2015 Community Impact Report
It’s a phrase that comes up often when longtime Board members reminisce about the early days of the Hilltop Alliance. Since then, the Hilltop Alliance has come a long way – growing in membership and staff capacity to help our member neighborhoods accomplish projects great and small.

Working together instead of competing against each other, the neighborhoods on the Hilltop are reaping the benefits of cooperation after many years of neglect. And we are not just planning; we are doing. In 2015, the Hilltop Alliance's Green ToolBox Report led us toward advancing many greenspace projects, including the Hilltop Farm & Homes plan. In 2013, the Hilltop Housing Strategy for Allentown and Beltzhoover led us to providing many small grant funds and projects targeting priority areas.

Some of the most visible progress on the Hilltop has come in the East Warrington business district. Partnering with the Allentown CDC and building on its previous work, the Hilltop Alliance administers and implements the Allentown Business District Revitalization and Allentown Residential Property Stabilization Programs. Building on the preliminary work of our member organizations has been at the core of the Hilltop Alliance.

Who would have thought it would happen? I did, along with the Hilltop Alliance’s 15 other Board members, our member organizations, our community partners, and our great supporters in the Hilltop, but it is still only the beginning.

Tom Smith
Board President 2016
On June 2-3, 2015, a diverse group of stakeholders took a benchmarking trip to visit the acclaimed conservation community of Prairie Crossing in Grayslake, IL, and Will Allen’s successful urban agriculture nonprofit, Growing Power, in Milwaukee, WI, to inform elements of the Hilltop Farm & Homes plan.

On April 1, 2015, over 100 people gathered at the first Open in Allentown event in the then-vacant storefront at 816 East Warrington, now home to Spool.

On April 25, 2015, Hilltop Alliance and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy hosted a Community Walk-Shop of the Haberman Corridor and McKinley Park to collect stories and priorities from 50 neighbors for the McKinley Park Master Plan.

On July 22, 2015, over 100 people attended the second Open in Allentown, a pop-up restaurant in the former Michelle’s Diner, a then-vacant commercial storefront at 742 East Warrington. The restaurant will re-open this year under new ownership as “Breakfast at Shelly’s”.

On August 15, 2015, Café con Leche hosted “FUERZA - Latin@s making a difference in Pittsburgh”, the organization’s first awards ceremony honoring Pittsburgh Latinos. The event was held at WorkHard Pittsburgh, a co-working space at 744 East Warrington Avenue, and sponsored by the Hilltop Alliance.

In October 2015, GTECH and Hilltop Alliance constructed Let’s Talk at the corner of Mountain and Fisher in Mt. Oliver City-St. Clair.

Fresh Fridays on the Hilltop provided approximately 40 pounds of fresh produce each month to food-insecure families in the Hilltop through a partnership with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, The Brashear Association, and St. John Vianney Food Pantry in Allentown.
2015 marked the first full year of our Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) in Allentown, kicking off a 6-year, $1.5 million investment in the neighborhood, where the Hilltop Alliance and our program partners exceeded our first year goals.

Our business district revitalization efforts have resulted in many exciting businesses opening in Allentown, including a Caribbean restaurant, a fabric shop, a children’s clothing store, and a coffee shop. We have also been able to leverage private lending and investment, and this combined with our technical assistance, special event planning, and internal grant and loan funds have been pivotal in reestablishing East Warrington as a vibrant commercial corridor.

Based out of Allentown, our Fresh Fridays on the Hilltop program distributes over 80,000 pounds of produce to residents. The program was designed to address the lack of access to fresh food since there is no full-range grocery store in the neighborhood.

In partnership with Mount Washington Community Development Corporation, our Property Stabilization Program succeeded in addressing code violations at eight properties, facilitating renovation in four others, and began the process of reclaiming and restoring 21 vacant, blighted properties.

The NPP also supports year-round afterschool and summer programs at The Brashear Association’s Allentown Learning and Engagement Center and Neighborhood Employment Center. It also supports the Hilltop YMCA’s high school credit recovery and STEAM learning programs.

**2015 by the Numbers**

$700,000+ Investment in commercial Properties

3,878 People receiving 40 lb. fresh produce monthly
New Vision for Vacant Land

Beltzhoover

2015 marked the beginning of strong organizational partnerships working together to solve known issues highlighted in several recent community plans.

With the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, we completed master plans for restoring and enhancing both McKinley Park and the Haberman Avenue Corridor. Haberman Avenue is a combination of streets, sidewalks, city steps, and dilapidated paths through woods which connect McKinley Park with the Warrington Recreation Center and light rail transit at South Hills Junction. Having a safe greenway between these assets would be a valuable new community resource, which could also catalyze residential reinvestment in the area. To empower longtime residents and help end years of disinvestment, the Hilltop Alliance began offering grants to Beltzhoover residents for acquiring side yards through the City’s Side Yard Sales Program, as well as grants for homeowners 50 and older to receive personal wills.

In partnership with the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, the Beltzhoover Community Coordinator spent the past year completing a comprehensive property survey, coordinating code enforcement blitzes, and organizing and engaging residents to ultimately form the new, monthly Beltzhoover Community Forum.

Mt. Oliver/St. Clair

The Hilltop Farm & Homes plan is a proposed conservation community for the former St. Clair Village property that would include significant green infrastructure, a walking trail network, and 120 energy-efficient townhomes, anchored by what would be one of the largest urban farms in the United States. The Hilltop Farm will include a Production Farm, Farmer Incubation Program, Community Farm Market, Youth Farm, Events Barn, and Community Garden.

Throughout 2015, the Hilltop Alliance worked with Sota Construction Services, Common Ground, InSite Design, Butter Hill Farm, Grow Pittsburgh, Lighthouse Cathedral, and Liberty Prairie Foundation to create the Soil Rebuilding Plan, complete the Hilltop Farm & Homes Master Plan, and develop the Operations Plan for the Hilltop Farm.

As we continue to work with federal, state, and local government agencies to make this plan a reality, 2016 will be an important year related to site ownership and project financing. Separate from this plan, we will also see Arlington K-3 and 3-8 merge and move into a fully-renovated K-8 school at the former Philip Murray Elementary School building, across Mountain Avenue from the proposed Hilltop Farm & Home site. In addition to the “Welcome to the Hilltop” gateway signage at Mountain and Wagner, we will also be working with partners to complete the community gathering space at Mountain and Fisher.

Youth supported by after school and summer programs with The Brashear Association: 607

Residents engaged in community planning meetings: 500+

Residential property code violation issues resolved: 36
Developed out of the need to expand upon a former Code Enforcement Task Force, the Hilltop Alliance launched the Property Stabilization Program in 2013 to work to repurpose vacant properties and address code violations across the Hilltop. At monthly meetings, community members are invited to report concerns which the Program Manager documents and works directly with property owners, partners, and appropriate City officials to resolve.

Through on-the-ground walkthroughs of our neighborhoods and the development of a centralized database of property conditions, action history, and data from various City and County departments, the Hilltop-wide program boasts an average 35-40% success rate since its inception in 2013.

**Property Stabilization**

| Loans and grants provided for Allentown business development | 12 |
| New businesses located in Allentown | 8 |
| Special events organized or sponsored to highlight the Allentown Business District | 6 |
2015 Friends & Supporters

Supporters
BNY Mellon
Mayor William Peduto
City Council President Bruce Kraus
City Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak
Sitko Bruno
State Representative Harry Readshaw
State Representative Jake Wheatley
State Senator Jay Costa
State Senator Wayne Fontana
Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

Partners
Allegheny County Adult Probation Office
Allegheny Land Trust
The Brashear Association
City of Pittsburgh
Economic Development South
Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Grow Pittsburgh
GTECH Strategies
Hilltop YMCA
Lighthouse Cathedral
LISC MetroEDGE
NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania
New Sun Rising
Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture
Penn State Cooperative Extension
Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group
Pittsburgh Food Policy Council
Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh
Sota Construction Services
St. John Vianney Food Pantry
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

Major Supporters
Anonymous Donor
City of Pittsburgh
Henry L. Hillman Foundation
PNC Charitable Trust

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At the Hilltop Alliance, our mission is to preserve and create assets in the Hilltop community through collaboration and coordination of resources. The Hilltop Alliance is structured as a collaborative organization of community-based organizations from the following eleven South Pittsburgh neighborhoods: Allentown, Arlington, Arlington Heights, Beltzhoover, Bon Air, Carrick, Knoxville, Mount Washington, Mount Oliver City, South Side Slopes, and St. Clair, as well as Mount Oliver Borough.