



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

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BACKGROUND

Dor Hadash's history

Congregation Dor Hadash was formed in 1963 when a group of 17 people looking for an alternative to the existing Pittsburgh synagogues came together. According to a history of the congregation by Stan Angrist,¹ they were interested in “a new kind of group in which there was an opportunity both for prayer and discussion of issues of contemporary Jewish interest.”

While the “prayer and discussion group” was initially not officially a part of any denomination, members chose to use the Reconstructionist *siddur*. An early flyer inviting visitors or prospective members² stated “although Dor Hadash is not affiliated with any other group either locally or nationally, its prevailing philosophy is closest to that of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism... concerned with revitalizing the Jewish heritage so as to make it meaningful and enriching to modern life.” The congregation formally affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement in 1969.

According to Angrist, in the first year, membership totaled 20 to 30 families. Over the years, the congregation has grown gradually. Initially, services were led by a member and a *chasan*, with several people holding that position. In 1986, Cheryl Klein was hired and stayed with us as cantor until she retired in 2019. She returned on a one-year part time basis for 2020-2021, and is currently serving as our rabbi.

Why strategic planning?

Dor Hadash has grown and evolved without ever developing a formal strategic plan. In 2020, however, the congregation faced several challenges, and several members felt it needed to take a more strategic approach to its future. Among them are:

- The trauma of October 27, 2018, when we were one of three congregations attacked in the worst episode of anti-Semitic violence in U.S. history.
- The move to a new physical space, as the space we shared was rendered unusable by the attack.
- The retirement of Cheryl Klein and the need to rethink what kind of professional clergy we needed.
- The recent growth of the congregation, bringing in new energy in the form of a more diverse membership, with people who have different needs and expectations.

¹ Stan Angrist, *A Brief History of Congregation Dor Hadash*, 2003. (Written for the 40th anniversary celebration.)

² Provided by Rabbi Cheryl Klein.

Current membership is at 171 family units, which is the first time we have had more than 170.

- The Congregation is facing decisions on how to allocate funds received from federal and donor sources, and “clarity about what the congregation wants to be in the future will aid in the appropriate decision-making.”³

As a result, in March 2020, a group of members brought to the board a proposal to engage in a strategic planning process. The Board approved it and asked Carolyn Ban to chair the strategic planning committee. She was soon joined by Melvin Melnick, the Vice President of Administration, with both serving as co-chairs. A committee was formed, which both supported the initial proposal and identified qualified consultants to work with the committee and the congregation, especially in collecting data from most members.

Data collection

The committee strove for maximum involvement of the congregation in the planning process. The final approval of the plan was postponed for a month so that we could reach out to as many members as possible to alert them that this process would be starting and to encourage them to participate. The committee also recommended using consultants to collect the data, so that people would feel free to speak confidentially. In negotiations with the consultants, we revised upwards their proposed data collection plans and asked them to add a congregational survey.

Numbers of participants/respondents⁴

Individual and small group interviews:	55 current members; 9 external sources
Survey:	135 (response rate of 65%)
Six congregational meetings:	73

Going forward

The plan presented below provides the overall strategic plan, based upon goals and objectives derived from the data collected by the consultants to reflect the varied needs and preferences of congregants. Implementation will include development of specific strategies and actions for each objective as well as responsible parties and time-lines. The plan is designed to guide the congregation’s work for three years, with annual reviews of progress. As in the initial planning stages, this process will only work if members participate actively. We encourage all members to review the report, to see where they can make a contribution to advancing the congregation, and to get involved.

³ From motion to the Board, February 2020.

⁴ For additional detail, see Detwiler Group, Summary and Distillation of Findings, October 28, 2020, available on the [members section of the Dor Hadash website](#).

DOR HADASH VALUES

Dor Hadash is a socially conscious, lay-led, Reconstructionist Jewish Congregation. Through the integration of tradition and innovation we offer access to Jewish life and community for people of all backgrounds and abilities.

COMMUNITY

Our greatest strength is our Dor Hadash community itself. We celebrate our diversity and our inclusive values, and everyone is welcome to join us to participate in Jewish communal life.

We are committed to strong democratic lay leadership. We value member engagement in the ritual, governance, social, and educational aspects of our Congregation.

We care for one another and share communal experiences of pain and joy that include ritual, prayer, and personal connection.

Dor Hadash is part of a larger Jewish and civic community, to which we contribute and from which we draw strength.

JUDAISM AND SPIRITUALITY

Dor Hadash is committed to Reconstructionist ideals of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization. We seek to bring meaning to ritual, Torah, and mitzvot as we engage with Judaism through a progressive and contemporary lens.

SOCIAL ACTION

We understand that we are responsible to our broader community and our planet. Through member involvement we work for social justice and dignity for all people and our world.

EDUCATION

We are committed to dynamic Jewish learning. We study Jewish texts, values, practices, and traditions and “reconstruct” them in ways that move and inspire us today. We are committed to the Jewish education of our children.

DOR HADASH GOALS

- 1. Community and Inclusion: Reinforce a Sense of Community and Inclusion within Congregation Dor Hadash**
 - 2. Community Engagement: Build partnerships within the Jewish Community and the Broader Community**
 - 3. Spiritual Guidance: Ensure Spiritual Guidance and Pastoral Care of the Congregation**
 - 4. Financial Management: Sustain a Financially Viable Congregation**
 - 5. Governance and Management: Improve Governance and Management Infrastructure while Maintaining a Participatory Tradition**
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Goal 1: Community and Inclusion

Reinforce a Sense of Community and Inclusion within Congregation Dor Hadash

“Dor Hadash will take an intentional approach to constructing a welcoming, inclusive, curious, and anti-racist environment for Pittsburgh’s Jews and their families and friends. We will continually examine and refine our policies, practices, rituals, and behavior to ensure that all who choose to participate in our community will be welcome.”⁵

Objective 1: Ensure that the congregation is inclusive and open

Make certain that the congregation is welcoming and supportive of anyone who wants to be part of an inclusive and open Jewish congregation, including individuals and families with diverse sexual, gender or racial identities, those who are interfaith, have non-traditional backgrounds or household composition, those who are disabled and any who may find themselves at the margins of Jewish communities.

Measured by: To be determined

Responsible party: Inclusion Committee (creation recommended)

Achieved by: January 2023

⁵ Dor Hadash Anti-Racism Vision statement adopted by the Board, January 10, 2021.

Objective 2: Develop systematic approaches to welcome and connect new members

Measured by: The creation and implementation of systematic approaches

Responsible party: Membership Committee with Administration

Achieved by: September 2021

Objective 3: Engage all members in the life of the congregation through diverse opportunities

Seek members' input on how they would like to contribute, and develop diverse educational, spiritual, social, cultural and social action opportunities.

Measured by: Number of members participating in more than one type of congregation activity; number of members participating in congregation activities beyond attending services or religious school)

Responsible party: Membership Committee

Achieved by: January 2022

Objective 4: Create a sustainable approach to provide care as needed to congregants

Measured by: Approach exists and is being used

Responsible party: Hesed Committee and clergy

Achieved by: May 2021

Goal 2: Community Engagement

Build Partnerships within the Jewish Community and the Broader Community

Objective 1: Build on existing external relationships in further pursuit of the congregation's values

The congregation as a whole and individual members on their own have created numerous informal and formal collaborations with international Jewish organizations, the Reconstructing Judaism movement, as well as organizations in the region's Jewish community, other religions, media, government, and civic and social-service communities. As Dor Hadash creates a strategic plan for its operations and activities, we need to understand the nature of those collaborations in order to strengthen our efforts around education, spiritual life, and the other values of Dor Hadash identified in this Strategic Plan.

Measured by:

Inventorying current partnerships with the congregation and members, 3/15/22

Identifying potential additional partners for spiritual partnerships; education; meditation; social justice; racial justice; school projects; climate action; immigrant assistance; homelessness; Reconstructionist youth group; shared talks, 12/31/22
Monitoring progress in expanding partnerships, 3/15/23 and rolling three-year periods

Responsible party:

For initial plan and continuing plan development: Strategic Plan Implementation Committee.

For additional work and monitoring: Board, possibly through a new Community Engagement committee.

Achieved by:

Initial plan, 12/31/21

Monitoring progress, 3/15/24

Objective 2: Acknowledge and build on the Social Action identity of Dor Hadash within the congregation and the broader community

Social Action, one of the congregation's core values, contributes to many aspects of the life of Dor Hadash and its interactions with the broader community, so we need to document and use that knowledge strategically. This objective is related to but in some ways distinct from Objective 1.

Measured by:

Completing a survey of members and documentation of activities and current partnerships with the congregation and members, 12/31/21

Creation of action plan, 3/15/22

Responsible party: Social Action Committee

Achieved by: Initial plan, 3/15/22

Objective 3: Demonstrate the value of community engagement in the pursuit of Dor Hadash congregational values and in attracting and retaining members

Congregants engage with external organizations in pursuit of their own and the congregation's values and goals, and some members are attracted to Dor Hadash because of its active pursuit of its values. By knowing how and why members interact in the community and why they are attracted to Dor Hadash, having clear strategies for making judgments, as well as by communicating these aspects of Dor Hadash to the wider community, we will be able to create more effective partnerships.

Measured by: Drawing from the actions undertaken for Objectives 1 and 2, and integrating them with the other portions of the Strategic Plan.

Responsible party: Community Engagement Committee (proposed), Communications Committee

Achieved by: 3/15/22

Objective 4: Communicate systematically about external community opportunities, activities, and issues in which members and groups within Congregation Dor Hadash are engaged

The congregation should communicate opportunities more effectively to its members, and more intentionally and systematically inform the wider public about its programs and activities.

Measured by: Development of improved communications within the congregation; action plan for media placements; clarity of which issues warrant the involvement of or statements by the Congregation (anti-Semitism, Democracy, racism, police violence, etc.); and protocols for when/how/why to open Dor Hadash activities to the wider community.

Responsible party: Community Engagement Committee, Communications Committee

Achieved by: 3/15/23

Goal 3: Spiritual Guidance

Ensure Spiritual Guidance and Pastoral Care of the Congregation

Objective 1: Recruit and provide orientation to part-time rabbi or other professional clergy who can fill the needs articulated by members while supporting and working within our lay-led culture

We envision a part time rabbi or other clergy member providing support to lay leaders, leading the congregation in singing, and providing service leadership as scheduled, while helping support and maintain a sense of belonging within a participative and lay-led culture. That person would help meet the articulated congregational needs for pastoral counseling, support for congregant life events, and educational programming to deepen our knowledge of and connection to Reconstructionist Judaism.

Measured by: Successful recruitment

Congregational satisfaction survey after one year

Responsible parties:

Search committee, Board, Hesed, School committee, Learning and Programing, other committees as relevant

Achieved by: To be determined

Objective 2: Engage clergy member in supporting the religious school in providing learning about Judaism, especially Reconstructionist Judaism

Measured by: Religious school administration and parent satisfaction

Responsible Parties:

Religious school principal and teachers

School committee

Achieved by: To be determined

Objective 3: Involve clergy in providing in-depth Jewish education for adult congregants in accordance with determined educational needs and preferences

Measured by: Satisfaction surveys after classes or programs

Responsible parties:

Learning and Programming committee; Ritual committee; Other committees as Relevant; Clergy member

Achieved by: To be determined

Objective 4: Engage clergy member in programs to build a strong sense of community within the congregation while supporting our democratic and participative culture (Working in partnership with those implementing Goal 1)

Measured by:

Annual survey of members

Responsible parties:

Clergy member; Board; Learning and Programming Committee; Ritual Committee; Social Action Committee; Inclusion Committee (proposed)

Achieved by: To be determined

Objective 5: Strengthen the connections of the congregation to the Jewish community and the broader community (Working in partnership with those implementing Goal 2)

Measured by:

Annual congregational survey

Records of existing and new partnerships

Responsible parties:

Clergy member; Board; Community engagement committee (proposed)

Achieved by: To be determined

Goal 4: Financial Management

Sustain a Financially Viable Congregation

Objective 1: Defining financial sustainability

To define what will make Dor Hadash financially sustainable and clarify the decision-making process for achieving this. This will include a process to balance anticipated expenses with targets for dues, fundraising, grants, investment income, and alternative revenue streams.

Measured by:

Acceptance of plan by the Board

Monitoring of the Congregation's current and past financial statements and future plans for adherence to the sustainability goal

Responsible party:

For initial plan: Sustainability working Group of Finance Committee

For monitoring: Finance Committee⁶

Achieved by:

Initial plan implemented: June, 2021

Monitoring progress: Annually every October, prior to budgeting for the next fiscal year

Objective 2: Dues and membership

Develop a dues structure that (1) meets the overall dues target; (2) makes it easy to be a member regardless of resources.

Measured by:

Dues plan has met target for dues income in past and current fiscal years.

Survey shows no feeling of financial barrier or hardship

Responsible party: Dues and Membership Working Group⁷

Achieved by:

Dues structure implemented: December, 2021 for inclusion in draft of 2022-2023 budget

Monitoring effectiveness: Annually every October, prior to budgeting for the next fiscal year

Objective 3: Fundraising

Develop a strategy that meets Dor Hadash's fundraising target while honoring our values.⁸

Measured by:

The plan has met the target for fundraising income in past and current fiscal years.

Survey showing our fundraising strategy is supported by most members.

Responsible party: Fundraising Working Group⁹

Achieved by:

Fundraising plan implemented: August, 2021

Monitoring effectiveness: Annually every October, prior to budgeting for the next fiscal year

⁶ Current membership of the Finance Committee includes the treasurer, three past treasurers, and a member with extensive synagogue management experience. Consider adding 1-2 members to insure representation from diverse groups within congregation.

⁷ The past two membership chairs, 1-2 others not involved in governance, and the treasurer.

⁸ The Strategic Planning Committee recommended that the Fundraising plan include planned giving.

⁹ A member of the Finance Committee, 2-3 others not involved in governance with fundraising experience.

Objective 4: Grants

Develop a grant procurement strategy that meets the congregation's target while honoring our values.

Measured by:

The plan has met the target for grant income in past and current fiscal years.

Board review confirms that the grant strategy is compatible with our strategic goals and congregational values

Responsible party: Grant Working Group¹⁰

Achieved by:

Grant procurement plan implemented: August, 2021

Monitoring effectiveness: Annually every October, prior to budgeting for the next fiscal year

Objective 5: Investments and endowment

Develop a strategy that meets Dor Hadash's target for investment and endowment income while preserving its assets for future generations and adhering to the congregation's ethical principles.

Measured by:

The Congregation is able to withdraw the needed income from its investments each year in a way that supports Objective 1 (Sustainability)

Responsible Party:

For initial plan: Investment and Endowment Working Group

For monitoring: Finance Committee

Achieved by:

Investment and Endowment plan implemented: August, 2021

Monitoring effectiveness: Annually every October, prior to budgeting for the next fiscal year

Objective 6: Religious school and youth education

Develop funding strategies for youth education in which the primary goal is to allow the Dor Hadash Religious School to remain viable.

Measured by:

Review of past and current School Income and Expense statements to see if the results meet the prescribed targets¹¹

Responsible Parties:

1. For initial plan: Religious School and Youth Education Working Group
2. For monitoring: Finance Committee and Youth Education Committee

¹⁰ A member of the Finance Committee, 2-3 other people with experience writing and applying for grants.

¹¹ When the Religious School was a separate entity, Dor Hadash pledged to cover up to 50% of the Religious School's operating budget.

Achieved by:

Youth education plan implemented: December, 2021 for inclusion in draft of budget for 2022-2023

Monitoring effectiveness: Annually every October, prior to budgeting for the next fiscal year

Goal 5: Governance and Management

Improve Governance and Management Infrastructure while Maintaining a Participatory Tradition

Objective 1: Re-Envision the Board of Directors and Executive Committee

Overhauling the Board and Executive Committee structure will increase transparency in governance, improve efficiency, decrease the time spent in meetings, and make Board participation and committee positions more appealing to members.

Measured by: Approval by Board and Congregational vote

Responsible party: Governance & Management Working Group, Bylaws committee

Achieved by: September 1, 2021; implemented at March, 2022 congregational meeting

Objective 2: Expand the role of staff

Clarifying and expanding the role of paid administrative staff in supporting the Board and other congregational leadership will make participation in leadership more accessible and more attractive to members, achieve greater consistency in Congregation operations, and allow the Board to focus on governance and mission of the Congregation instead of day-to-day tasks.

Measured by:

Board votes on updated Bylaws and Policies & Procedures

Board approval of updated job descriptions for administrative staff

Responsible party: Bylaws Committee, VP Administration, Congregational Manager, Finance Committee/Working Group, Ritual Committee/Spiritual Leadership Working Group, Governance & Management Working Group

Achieved by: June, 2021(part), June, 2022 (remainder)

Objective 3: Greater openness in governance

Increasing access to congregational governing documents and records of Board decisions and discussions will increase understanding, awareness, and confidence in Board decisions.

Measured by:

Publication of documents as described
Survey congregation about Board accessibility

Responsible party: Communications Chair, Congregational Manager

Achieved by: June 30, 2021

Objective 4: Improved documentation of policies

Codifying and making searchable Congregation policies will decrease the time spent rehashing issues which the Board has already addressed, strengthen institutional memory, and increase consistency in policy between Boards over time.

Measured by:

The Board votes to update and approve existing Policies & Procedures manual
Review of the website to confirm publication and archiving of documents

Responsible party: Bylaws Committee, staff person (to search old minutes), Technology committee, Congregational Manager

Achieved by: June 2022

Objective 5: Promoting greater participation in leadership

The development of mentorship opportunities, training and support for Board members, and a decrease in the amount of time required for Board commitments will promote greater participation in Congregation leadership.

Measured by:

Participation of currently underrepresented constituencies on the Board (as reflected in the nomination slate)

Documentation of onboarding and transition procedures for new Board members in Policies & Procedures

Survey of Board members about hours devoted to Dor Hadash business

Responsible party: Current Board and Standing Committee Chairs, Nominating Committee, School Committee, Community & Inclusion Working Group, current Board, Bylaws Committee, Vice President for Administration, current Board members

Achieved by: December 2021

APPENDIX
MEMBERS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE AND WORKING
GROUPS

Members of The Dor Hadash Strategic Planning Committee

Carolyn Ban, co-chair
Melvin Melnick, co-chair and Dor Hadash Vice President for Administration
Rob Kraftowitz, Treasurer
Bruce Herschlag, President Elect
Sarah Angrist
Abigail Horn
Matthew Nicotra
Deane Root

Working Group Members

Values

Leader: Susan Melnick
Sarah Angrist
Dana Kellerman
Miri Rabinowitz
Pamela Weiss

Goals

Leader: Wendy Kobee
Bruce Herschlag
Abigail Horn
Melvin Melnick

Working Groups Organized Around the Specific Goals

Goal 1. Community and Inclusion Goal 2. Community Engagement

Group Leader: Abigail Horn
Co-leader: Anna Coufal
Alyson Bonavoglia
Hal Grinberg
Miriam Kenton
Scott Hollander

Group Leader: Deane Root
Laurie Heller
Joni Schwager
Richard Weinberg

Goal 3. Spiritual Guidance

Group Leader: Wendy Kobee
Ray Engel
Anne-Marie Nelson

Goal 4. Financial Management

Group Leader: Rob Kraftowitz
Ilana Diamond
Harry Levinson
Jim Silver
janera solomon

Goal 5: Governance and Management

Group Leader: Dana Kellerman
Pamina Ewing
Pam Goldman
Beth Silver
Judy Yanowitz

Consultants

The Detwiler Group:
Susan Detwiler
Jocelyn Sheppard