

Community Impact Report 2022



Staff

Aaron Sukenik

Executive Director

Bill Shimko

Director of Administration &
General Counsel

Meg O'Brien

Director of Economic Development

Jeph Martin

Services Manager

Mohak Chauhan

Construction and Redevelopment
Manager

Rain McCoy

Communications Coordinator/
PULSE Fellow

Aimee Mangham

Outreach Coordinator

Corey Sage

Finance Manager

Sebastian Foltz

Photo Contributor

Board of Directors

Allentown CDC

Nancy Lomasney

Beltzhoover Civic Association

Nicole Stephens

Carrick Community Council

Sherry Miller Brown

Hilltop Economic Development Corporation

Amanda Cassady

Knoxville Community Council

Ricco Brown

Mt. Oliver City/St. Clair Community Group

Suzanne N. Photos

Mount Washington CDC

Mary Causey

South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association

Gavin Robb

At Large

Jennifer Cash Wade, President

Denise Filip, Secretary

Jessica Ruffin, Vice President

Tom Smith, Treasurer

Linda Piso

Letter from our Board President

2022 saw a return to (mostly) normal after navigating pandemic-related challenges over 2020 and 2021. However, with the rise of inflation and economic uncertainty, we saw our monthly Fresh Fridays free food distribution attendance increase in the summer and fall of 2022, after watching it steadily decrease throughout 2021. Hilltop households receiving home repair assistance were higher than ever, and unfortunately our waitlist is also longer than ever.

It has been exciting to see the Grandview South Homes development of 31 new, affordable single-family houses in Allentown near closing on all acquisition and financing (May 2023), with construction scheduled to begin late Spring or Summer 2023! In 2022 we also purchased, renovated and moved into a new office building at 209 Bausman Street. The building was the former home of National Printing Co. and is conveniently located in Knoxville, two blocks from the busy clocktower intersection of Brownsville Road.

In 2022, the Hilltop Alliance's Business District Programs on Brownsville Road (through Mt. Oliver Borough and the Knoxville neighborhood) and East Warrington Avenue (Allentown neighborhood) saw continued growth and success. Cross-district collaboration between the two brought some very successful marketing campaigns and experiences, including the Passport Program for holiday shopping and the Cookie Tour.

Heading into 2023, we will see a major transition for the organization. After 10 years of growth and stable leadership, longtime Executive Director Aaron Sukenik announced in early January that he would be leaving the organization on February 3. We are now actively searching for a new executive director with the hope of one being in place before June. The Hilltop Alliance's current Director of Administration & General Counsel Bill Shimko will serve as Interim Executive Director until a new one is hired. Bill started with the organization in February 2022 and has spent an entire year working alongside Aaron on grants, contracts, real estate and administrative matters. While the Board of Directors goes through the hiring process for a new Executive Director, we are confident that the operations and impact of the organization will remain steady.

Throughout this report, we acknowledge and thank our supporters and partners who assist us in implementing neighborhood projects and programs. We are proud to see the tremendous progress being made from investing in our residents and the places we love on the Hilltop.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cash Wade

2022 President, Board of Directors

2022 Leadership
and Staff

2022 By the Numbers

6

New businesses opened along the E. Warrington Avenue Business Corridor

20+

New jobs created within the Allentown Business District in 2022

16

Loans or grants provided to Allentown small businesses

Allentown Business District

7

New businesses opened along the Brownsville Road Business Corridor

13

Facade renovations completed or in progress

16

Loans or grants provided to Mt. Oliver small businesses

Mt. Oliver Business District

41

Special events held across the Allentown and Mt. Oliver Business Districts

50+

Businesses participated in the Allentown & Mt. Oliver Passport Program and/or Small Business Saturday Cookie Tour

3,275

Households received fresh produce, dairy and dry goods through Fresh Fridays

Special Events and Outreach

45

Home repair projects completed or in progress, across ESG, HAP and HAPI

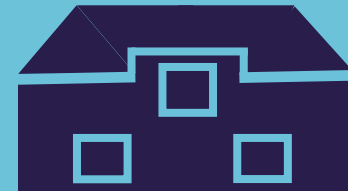
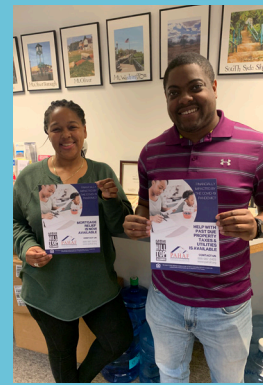
158

Property Maintenance issues resolved, 110 of which are connected to Knoxville Clean-Ups

13

Hilltop residents assisted with applications for past due mortgage and utility assistance

Property Stabilization Program



A YEAR OF DEVELOPMENT: NEW STOREFRONTS, EVENTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Allentown Business District

In 2022, the Allentown business district welcomed 6 new shops to the unique and creative atmosphere of the neighborhood. The district-wide storefront occupancy rate is currently at 95%.

Hilltop Alliance awarded 5 Rent Abatement grants to help support and incentivize new businesses, including: Bottlerocket Social Hall, Soil Sisters House of Plants, Brow and Crown Collective, the Open Road, and Sojourner Gallery. When Allentown's Black Forge Coffee House announced it might close, HA supported local business owner Kelly Braden (of the Weeping Glass), in taking over ownership and management of the neighborhood coffee shop.

There were 7 Marketing Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) grants awarded in 2022. Business owners worked with our consultant partners Trailblaze Creative and First Sip Studios to build marketing content and skills based on their needs. Two commercial properties renovated their facades with the URA's Avenues of Hope Storefront



Facade Grant Program this year, with more applications pending for 2023.

Events brought the community together in 2022. HA worked with The Weeping Glass to host the largest Allentown Night Markets yet, welcoming over 200 vendors and over 3,500 visitors over two events, including Mayor Ed Gainey.

Throughout 2022, Hilltop Alliance worked with community partners to host community-centered and youth-friendly parades for Mardi Gras, the Ides of March and Halloween. Over the summer, the Side Lot Side Hustle outdoor vendor series offered local entrepreneurs a space for pop-up sales in the Lunchtime Lot at 819 E. Warrington Ave.

In September, HA was part of Allentown's team at the Garbage Olympics, led by the Allentown CDC. The team placed 1st out of 48 teams with the most trash collected. We continue to partner with Allentown CDC on events, advocacy, communications and social media campaigns.



Mt. Oliver Business District

Working with the Hilltop Economic Development Corporation in Mt. Oliver Borough, the occupancy rate in the 100-200 blocks of Brownsville Road increased to 71% by the end of 2022, compared to 50% at the beginning of 2021.

Seven new businesses opened and each is woman and/or minority owned. ECHT Coffee House was recognized by Pittsburgh Magazine as one of the 8 Best New Restaurants, the Cheese Queen regularly draws new visitors to the Borough via her active social media, and Two Coffins Tattoo expanded their operations to 100 Brownsville Road. Many new businesses received support through Rent Abatement grants, MTAP grants and Facade Improvement grants.

In 2022, Fragasso Financial Advisors presented the Mt. Oliver Small Business Series, a program for business owners to learn more about

management, accounting, marketing and human resources. In 2023, Fragasso will hold more workshops for business owners.

In 2022, there were over 30 events in the Borough. The Summer LIVE Music Series and Falling for Mt. Oliver Autumn series brought entertainment to the Deck at 150 Brownsville Road every weekend for 5 months. HA collaborated with the Hilltop Urban Farm and Mt. Oliver for the first Hilltop Harvest Fest, where 400 visitors enjoyed local produce, live music, and participated in a community art project.



Collaboration Across the Hilltop

In 2022, we focused on intentional collaboration between Allentown and Mt. Oliver. This included a Passport Program with 50 participating businesses across the districts. This program awards prizes to shoppers that make purchases at 10 different businesses during the promotional period. Allentown and Mt Oliver also

collaborated on a Small Business Saturday Cookie Tour, with 29 total stops. In December, HA hosted a Holiday Mixer for business owners and community members from the districts, fostering community building and further collaboration in 2023.

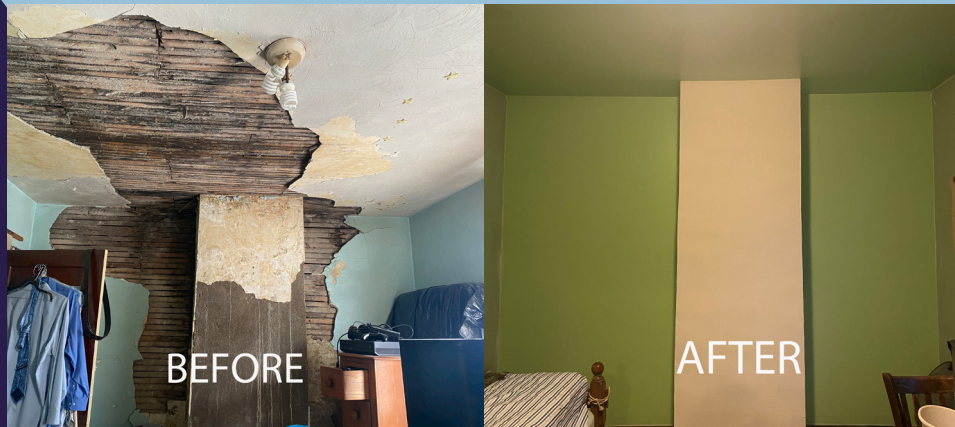
PROPERTY STABILIZATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

It was another busy year for the Property Stabilization Program team, working with homeowners across the Hilltop to provide grants for home repairs, financial support to prevent displacement, and working to clean up property-related issues such as dumping and overgrowth, all in coordination with City departments, nonprofit partners, local magistrates, and neighbors.

In 2022, 203 residential properties across our service area of 11 neighborhoods received property stabilization assistance from the Hilltop Alliance. This included 45 home repair projects, totalling almost \$400,000 (Emergency Stabilization Grants, Homeowner Assistance Program projects, and Home Accessibility Program for Independence projects), which was over 35% more than in 2021.

In addition to the Hilltop Alliance's role as program administrator for the City of Pittsburgh Housing Opportunity Fund's Homeowner Assistance Program, which manages up to \$35,000 per home for priority home repairs that ensure safety, 2022 brought an expansion of our work.

Through a contract with ACTION Housing Inc., Hilltop Alliance is now promoting, educating and assisting income-qualifying homeowners in the Hilltop area to apply for the Pennsylvania Homeowner Assistance Fund (PAHAF), which provides up to \$35,000 in assistance toward delinquent utility bills, mortgage payments and property taxes. In the last five months of 2022, we assisted 13 homeowners to apply and were actively working with 180 others.



FOOD ACCESS AND FRESH FRIDAYS ON THE HILLTOP

For Fresh Fridays distributions, July 2022 welcomed the return of the shopper-style distribution model, replacing the pre-boxed model that began in June 2020. This change necessitated an increase in volunteers. To meet that need, we reunited with St. John Vianney Food Bank volunteers (who we worked with pre-pandemic, since 2012), as well as new volunteers through Mary, Queen of Peace Parish.

In addition to produce and dry goods, since September 2022 Fresh Fridays has also provided free pet food to Hilltop residents, in partnership with another Hilltop nonprofit, Biggies Bullies, who rescues and re-homes Pitbull-type dogs.



With the return to the shopper-style model, volunteer reliance and attendance peaked in early summer but began decreasing in late summer. Fresh Fridays started the winter hiatus after November (which was normal pre-2020) and distributions will begin again on the second Friday in April 2023, to continue through November 2023.

Approximately 3,275 Hilltop households received fresh produce, dairy and dry goods through our Fresh Friday distributions in 2022.



GRANDVIEW SOUTH HOMES PROJECT

Responding to community feedback and growing out of the Hilltop Alliance's 2013 Hilltop Housing Strategy, Grandview South Homes was conceived to rebuild on vacant lots and increase affordable housing options in the neighborhood.

Since 2014 Hilltop Alliance, along with the City of Pittsburgh, Urban Redevelopment Authority, and Mount Washington Community Development Corporation, has been assembling vacant buildable lots in the Grandview South microneighborhood. With input and guidance from the Allentown Community Development Corporation, Hilltop Alliance and development partner Gatesburg Road Development began designing new homes.

In October 2021, then-Governor Tom Wolf and the PA Housing Finance Agency announced this project as one that had been awarded tax credits. Since then, Grandview South Homes moved through pre-development planning, permitting and financing.



2022 saw the beginning of physical work, including site surveying, pre-demolition environmental studies, and three of eight required demolitions.

The 31 new lease-to-own homes will include 23 two-bedroom units and 8 three-bedroom units; 4 will meet ADA standards. Based on federal guidelines for household size and income, monthly rent, including all electric, water and sewer utilities, are anticipated to be \$400-950/month for 2-bedroom homes and \$1,100/month for 3-bedroom homes.

Construction is expected to begin in late Spring or Summer 2023 and leasing will begin approximately one year later (mid 2024).



2022

Neighborhood Assistance Programs:

Allentown



Knoxville & Mt. Oliver Borough



Major Supporters

Jack Buncher Foundation
 Fred & Gilda Nobel Foundation
 Mt. Oliver Borough
 The Grable Foundation
 PNC Charitable Trusts



Partners

Abiding Missions
 The Brashear Association
 Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
 Hilltop United Methodist Church
 Hilltop Urban Farm
 Sister's Place Inc.
 Mary, Queen of Peace Parish
 Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group
 Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
 PULSE
 St. Paul AME Church

Supporters

Neighborhood Community Development Fund
 NeighborWorks of Western PA
 Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
 Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh
 State Senator Jay Costa
 State Senator Wayne Fontana
 State Representative Jessica Benham
 State Representative Aerion Abney
 County Executive Rich Fitzgerald
 Mayor Ed Gainey
 City Controller Michael Lamb
 City Councilman Bruce Kraus
 City Councilman Anthony Coghill



209 Bausman St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15210
(412) 586-5807
PghHilltopAlliance.org
@HilltopAlliance
@HilltopUrbanFarm
@Mtoliverpgh
@allentown_pgh

