

Meeting Minutes

Client:	City of Pittsburgh
Project Name:	Lincoln Lemington Belmar & East Hills Community Visioning Study
Project Number:	10-20296
Date:	12-3-2020
Location:	Virtual
Meeting Purpose:	Kick Off Meeting with East Hills Collaborative and public
Prepared By:	Amy Wiles

In Attendance	
Name	Company
Janai Williams Smith	E. Holdings
Alexis Strothman Meier	E. Holdings
Amy Wiles	E. Holdings
Ben Levinger	E. Holdings
Janette Williams	E. Holdings
Paige Nealer	E. Holdings
Christopher Corbett	City of Pittsburgh

Summary

The EHI team facilitated a visioning and kick off meeting for the East Hills neighborhood. This meeting was designed to create a baseline of information; specifically, to gather qualitative data that the existing conditions analysis could not gather. Highlights about this meeting are as follows:

- 13 Attendees (excluding City and Consultant Staff)
- Two breakout room facilitations
- Participation in open ended and fact-finding questions
- 2000+ flyers informational mailed to the neighborhood prior to the meeting date

The main takeaways from this meeting are (see following pages for detailed input):

1. Overall, East Hills is a neighborhood struggling with generational disinvestment. Residents often feel like the forgotten, neglected corner of the City. There are basic improvements to the built environment that are in serious need of attention, such as broken streetlights, cracked sidewalks, overgrown weeds, lack of safe crosswalks.
2. Although it is the gateway into the City from the East, there is nothing to welcome visitors into the City or let people know they are in East Hills. The neighborhood lacks branding but there is history that can be incorporated into branding, signage and public art.
3. Safety is a concern. There is a lot of concern regarding speeding and safe roadways in East Hills. Residents identified several roads that pose safety concerns, including Wilner, which provides access

to the park. Better lighting and safer pedestrian access would allow more residents to utilize the park and open space.

4. There needs to be better services provided for the entire community. Although parts of the neighborhood are well-served by events and services, they are only offered as part of individual housing developments. In particular, there need to be more activities for the youth - ages 14-20. Parks and recreation facilities need upgraded.
5. There is opportunity for new development. Need more businesses, need to help/encourage local entrepreneurs, need to demolish blighted homes.

Next steps will include furthering discussions to develop a vision and identify priority goals.

The detailed questions and responses from breakout room discussions are as follows:

Q. What ONE word would you use to describe your community?

- **Gateway** - East Hills is the eastern gateway into the City, but there is nothing to identify it as such
- **Family** - residents are tied to the neighborhood through past generations; live here because of family; close-knit community - everyone knows everyone
- **Disinvestment** - the neighborhood is lacking in overall maintenance of basic resources such as sidewalks, street lights, roads; last community to get resources; in the past, the school attracted support & attention
- **Separation** - first/last neighborhood; feel separated from the City; more ties with Penn Hills
- **Forgotten** - need better protection, increased safety & places to play; a community center that will suit everyone, need more unity
- **Struggling** - buildings and businesses challenged with survival as well as physical maintenance of; the community needs help to flourish

Q. What are your two favorite things about the neighborhood?

- Rural feel in the neighborhood
- Existing Entrepreneurs and potential new ones-could use more networking assistance
- Community Days here are outstanding-community events tied to existing community spaces (swimming, basketball, movies, music, activities-all translates to togetherness)
- Beautiful w/park and spray park (increase the amenities within and around these spaces)
- Community Pride (and a sense of community) and the commitment to continued community (togetherness)

Q. Do you feel there are enough services within the community to shop locally?

- We don't really have a business district (restaurants, a mall, shopping opportunities; options for more take-out services)
- Need more stores throughout the neighborhood (along Wilner & Robinson Streets), groceries, bakery, dry cleaners, more professional services
- The closest stores they have are Giant Eagle, Dollar Tree, etc., but they have to travel to Penn Hills

Q. What improvements would make the neighborhood more vibrant?

- Need more positive media attention-lack of coverage on positive events
- Lighting and streets-need more improvement all over the neighborhood, cameras
- At Wilner the Stop signs are not obeyed; need better traffic control; there is a blind spot near the park
- Streets are dangerous-speeding constantly along the following streets (concerns about safety, improved pedestrian safety)
 - Robinson
 - Sunrise
 - Remington
 - Frankella
 - There is also a section the community refers to as "Death Hill"-near East Hills Drive
 - Callastoga
 - Sunny
 - Tokay

- Cressline
- Gateway Signage-Welcome to East Hills (top & bottom); there is an existing logo but community is not opposed to redesigning the logo

Q. What cultural or civic events does your neighborhood facilitate?

- Community Days
- Partner w/Community Services for their Back-to-School backpack event; Residents Council Services
- Coat drives, Easter Egg Hunt, Thanksgiving Dinner give-a-ways; partnered with a local women's group for a pop-up closet for clothing

Q. What services/amenities would you like to see or are missing?

- Traumatized/violence; lack of services and support for self-care (mental health)
- Racial disparities (need open conversations)
- Not all of the neighborhood(s) are served by the same services
- Need programs for homeownership and senior services
- Everything
- Programs for youth-need a center(s) that will provide services for 14-20 year olds; need increased capacity
- Park Hill homes need some attention and routine maintenance
- Better lighting and street repairs; there are two parks that could use some work and have been untouched
- Indoor basketball court for weather conditions
- Senior Center

Q. What would attract more people to visit or live in East Hills?

- Streetscape and Beautification-currently the weeds are overgrown
- Blighted homes that need demolished (at the end of Frankella)
- Beautify the parks-involve the kids/youth to take part to improve the park and do some public art work
- Need to improve the football/baseball fields within the existing park-Could build an Amphitheatre by the existing basketball court
- Dorn Bush road-is one of the steepest hills in the country
- Build Community Pride-East Hills is a Gateway to the City, home to historic persons-tap into the source