

OVERVIEW: *The Hill District Greenprint Project*
“A Village in the Woods”

The Greenprint project re-connects both the Hill District to its specific landscape and community members to the greater Pittsburgh area. It also strengthens social ties through linkages to adjacent neighborhoods. Fulfilling the plan is expected to attract outside visitors, encourage outdoor activity, provide new venues for public visual and performing arts, increase property value, and attract economic development. The Greenprint has three core goals:

- Establish a healthy place with urban development that works in concert with the natural ecology;
- Identify projects and opportunities for leadership and innovation in a local economy; and
- Reframe the identity of the Hill District as “A Village in the Woods” – an example of urban beauty.

The term “Greenprint” adapts “blueprint” to denote the plan’s focus – land use and the identification of a network of public green spaces, overlooks, parks, streets, and trails that connect to key locations in the overall neighborhood and to sites in surrounding neighborhoods. It has been produced by analyzing green assets and engaging residents in planning ecologically sound development that will promote economic and public health benefits.

As an ecological framework to guide future development, the Greenprint defines three distinct regions:

- *The Woods*, the Hill’s outer edge, wraps the community with dense vegetation.
- *The Village* is a collection of diverse neighborhoods at the geographic center of the Hill.
- *Conveyance* is the system that moves people, water, and wildlife through the Hill, highlighting historic stream paths.

A set of project initiatives have been designed to:

- Expand the web of trees and green space that encircles the Hill District and extend it into the Village core;
- Construct and improve strategically located steps and nearby pathways that are vital links for walking routes in the Hill; and
- Recognize and enliven five blocks of Centre Avenue as the Hill’s core public space, to attract and support community use.

The Greenprint builds upon the Hill’s existing landscape resources to provide a framework for the Hill to retain its identity and capitalize on its geography. Historically, the community has been plagued by disinvestment and abandonment. That situation raises the question: “if the value of middle-to upper-class communities is directly related to its landscape context, why can’t urban neighborhoods take advantage of their unique landscapes?” That question is particularly relevant now that densities are reduced and industries have been removed from these natural settings. In short, can the “Hill” become one of Pittsburgh’s newest suburban developments downtown? Currently there is great interest in the hill because of its proximity to downtown, Oakland, and the University. City government owns large parcels of land. Gentrification is real threat. How can urban communities, like the hill, retain their identity and capitalize on its geography? The Greenprint builds upon the Hill’s existing landscape resources to provide a framework for wrestling with these huge challenges.

The Greenprint project team includes Hood Design and Studio for Spatial Practice, working with Terri Baltimore, Denys Candy, and Susan Rademacher of *Find the Rivers!* The Greenprint is a project of *Find the Rivers! (FTR!)*, a partnership between Hill House Association, the Hill District Consensus Group, Community Partners Institute, and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

PROJECT TIMELINE

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| 2001-04 | Find the Rivers! formed as a consortium with goal of reconnecting Hill District to the rivers and the rest of the city |
| 2005-07 | FTR! produces corridor plans for Herron Avenue and Kirkpatrick Street |
| 2007 | Parks Conservancy is recruited as a partner for expertise in park development, management, and fundraising |
| 2008 | Study completed of Arcena Street in context of nearby cultural sites |
| 2009 | Greenprint I completed – articulates vision for the Hill as a Village in the Woods Cliffside Park Site Plan completed |
| 2010 | Greenprint II completed Cliffside Park Entrance capital improvement project underway Woods plantings on Center Ave and side streets; at Ammons Field/Memory Lane |
| 2011 | Cliffside Park Entrance to be completed Cliffside Playground underway Woods plantings continue Coal Seam Trail/Memory Lane underway |
| 2012 | Centre Avenue Public Space Woods plantings continue Lombard Steps |
| 2013 | Williams Park/Herron Hill Reservoir Woods plantings continue |
| 2014 | Chauncey Street Steps and New Park Woods plantings continue |
| 2015 | Ongoing initiatives |