

## **Augustana purchases property, begins plans for College Hill District May 7, 2025**

On Wednesday, April 23, Augustana announced its plan to revitalize the College Hill District as a part of the Hilltop Community Development Corporation (CDC). According to the press release, the Hilltop CDC is a non-profit, community-focused organization that was recently founded to enhance growth along the edges of Augustana's campus by collaborating with the City of Rock Island, local businesses and citizens.

The release was sent out in an email from the college's Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Brand Communication, Irene Borys. According to the city of Rock Island's [website](#), the district was founded in 2011 and is located from the intersection of 14th Avenue with 30th Street and 37th Street to 42nd Street.

Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Finance and Administration Kirk Anderson said the Hilltop CDC is a part of the third leg of Augustana's [Bold and Boundless Strategic Plan](#). He said this organization was created not only to benefit students but also to benefit the community.

"We think about ways of how can we make Augustana more part of the community while providing services for the college students at the same time, and that's a large area if you think about each one of those corners," Anderson said.

The Hilltop CDC board is made up of 11 people, he said, with most of them being Augustana community members. Anderson said there are four Rock Island community members, including the Mayor of Rock Island, Mike Toms, and the city's Community Economic Development director Miles Brainard.

"It involves Rock Island community members to basically bring all these ideas together to make them happen and make them happen with the idea of, you know, whether it's funding, state funding, private investment, to make this vision come about," Anderson said.

The College Hilltop District encompasses many local businesses, such as Kavanaugh's Hilltop Bar & Grill and Fred and Ethel's 50's Antiques. Owner of Fred and Ethel's Jennifer Horvath said she was excited to hear about the plans, after discussing the losses of several businesses.

"The programs kind of got real stagnant for a while. We lost a couple of bigger businesses, and you know the more the merrier in the neighborhood," Horvath said. "We've got two new businesses that have just opened up in the last year, so that's wonderful."

Horvath hopes that the Hilltop CDC will bring in more businesses to create a safe neighborhood.

According to the release, the Hilltop CDC has already purchased its first building, located at 1407 30th St., which was the Curry-Out QC restaurant. Anderson said that students can expect to see the building demolished by late May, and the building will remain vacant until then.

The Hilltop CDC is in its first stages of development. Over the summer, Anderson said more plans will be made as an executive director is hired.

“The timeline on [hiring an executive director] is to have hopefully wrapped up sometime here early this summer,” Anderson said. “With that being the case, then we’ll start talking about the idea phase, exactly what kind of a blueprint of what we’re thinking, based on the property that we currently have.”