

## Industrial action Pittsburgh

**Preface**  
Lawrenceville in Pittsburgh is transforming from a centre of industry into a commerce hub.

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A blue-collar neighbourhood from the 1870s, the suburb of Lawrenceville in Pittsburgh was once home to thousands of mill workers who helped fuel America's industrial revolution from the steel factories along the Allegheny River. But as the industry faltered from the 1960s so did the suburb, when ramshackle bars and empty shop fronts became the norm.

"The perception of this neighbourhood was so bad that my girlfriend dumped me when I moved here," says Brian Mendelsohn of the 3km strip of Butler Street between 34th and 52nd Street. In 2003 Mendelsohn, then a materials scientist, was among the first to recognise the latent promise of Lawrenceville that lay beneath its deterioration. "It had all the right elements: the physical infrastructure of beautiful-though-dilapidated houses and it's close to downtown," he says.

Convinced of the opportunities, Mendelsohn traded his lab coat for land and became a property developer and entrepreneur. He launched various projects throughout his adopted home including a gift-card boutique, a craft-beer shop and his latest endeavour, an independent cinema called Row House.

"I could make more money initially if I leased spaces to international chains but in the long term it'll lose the feel of the neighbourhood, which is why people move here in the first place," he says.

In 2004, former teacher and new resident Janice Donatelli opened the neighbourhood's first farm-to-table breakfast and brunch spot, Coca. "Everyone supports everyone: camaraderie not competition," she says. Donatelli also founded two other businesses: Butler Street Gallery and Artemis, which supplies environmentally friendly construction materials.



- 01 Butler Street
- 02 Espresso a Mano coffee shop on Butler Street
- 03 Andrew Moss with his daughter at home in Lawrenceville
- 04 Moss's home
- 05 Brian Mendelsohn's Lawrenceville apartment
- 06 Patrons at Coca Café
- 07 Mendelsohn's interior
- 08 Mendelsohn at home
- 09 Emily Slagel and Joseph Hilty in Slagel's store, Mid-Atlantic Mercantile
- 10 Clothes in Mid-Atlantic Mercantile
- 11 Row House Cinema
- 12 Mendelsohn at Atlas Bottle Works
- 13 The Pittsburgh Juice Company

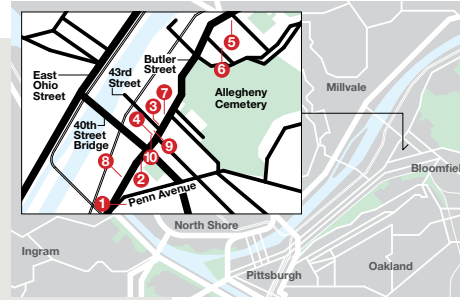


### Property guide

As once-derelict buildings are renovated and refurbished, property prices in Lawrenceville are on the up. What might have cost \$30,000 to \$50,000 (€22,500 to €38,000) a decade ago now easily fetches triple that price today. If you have time and energy to spare, the more affordable and rewarding option is buying a fixer-upper and taking on the makeover yourself.

**Prices**  
**One-bed apartment:** \$250,000 (€220,000)  
**Two-bed apartment:** \$335,000 (€295,000)  
**Three-bed apartment:** \$350,000 (€308,000)  
**Four-bed apartment:** \$450,000 (€397,000)

**Estate agent**  
Coldwell Banker  
+1 412 363 4000  
pittsburghmoves.com



### Eat & drink

- 1 The Pittsburgh Juice Company**  
Founded by siblings Naomi and Zeb Hornison, specialises in organic juices.  
[pittsburghjuicecompany.com](http://pittsburghjuicecompany.com)
- 2 Coca Café**  
Janice Donatelli set up Coca Café because she "couldn't persuade anyone else to". It's a favoured brunch spot.  
[coca-cafe.net](http://coca-cafe.net)
- 3 Industry Public House**  
Serves craft cocktails to wash down its American comfort food.  
[industryppgh.com](http://industryppgh.com)
- 4 Atlas Bottle Works**  
With over 500 local and global beers this is a one-stop-shop for sippable delights.  
[atlaspg.com](http://atlaspg.com)
- 5 Cure**  
As its name implies, Chef Justin Severino's restaurant specialises in charcuterie and cured meats.  
[curepittsburgh.com](http://curepittsburgh.com)

### Shop

- 6 52nd Street Market**  
Deirdre Kane and Dora Walmsley provide fresh produce.  
[52ndstreetmarket.com](http://52ndstreetmarket.com)
- 7 Mid-Atlantic Mercantile**  
Inspired by the area's industrial history, this shop sells homeware, stationery and clothing made by independent designers and manufacturers.  
[mid-atlantimercantile.com](http://mid-atlantimercantile.com)
- 8 Pavement**  
Since 2006, resident Alissa Martin has handpicked clothes made in the US to sell in her womenswear boutique.  
[pavementpittsburgh.com](http://pavementpittsburgh.com)
- 9 Wildcard**  
One-of-a-kind cards courtesy of property developer Bryan Mendelsohn.  
[wildcardpgh.com](http://wildcardpgh.com)
- 10 Row House Cinema**  
Single-screen theatre shows new releases and old classics.  
[rowhousecinema.com](http://rowhousecinema.com)

### The resident

Emily Slagel, owner of Mid-Atlantic Mercantile Shop  
"This is really a live-work neighbourhood; I have a lot of friends who live and own businesses here."



Developers have pumped over \$120m (€106m) of investment into the neighbourhood in the past three years according to Matthew Galluzzo, executive director of the Lawrenceville Corporation, which looks after commercial development in the neighbourhood. Yet the noticeable lack of big-brand retailers is testament to developers' commitment to keeping the neighbourhood's character authentic.

Predictably this regeneration has pushed up property prices as young professionals, families and empty-nesters move in. While this also means higher rents, steps are being taken to ensure that gentrification does not push out long-term lower-income residents. "A residential developer has set aside 20 per cent of living space for people below the median income," says Galluzzo.

"There are so many opportunities to rehab old structures but also to add new pieces to the existing context," says architect Andrew Moss, who runs his practice out of 42nd Street and lives nearby. New ideas include converting abandoned warehouses on the riverfront into a lifestyle space, repurposing a railway line into a green thoroughfare and a new downtown pathway for bicycles and walkers.

Residents are glad that Lawrenceville's shady image has been relegated to history but ask anyone and they'll tell you they don't want their neighbourhood too polished. As Mendelsohn puts it, "We're in the Rust Belt so we actually like the roughness." — (M)

