

Block22 FAQs

1. What is Block22?

- a. Block22 is a unique, living learning community developed in partnership with Pittsburg State University and the City of Pittsburg. It will combine 100 units of student housing with more than 16,000 square feet of innovation space for students to explore their own entrepreneurial ventures, while also contributing to the success of local entrepreneurs.

2. Where will Block22 be located?

- a. Block22 is located in the heart of downtown Pittsburg at the corner of Fourth and Broadway. It will renovate four existing buildings (Commerce Building, Baxter Building, National Bank Building and Opera House Hotel) to house 100 student residential units, innovation and retail space.

3. Why is it called Block22?

- a. The name ties into the city's rich heritage of entrepreneurs and business pioneers. The city's forefathers originally platted our city into 51 blocks. The oldest building included in today's project, the Opera House Hotel, was located in Block 22 of the original map. Hence, the moniker Block 22.

4. How much will Block22 cost?

- a. The total project is estimated to cost \$18M.

5. How many square feet, in total, will this project encompass?

- a. Together, the four buildings included in Block22 encompass nearly 93,000 square feet of space.

6. Where did this idea come from?

- a. The idea to add student housing downtown is not new, however, the plan took shape this year with the city approaching the university with the concept.

7. Who is paying for this project?

- a. Block22 will be funded through a public private partnership between Pittsburg State University, the City of Pittsburg and the Vecino Group, a development/housing specialist based in Springfield, Missouri. The City of Pittsburg has committed \$1.5M in funding from its Revolving Loan Fund, Pittsburg State University has committed \$1M in fundraising and the Vecino Group has secured \$10.05M in tax credits. The remaining balance of \$5.4M will be in the form of a loan assumed by the Vecino Group and will be paid through a long-term lease agreement with Pittsburg State University.

8. Why is the city investing in this project?

- a. This is a unique opportunity to revitalize the city's downtown district and to do so at a minimal cost to taxpayers. The project will reinvigorate buildings that have largely stood vacant for 20+ years, place 100+ students to the downtown business district and likely attract additional retail businesses into the downtown district. The expected result is increased sales for local retail outlets, increased sales tax collections and a new vibrancy to the heart of downtown Pittsburg.

9. Are local tax dollars being used to fund this project?

- a. The city is investing a total of \$1.5M from its Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) into this project. The RLF is funded by a local one-half cent sales tax and used as a loan guarantee for implementing credit-worthy industrial and non-competing retail, commercial and serve business projects which create and/or retain jobs.

10. Who will own the buildings in Block22?

- a. The buildings will be owned by Pittsburg State University at the end of the lease period.

11. When will construction start and when will the project be completed?

- a. Construction will start shortly after the final details of the lease have been agreed upon by both the Vecino Group and Pittsburg State University. Construction is expected to take approximately 18 months.

12. Who will be responsible for the operation of Block22?

- a. Pittsburg State University will operate and manage student residential, retail and business spaces through a long-term lease. The student housing aspect will be operated by university student housing staff.

13. Who will be able to rent apartments in Block22?

- a. Residential apartments will be limited to Pittsburg State University students with preference given to upperclassmen and graduate students.

14. What types of apartments will be offered to students?

- a. Current designs call for one-bedroom standard, loft, flat and studio-style apartments.

15. What types of retail and business operations will be able to locate within Block22?

- a. The developer is working with the city and university to identify commercial tenants that will support this living and learning community as well as the revitalization of the downtown business district.

16. Will there be enough parking spaces for residents and business? Where will people park?

- a. Block22 is expected to house approximately 120 staff and residents. There are 190 parking spaces within a one block radius and 308 parking spaces within a block and a half of Block22. The City of Pittsburg will work with local business owners and university officials to determine options for moving forward. New signage, lighting and cameras will be installed to ensure walkways and parking lots are visible, well-lit and monitored.

17. How will these students get to and from the university?

- a. While most, if not all, residents will likely own a vehicle; the city will implement a new shuttle system. This shuttle will run between Block22 and the university campus on a regular schedule.

18. Will these buildings retain their historical features?

- a. Yes. Because Federal and State Historic Tax Credits will be used the developer will place a special emphasis on maintaining the buildings' historic features. These will include reclaimed office and panel doors, exposed brick, historic floors, light fixtures and many other turn-of-the-century architectural features.

19. The university already has on-campus housing available to students? Why does it want to build new student-housing units in downtown Pittsburg?

- a. These units will be unlike anything currently available to Pittsburg State students. Block22 puts students in the art, commerce and technology district of Pittsburg. Students in these areas will live together in this innovative complex that provides natural collision space with area entrepreneurs, businesses and community members.

20. What is “The Foundry” and how does it relate to Block22?

- a. This is the name of the retail and business development space included within Block22. It will be located within the first floor of the former National Bank Building and Opera House Hotel. It will include space for Pittsburg State’s Center for Innovation and Business Development, a coffee shop, student lounge, co-working space, makerspace, and community meeting rooms.