

# *Moving Forward Together*

## Community Conversation

### Report\*

Allentown, Arlington, Arlington Heights, Beltzhoover,  
Carrick, Knoxville, Mt. Oliver, Mt. Oliver Borough, St. Clair

September 2007

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## ABOUT MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

This report describes the accomplishments and next steps of an initiative to create a common agenda for action in the South Pittsburgh Hilltop neighborhoods of Allentown, Arlington, Arlington Heights, Beltzhoover, Carrick, Knoxville, Mt. Oliver, Mt. Oliver Borough, and St. Clair.

Residents and business owners in all these neighborhoods are working to foster effective leadership in preventing the rise of crime (especially violent crime), creating opportunities

*"We need to help those who have suffered from the economic collapse in our communities."*

-51 year old male, Beltzhoover

for youth and families, and attracting residential and commercial investment in their community.

A project team organized by the Coro Center for Civic

Leadership<sup>1</sup> has done a number of things to identify and document these items for a common action agenda. We attended over 60 community meetings in the South Pittsburgh Hilltop between April 2006 and August 2007, including every meeting of the newly-formed South Pittsburgh Weed and Seed steering committee. In spring 2007 we conducted over 30 interviews and discussion groups with community leaders, public officials, and organizations that service the South Pittsburgh Hilltop. And we reached out to the broader community by knocking on doors of 150 randomly selected residents and businesses, administering a scientific survey, and asking them to participate in a Community Conversation.

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<sup>1</sup> Coro is a national nonprofit organization devoted to developing leadership in local communities, nonprofits, businesses, and governments. Coro began operations in the South Side in 2002, three years after the opening of a Pittsburgh center.

The purpose of the Community Conversation, held at Potters House Cathedral in Mt. Oliver on July 21, 2007, was to facilitate working together across neighborhoods to solve common problems.

Coro organized and facilitated the Community Conversation with support from the Birmingham Foundation, the City of Pittsburgh Weed and Seed Office, the Office of City Councilman Jeffrey Koch, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Program for Deliberative

Democracy, and the South Pittsburgh steering committee. The steering committee includes 40 active leaders from across the Hilltop who are working together to prevent crime and revitalize neighborhoods.

*"We need to develop a vision that the community will support"*

*-57 year old female, Beltzhoover*

One hundred thirteen people participated in the July 21 Community Conversation. About half of them were

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION TOPICS, JULY 21, 2007

HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MANY GROUPS OPERATING IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS (E.G., BLOCK WATCHES) TO WORK TOGETHER, ALONG WITH POLICE, TO PREVENT CRIMES FROM OCCURRING?

HOW CAN WE BETTER COORDINATE EXISTING RESOURCES TO PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITIES OUR YOUTH NEED TO SUCCEED?

HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT AND REVITALIZATION IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS?

contacted through a visit to their home or work by Coro volunteers. The other half include representatives of community-based organizations and block watches, elected officials, and resource partners from government and nonprofit agencies.

This multi-layered recruitment strategy helped us engage a highly diverse group of participants in terms of age, race, neighborhood location, and prior level of community engagement.

Participants were given a background document, *Moving Forward Together: A Community Conversation*, to prepare them for an informed discussion and to help spark creative solutions to shared problems.

The outcome of the Community Conversation is that residents, businesses, and community groups from across the Hilltop are working together in new ways to

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED THROUGH HOUSE VISITS	
NEIGHBORHOOD	PARTICIPANTS
ARLINGTON/ARLINGTON HEIGHTS	5
ALLENTOWN	7
BELTZHOVER	12
CARRICK	7
KNOXVILLE	9
MT. OLIVER CITY	2
MT. OLIVER BOROUGH	8
ST. CLAIR	2
TOTAL	52

identify priorities for strategic action.

This report describes the priorities that have the most support from Community Conversation participants and the strategic actions that must come next. We hope it will serve as an example of successful collaboration

across neighborhoods and among individual leaders, community groups, governments, and nonprofit agencies.

*"Now that I know that people really do care about the community, I would like to participate more."*

-18 year old female, St. Clair

## 1. FOSTERING LEADERSHIP

The most basic challenge for Hilltop neighborhoods is how to engage residents and business owners in community problem solving and foster leadership for the future. Many of those who are active in Hilltop block watches and community groups are nearing retirement and do not see themselves as the leaders of the future. They are seeking ways to get more people to take ownership of the challenges of the future.

### ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

A. PARTICIPANTS WILLING TO RESPECT ONE ANOTHER WHILE SPEAKING HONESTLY ABOUT THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

B. BALANCED INFORMATION ABOUT THE ISSUES

C. DISCUSSION IN SMALL GROUPS, DOCUMENTED BY FACILITATORS

D. OPPORTUNITY TO POSE QUESTIONS TO RESOURCE PARTNERS WILLING TO HELP PARTICIPANTS TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION

E. OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPANTS TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS PRIVATELY IN AN ANONYMOUS SURVEY

Community Conversation participants emphasized a few key ideas for fostering leadership:



*FOCUS ON "WINNABLE" GOALS WITHOUT LOSING SIGHT  
OF THE BIGGER PICTURE*

Many people don't participate because they feel they "cannot make a difference." Attending public meetings, for example, helps people learn about community problems. But people often come away without a clear sense of what they can do *personally* to solve the problems.

Community Conversation participants stressed the need to focus on "winnable" goals that enable people to make a real difference. A cleared lot, a

painted porch, a street cleaned of litter – these are accomplishments that inspire people to participate more.

Yet many small wins do not necessarily add up to a great victory. Each must be fit into a larger plan. For example, if the community has a plan to attract new home buyers by renovating dilapidated properties, then restoring one property in a strategic location could be a significant win toward that bigger victory.



*EXPLORE CREATIVE WAYS TO REACH OUT TO NEW  
PARTICIPANTS*

There are various ways that residents and businesses become aware of community events and initiatives. Newspaper postings and word of mouth are the most common.

Cell phones, list serves, blogs, and other internet formats have worked well for newer groups like the League of Young Voters. What is the best strategy for your group?



*ORGANIZE A WORK GROUP INCLUDING ALL  
NEIGHBORHOODS AND ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS TO MAKE  
PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC PRIORITIES*

In order to make sure that the many small wins accomplished by active citizens add up to a big victory, the community has to have a broad vision and the leadership required to sustain commitment until the vision is achieved.

In the Community Conversation Resource Partner discussion, State Representative Jake Wheatley said his office wants to help create “a work group” including all the neighborhoods, all elected officials, etc.” The purpose of

the work group would be to “work together on YOUR agenda... where we are informed and have action items for which we can be held accountable.” The work group would meet regularly to make progress on initiatives that contribute to the community’s vision.

*“Don’t look for [public officials] to do the heavy lifting. The more active you are, the more aggressive you are, and the more collective you are, the more we can do for you. This day is a huge victory for you. But the real work is what will happen when you leave today.”*

*-Rep Jake Wheatley*

## 2. CREATING AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION TO COORDINATE RESOURCES

The theme of the Community Conversation was to promote collaboration across neighborhoods as a way to solve shared problems.

A focal topic was to consider options for facilitating collaboration – for example through *informal* cooperation among existing neighborhoods (an approach that has been successful in Pittsburgh’s East End neighborhoods) or through a *formal* umbrella organization that would include existing community groups and churches as members (along the lines of Pittsburgh’s North Side Leadership Conference).

Participants showed the most support for the umbrella organization idea. Seventy percent of participants who completed the event post-survey preferred an umbrella organization to the alternatives of informal collaboration or some other arrangement.

Participants identified several key advantages in creating an umbrella organization:

### ROLE OF AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION

A. IDENTIFYING THE MISSION, GOALS AND ACTIVITIES OF EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS; WORKING WITH THOSE ORGANIZATIONS TO COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS, ELIMINATE DUPLICATION, AND BETTER ALLOCATE RESOURCES

B. MAINTAINING CONTACT INFORMATION OF ALL EXISTING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL LEADERS; USING THIS INFORMATION TO CONDUCT OUTREACH FOR INITIATIVES AND EVENTS IN THE HILLTOP AREA

C. MAINTAINING A COORDINATED CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE HILLTOP AREA

D. PUBLISHING A NEWSLETTER OR OTHER INFORMATION MEDIUM TARGETING THE HILLTOP AREA

E. FACILITATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE WHOLE HILLTOP AREA

How should the community go about creating an umbrella organization? Participants emphasized the benefit of working with a role model like the North Side Leadership Conference.

If Hilltop leaders decide to create the kind of work group suggested by Representative Wheatley, their first major initiative could be the development of an umbrella organization.

Community Conversation Resource Partner Maureen Hogan said that her organization, the Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development (PPND), could assist in developing a new organization. PPND provides funding and technical assistance to build capacity of

community-based organizations to implement community and economic development projects.

The best way to learn how PPND could help the Hilltop communities is to call Maureen Hogan at 412.471.3727 ext. 20.

Hogan mentioned that the Community Technical Assistance Center (CTAC), which works closely with the PPND, is also a good organization to consult in developing an umbrella organization. CTAC can be contacted by calling 412.231.2822.

### 3. RESIDENTS AND POLICE COOPERATING TO PREVENT CRIME AND DEAL WITH PROBLEM PROPERTIES

There is a good deal of mistrust between residents and police. A lot of Hilltop residents believe that too few police patrol the streets on a regular basis. Residents typically see police only after major crimes or drug busts occur, and many feel the police arrive on the scene too late to instill a feeling of safety.

Residents may not report enough of what they witness and police may not be responsive enough to these reports when they are made.

Community Conversation participants suggested several ways to build trust through more interaction between residents and police:

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING TRUST BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND POLICE**

**INVITE POLICE TO COMMUNITY SPORTING EVENTS**

**HAVE RESIDENTS PARTICIPATE IN A CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY**

**BUILD STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHURCHES AND POLICE (PEOPLE TRUST CHURCHES)**

**HAVE MORE FOOT PATROLS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY**

**MAKE SURE EVERY COMMUNITY MEETING HAS A POLICE OFFICER PRESENT (COMMUNITY GROUPS MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE, CALL 412.323.7821)**

Participants also showed significant support for the idea of using block watches and other social networks to create a collective voice for addressing problem properties.

*“Block watches are a great resource for preventing crime. But they need to make sure a police officer attends every meeting”*  
-46 year old male, Mt. Oliver

Resource Partner Jerome Jackson of Manchester Citizens Council outlined the concept of

a “hit group,” which involves a large group of people showing up at a problem landlord’s home to demand his/her property be cleaned.

Jackson reported that hit groups have worked very well in the North Side. To be effective, the group has to show up at the landlord’s home every week until the owner cleans up the problem property. To learn more, call Jerome Jackson at 412.716.5719.

## 4. CREATING A “ONE STOP SHOP” COMMUNITY CENTER SERVING THE HILLTOP

Community Conversation participants believed that any strategy to support at-risk youth must engage people during the critical years up to age 13. Many at-risk youth do not have the benefit of stable and supportive families and are not aware of, or are not encouraged to engage in, education, employment, and civic opportunities.

The result is that an alarming number of youth hang out on the street when they are not in school.

In the past 3 years residents have witnessed the closing of multiple schools and recreation centers across the Hilltop, which represents a further decline in resources available for youth.

Participants believed that the Hilltop should re-use one of the closed public schools to create a “One Stop Shop” community center modeled on the Hill District’s Hill House and Wilksburg’s Hosanna House.

Both of these organizations deliver a wide array of services to a broad population. They reflect a vision of having a single agency that can bring people and organizations together and foster innovation in responding to social needs.

Creating a Hilltop community center could be another priority of the Hilltop work group.

Organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCA could be asked to be part of the new community center.

If it operated on a large scale, the center would be able to offer services inexpensively. More importantly, when programs have more interaction, they share resources and are more innovative.

Participants focused on six service programs that could be provided by the center:

## **SUGGESTED SERVICES PROVIDED BY A HILLTOP COMMUNITY CENTER**

**EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

**RESOURCES FOR YOUTH**

**RESOURCES FOR SENIORS**

**FAMILY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Participants believe that a Hilltop community center ought to offer education and training in each of the six service areas. Education and training improve individual capabilities to become leaders in their community.

Nutrition education for young parents, financial literacy for homebuyers, fundraising workshops for community groups and work readiness training for youth are among the kinds of training that the Hilltop needs right now.

The Hilltop community center ought to also facilitate interaction among people of different age groups in order to help close a perceived “generation gap.” Seniors have lots of life experience and could be recruited as mentors for youth.

Where should a new Hilltop community center be located? Several participants suggested Knoxville Middle School, now vacant, as the best location and building for the new facility.

Resource Partner Joanna Deming said that the Hilltop Health Ministries is now looking at the Knoxville Middle School as a potential site for a family center. The school has basketball courts and a swimming pool. Deming can be reached at 412.381.4717.

*“I will do anything – attend meetings, write letters, make phone calls, and get others to participate – in order to make a community center a reality.*

*-47 year old female, Allentown*

## WORKING TOGETHER ON A HILLTOP BUSINESS PLAN

Participants took a very practical approach to the Community Conversation, viewing it as an occasion to create “winnable” goals for the whole Hilltop.

*“We must take action now”*  
-51 year old female, Allentown

Yet it is also necessary to keep an eye on the bigger picture - the long term plan for community revitalization in the Hilltop. To this end, participants emphasized the need to create a business plan that would encompass the whole Hilltop as a site for investment and economic growth.

The value of a business plan is that it outlines the action steps that individuals, businesses, public officials and other partners in community development will have to take in order to make progress toward the vision described in this report.

The business plan is also a powerful tool for communicating a shared vision to those who live and work in the Hilltop as well as potential investors in the community.

Community Conversation Resource Partners proposed several specific ways they could work with the community to develop and implement a strategic business plan:

Richard Snipe, a manager of real estate for the Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) said that the URA can fund and help develop a business plan capable of bringing new investment to the Hilltop.

*“I remember along Warrington Ave there used to be so many stores, but coming here today it seemed that the businesses have disappeared. We can help you bring these back.”*

-Richard Snipe,  
Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority

Snipe can be reached by e-mail:  
[rsnipe@ura.org](mailto:rsnipe@ura.org).

Kim Graziani, Director of Neighborhood Initiatives for the City of Pittsburgh, referred the community to the City's newly-hired manager of the Business Attraction and Recruitment Team (BART). This person can work one-on-one with prospective and existing businesses that need assistance.

The business plan should include a description of how BART fits into the development strategy and who may need to work with BART to succeed in attracting investment.

*"We recommend that you look at corridors that serve various neighborhoods... If you look to key corridors like this you can make the best use of your funds."*

-Kim Graziani, City of Pittsburgh,  
Director of Neighborhood Initiatives

Graziani mentioned that Pat Ford, City of Pittsburgh Director of Community and Economic Development, is another important resource that should be used in creating a business plan. Graziani can be contacted at 412.255.2792.

*"We are trying to raise money for people who look beyond neighborhood boundaries."*

-Maureen Hogan,  
Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development

Maureen Hogan urged the community to include a market analysis as part of the business plan.

A market analysis can help determine where the best sites are for different kinds of businesses to be located. Once the sites are selected, the community can focus its effort on preparing or restoring them. PPND can often provide funds or direct training for neighborhoods to implement a market analysis.

Becky Rodgers, Executive Director of Neighbors in the Strip, spoke about the value of the national Main Street program that is run through state and local governments. Funding can be used for economic restructuring, promotion, and organization development. Alecia Sirk can be contacted at 412.255.6686.

## **PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS REGARDING A HILLTOP BUSINESS PLAN**

**FOCUS ON BRINGING INVESTMENT TO THE BROWNSVILLE RD. AND  
WARRINGTON AVE BUSINESS DISTRICTS**

**FOCUS ON BUILDING BUSINESSES THAT CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
YOUTH**

**CONSIDER A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOCUSED ON THE ARTS**

**KEEP BETTER TRACK OF WHO IS LEAVING AND WHO IS COMING INTO THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD**

**DEVELOP HOME RENOVATION PROGRAMS**

**ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO HIRE A PERSON OR GROUP TO “SELL” THE  
HILLTOP TO BUSINESS INVESTORS AND HOMEBUYERS (ADVERTISE  
ADVANTAGES OF LIVING CLOSE TO DOWNTOWN AND HAVING EXCELLENT  
CITY VIEWS)**

## APPENDIX 1: IMPORTANT ISSUES NOT EMPHASIZED IN THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Below are several important issues not emphasized in the Community Conversation that participants believed to be important:

- How can we create high quality housing that is abundant and affordable?
- What are the services our elderly need to succeed?
- How can we work toward the elimination of poverty in our neighborhoods?
- How can we heal the wounds of racism that create divisions between us?
- How can we build a local government that can provide high quality services at a low cost?
- How can we get guns off the street?
- How can we bring back our Catholic schools?
- How can we deal with serious mental health issues in our community?

## APPENDIX 2: JULY 21 COMMUNITY CONVERSATION, RESOURCE PARTNER DISCUSSION

### RESOURCE PARTNERS

Bonita Allen, Board Member, A+ Schools, tel. 412-258-2660

Joanna Deming, Project and Grants Administrator, Hilltop Health Ministries, tel. 412-381-4710

Kim Graziani, Director of Neighborhood Initiatives, City of Pittsburgh, tel. 412-255-2792

Maureen Hogan, Deputy Director, Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development (PPND), tel. 412-471-3727 x 20

Jerome Jackson, Manchester Citizens Council, tel. 412-716-5719

Mary Phan Gruber, Executive Director, Birmingham Foundation, tel. 412-481-4777

Becky Rodgers, Executive Director, Neighbors in the Strip, 412-201-4774

William Bochter, Assistant Chief of Police, Pittsburgh Police Operations Branch, tel. 412-323-7821

Richard Snipe, Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA), e-mail: [rsnipe@ura.org](mailto:rsnipe@ura.org)

Jake Wheatley, State Representative, 19<sup>th</sup> District, tel. 412-471-7760

## RESOURCE PARTNER DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT

### Summary

Community Conversation participants assembled in 10 small groups of four to five people and spent a total of three and a half hours in the groups brainstorming responses to Community Conversation topics. Participants also spent one and a half hours in a “plenary” discussion where they posed questions to Resource Partners. The questions focused on exploring how the partners could help the community to take effective action on its agenda.

### Transcript

*Group one question - to Joanna Deming: “How does your ministry get information to our community?”*

*Joanna Deming: “We started as a conglomeration of churches, so through each of these faith communities. We also use the South Pittsburgh Reporter, other newspapers, radio, and addition methods.”*

*Group two question - to Kim Graziani: “What are some of the ways we can instill collaboration between the City, community groups, faith-based groups, etc. to ensure equitable distribution of resources?”*

*Kim Graziani: “There are several ways. The Weed and Seed program has basically done this in being here today to start a discussion to prioritize what you want to do to make the hilltop communities better. We are always starting over and adjusting based on what you all are saying. We can use the steering committee as a starting place and a sounding board for working together and sharing information.”*

*Maureen Hogan: “Collaboration is a process by its nature and it is based on trust. If you look at some of the neighborhoods that have been addressing the kinds of issues you have been, they have been creating neighborhood plans with a collective consensus vision. So, if you can take this energy and turn it into a neighborhood plan to address your needs, specific needs the city can help take care of, as well as our organization PPND, there may be an opportunity for us to work with you next year.”*

*Group three question – to William Bochter: “What possibility is there for a hilltop Town Meeting with police and community members as well as other communities such as Brentwood?”*

*William Bochter:* "Zone 3 has a monthly public safety meeting that is probably the best opportunity for that, but if you would like to set a Town Hall up for your neighborhood in particular, Larry Ross would be happy to set that up for you. Bringing in Brentwood and Mt. Oliver Borough should be no problem. No meeting exists at a down and dirty level with officers there, so that is a great idea."

*Becky Rodgers:* "We formed a wonderful relationship with our Commanders and our part 1 crime has reduced by 30%. Our relationship with the Zone 2 police, the FBI, and the state police is critical. We found that people did not want to talk to the police or call 9-1-1, so one of our officers met with residents about reporting emergencies. (*Question from participants:* What is part 1 crime?) "Part 1 crime is your more violent crime along with motor vehicle theft. Call 9-1-1."

*Kim Graziani:* "We have staff in the Weed and Seed office and part of our goal is for you to utilize us for setting up things like this Town Hall. Right now we are including Mt. Oliver Borough because we need to bring everyone to the table – crime doesn't stop at neighborhood lines. We also have monthly steering committee meetings that can be used."

*Group four question – to Richard Snipe:* "What can your offices do to help us revitalize business districts along Brownsville Rd. and Warrington Ave., and what can residents do to support these efforts?"

*Richard Snipe:* "We have funds available through the URA to help you put together a business plan and help you get those funding dollars. I remember along Warrington Ave. there used to be so many stores, but coming here today it seemed that the businesses have disappeared. We can help you bring these back."

*Kim Graziani:* "When you look at revitalizing business districts and the decline in population, we recommend that you look at corridors that serve various neighborhoods. If you look to key corridors like this you can make the best use of your funds. We have just hired a BART manager, Jennifer Gomez, and she will work one-on-one with any business that needs assistance. Also, Pat Ford helps people invest in our city. We have meetings to make sure it is a one stop shop to invest in our city."

*Maureen Hogan:* "We are trying to raise money for people who look beyond neighborhood boundaries. We are looking for funding to provide pre-development grants for corridors. Brownsville Rd. is an interesting one because it reaches from the Southside Slopes to Brentwood. Marketing analysis is one

way to use these funds. For example, you could use this to identify the best business sites.”

*Becky Rodgers:* “Main Street is a national program run through state and local governments and then to individual neighborhoods. Contact Alecia Sirk at 412-255-6686. This funding can be used for: Economic Restructuring, Promotion, and Organizational Design. I encourage you to seek that. Megan Searman will work with you to develop this relationship with Main Street.”

*Group 5 - question:* “How can we get people involved and keep people involved with a short-term winnable fight, like abandoned houses and vacant buildings, etc.?”

*Kim Graziani:* “A small winnable ‘something’ but it doesn’t always need to be a fight. We need to have things for people to do, to work on after they meet. When the Weed and Weed Community Policing Subcommittee was sick of just talking, they planned a Unity Festival, a plan-able, tangible event. You could do something like this.”

*Jerome Jackson:* “In Manchester, we had about 100 people planting and cleaning up a park. If people see that we are doing something, they will step up and help us maintain it. In crime prevention, we ask people to stop talking about the problem and start talking about solutions. We moved away from our block watches to a community policing committee across blocks and communities. Once we came together as a community as a whole, we were able to identify ‘hot spots’ and make a plan. We challenged the District Attorney to a Drug Free Zone where if drugs are sold within 1000 ft. from a school, the perpetrator would receive a mandatory 2 year sentence. This only happened because 200 of us showed up to a meeting. We use our organization for a clearinghouse if someone is afraid to call 9-1-1. We are in another phase, which is to create a community justice program situating the community as a first line of defense in how we want to fight crime in our community.”

*Mary Phan-Gruber:* “Information sharing. One small but effective action is sharing information. One of these examples is the Summer Fun in the South guide to identify resources in the summer for youth. It is positive and collaborative. Letting people know what is already out there is important. We also publish an insert in the South Pittsburgh Reporter. These little things are also powerful tools to accompany the kinds of event Jerome was talking about.”

*Maureen Hogan:* “The key word is ‘winnable.’ As an individual, what can do? When you are dealing with volunteers you want to pick a couple things that you

can accomplish and do that. Identify one lot that is vacant and address that. Get those big issues, like vacant lots and abandoned buildings down to a winnable level. The more you do, the more successful you are at it and the more you will have an appetite to do even more.

*Joanna Deming:* "What are people passionate about? We talked about the lack of resources for kids, like the closing of a pool. We can build support through grassroots efforts, door-knocking, etc."

*William Bochter:* "We can bring a public safety display into your neighborhood if you ask us. You can show the folks in your neighborhood that you have the power to bring people like us in, and we are happy to come."

*Group 6 question* (inaudible question)

*William Bochter:* "What has been implemented? Crime prevention officer in Zone 3, Chris Luffey. She is a great asset to get to know. There are a lot of community things you can get involved in, the Junior Police Academy, or Citizens Police Academy, which explain what police can and cannot do and why we can't do some of the things you might want us to do."

*Follow up question:* "What about beat cops, has this been implemented? How should people use 9-1-1?"

*William Bochter:* "Everyone is a little afraid to call 9-1-1, but there are well-trained people to answer your call so you can tell them what you know and they will put that out.

"We have instituted the beat plan. We now have 2 beat officers in Zone 3 and they work a 10-hr shift. We also have apartment calls where people will be asked to walk "here" if something is suspicious. There are also C-Tips, the chief's "trouble squad", 6 officers to sick on particular problems.

"We also have the Citizen Observer at [citizenobserver.com](http://citizenobserver.com) which we have just received funding to provide to the whole city. It is a web-based crime alert system you can use as a way to access and report crime activity."

*Follow up question:* "How soon after you get a call will it go to the Citizen Observer online?"

*William Bochter:* "We have staff to do this, but the more critical reports go up immediately, others may take a bit longer."

*Jerome Jackson:* "Citizen Observer has worked very well on the North Side. It is very helpful for getting information out very quickly. Citizen Observer helps educate our community people. They want to know what to look for, so we help people identify things such as which drugs are being bought, sold, etc. We found people using one of our vacant lots as a shooting range and got our officers to drive by every Thursday until they were caught. You have to build a relationship with our officers, commanders, etc. so they can act as friends and get things done for you."

*Group 7 Question to William Bochter:* "How can we guarantee that a representative from the police department will attend all of our meetings? For example, we have been trying for a year, we need to sit down with police and enforce cooperation."

*William Bochter:* "Any time you have a meeting and invite the police, we should send someone. If the commander cannot come, he should send another officer. Let us know your meeting schedule and I will make sure to send an officer."

"But, undercover operations are tricky. We do not want the bust to be tied back to you. We don't want to jeopardize anyone."

*Kim Graziani:* "The Mayor had made it clear that if a group wants a member to attend, we will keep your schedule in our database and try to attend whatever meetings we can. First, you can expect someone from Neighborhood Initiatives. You may also be able to get someone from City Planning if no one from Neighborhood Initiatives is available. Contact me with your group, contact information, and when you meet and we will add you."

*Jake Wheatley:* "I have been trying to sit here, listen, and be patient, because I too like to listen to residents and community agencies, but there are several things I need to say, and we need to think about the short-term and the long-term. What are the causes? The education system is critical; how our children are being educated, jobs and work, drugs and rehabilitation. We need to stop drug houses and identify how we can come together to change that reality. For the long-term, how can we change the message our children are getting and their education, as well as make sure there are jobs available for them as they pass through the education system. In my office, we have been trying to figure out how to have a meeting with all the neighborhoods in your area, all the elected officials, etc. to think through these issues. We need to have work group – a conversation where we all work together on YOUR agenda and we want to see it happen in a working Town Hall format where we are informed and have an action item for

which we can be held accountable. But don't look for people like me to do the heavy lifting. The more active you are the more aggressive you are, and the more collective you are, the more we can do for you.

"This day is a huge victory for you. But the real work is what will happen when you leave today."

*Group 8 Question:* "How do we build a new umbrella organization for District 3 that encompasses all these communities?"

*Jake Wheatley:* "Very Carefully!"

*Maureen Hogan:* "We understand that areas of great need do not often get into our cycle because of capacity so we have developed an entry level program for capacity development. We can only do three sites with a 6-month commitment. The worst that will happen is you will get more organized as a group, even if you are not able to secure our funding.

"Use CTAC – have them out and see what kind of organizational development they can offer. Or use consultants, but you need funding for that. We are excited about groups of people being collaborative."

*Jake Wheatley:* "Be sensitive, make sure that you sit down and agree on a collective vision. I don't want foundations to forge what you do as a neighborhood, what you do as a collective. Some of you may not agree on a vision, but you may share a strategy. You need to be clear on what it is you are collective on and what you are not going to be collective on. It is okay not to have a collective organization. Trust is a big thing. If you are unwilling to come to the table and let go of history, your collective is doomed from the beginning. You need to have an honest conversation and talk about how to share, and what you share. Be clear and careful. I still encourage collaboration."

*Maureen Hogan:* "You have to have a purpose. Don't just go after the money"

*Group 9 Question:* "We are asking for the elephant. How can we quickly create a physical community center for the South Pittsburgh community?"

*Joanna Deming:* "Hilltop Health Ministries has been looking toward the Knoxville Middle School, which has basketball courts and a pool. We need to identify if we can reuse some of the buildings that already exist."

*Bonita Allen:* "Some of the old school buildings are available. Community development work really does elevate academic achievement. A+ Schools has a

report to the community which I left for you today which has the information on the Pittsburgh Public Schools. We offer community forums on issues related to student achievement and we will report on what we find in your communities.”

*Mary Phan-Gruber:* “Good things don’t happen quickly. We want to build something that is sustainable for the long-term.”

*Group 10 question:* “How do we strengthen home ownership in our neighborhoods?”

*Richard Snipe:* “I could move someplace else or I could stay in the neighborhood and invite all my friends. Fix up your own home and introduce your friends to how great the community is. Then help your neighborhoods learn the best ways to take care of their properties. Also utilize the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

“Beltzhoover and Climax, for example, have many new houses – how can we get people back to the community to buy these houses? How can we sell these homes so we can build 50 more new ones and sell those? It will be less to buy these homes that you will ever pay in rent.”

*Maureen Hogan:* “What is it, thinking strategically, that could inhibit home ownership? Crime, vacant lots, etc. You don’t always have to build new. You can focus on fixing up what is already there.”

*Jerome Jackson:* “On dealing with problem landlords – you can go to that person’s own home, where they live, with a large group and signs, every weekend and tell them to clean up their property. Go back each week until it is cleaned up.”

Note: Participant Sean Compton from Animal Friends wanted to include the number 412-847-7066, which can be called to reach the Humane Investigations Office. They cover animal related crime that police may not cover.

## APPENDIX 3: FEEDBACK ON THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

As part of the Community Conversation post survey, administered at the end of the day on July 21, participants were asked to give their feedback on the organization and facilitation of the Community Conversation. Forty seven participants completed the survey. Below are the results.

### 1. How helpful did you find...

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very
the Moving Forward Together background document?	4.3%	4.3%	32.6%	58.7%
the small group discussions?	2.2%	10.9%	13.0%	73.9%
the resource panel discussion?	4.4%	8.9%	26.7%	60.0%

### 2. How much did the Community Conversation...

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very
give you a better understanding of important issues facing your community?	2.1%	12.8%	44.7%	40.4%
help you identify solutions to important issues?	2.1%	23.4%	46.8%	27.7%
cause you to consider points of view that you had not previously considered?	6.4%	10.6%	53.2%	29.8%

3. Will you become more engaged in your community as a result of the Community Conversation?

Definitely yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Definitely not
72.0%	16.3%	9.3%	2.3%

4. Given what you know now, would you still have participated in the Community Conversation?

Definitely yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Definitely not
79.5%	18.2%	2.3%	0.0%

5. In participants' own words...

*"The Community Conversation encouraged me to engage more with my community. I am happy to learn that people in my community are willing to participate."*

**-25 year old female, Allentown**

*"The Community Conversation gave people some hope again."*

**-31 year old female, Arlington**

*"I would like to see this as a springboard to future conversations and town meetings."*

**-54 year old female, Carrick**

*"It would be a crime to have this discussion and not go anywhere with it. There should be a follow-up scheduled as soon as possible."*

**-29 year old female, Arlington**

*"I was encouraged by this conversation at a time when I was ready to sell my home and my business because of rising crime. I do not feel so alone now after this Community Conversation."*

**-49 year old male, Beltzhoover**

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