



[Print](#) | [Close this window](#)

Why Pittsburgh for the G20?

Fri Sep 18, 2009 3:35pm EDT

Ask RAD: A Unique Model of Tax Relief and Support for Regional Assets

PITTSBURGH, Sept. 18 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Allegheny County, home to the City of Pittsburgh and site of next week's G-20 summit, is also home to a unique program that combines tax relief with more than \$75 million of annual support for regional assets.

Funded by a one-percent sales tax, the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD) is a dedicated fund for the preservation of treasured regional assets that are important to the quality of life in the region, and essential in recruiting and retaining a thriving workforce. For 15 years, RAD grants have supported and enhanced places like Phipps Conservatory and The Andy Warhol Museum, regional assets that are on next week's G-20 visit. RAD funds also support the site of the conference, the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, the world's largest "green" convention center.

RAD Grant Program: A \$1 billion investment in the region's quality of life since 1995

Since its inception in 1995, more than \$1 billion has been invested in sustaining and enhancing the County's libraries, parks, stadiums and arena, and arts and culture facilities and programs. An equal sum has also been provided Allegheny County and its 130 municipalities for providing tax reform and essential services.

The hallmark of district grants is unrestricted operating funds. RAD has also awarded \$55.1 million in capital grants for projects like accessibility, critical infrastructure and equipment. RAD funds also have made possible special collaborations among assets that have contributed to budget savings and audience development.

Libraries have received 31% of the grant funding, parks 28%, stadiums and arenas 21%, regional facilities (Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium, Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens, National Aviary) 10%, and arts and culture 10%. Overall, nearly 60% of District funds have gone to places that are free to the public. The funding program is diverse and has included more than 135 different assets located throughout the county.

Background:

In the early 1990s, the City of Pittsburgh found itself providing a disproportionate amount of funding for the region's cultural facilities and recreational activities. At the same time, leaders saw the need to move away from property tax as the main source of funding municipal and county functions, and to provide a local tax relief program for low income senior citizens. The Allegheny Conference on Community Development proposed a legislative effort to stabilize funding for the regional assets, correct funding inequities, reduce reliance on property taxes and establish a precedent for regional cooperation.

With bi-partisan support, the legislature in 1993 approved creation of the first regional mechanism -- the Allegheny Regional Asset District (or RAD) -- to address tax reform and to stabilize funding for important regional institutions, or "assets."

For more about the Allegheny Regional Asset District, visit www.radworkshere.org.

SOURCE Allegheny Regional Asset District

Julie Goetz, Communications Manager of Allegheny Regional Asset District, +1-412-227-1900 ext. 14, jg@radworkshere.org

© Thomson Reuters 2009. All rights reserved. Users may download and print extracts of content from this website for their own personal and non-commercial use only. Republication or redistribution of Thomson Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters and its logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of the Thomson Reuters group of companies around the world.

Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to an Editorial Handbook which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.