

HILLTOP COMMUNITY INVESTMENT COUNCIL

DRIVING DESIGN AT 11TH & MLK



FORT&ERRA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This report synthesizes the feedback received from Forterra's first year in partnership with the Community Investment Council (CIC), a community advisory group from the Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma, Washington. Convening to advocate and organize around anti-displacement, racial economic equity, and community ownership in this 150-year-old Black community, housing has been the driving element. This summary documents the collective input of the group and serves as a reference guide for their community-driven ideas. It is also an important implementation aide for ongoing planning of the attainable homes and businesses that will exist in Hilltop on the city block at 11th and MLK by 2025. This input has been vital for the creation of rich, pre-development engagement data points that are now translating into the built environment and programming based in community values.

The first section describes the purpose of the CIC. We then focus on the CIC's advice from our meetings. Those recommendations fall into five themes: home, business, community, culture and communication. The concluding section highlights achievements that were the direct results of CIC involvement.

HISTORY OF THE CIC

The idea for the CIC came from a focus group of 35 community members hosted by local nonprofit Fab-5 and Forterra in November 2019. At the end of that meeting, there was an overwhelming consensus. The residents felt strongly about participating in the decision-making and planning process of the upcoming development. Representing Fab-5, Kiara Daniels and Brendan Nelson guided the selection of Black residents and business owners of Hilltop to form the CIC.

The CIC serves as a special advisory group of 14 former and current community residents and business owners selected to represent the Hilltop Community with a focus on those most likely to benefit from the initiative. Black residents of Hilltop have been disproportionately affected by gentrification in the neighborhood, so priority emphasis was dedicated to the historically Black population.

We had our first meeting in person in February 2020. Our last meeting of 2020 occurred in November, totaling 11 meetings. Quarterly meetings with the CIC resumed in April 2021.

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PURPOSE

With the help of funding from local organizations in Tacoma, Fab-5 and Forterra have been able to implement our Community Engagement (CE) strategy of informational meetings and dialogue with the Community Investment Council (CIC), Design Events, and Direct Outreach using social media and Community Engagement Specialists (CES). Each aspect in this phase of engagement brings us closer to providing attainable housing and business space in a manner that addresses anti-displacement, social and economic equity and community ownership. Our CE goals are:

- Grow trust and build relationships in the Hilltop neighborhood
- Lead all community engagement with an equity lens
- Follow a community-driven process
- Partner with the community to recruit locally owned businesses
- Build awareness of cooperative home ownership

Having access to a council of passionate and informed residents provided us with insight that we translate into our development process.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPICS

In our 11 meetings with the CIC, we covered:

- Interim use
- Appropriate business/retail space needs and potential barriers
- Cooperative ownership models
- Unit sizes and cost
- Tenant selection policies
- Affirmative Labor
- Social and economic equity and access



Ghanaian adinkra symbols are culturally anchored visual characters that offer guidance via traditional maxims from the ages. These tenets have become a part of Black American heritage over time.

They are also useful reminders for inclusive community engagement. We use them to emphasize our continued partnership with Fab-5 and the Hilltop community.



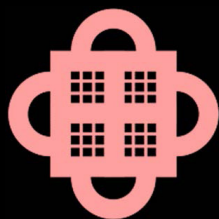
VALUES — HOME

- Desire for outreach to displaced former residents to be a part of the engagement strategy
- Need income information specific to Hilltop
- Multiple family and alternative family structures should be considered
- Beautification and art act as a signal of change to come to the location
- Community wants preference policy in writing for longevit
- Desire for Forterra to fundraise for down payments on co-op units
- Need to connect people to financial education and resources
- Housing families is a priority
- Live/work option needs more explanation

STRONG, UNITED HOMES

Families are the fundamental components of society, and this symbol centers on the strong bonds that keep them close.

"Abusua pa" — Good Family



VALUES — BUSINESS

- Business prep is needed as many businesses are under-resourced and/or new to what is required
- Themes of food, retail and wellness as business staples
- Desire for community investment model
- Desire for Black business prioritization
- Want to keep businesses local – no chain businesses
- Variety of space needed for different type of businesses
- Services are needed for sustainability of investment model, serving organizations, businesses
- Desire for community owned and funded business space
- Transparency and outlining of ownership process

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & HARD WORK

Depicting cultivation tools, this symbol expresses the industry, diligence, and productivity they require to become successful.

"Okuafo pa" — Good Farmer



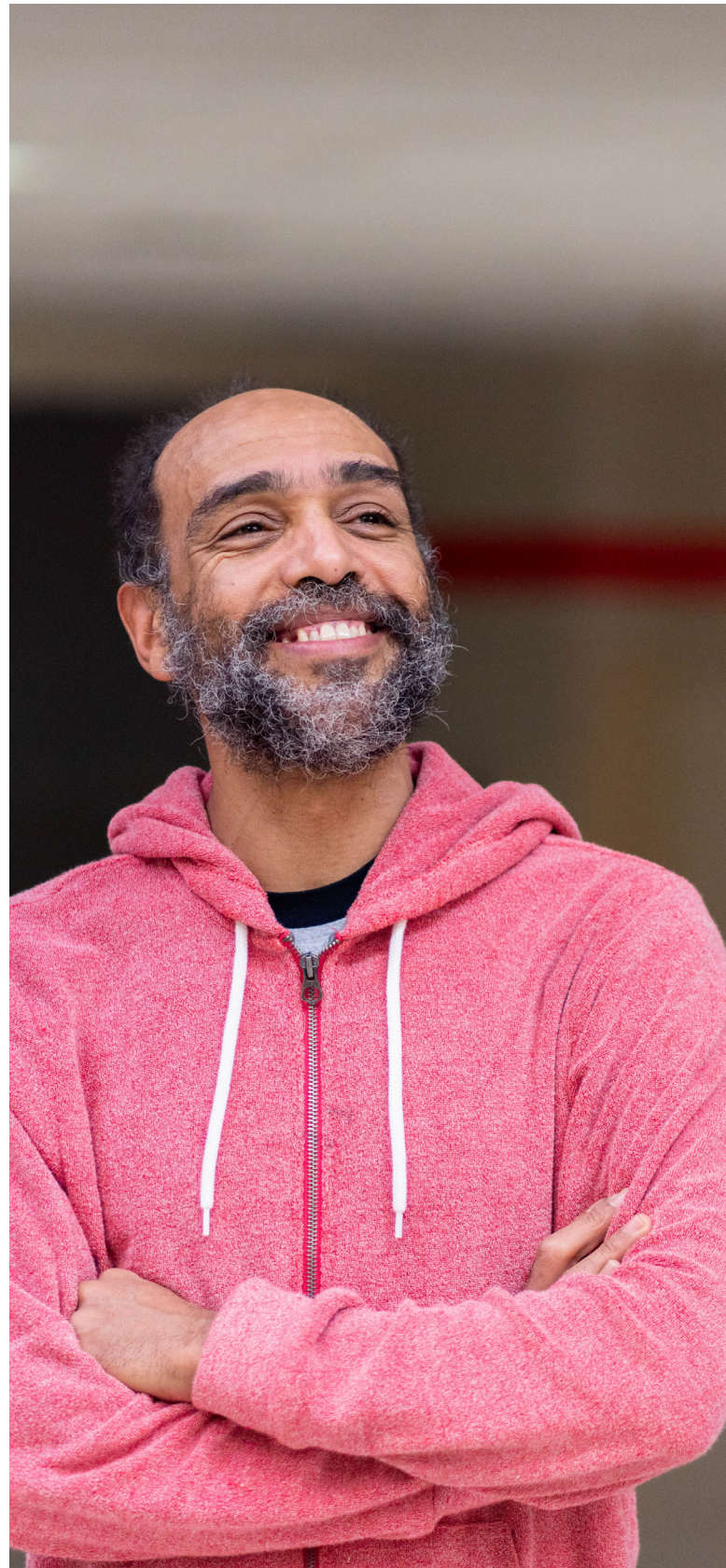
VALUES — COMMUNITY

- Affordability is key to providing equity
- Site activation is an investment
- Community gains values from planning process early and at different levels of development
- Put the site in possession to community benefit as part of development planning
- Desire to slow or stop displacement as part of co-op structure
- Restoration of place/space not erasure
- Interim use is needed
- #DesignTheHill, other developments, and Forterra creating ecosystem of opportunity to plan to take advantage of what's coming. What are the other opportunities?
- Economic benefit of using the site should be returned back to Hilltop
- Co-creation of new virtual community engagement strategy

COOPERATION & INDEPENDENCE

This symbol represents the need to transform the world by creating collaborative spaces for people that promote the greater good

*"Boa me na me mmoa wo" —
Help me and let me help you*



VALUES — CULTURE

- Working in Hilltop requires caring enough to be aware of history of neighborhood and how to navigate being in that space
- Hilltop residents have a way of coming together around particular locations in the neighborhood
- Gathering is tradition
- Cultural and historical preservation through art. Important to honor leaders, heroes in Hilltop
- Want to keep different opportunities of housing available and in community hands by passing down homes of elders
- Elders, heroes, ancestors are always central
- CIC and other residents are ambassadors
- Research needed on where residents have been pushed out to and if they feel comfortable returning
- Preservation of neighborhood essence
- Creating spaces for Black people is central to Hilltop identity

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The interconnected crocodiles signify cultural tolerance as they share one stomach and musto wrok together in harmony

*"Funtunfunefu Denkyemfunefu" —
Conjoined crocodiles*



VALUES — COMMUNICATIONS

- Community enjoys dialogue, conversation, sharing ideas/plans of what they would like to see
- Important to name site with community
- External communication plan and strategy needed
- Intentional outreach
- Important to be explicit about Black residents being prioritized
- Intentional and unapologetic language is important
- Providing examples and homework videos to watch
- Communication of the development timeline is necessary
- Community speaking for themselves instead of Forterra speaking on behalf of community
- Transparency and outlining of homeownership process
- Pre-event and small group conversations are important structure for sharing development opportunities

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Reaching back with reverence while it moves forward, the mythical bird always uses past experiences to build wisdom.

"Sankofa" — Go back and get it





ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

Community Investment Council advice directed conversations and influenced decisions:

Advocating for Home

- Family-first unit mix
- Affirmative marketing

Focus on Black Business

- Business use design for local opportunities
- Affirmative labor

Community-driven Social Equity

- Increased access to ownership
- Inclusive reclamation
- Honoring Black lives
- Pioneering virtual community engagement

Preservation of Hilltop Culture

- Fully funded interim use program (\$125k)
- Two art projects - Get Ready & Lasting Legacy
- 10 art commissions with residencies
- Hilltop artist talent roster
- Black aesthetic art partnership



**NOTHING ABOUT US
WITHOUT US,
IS FOR US**

- Tera Williams, Hilltop

FOR MORE HILLTOP INFORMATION

ATTAINABLE HOMES & BUSINESSES

[Forterra.org/Hilltop](https://forterra.org/hilltop)

DESIGN THE HILL 11TH & MLK

www.shor.by/DesignTheHill

