali, Sabina Deitrick, Crystal Eddins, Stefan Gruber, and Jackie Smith

Part 1:

Counting human costs of Pittsburgh's economic revitalization

10:00-11:00—Resident voices on lived experiences of “Urban Renewal” in Pittsburgh

Speakers: Sala Udin, Hill District Resident, civil rights activist, & member of Pittsburgh School District school board; **Randall Taylor**, Penn Plaza Support & Action Coalition & Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance (& TBC)

Facilitator: Sabina Deitrick PhD, School of Public and International Affairs and Co-director of Urban and Regional Analysis program at the University Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR) at the University of Pittsburgh.

Break

11:15-12:15PM Root Shock: Impacts of housing insecurity and displacement on health & well-being

Speakers: Fawn Walker-Montgomery, Take Action Advocacy Group (TAAG); **Shawnta Reed**, Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services; (& TBC)

Facilitator: Jackie Smith, University of Pittsburgh Department of Sociology

12:15-1:15PM Lunch & Discussion / Please view poster displays

Part 2: Strategies for promoting community development without displacement

This session explores lessons from earlier struggles to prevent displacement and offers policies that can preserve and expand affordable housing in Pittsburgh and other cities.

1:15-2:00PM Strategies for preserving affordable housing

Jarid Shipley, Director of Operations, NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania-- *Remembering the work of Dorothy Mae Richardson*; **Sabina Deitrick**, University of Pittsburgh-SPIA & UCSUR- *Housing preservation policy strategies*

Facilitator: Crystal Eddins, University of Pittsburgh Department of Sociology

2:15-3:45 Ending displacement and building permanent housing solutions

Many U.S. and European cities have developed effective models of non-market and social housing. This panel presents examples of permanent, affordable, quality housing that protect housing as a human right and promote stable communities. Discussion will explore possibilities for furthering such models in Pittsburgh.

Speakers: Edward Goetz, University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; **Stefan Gruber**, Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture & Director, Remaking Cities Institute

Facilitator: Omer Ali, University of Pittsburgh, Department of Economics

Respondent: Ed Nusser, Director of Housing Strategy, Office of County Executive-Allegheny County