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## **Viewpoint: New assets are a win for Pittsburgh International Airport and the region's economy**

**By Stefani Pashman**



The recent announcements of the [new microgrid](#) and [Neighborhood 91](#) at the Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT), under the forward-thinking leadership of the Allegheny County Airport Authority, demonstrate what is possible when partners come together with a focus on innovation, sustainability and resilience.

With its new, first-of-its-kind independent microgrid, the airport is well on its way to being one of the smartest airports in the world. And the creation of Neighborhood 91 at the Pittsburgh Airport Innovation Campus will be an additive manufacturing game-changer. Future-focused, these both represent the kind of investments that make the region more vital and globally competitive.

True regional vitality comes when the conditions of people and place improve as a result of the economy. This, in turn, fuels the economy with people's new ideas and by the responsible use of the region's assets. When we build a vital, globally competitive economy in an inclusive, sustainable way – we are building the economy of the future for all. This is a formula for success, and we have it here in our region.

The microgrid and Neighborhood 91 exemplify a strong commitment to the triple bottom line that the Allegheny Conference has been using to measure regional progress: people, place, economy. These investments will produce strong economic returns, short- and long-term. The microgrid will allow people in the region to ensure safer, more cost-effective and reliable travel

experiences, in addition to creating new job opportunities for them. Our place will benefit from the reduction of emissions because of more sustainable energy production and the future-focused pairing of natural gas with solar technology. And our economy, as a result of Neighborhood 91, will be bolstered by a hub for next-generation, additive manufacturing activity.

When we benchmark, we see that the regions that have invested in innovation-based and future-focused economic development are yielding the benefits for people, place and economy. Confirmed by the Our Next 75 input gathering process led by the Conference this year, southwestern Pennsylvania has an abundance of unique regional assets that can be leveraged to create a future-focused economy that benefits all of our people while also improving where we live.

The Pittsburgh region has incredible assets on which to capitalize: extraordinary public-private and cross-sector collaboration; deep expertise in energy and manufacturing; rich natural, human and built resources; visionary leadership; and a shared commitment to building a vital, globally competitive economy where thriving people live in the highest quality of place.

Transformative investments, like the microgrid and Neighborhood 91, remind us that this is a place of builders, creators, artists, makers, innovators and problem-solvers. We are a region of firsts and one-of-a-kind innovations that put us on the map and tell the world: the Pittsburgh region is on the forefront of what's next.

*Stefani Pashman is CEO of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development*