

South Allison Hill Safety Project

This project is the result of a community recognizing an issue and working together to address shared concerns. Resident feedback is of the highest priority when creating community plans and the South Allison Hill Safety Project adopts this principle. The Heart of the Hill Plan engaged over 700 residents in the neighborhood and identified safety as a top value. Additionally, each partnering organization included in this project has experienced or witnessed an increase in crime and a decrease in overall safety exacerbated by the pandemic.

After a productive conversation with Mayor Papenfuse and Commissioner Carter, The South Allison Hill Safety Project was formed. The partnering organizations included in this project have come together out of a love for the community and a desire to improve the safety of our neighborhoods with the understanding that we are all in this together.

The following proposal contains several approaches to improving community safety:

1. Improve Lighting
2. Increase Security
3. Address Vacant lots and homes
4. Engage Neighbors

While these are only a part of the puzzle, we believe we have outlined achievable action steps to support the community in improving safety.

Together, and with buy-in from the community, we CAN make a difference. There will surely be a positive impact on the community with our shared commitment to South Allison Hill combined with support of this project.

Respectfully,
The South Allison Hill Safety Project Team

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on behalf of Light the Hill

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on behalf of Latino Hispanic American Community Center

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on behalf of Tri County Community Action



Improve Lighting

One simple way to increase safety is to improve the lighting in our neighborhoods. Improved lighting has been shown to:

- Deter potential offenders by increasing the risk that they will be seen or recognized when committing crimes.
- Encourage residents to spend more time on their stoops or in their front yards in the evenings which increases eyes on the street.
- Improve visibility of police, leading to a decision to desist from crime.
- Encourage more people to walk at night, also increasing eyes on the street.

This project will assure that basic street lighting is maintained (90%+) throughout South Allison Hill by:

- Monitoring and reporting broken or burnt out streetlights.
- Collaborating with appropriate City officials to ensure broken/burnt out street lights are repaired in a timely manner.
- Protecting street lights from vandalism.
- Promoting and sustaining a neighborhood habit of turning on porch lights in the evening.

In order to accomplish this, The South Allison Hill Safety Project will:

- Create a dedicated phone line managed by Light the Hill to collect and aggregate weekly neighborhood-wide street light data (texts and calls).
- Clear and trim 50 trees or other overgrowth a year which impedes street light illumination to improve safety and visibility after dark as well as improve walkability in the neighborhood.
- Provide LED lightbulbs for distribution to households across the greater Allison Hill community.



Increase Security

During the pandemic, as in many communities across the country, South Allison Hill has experienced an increase in crime. The South Allison Hill Safety Project team has witnessed the impact firsthand. Violent crime in particular has led to residents requesting additional security cameras to deter crime and provide an additional layer of security.

One strategy we will be using is increasing security cameras on partner organization properties. Any needed footage will be provided to Harrisburg Bureau of Police. Brethren Housing Association (BHA), a trauma-informed organization whose priority is safety, owns 22 of the properties to be covered. Tri-County Housing Development Corporation (TCHDC) will supplement coverage in the 200 block of Hummel Street area.

This project will also provide residents in the target area the opportunity to apply to receive a free doorbell camera for their property. Wildheart Ministries will provide installation services for residents desiring security doorbell cameras (ex. Ring doorbell). Residents who choose to be part of this program will have the option to register their camera to share footage with the Harrisburg Police Department when requested after a crime may have occurred.

Our goal is to provide 50 doorbell cameras to homes and properties over the course of three years.



Address Vacant Lots

Although vacant storefront revitalization has been steady, South Allison Hill's residential vacancy remains another concern for the neighborhood. A vacancy rate of about 3% is considered typical at the regional and state level. In 2019, 22.86% of residential properties were vacant in South Allison Hill. Residential vacancy has decreased since 1990 (26.3%; 2000, 23.3%) but still remains a significant challenge. Additionally, vacant land from past home demolitions that have not been maintained creates further challenges for the community with a current inventory of almost 300 parcels of vacant land.

If all the vacant properties in the neighborhood were combined, they would fill 26.5 football fields in an area less than half of a square mile and home to 6,600 people!

Tri County Community Action and Wildheart Ministries will partner together to enhance vacant lots through beautification and adaptive reuse of space. In order to reduce crime opportunity areas created by abandoned lots, Wildheart Ministries will remove overgrowth to improve visibility and install fences (as needed). Funding will also support equipment maintenance, fuel and long-term lot maintenance. Twenty lots will be addressed as identified by The South Allison Hill Safety Project team in conjunction with residents and City partners.

Lastly, in effort to address vacant lots in the South Allison Hill neighborhood, a transformation of vacant and overgrown lots will begin with two identified overgrown and vacant lots on the corners of Crescent and Haehrlen Streets and Reese and Hummel Streets. Installing a community board and maintaining overgrowth will address safety and engagement concerns in the neighborhood.



Address Vacant Homes



To stabilize currently vacant properties and keep out drug and other illegal activities, 10 properties per year will be boarded and secured with murals.

Unsecured vacant buildings will be identified by the team in conjunction with residents and City partners. This would prevent illegal use of facilities.

Tri County Community Action and Wildheart Ministries will spearhead this campaign and partner with local schools, community organizations, and artists to paint murals on the boards prior to hanging, improving the aesthetics of the community while addressing blighted properties.



Engage Neighbors

Everyone should feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods. Unfortunately, the pandemic has made many of us more isolated and less aware of the concerns of our neighbors. While residents acutely know the issues in their neighborhood, they often feel it is too big and too difficult to know what to do about them. Residents of South Allison Hill noted in The Heart of the Hill Plan that a sense of community is an important neighborhood value. A sense of community's impact on safety is reflected in research as “studies have shown that connected communities have reduced crime levels, and increased ability to report eyewitness accounts.”[1]

Together we can strengthen our communities and we believe that safety is something residents have the power to influence. We can reduce crime by being aware of danger and by having the knowledge, the tools and the power of the community. Block Leaders and the use of an app to engage neighbors are two tools to connect residents of South Allison Hill.

Wildheart Ministries will create a crowdsourced safety app to connect neighbors that will:

- Increase resident engagement in the issue of public safety;
- Improve communication channels with corresponding City departments;
- Empower residents to participate in solution-oriented neighborhood monitoring; and
- Serve as a potential prototype for City-wide use after successful launch in South Allison Hill.

Funding will support the app development and testing, app licensing for 3 years, data collection and population, promotion and marketing and will provide FREE resources for community engagement & public safety.

Light the Hill will create a team of Block Leaders who serve as the heart of the South Allison Hill community. Block Leaders will be the eyes and ears of the neighborhood and be charged with talking to neighbors to know the needs, ideas and issues affecting the residents on their street. In addition to helping to distribute critical information, they will attend informational meetings and connect with City leaders and decision makers to have streamlined communication about community issues. At the same time, when a resident has a question or concern, they can turn to their Block Leader, who will be “plugged in” to some of the people who can provide answers. The aforementioned app will also serve as a tool to compile important resident data and keep neighbors connected. While not employees, Light the Hill will reward Block Leaders with gift cards, gatherings and a block party.



Once established, these Block Leaders' roles may develop as community and block needs change. It is invaluable to have Block Leaders assisting and encouraging attendance at neighborhood-wide functions and meetings where community feedback is essential to ensuring project and programs meet their needs.

[1] <https://wealert.io/>

Administrative

Tri County Community Action is the acting fiscal agent for the funds for year 1 and is working with community partners named to implement year 1 goals. The above project covers a three-year period. These tasks will be executed in the following phases:

Year 1

- **Improving Lighting**
 - Canvas and identify street lights
 - Clear and trim 50 trees (each year)
 - Identify a City Council Committee as well as the Chairperson for that Committee that deals with lighting
 - Request a map of all street lights in South Allison Hill, including the pole numbers for all streetlights
 - Conduct dusk canvassing across the community to identify streetlights that are currently out as a baseline
 - Educate community about Light the Hill
 - Consider LED porch light program and need
 - Create a phone line to aggregate streetlight data
 - Create community outreach & education, communication & meeting materials and a Facebook page
- **Improve Security**
 - Crime hot spot analysis
 - Install about 16 Ring cameras a year (~16/year, 50 total)
 - Install BHA and TCHDC cameras
- **Address Vacant Lots**
 - Identify and address the needs for the first 20 vacant lots (60 total)
- **Address Vacant Homes**
 - Identify partners for art on boards to board up vacant homes
 - Identify 30 vacant homes to board up
 - Board up 10 homes
 - Art collaboration with community partners or youth organizations
- **Engage Neighbors**
 - Begin app development to engage neighbors
 - Block Leader recruitment and training

Administrative

Year 2

- **Improving Lighting**
 - Clear and trim 50 trees
 - Provide & distribute LED light bulbs for porch lights
- **Increase Security**
 - Crime hotspot analysis
 - Install 16 Ring cameras
- **Address Vacant Lots**
 - Address 20 vacant lots
 - Address lot at Crescent and Haehnlen Street
 - Remove overgrowth and maintain space
 - Install community board
 - Address lot at Reese and Hummel Streets
 - Adaptive reuse of space (ie. volleyball net)
 - Update community board
- **Address Vacant Homes**
 - Board up 10 homes
 - Art collaboration with youth organizations
- **Engage Neighbors**
 - Engage Block Leaders
 - Testing and licensing of App

Administrative

Year 3

- **Improving Lighting**
 - Clear and trim 50 trees (each year)
 - Provide & distribute LED light bulbs for porch lights
- **Increase Security**
 - Install 16 Ring cameras
 - Crime analysis
- **Address Vacant Lots**
 - Address lot at Crescent and Haehnlen Street
 - Remove overgrowth and maintain space
 - Install community board
 - Address lot at Reese and Hummel Streets
 - Adaptive reuse of space (ie. volleyball net)
 - Update community board
- **Address Vacant Homes**
 - Board up 10 homes
 - Art collaboration with school districts
- **Engage Neighbors**
 - Promotion and marketing for App—engage neighbors!
 - Engage Block Leaders and App usage