

T0: The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
FROM: Treva Tam

I would like to propose a new program that supports local entrepreneurs in the food industry. Currently, the program I envision targets two types of business owners:

- 1) current restauranteurs who already own businesses in areas with a lack of easily accessible restaurants and
- 2) new restauranteurs looking to open businesses in these areas.

This program would not only provide funding, but also provide other resources such as networking opportunities and mentorship in the food industry.

Using Yelp data, I mapped out the location of restaurants in the Pittsburgh as well as their pricing categorization in Yelp. I layered this over ACS data at the block group level for information on the share of the population that is categorized as Black on the Census. Through our mapping of the Pittsburgh area, I noted that restaurants were clustered in certain areas of the city, such as the downtown area. However, there was a noticeable avoidance of areas that had a high proportion of Black residents.

Here, I provided a closer look at the downtown and Strip District area. As you can see there is high restaurant density in block groups that have up to 20% Black residents. However, in block groups that have more than 50% Black residents, the number of restaurants drops dramatically. As can be seen here, the Hill District has very few restaurants per block when compared to the surrounding neighborhoods - Downtown, the Strip District, Oakland, Lawrenceville, South Side, and Shady Side. This pattern is apparent regardless of pricing.

While more research needs to be done on the causes of this restaurant-void. I propose a program such as the one I described earlier in this memo. In hopes to make the program as equitable and beneficial to the community as possible we can implement the following measures: program information can be passed out as a flyer to be placed in mail slots of the neighborhoods with a majority Black population. Further information will also be disseminated to community leaders, such as church leaders and community centers. Community meetings will be held 4 times a year to identify what types of restaurants and food services residents desire in their neighborhoods. The committee that decides which applicants will have access to the funding will also be comprised of 60% community members.

