

An Update from Peace Community Center – May 2025

Community engagement and strategic planning work has been conducted by advisory board participants and Peace Community Center board members and facilitated by Dr. Tali Hairston. Our next steps over the next three to four months involve reviewing the community's feedback and making decisions about the Peace Community Center's future direction. We've identified that Peace Community Center embraces its place-based approach to community service and development, celebrating its history of building community for youth and young adults in the Hilltop neighborhood. It is deeply rooted in Lutheran tradition to be a community of service, love, and belonging for all, and we seek to discover our contribution to Hilltop's collective future.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN - ACTIVITIES:

- Community Leader Interviews: The board selected different community and organization leaders to conduct brief high-level interviews.
- Focus Groups: Similarly, groups of 6-10 convened for 50-to-60-minute discussions.
- Survey: Respondents to the online survey covered a broad range of issues and provided feedback.

RETREAT: In two four-hour sessions the committee met to examine the community engagement data. We listened to recorded interviews and focus groups, discussing relevant challenges and opportunities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN - WHAT ARE WE LEARNING?

- Peace is a trusted partner with authentic relationships, social capital, and a strong support community.
- A complex or highly administrative program may take Peace away from what it does best: centering community and relationships.
- Programmatically, responding to opportunities that emerge from the core activity of centering community and building relationships needs to be revisited.
- Youth and young adult education means a lot to the Peace community. At the same time, a growing concern is a plethora of housing issues impacting young people and their families.

We will do more discernment work this summer and will finish our discernment work and share what we have learned this fall.

Blessings, Peace Community Center Board of Directors