



Hobart's Run Timeline

July 2014: The Foundation

The Hobart's Run initiative began in July 2014, when The Hill School invited Pottstown community members to meet and discuss shared neighborhood concerns. Participants included residents and representatives of educational, government, religious, cultural, and social service organizations in the Borough. Together, the Hobart's Run planning group drafted a mission statement and developed a list of priorities and goals.

Hill representatives studied neighborhood revitalization efforts tied to educational institutions in other cities, including University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and Trinity College in Hartford, Conn. One notable model was the Lancaster City Alliance (Lancaster, Pa.), wherein citizens, businesses, Lancaster General Hospital, and Franklin and Marshall College collaborated to shape Lancaster's renaissance.

Fall 2016: Making the Case

In fall 2016, a white paper was presented to Hill's Board of Trustees and other community leaders to formalize establishment of Hobart's Run and propose a focus area of approximately 600 parcels. According to advisers from F&M and Penn, the initial, concentrated physical scope would allow Hobart's Run to achieve tangible, concentrated successes upon which to build and expand its efforts.

The Hill School was transparent about concerns that student admissions and faculty retention could be impacted by then-concerning situations in the neighborhood if they were not addressed. Issues included an abundance of absentee landlords, declining homeownership, crime (and drug activity in particular), eyesores such as the abandoned Edgewood Cemetery, and a decline in tax-producing and quality of life-enhancing businesses.

It also was clear that addressing these serious concerns would vastly improve the quality of life

for the entire Borough of Pottstown and serve to stimulate and complement overall Pottstown revitalization efforts.

January 2016: Director Appointed

In January 2016, Hill appointed Twila Fisher as Director of Community and Economic Development. Twila soon established a Hobart's Run Board of Directors that includes Borough residents, and she began neighborhood outreach and program development.

May 2017: 501(c)(3) Status and Office

In May 2017, Hobart's Run received official 501(c)(3) status allowing it to apply for nonprofit foundation funding. In September 2017, Hobart's Run set up office space in a renovated office at 701 E. High Street.

July 2018: Staffing Up

As Hobart's Run's program scope grew, in July 2018, Cathy Skitko, formerly Hill's director of communications, moved into her new role as Director of Hobart's Run Communications and Senior Director of Institutional Public Relations for The Hill School.

Hill funds Hobart's Run by paying the co-administrators' salaries as well as that of Jacqueline Steinman, part-time Administrative Coordinator; by providing an operating budget to help fund community outreach programs; and by facilitating related fundraising. The initial Hobart's Run funding came from the 3758 Fund established by a Hill alumnus whose intent was to "seed" programs that would benefit the Pottstown community. Additional support has come from Hill alumni, parents, and Hobart's Run friends. Additional funding from private investors is welcomed and will allow us to expand the breadth and depth of our programming.

July 2020: Boundaries Expanded

The Hobart's Run Board of Directors voted to expand the western boundary of its improvement focus area, allowing Hobart's Run to formally increase and enhance its direct engagement with and support of area residents, businesses, and nonprofits. Prior to the expansion, the boundaries of that 600-parcel focus area were from North Adams on the west; to Beech, Grant, and Jackson on the north; Keim on the east; and Queen Street on the south. The new area extends to North Washington Street, adding about 200 parcels to the focus area (for a total of 800), and including about 25 properties in the 500-600 blocks of High Street.

July 2021: A New Office Location

Hobart's Run moved into its current office at 856-A. East High Street, which is more visible and accessible to our neighbors.