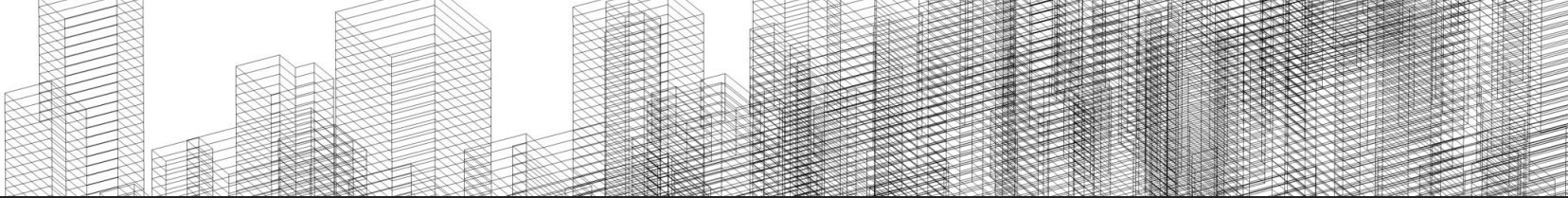




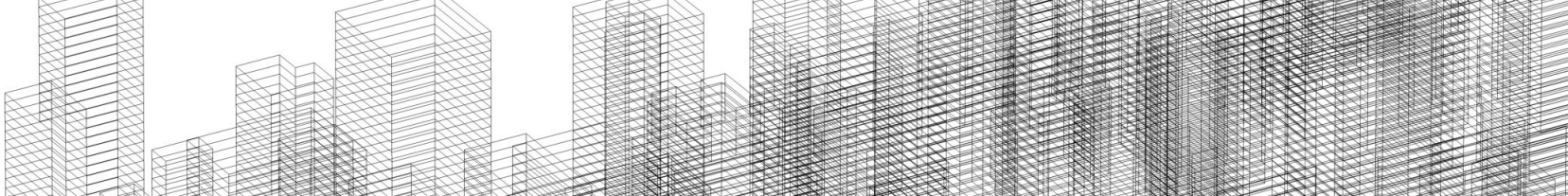
# Post-Graduate Student Retention in Oakland

Community Action Group  
Elizabeth, Brenna, Mythri, Victoria, Annabelle



## Research Questions:

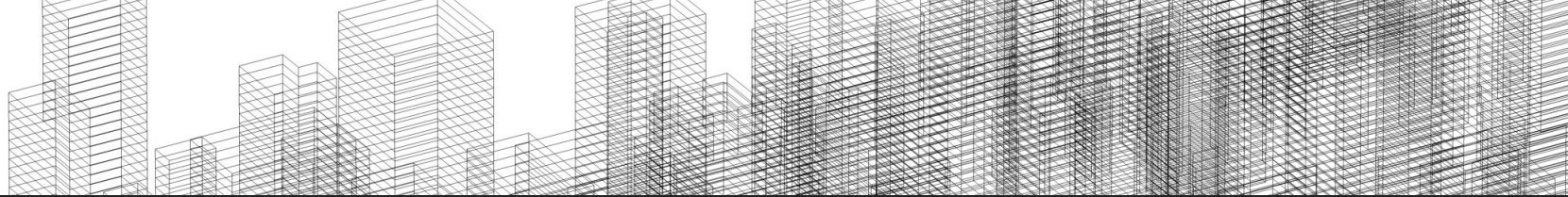
- **What can be done to retain Oakland's post-graduation student population?**
  - What can be done to make Oakland's diverse student population feel more welcome?
  - How may a growing, young, professional population impact other communities in Oakland?



# Community Profile

What does Oakland really look like?

- Oakland is a neighborhood of about 20,000
  - “Predominantly Asian and/or white and less of Oakland’s population identifies as Black than the city overall” (21).
- Per capita, Oakland has more low-income households than the city (23)
- Oakland is primarily a renter market (more people rent than own homes) (30)
  - High turnover rate due to students
  - Housing options are “characterized as average to fair condition” (30)
- Oakland residents are highly-educated
  - Due to the universities in Oakland and the high rate of college students in the area (11)



## CHAPTER ONE:

# OAKLAND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

### Key Takeways

- Oakland is a neighborhood of about 20,000 residents, representing about one of every fifteen Pittsburgh residents. It is also an employment and education center. Home to two major hospitals (with a third one adjacent), three universities, and several destination secondary schools and cultural institutions, Oakland's population swells to nearly 107,000 people each weekday during the school year. This includes over 42,000 university students and 2,000 primary or secondary school students. Later chapters address Oakland's workforce and visitors in more detail. Oakland's residential population is about the same as it was in 2000, having risen slightly until 2010 then declined.
- About two thirds of Oakland's residents are in the 15-24 age range dominated by university students. Most university students live in Central and North Oakland, but they also represent the largest age cohort in West and South Oakland. About one third of Oakland

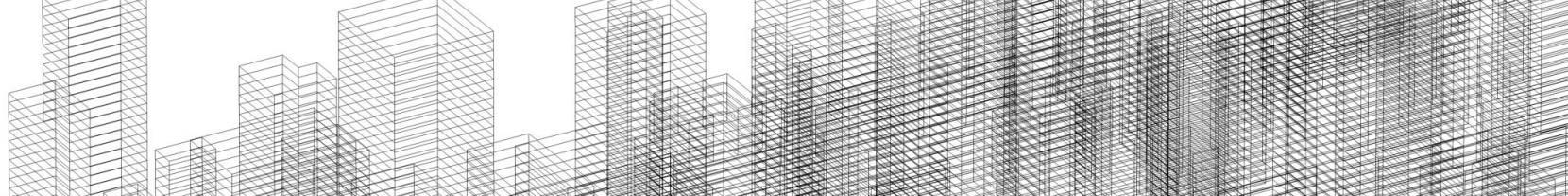
residents are not in the 15-24 age range; apart from some advanced graduate students, most are not university students, and represent a wide variety of short- and long-term resident households.

- Oakland's household count declined about 9% between 2010 and 2018, led by loss of 13% and 15% of households in Central and North Oakland respectively. Meanwhile, the number of households in West and South Oakland increased, concurrent with a loss of 29% and 26% of family households respectively. As little new housing was constructed in this period, this suggests a significant number of family dwellings were subdivided into apartments.
- The racial composition of Oakland's residents includes half the share of Black residents, twice the share of Asian residents, 20% more White residents, and about the same share of Hispanic residents as in Pittsburgh overall.

These discrepancies have been widening. Racial composition varies considerably around Oakland, with Black residents most represented in West Oakland, Asians in North Oakland, and Whites in Central Oakland. South Oakland comes closest to the city's overall race and ethnicity breakdown.

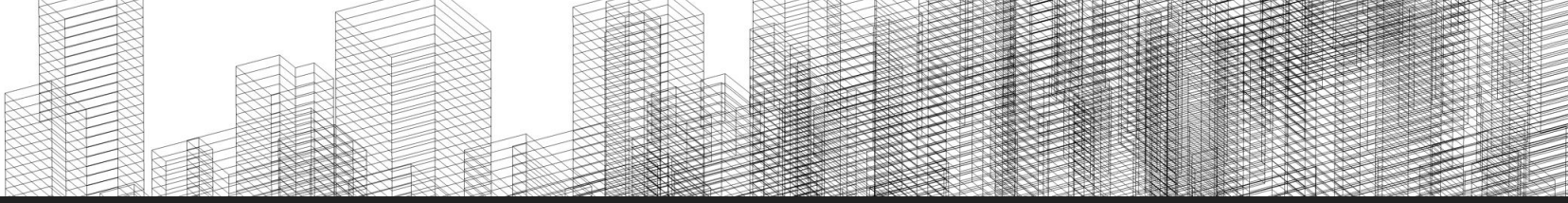
- The average educational attainment level of Oakland residents is higher than the city as a whole, but lower than in the established or re-emerging neighborhoods of downtown, Strip District, South Side Flats, Shadyside, and Squirrel Hill.
- Other examples of neighborhoods with dominant university populations and employment include Philadelphia's University City, Cambridge's Kendall Square, and Midtown Atlanta. Unlike Oakland, each of those neighborhoods has had substantial population growth since 2010.

Snip directly from the Pittsburgh Department of City Planning's Oakland Plan Existing Conditions Report (2020) - "Oakland: Economic Development and Urban Design Studies: October 2020"



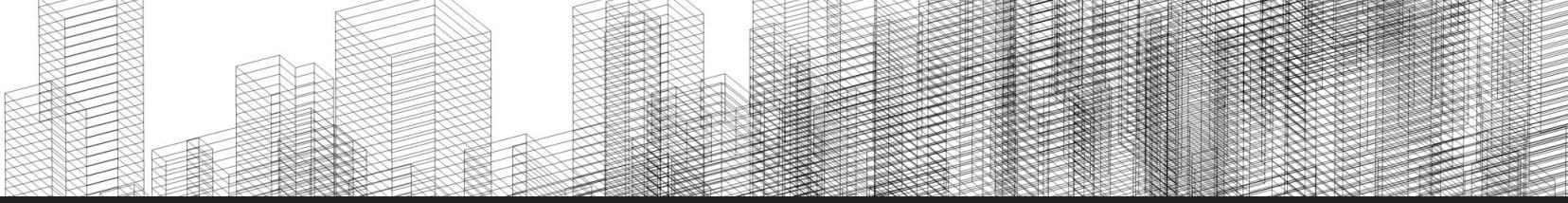
## Literature - College Graduates

- Positive effect of college graduates' presence (Shapiro)
- “Creative class” needs, includes location (Lawton et al.)
- Study in Long Beach, CA, again location (Stephens)



## Literature - Caveats

- Issue of focus on attracting wealthy/well-educated residents (Storper & Scott)
- Potential for technology field in Oakland (Weiss & Metzger)
- Importance of community engagement & impacts beyond “engagees” (Brunton et al.)



# Methods

- **Literature review**

- Basis to understanding to further analysis on Oakland Retention

- **Survey**

- (Semi) random sampling of Oakland University students
- Multiple reviews and peer edits before release
- Collection of Data for ~2 weeks
- Determined:
  1. Demographic info
  2. Opinions on Oakland's infrastructure & culture
  3. Possible rates of post-grad retention
  4. Reasoning behind retention rates

- **Analysis**

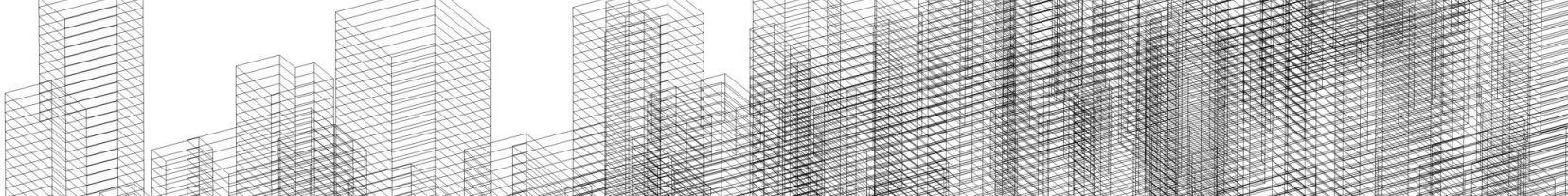
- Collection of data through qualitative and statistical analysis
  - Most quantitative data was analyzed automatically by the surveying software: Qualtrics

- **Stakeholder Interviews**

- Identification of 5 community stakeholders
- interviewed in reference to survey
- Gathered information about ways to improve Oakland for student retention post-grad

- **Discussion**

- Identification of issues, conflicts, and ways to improve



# Findings

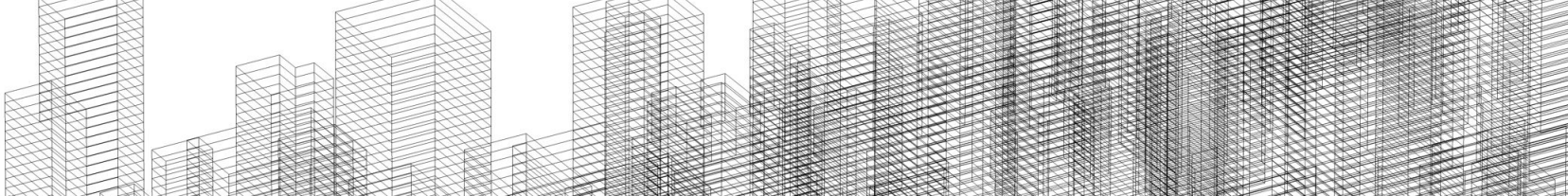
- 175 survey responses

Main 3 questions of survey:

1. After graduation, do you plan to live in Oakland?
2. How have your experiences been with these features of Oakland?
3. Which features of the Oakland neighborhood are more likely to affect your decision or did affect your decision to remain in Oakland after graduation?

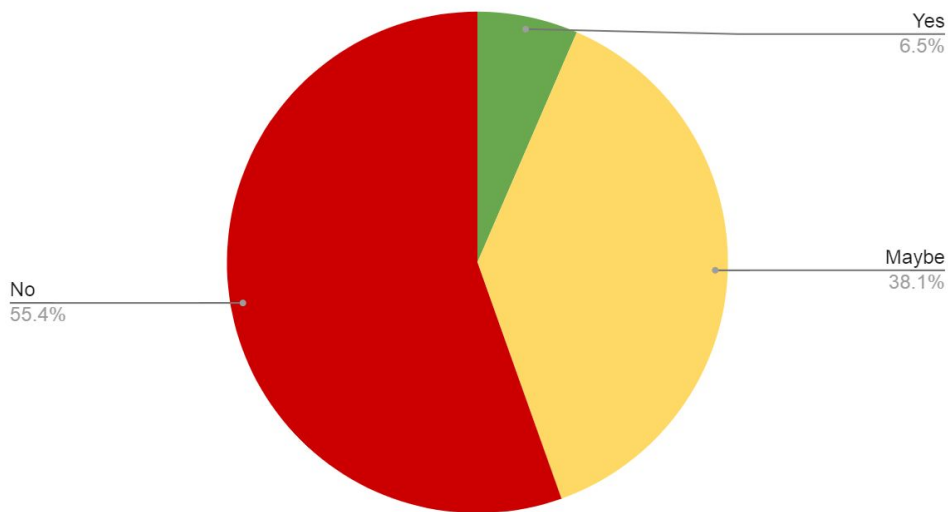
These questions analyzed against demographic questions to determine if any intersectional trends present



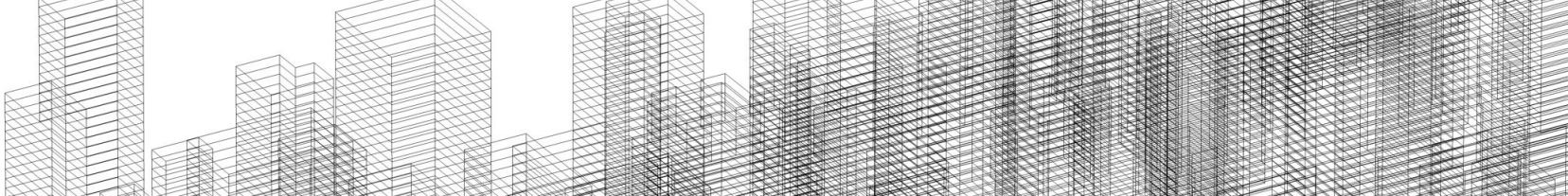


## 1. After graduation, do you plan to live in Oakland?

Question: After graduation, do you plan to live in Oakland?



None of our stakeholder interviewees were surprised that the majority of respondents weren't planning on staying in Oakland after graduation



# Reasoning

13. If you responded maybe, what would make you stay in Oakland after graduation?

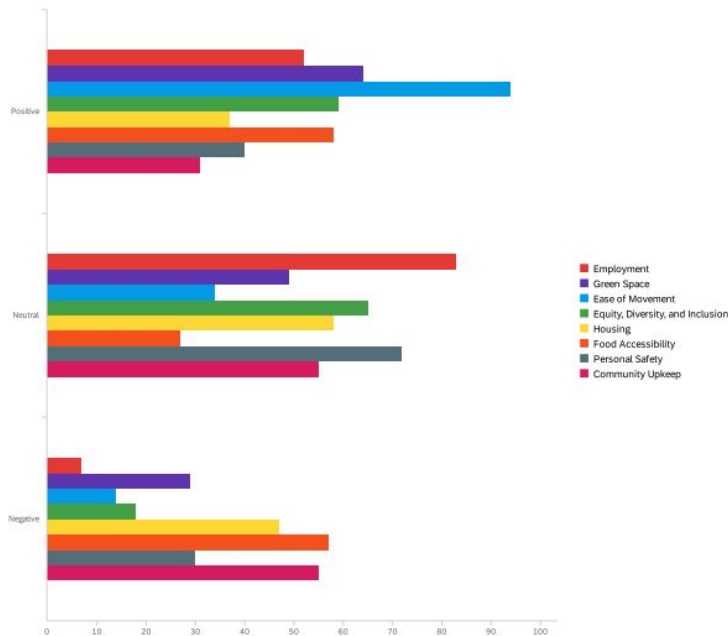
- High number of responses mention jobs or grad school

14. What is the main reason you chose not to live in Oakland and/or are planning not to live in Oakland after graduation?

- Mix of responses mention feeling of “college town”, opportunities elsewhere, and better housing elsewhere

## 2. How have your experiences been with these features of Oakland?

Q16 - How have your experiences been with each of these features within Oakland?

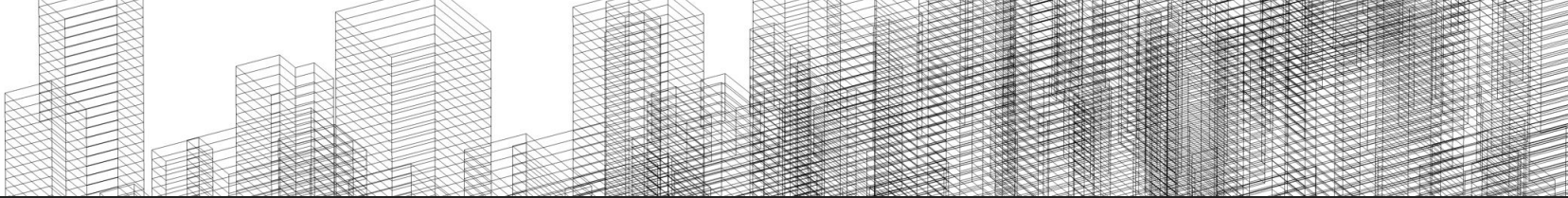


### Top 3 Positive Features:

1. Ease of Movement
2. Green Space
3. Diversity and Inclusion

### Top 3 Negative Features:

1. Food Accessibility
2. Community Upkeep
3. Housing



### 3. Which features of the Oakland neighborhood are more likely to affect your decision or did affect your decision to remain in Oakland after graduation? Please rank from most impactful (1) to least impactful (8)

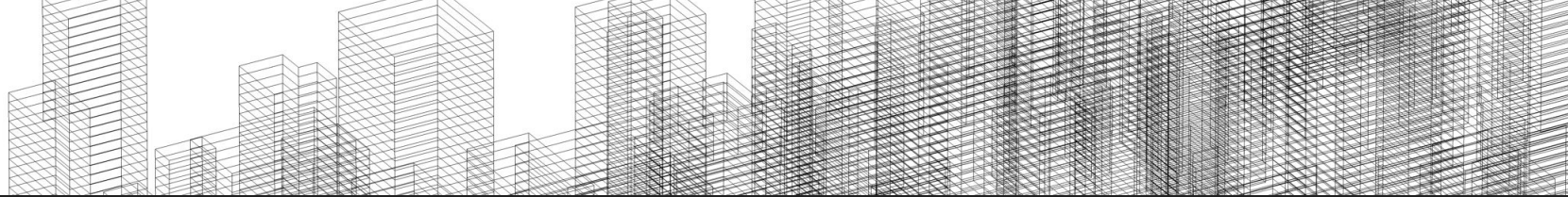
Question: Which features of the Oakland neighborhood are more likely to affect your decision or did affect your decision to remain in Oakland after graduation? Please rank from most impactful (1) to least impactful (8)



Grouped responses in top 4 and bottom 4 as two separate categories to define impactfulness

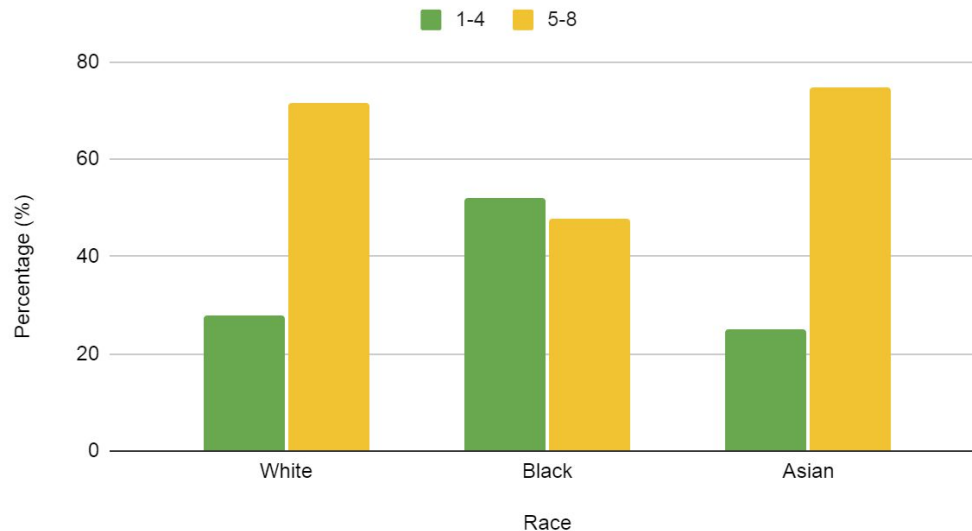
Housing, Employment, and Personal Safety were ranked as the top 3 most impactful factors.

Employment (49.6%) and Housing (26%) were the highest top #1 ranked choices



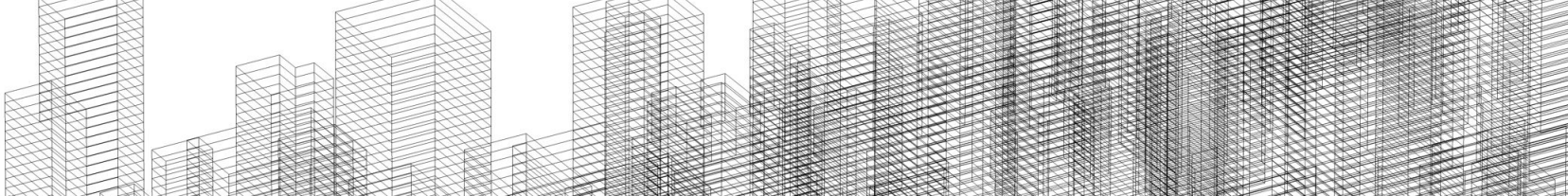
## Race x Impact of Equity Diversity and Inclusion

Impact Ranking Question: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Factor



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion ranked as much more impactful for Black respondents compared to White and Asian respondents





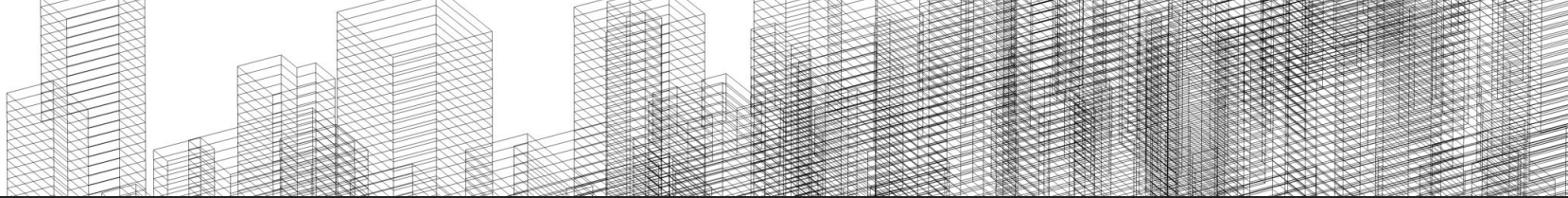
## Qualitative Responses

### Positives

- Mobility
- Proximity to campus
- Proximity to friends
- Quiet
- Near museums and public library
- Clean
- Atmosphere/Activity/People
- Sense of community
- Greenspace

### Negatives

- Landlords
- Trash
- Housing - affordability and quality
- Lack of grocery stores/healthy food
- Safety - streetlights
- Lack of community spaces
- Mobility - traffic, parking, sidewalks
- Feels secluded
- Lack of greenspace
- Noisy



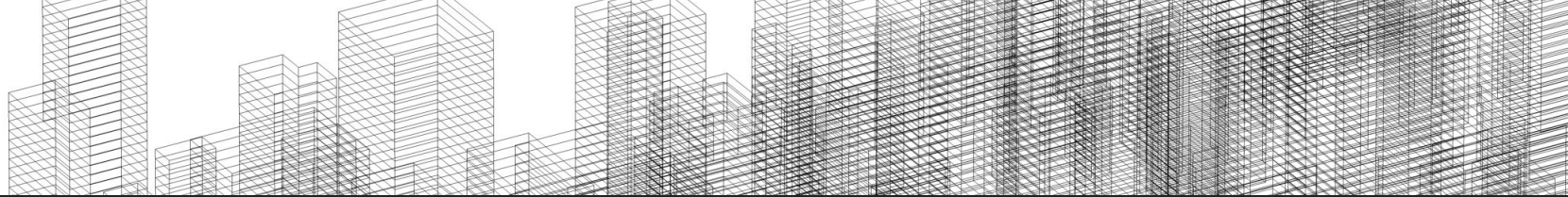
# Stakeholder Interview Outcomes

## Diversity and Inclusion

- Less of a sense of community for minorities
- First impressions of Pitt is a *whitewash*
  - leads students of color to feel a sense of tension and uncomfortability
- Not directly outcast, but lack of inclusive culture leaves students of color segregated

## Business and Employment

- Create more opportunities for businesses (not just restaurants)
  - Businesses Diversification attractive for non-college students
  - More career opportunities
  - After graduation, students are looking for jobs that relate to their career goals and interests, not only part-time service jobs



## Stakeholder Interview Outcomes, pt. 2

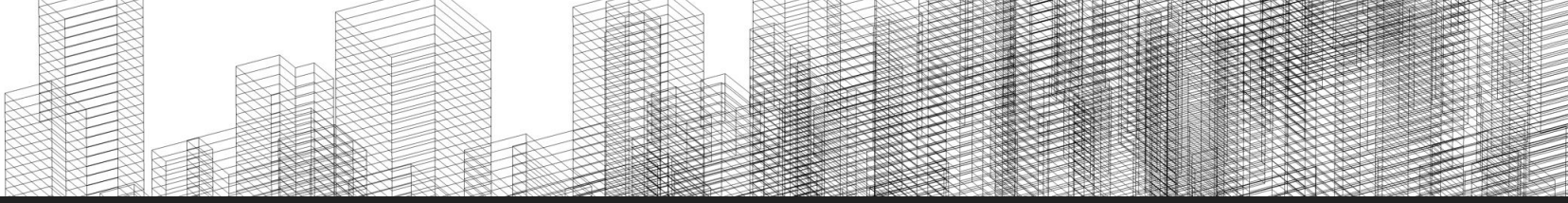
### Housing

- More affordable homes
- Equal housing for all
  - students, post-grad, long-term residents
- More variation in housing
  - Oakland housing is only acceptable for college students
  - Lack of family homes

### Programing and Development

- Increase programs that join all people in Oakland
  - Collaboration between residents and students
- More green spaces
- K-12 school
- Grocery store options
- Community gardens
- More accessible sidewalks for all
- Less encroachment by institutions





# Planning For a Better Community

## **Safety:**

- More streetlights, Saferiders

## **Transportation:**

- Shuttles throughout Oakland for residents (Buses in South Oakland), fix sidewalks, bike lanes

## **Housing:**

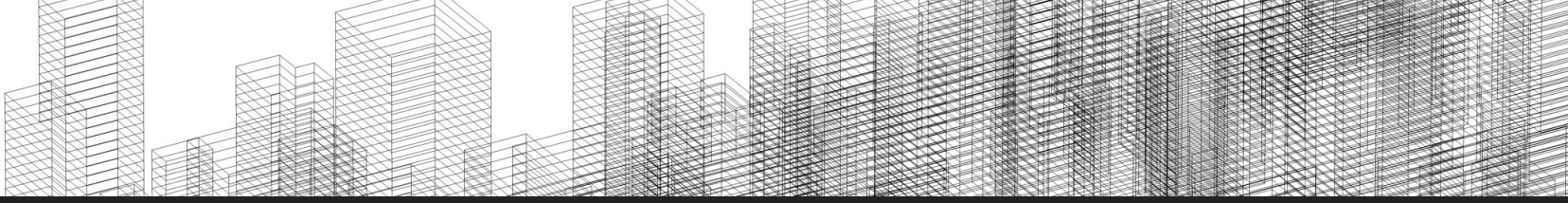
- Landlord management/tenant union, affordable and well-maintained housing

## **Sense of Community:**

- activities /spaces to connect residents & students (i.e. block parties, farmers' markets, festivals)

## **Quality of Life:**

- Inclusion of people of color in planning process, grocery stores, (and better housing)



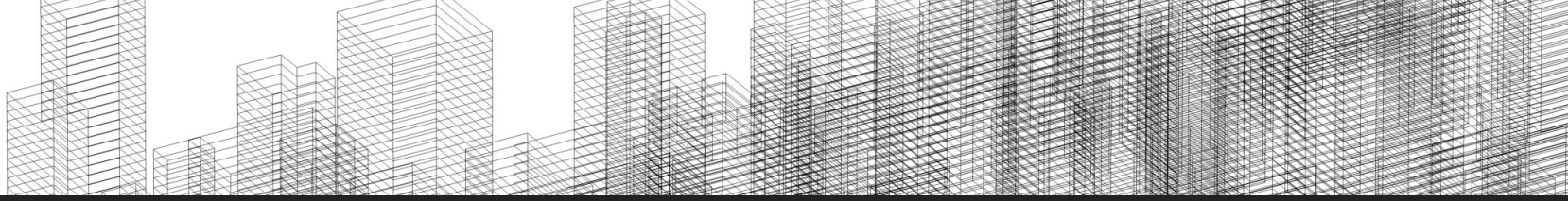
# Discussion/Conflicts

## Conflicts

- Purposeful gentrification in area full of housing insecure students
  - “Nicer” housing means higher pricing
- Limited housing available
  - Overcrowding issue
  - Nowhere to house replaced student population
  - Dorms are too expensive
- Does not solve racial/ethnic/gender diversity issues
- Based around economic possibilities instead of helping residents

## Limitations

- Only received ~175 responses for Survey
- Stakeholders do not represent every community
- Research limited to students (mostly University of Pittsburgh)
- Did not receive information from long-term residents
- Limited time period



# Conclusion



In conclusion, we have been able to take our survey and turn it into solid recommendations with input from others on how to make Oakland a more cohesive community to live in. We hope for a community that not only focuses on the students, but also brings in all residents.

