

TROY HILL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



5/21/2018

First Steps (Initial Plan)

This document, provided by Troy Hill Citizens in collaboration with AmeriCorps Public Allies, provides a summary of community feedback to date concerning the re-formation of a business association, as well first steps that businesses and organizations can start taking today.

PURPOSE

The general purpose of the Business Association will be directed on a discretionary basis by the leadership of the organization. From the initial feedback we have received, some of the expressed goals of the Business Association and potential solutions or action items include the following. This list is far from exhaustive and is only to be used as a starting point:

Fill Vacant Store Fronts

Eleven (11) vacancies or underutilized commercial properties exist within the Troy Hill business district. A Business Association can pool resources for securing a dedicated neighborhood broker, purchasing real estate, and subscribing to listing/recruitment services. Additional, the Business Association can be used to ensure that new tenants add value to the community and are complimentary to existing businesses and organizations.

Share Resources

The Business Association could be used for accessing group rates and discounting for accounting, marketing, consulting and other services. A unified Business Association may also be more likely to receive assistance from the city's consulting and planning services. For example, Henry Pyatt, a Troy Hill resident, has helped develop other business associations in his capacity as Small Business & Neighborhood Redevelopment Manager.

Brand the Neighborhood

Collectively determine how to best connect the rich history of the neighborhood with its future possibilities, with a brand that also serves to correct misperceptions of Troy Hill as dirty, dangerous, or on the decline. Consistently employ this brand or image across the board.

Establish Relationships

Create monthly opportunities to share ideas and to develop partnerships, both internal and external to Troy Hill, with are mutually beneficial. Promote tourism and provide consumer opportunities through collaborative, community-centric events such as parades, happy hours, bar crawls, block parties, community festivals and so on. Provide incentives for visitors to "make a day" out of visiting Troy Hill and surrounding neighborhoods such as Spring Garden.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The following organizational approach is used by Troy Hill Citizens and is provided simply as a starting point or template. Formal incorporation will likely only occur or be necessary once there are established relationships between Troy Hill organizations and sustained, collaborative effort on behalf of those seeking leadership roles. Additional organizational details and framework are provided by the Troy Hill Business Association Resource Packet, courtesy of AmeriCorps Public Allies.

Potential Non-Profit Model (Troy Hill Citizens)

- Recognized 501(c)(3) with a 4 member executive board and 7 total board seats. The executive board is comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
- Monthly board meetings, with subcommittee meetings as necessary.

Troy Hill Citizens Bylaws

<http://troyhillpittsburgh.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/THCbylaws2010.pdf>

External Bylaw Resources

<https://formswift.com/sem/static-state/bylaws>

<https://nonprofitally.com/start-a-nonprofit/nonprofit-bylaws/>

Relationship with Troy Hill Citizens

While the Business Association may work closely with Troy Hill Citizens (for example when securing grant opportunities or when seeking general council), it should be considered a separate entity. It is recommended that a Troy Hill Citizens representative attend all Business Association meetings in the capacity of a consultant, but without voting rights or a board seat. And while Troy Hill Citizens is willing to assist with initial implementation of the Business Association, it cannot commit the resources necessary for a position of leadership.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The primary sources for community feedback were the initial Business Association community meeting held on March 12th, 2018, as well as the Troy Hill Business Association Questionnaire coordinated by Troy Hill Citizens.

March 12th Meeting Minutes

<http://bit.ly/troyhillbizmtg3122018>

Troy Hill Business Association Questionnaire

<http://bit.ly/troyhillbizsurvey2018>

March 12th, 2018 Business Association Meeting Highlights

The following topics were identified as potential priorities and initial projects for a future business association, based on general interest and agreement shared by meeting attendees.

Maintain Networking and Communication

- Many owners met for the first time despite working and living in the same neighborhood.
- Maintaining regular meetings, relationships, and an open dialogue is a critical first step in establishing any association.

Re-establish Youth Services

- Sponsorship of existing (i.e. Movies in the Park, Deck Hockey League) and new (i.e. Boy Scout Troop, Urban Impact) programs.
- Hiring of community youth for social media outreach, part-time positions.
- Although secondary to providing Troy Hill youth with a positive, productive outlet, business and organizational benefits include additional advertising (sponsorship), potential reduction in petty neighborhood vandalism (beautification, neighborhood perception), and increased retention of families (membership and customer base).

Strong Main Street

- The main street sets the perception of the entire neighborhood. The primary drivers for main street perception are vacancies, litter, store front condition, and public amenities.
- The top priority should be filling existing main street vacancies, if possible with complementary services or professional offices that may increase home ownership and additional membership/customer base.
- Coordinated facades (i.e. URA Storefront Grant), streetlights, and public amenities such as benches, trash cans, bike racks and greenery (i.e. tree pits) all serve to make a main street more attractive.
- City services such as the "[Street Sweeper](#)" could assist in reducing the accumulation of litter along the main street.

Leverage History

- “History of Troy Hill” pamphlet identified, among other historical references concerning Troy Hill.
- Examining what businesses and services existed at the peak of Troy Hill’s success as a neighborhood may assist in determining potential tenants for existing commercial vacancies.
- Nostalgia and neighborhood history can be drawn on for event themes, storefront coordination, and establishing neighborhood brand. For example, referring to Troy Hill’s West/East as “Front and Back,” Rialto’s identity as “Pig Hill,” Troy Hill’s German heritage, the Troy Hill incline, and so on.



FIGURE 1 - THE RIALTO ST. INCLINE MURAL WAS COVERED BY SEVERAL LOCAL PRINT AND ONLINE PUBLICATIONS, PROVIDING INDIRECT NEIGHBORHOOD ADVERTISING AND BRANDING AS A HISTORIC COMMUNITY.

“Make a Day of It”

- Most non-residents come to Troy Hill for one specific reason. A successful business district will allow visitors to “make a day of it,” by offering complimentary services, walk-ability (close proximity between businesses), and overlapping business hours.
- Idea of stamp/punch loyalty card to encourage multi-stop visits. Completion of the card, by patronizing several different businesses and organizations, could be redeemed for some promotion.
- Collaborate to expand existing events, such as offering brunch service or breakfast specials in coordination with community flea markets days (Grace Lutheran Red Door Sale, MHN Rummage Sale).

Establish a Unified Brand

- A common thread between all successful neighborhood re-vitalizations is a strong brand which is clearly communicated by all organizations and corrects existing negative stereotypes or perceptions.
- Currently there is a strong disconnect between resident perception (safe, low crime, close-knit community, quiet residential, on the rise) and non-resident perception (dirty, dangerous, in decline).
- There is also a disconnect between various areas of Troy Hill, most notably the central business district from the West and East ends, as well as from Washington’s landing due to obvious geographic and socio-economic reasons.
- Perceptions to fix: difficult to access, dangerous, dirty, nothing to do after 5pm.
- Brandable attributes: hilltop community, proximity to downtown/strip/river trails, affordability, a place where “everyone knows your name,” multi-generation families, German heritage, and so on.

Entrances are Introductions

- Hilltop community entrances set the stage for neighborhood perception. Crumbling infrastructure, overgrowth, and dumping are currently major obstacles facing Troy Hill.
- The collective voice of a Business Association, even if loosely affiliated, can create the pressure needed for city maintenance on an expedited timeline (i.e. recent Rialto St. closure).
- A Business Association could sponsor volunteer events with residents and employees for cleanup days focusing on neighborhood entrances.
- “You could be home by now” signage at Rialto St. entrance targeted at North Hills residents which use Rialto St. as a shortcut for daily commute. Rialto St. in particular sees heavy suburban weekday traffic, which if marketed correctly, could increase customer base and fill existing vacancies, whether residential (new homeowners) or commercial (businesses looking for more affordable, more convenient locations). Lowrie St. bridge is a potential location for a banner or signage.



FIGURE 2 - RIALTO ST. CLOSURES (TOP) CAN BE DEVASTATING FOR BUSINESSES. HOW CAN WE IMPROVE ACCESSABILITY FROM AND COMMUNICATION OF ALTERNATIVE ROUTES, AND EXPEDITE CITY RESPONSE? ILLEGAL DUMPING AND OVERGROWTH (BOTTOM) IS THE FIRST IMPRESSION MANY VISITORS HAVE. WHAT VOLUNTEER AND DPW INITIATIVES COULD A BUSINESS ASSOCIATION HELP FACILITATE?

Business Association Questionnaire Responses

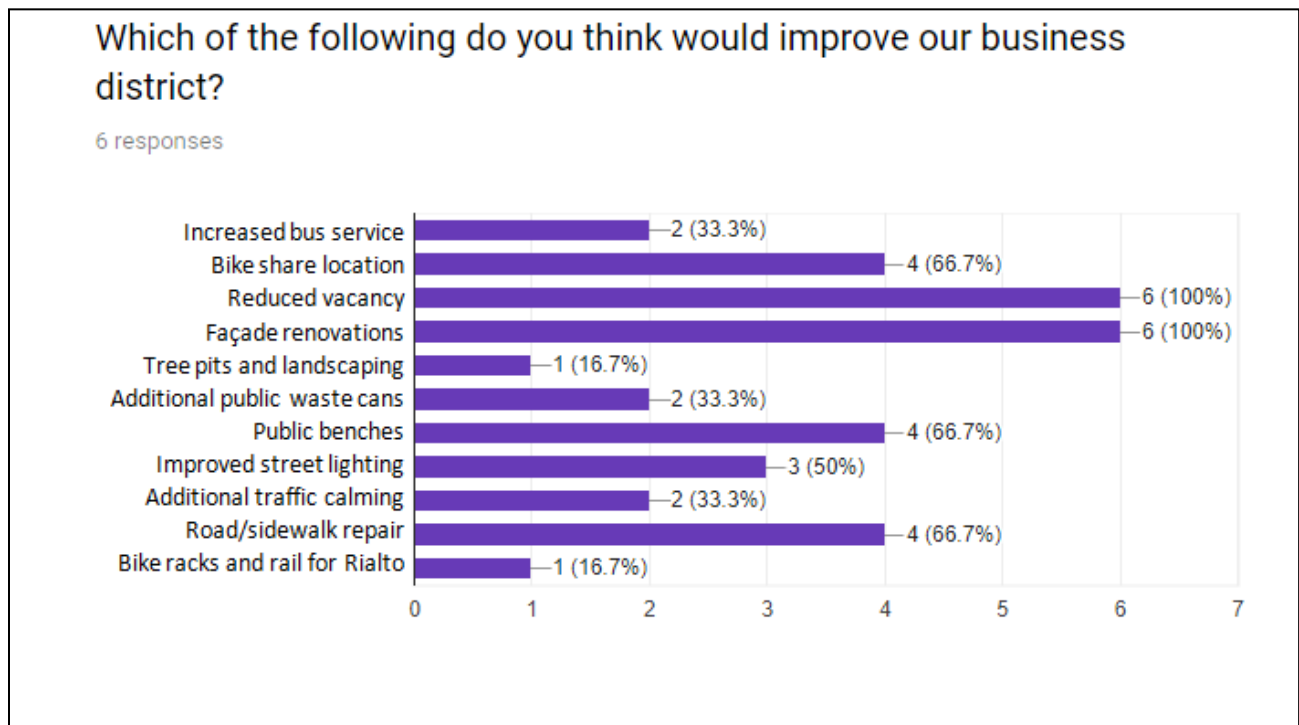
The following is a summary of responses to a questionnaire sent to all (30) Troy Hill businesses and organizations, as of May 21st, 2018. The survey was facilitated by Troy Hill Citizens.

Unanimous Feedback

- Reliance on word of mouth advertising.
- Preference for email communications for Business Association networking events and planning.
- General lack of knowledge concerning resources available to small businesses and organizations.
- Filling vacancies and façade renovations seen as top priority for business district.

Majority Agreement

- Fill vacancies with professional office, studio space, or incubator for additional 9-5 foot-traffic. Otherwise, some specialty food shop amenity, such as pastry shop, bakery or ice cream shop.
- Business association is justified and would benefit neighborhood as a whole.
- Interested in central community newsletter or communication point.
- Internal communications and marketing resources viewed as asset that could be shared with other organizations for mutual benefit (i.e. newsletters, social media reach, word of mouth reach, etc).
- Ease of access for all transportation modes is critical to improving the business district.



Split Opinions

- Half of those surveyed required more information or an understanding of the association's strategic plan before they could determine if it would be beneficial to their own organization.
- There was no consensus concerning the #1 problem facing organizations, although many points confirm the general challenges organizations face such as insufficient patronage.

What is the #1 problem facing your organization?

6 responses

petty theft

Need more guests, teusday and wednesday

Costs

Not enough parking when both churches have events, lack of attendance at events

Need to find the right tenant. getting the word out to the right people who are looking for space

Lack of foot traffic

- Although there was also no consensus on the #1 day-to-day administrative burden, it is obvious that pooling together resources to tackle common challenges can provide mutual benefit and cost savings.

If you could offload one day-to-day administrative duty, what would it be?

6 responses

snow removal / landscaping

Na

Social Media & Email

No answer

N/A

Accounting

Key Takeaways

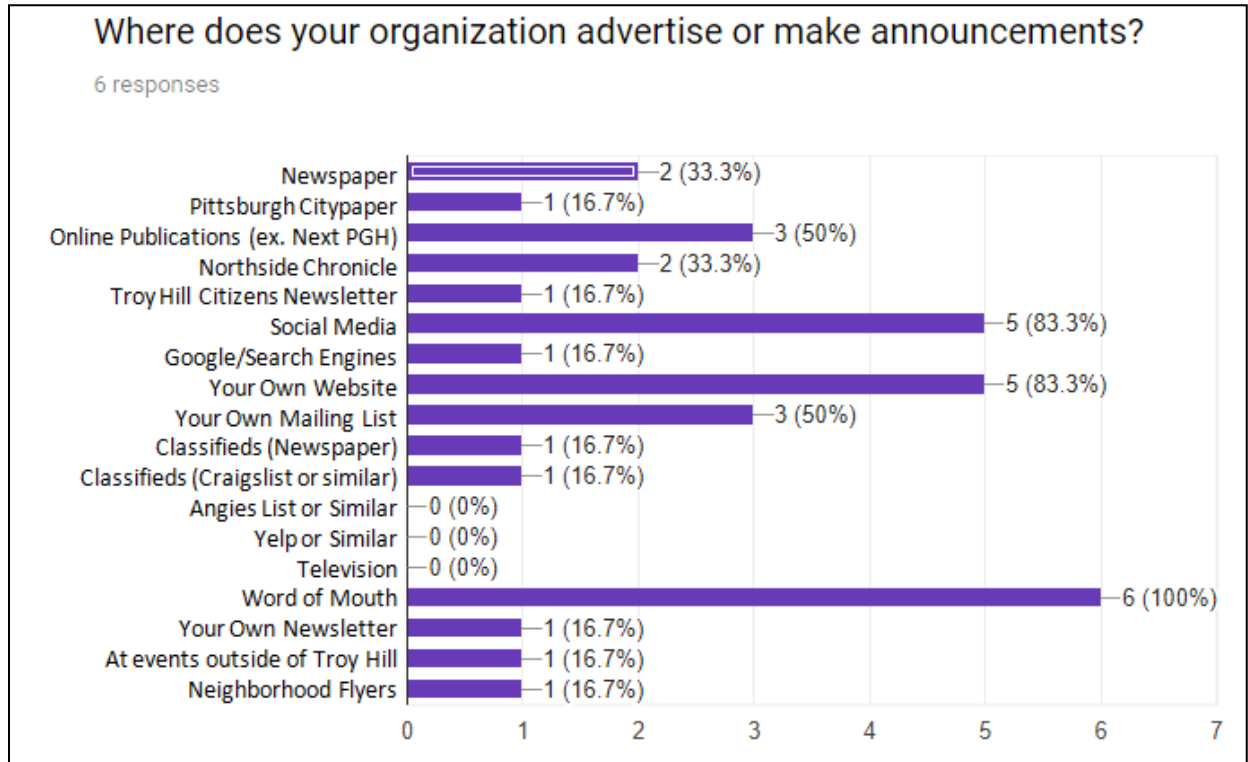
- Very little knowledge or experience with the previous Troy Hill business association.
- Participation is currently low and leadership is sorely needed. Most organizations are not responsive to purely digital communications, so future development of personal relationships, meetings and canvassing will be critical.
 - 20% survey response, 27% business association meeting attendance, 50% mailing list open rate and 24% mailing list click rate.
- Long standing businesses appear satisfied with their current customer base and status quo. Conversely, long standing organizations (i.e. clubs, churches, non-profits) have seen reduced membership, which has reduced their viability. These organizations may have common incentive with new arrivals to establish a business association, and common cause to improve foot-traffic and patronage, from not only our own neighborhood but also surrounding ones such as Spring Garden.
- Most partnerships are external. Neighborhood relationships and partnerships are lacking.

What other organizations have you partnered with?

6 responses

We have partnered with local businesses on many occasions to help support the community hockey program, the Food Bank and the St. Vincent de Paul Society
412 FR, Planned Parenthood, Quantum Theater, 3ENow, USBG, PGH Cultural Trust,
PGH Photo Fair, Silver Eye Center for Photography, Carnegie Museum of Art, Troy Hill Art Houses
No Answer
N/A
None

- Organizations use a widely varying and ever expanding range of tools for advertising, and do not share a common brand or identity. The lack of a central communication source (newsletter, website, email list, social media account) likely contributes to communication and collaboration difficulties within the neighborhood.



2018 COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

The following are potential dates for early-stage collaborations, with Troy Hill specific events highlighted.

Troy Hill Citizens makes every effort to maintain an up to date community calendar, which can be found at <http://troyhillpittsburgh.com/calendar/>. Submitting your event by contacting troyhillpittsburgh@gmail.com not only helps improve visibility to potential guests, but also to other organizations which may be interested in partnership.

Long term, the business association should look to establish its own communication methods, both internally for collaboration and externally, for marketing and advertising. Remember that nothing draws a crowd like a crowd!

June 2018

Event: Troy Hill Small Business Saturday - Saturday, June 2 @ 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Event: MHN 150th Anniversary Mass and Luncheon - Sunday, June 3 @ 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Event: Map Mural Kick-Off - Monday, June 4 (Completion date TBD)

Holiday: D-Day - Wednesday, June 6th

Event: Troy Hill Citizens General Meeting - Wednesday, June 6 @ 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Holiday: Best Friend's Day - Friday, June 8th

Event: Steel City Shakespeare – “As You Like It,” Saturday/Sunday, June 9/10th @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Holiday: Flag Day – Thursday, June 14th

Event: East Northside House Tour - Saturday, June 16 @ 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Event: Steel City Shakespeare – “As You Like It,” Saturday/Sunday, June 16/17th @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Holiday: Father's Day – Sunday, June 17th

Holiday: International Picnic Day – Monday, June 18th

July 2018

Holiday: Independence Day - Wednesday, July 4th

Holiday: Sugar Cookie Day – Monday, June 9th

Holiday: Parent's Day - Sunday, July 22nd

August 2018

Holiday: Middle Child Day - Sunday, August 12th

Holiday: Purple Heart Day - Tuesday, August 7th

Event: Pedal PGH, city-wide bike ride – Sunday, August 26th

Holiday: Women's Equality Day - Sunday, August 26th

September 2018

Holiday: Labor Day - Monday, Sept 3rd

October 2018

Holiday: Feast of St. Francis of Assisi - Tuesday, October 4th

Event: Hogtoberfest, Community Festival/Pig Roast – Saturday, October 6th @ 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Holiday: Columbus Day - Monday, October 8th

Holiday: Halloween - Wednesday, October 31st

November 2018

Holiday: Veteran's Day - Monday, November 12th

Holiday: Thanksgiving - Thursday, November 22nd

Event: Dirty Dozen, bike race – Saturday, November 24th

December 2018

Holiday: Christmas Day – Tuesday, December 25th

BRANDING

The topic of community identity, perception and branding was discussed at length during the March 2018 business association meeting, which was previously summarized within this document.

The following are recent articles written about Troy Hill, which may be helpful when attempting to establish a brand that counters false narratives and positively re-enforces our unique character and neighborhood features.

<https://www.nextpittsburgh.com/pittsburgh-neighborhoods-map-and-guides/things-troy-hill-pittsburgh/>

<http://madeinpgh.com/2016/12/19/neighborhood-spotlight-troy-hill/>

<https://www.nextpittsburgh.com/features/incline-station-theater-bank-troy-hill-building-become-next/>

<https://gtechstrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NorthsideNeighborhoodTrails.compressed.pdf>
(see page 34)

<http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2014/04/13/Troy-Hill-morphing-into-an-ethnic-blend/stories/201404130085>

<http://www.pittsburghcityliving.com/neighborhoodProfile.php?neighborhood=Troy%20Hill>

https://www.reddit.com/r/pittsburgh/comments/3kwvfa/is_troy_hill_a_safe_neighborhood/

<https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/n/troy-hill-pittsburgh-pa/rankings/>

CASE STUDIES

Troy Hill is not the first Pittsburgh neighborhood seeking re-vitalization of its business district, and it certainly won't be the last. Of those that have, Allentown is perhaps most similar to Troy Hill, in terms of geography, income level, and population trend. The following are excerpts and highlights from a [Post Gazette story](#) published in August, 2017.

“Despite its proximity to Downtown Pittsburgh and its skyline views, Allentown lost 70 percent of its population from 1940 to 2010. During that period, the population dropped from 8,200 to 2,500, according to census data. In 2010, 28.5 percent of residents lived in poverty, compared with a citywide poverty rate of 21.7 percent, and crime rates in the neighborhood soared relative to city averages.”

Sound familiar? Much of the success of Allentown has been contributed to a \$1.5 million grant through the state's Neighborhood Partnership Program in 2014, which required extensive partnership between the Hilltop Alliance, the Allentown Community Development Corporation (CDC, Troy Hill Citizens equivalent), and corporate sponsors such as PNC, Dollar Bank and UPMC.

Attracting new businesses to fill vacancies also required creative incentives such as rent subsidies of up to \$400/month for one year on multi-year leases. This subsidy was relied on by one of Allentown's now most well-know and successful businesses, Black Forge Coffee.

EXISTING BUSINESS DISTRICT VACANCIES

The following is a current list (as of May 21st, 2018) of key vacancies or underutilized commercial space within the core business district of Troy Hill. The information shared is public knowledge. The Troy Hill Citizens real estate committee is actively attempting to contact and establish relationships with all owners, with the goal of reducing vacancies by identifying owner intent and connecting owners with tenants or buyers. Inquiries concerning additional owner contact information should be made with Troy Hill Citizens at this time.

1512 Lowrie St.

- Previously used as Beer Distributor
- Owned by Eric Smith
- Actively looking for tenant
- [County Website](#)

1543 Lowrie St.

- Previously used as Beck Heating and Plumbing office/store front.
- Owned by Beck Heating and Plumbing
- Sent letter in April 2018, no response.
- [County Website](#)

1550 Lowrie St.

- Previously used as Miller-Brady funeral home.
- Represented by agent Sandy Odlund (724-413-6412)
- On the market for sale
- [County Website](#)

1612 Lowrie St.

- Previously Troy Hill Pharmacy
- Owned by Mary Minnock
- Has intermittently been looking for a tenant for several years since closure of Pharmacy.
- [County Website](#)

1619 Lowrie St.

- Troy Hill Citizens Office
- Owned by Troy Hill Citizens
- Passively seeking tenant for underutilized office space (incubator, small business, professional office, etc).
- [County Website](#)

1701A Lowrie St.

- “Red Curtains” storefront.
- Owned by Carly Deduk
- Possibly looking for tenant
- [County Website](#)

1712 Lowrie St.

- Previously used as Daycare
- Status periodically updated, known to have considerable back taxes, sheriff sale or auction may be likely.
- [County Website](#)

1723 Lowrie St.

- Previously Hair Design by Montileone
- Owned by Evelyn Montileone
- Future plans not known.
- [County Website](#)

1733 Lowrie St.

- Previously used by Wesbanco and Troy Hill Incline.
- Owned by Evan Mirapaul
- Looking for tenant.
- [County Website](#)

1800 Ley St.

- Firehouse used by city.
- Owned by City
- Potential for Troy Hill Citizens acquisition if sufficient planning, funding and partnership.
- [County Website](#)

1300 Gardner St.

- Former gas station.
- Owned by Tony Talotta
- Reached out to Troy Hill Citizens for possible grant money for redevelopment.
- [County Website](#)

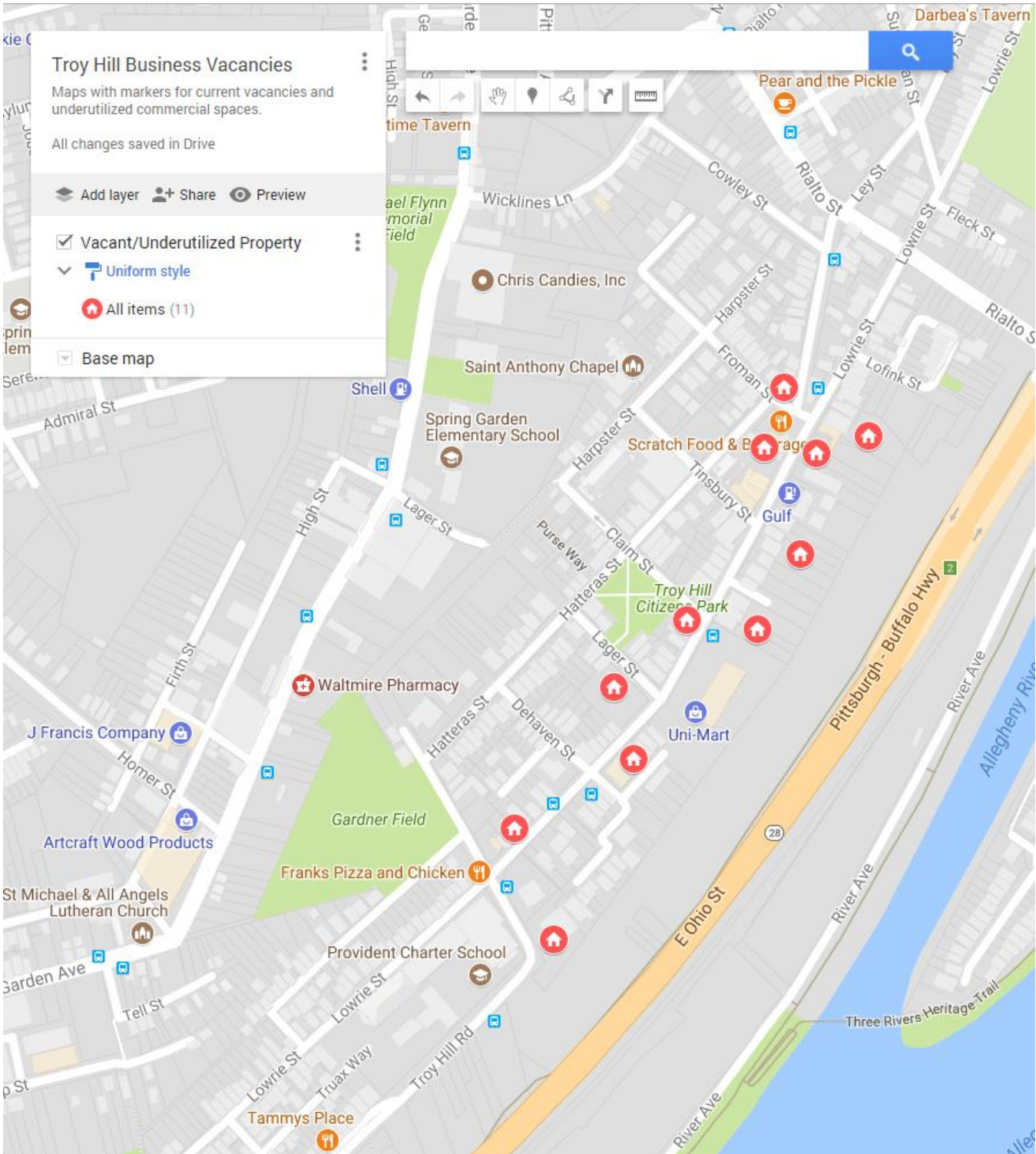


FIGURE 3 - OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS DISTRICT VACANCIES OR UNDERUTILIZED COMMERCIAL SPACE

TROY HILL ORGANIZATION DIRECTORY

As part of the initial Business Association effort between Troy Hill Citizens and Public allies, a mailing list and business database was compiled. The mailing list is provided below with the expectation that it will be used exclusively for the purposes of establishing networking and communication between Troy Hill businesses and organizations, with the ultimate goal of establishing a Business Association.

The organization database can be shared with those seeking to lead the next phase of the Business Association development. It contains organization classifications, address, contact information, operating hours, and other critical information which could be compiled from public knowledge and personal relationships. Troy Hill Citizens hopes to use this database to update its own local services listing, which is admittedly out of date.

Email List

ankt1222@gmail.com, atotsspot@yahoo.com, bean02041958@gmail.com,
BethM1069@gmail.com, cherevkamary@yahoo.com, cherylrosato@yahoo.com,
danzuso.joe@gmail.com, dflorijan@aol.com, drkazew@comcast.net,
emirapaul@aol.com, eschnupp@wesbanco.com, gmpol111@gmail.com,
gpolicicchio@osptainc.com, info@spacescorners.com, info@wildmanchalmers.com,
jack@goodrichpc.com, jewing@providentcharterschool.org, joseph.kuntz@verizon.net,
mawallisch@aol.com, mostholyname@gmail.com, muckle4@comcast.net,
pearandpickle@gmail.com, pghjunk@yahoo.com, pvjr53@icloud.com,
rennerrestoration@gmail.com, scratchfbpgh@gmail.com, uhligelectric@yahoo.com,
unclebill7@verizon.net, sronev@genesismedical.org, troyhillpittsburgh@gmail.com,
henry.pyatt@pittsburghpa.gov

Troy Hill Citizens Local Services List

<http://troyhillpittsburgh.com/local-services/>

LOCAL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

If you have difficulty getting in touch with any of the below resources, please contact Sam Morris of Troy Hill Citizens. He will provide introductions to each reference, once Leadership for the Business Association has been established.

City Council

Darlene Harris- Councilwoman
darlene.harris@pittsburghpa.gov

Jeff Martin- Chief of Staff
jeff.martin@pittsburghpa.gov
Office Phone Number-(412) 255-2135

Department of Public Works
Mike Gable- Director of Public Works
Mike.Gable@pittsburghpa.gov
Office Number: 412-255-2726

Mayor's Office
Molly Onufer- Manager, Office of Community Affairs
molly.onufer@pittsburghpa.gov
412-255-2694

Henry D. Pyatt- Small Business & Neighborhood
Redevelopment Manager, Bureau of Neighborhood
Empowerment
henry.pyatt@pittsburghpa.gov
412-255-2945

Northside Chronicle
Neil Strebog- Managing Editor
editor@thenorhtsidechronicle.com
412-321-3919

URA

Josette Fitzgibbons
Neighborhood Business District Manager
412.255.6686
jfitzgibbons@ura.org

Quianna Wasler
Mainstreet Development Specialist
412-255-6550
qwasler@ura.org

Northside Leadership Conference
Mark Fatla- Executive Director
mark@pittsburghnorthside.com
(412) 231-4714 ext. 200

Troy Hill Citizens

Sam Morris- Chair
samueltmo@gmail.com
(978) 578-2157

General Contact
troyhillpittsburgh@gmail.com

DELIVERABLES

The following are links to all resources provided by Troy Hill Citizens and Public Allies as part of this initial phase of re-establishing a Troy Hill Business Association. It is suggested that the initial leadership download all files and keep them on record for future reference.

Meeting Minutes

http://troyhillpittsburgh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Meeting-Minutes-3_12_2018-First-Business-Association-Meeting.pdf

http://troyhillpittsburgh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Meeting-Minutes-5_21_2018-Second-Business-Association-Meeting.pdf

Surveys

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe43CMMjtE_8RgwvF5mD6Ctu3HH2xAezTPwnr5OQMgmKg7N5w/viewform

Related Projects

<https://www.gofundme.com/troyhillmapmural>

Final Deliverables

Public Allies – Organizational Structure

http://troyhillpittsburgh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Public-Allies-Troy-Hill-BA-Resource-Packet-5_21_2018.pdf

Troy Hill Citizens – Troy Hill Community Feedback, Initial Plan

http://troyhillpittsburgh.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Troy-Hill-Citizens-BA-Initial-Plan-5_21_2018.pdf