

Programs

COMMUNITY:

Comprehensive Communities Partnership (CCP)

A collaboration between the Police Department, City Departments and the community addressing crime, quality of life, blighted housing, traffic problems, physical appearance and safety concerns at the neighborhood level through a Problem Solving Committee (PSC).

Hartford Block Watch Organizer Program

Provides funding for a neighborhood organizer to form block watches, maximize community participation and increase block water membership, assist in block level problem solving and link to CCP Problem Solving Committee, assist neighborhoods with actions and services projects related to Community Court, and help organize/support projects to improve neighborhoods.

Hartford 2000

A coalition of neighborhood groups providing forum for sharing ideas, resources, information and developing cooperative efforts. Advocates for funding of neighborhood revitalization (e.g. CCEDA and State Urban Act funds).

ECONOMIC:

Hartford Façade Improvement Program

Ten-year loan for 75% of construction cost for exterior facade improvements. Loan forgiven at rate of 10% per year so that loan becomes a grant if owner remains in property for entire 10 years. Architectural services provided by City at no cost.

Hartford Peer Lending and Development Corporation

Micro-lending, training and networking for small businesses and the self-employed.

HEALTH:

Capital Area Substance Abuse Council (CASAC)

A public/private Regional Action Council that helps community leaders and citizens develop and carry out strategies to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse through education, community mobilization, public awareness and advocacy. A CASAC community organizer is currently working with residents in a section of the Northeast neighborhood.

Community Health Services (CHS)

Provides services such as medical, mental health, nutritional counseling, substance abuse counseling, food pantry, pharmacy and lab. Located in adjoining Upper Albany neighborhood.

Hartford Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Program

City, State and HUD program providing 0% interest 10-year loan for lead abatement and associated rehabilitation to property owners cited by Health Department as having toxic levels of lead.

HOUSING:

Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Corporate tax credits for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied historic buildings containing 1-4 dwelling units. Minimum rehabilitation cost of \$25,000 of qualified costs (excluding sites improvements and soft costs); tax credits equal to 30% of qualified rehab costs to a maximum of \$30,000 per housing unit. Historic buildings are properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places.

Hartford Homeownership Appraisal Gap Financing Program

Financing assistance program for non-profit and for profit developers rehabilitating and returning vacant, deteriorated one to four family homes to the market. Generally, low, moderate and middle income potential homeowners eligible.

Hartford Housing Preservation Loan Fund

Low interest loans (direct and in combination with private sector financing) for repairs/improvements relating to code violations, energy conservation, handicap accessibility, general property improvements not exceeding 25% of total costs. Eligibility criteria relate to income of owner and affordability of units.

House Hartford

Fannie Mae, City of Hartford and local mortgage lender program offering homebuyers mortgages, down payment and closing cost assistance for purchase of one to four family homes and condominium units. Generally, low, moderate and middle income persons eligible.

YOUTH:

Hartford AmeriCorps

Provides living stipend and education award to persons between 17 and 30 years of age having a high school diploma or GED and who participate in community service projects for a year (September to August). Provides training in leadership skills, CPR, career counseling, child development and financial management among others.

Hartford Street Youth

Catholic Family Services program to divert high-risk youth from negative behavior by providing alternative programs, case management, recreation, intervention.

Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

Program integrating child development, leadership and democracy skills into a 20-week program targeted at enabling parents to become leading advocates for children. The application process is competitive, based on how the individual's participation will enhance learning for the class as a whole. Family supports such as child care, meals and transportation are provided.

Women Infants and Children

A nutrition program of food supplements and education for income-eligible women, infants and children under age 5 at nutritional and/or medical risk.

Yo! Hartford

A Youth Opportunity Program for youth 14 to 21 years old. Skills development program, training and preparation for permanent employment, high school completion and continuing education.

Our Economic Development Corridors

The primary opportunity areas for economic development within the Clay Arsenal NRZ logically center along Albany Avenue, Main Street and along Windsor Street. Both Main Street and Albany Avenue represent major corridors within Hartford which intersect at the NRZ's southern terminus. North Main Street historically linked the City with northern adjoining towns, however, a function largely undertaken by I-91. Albany Avenue on the other hand serves as both a retail corridor for North Hartford and a commuter link between the downtown and towns to the west. Meanwhile Windsor Street which defines Clay Arsenal's eastern border is largely dedicated to industrial uses. All of these areas provide key advantages to promoting economic development within the NRZ including the existence of established commercial corridors, strong stakeholder interest in the NRZ and a neighborhood commitment to long term stabilization and re-growth.

Lower Albany Avenue

Albany Avenue represents an important commercial and commuter corridor for the City of Hartford and serves as a major gateway to downtown Hartford. Within the Clay Arsenal NRZ, however, retail and service type businesses are less established and have more vacancies as compared to upper Albany Avenue. Low purchasing power associated with one of the lowest per capita income levels in the city combined with documented population decline no doubt contributed to the lackluster presence of retail in this area. Nevertheless, with more than 70% of the households in Clay Arsenal without vehicles (1990), there is a stated need to expand and improve retail/commercial mix in this area.

The portion of Albany Avenue located in the Clay Arsenal NRZ is relatively short, stretching 0.6 miles from the intersection of Main and Albany Avenue to Irving Street. Commercial uses in this area are few and tend to be concentrated in a number of small convenience stores or bodegas served by on-street or side street parking. Within this section, Quirk Middle School fronts Albany Avenue incorporating one entire block along this corridor. Housing is also prevalent along this strip of Albany Avenue dominated by mixed use and traditional multi-family residences. The closest major supermarket or drugstore convenient to the neighborhood is located 1.5 miles west of the Albany and Main intersection in Bravo Center in Upper Albany Avenue (Woodland Street).

The most obvious site for consideration of development on Albany Avenue is the MassConn site situated adjacent to the Community Health Services building. The site is owned by the Hartford Redevelopment Authority who has identified a preferred developer for the parcel. The property is less than two acres which is small for any strip center with an anchor store concept but should be able to accommodate a single use retail or business such as a franchise restaurant. Environmental issues connected to the site will reportedly be addressed by HRA prior to any land transfer.

Despite advantages of street frontage on a major city thoroughfare, public ownership and a developable parcel size, the MassConn site continues to be undeveloped. Market issues no doubt play a role in the lack of activity of the site. Nevertheless, given its proximity to CHS (representing a major investment and asset in the NRZ) and high visibility on Albany Avenue, determining and undertaking a program/project for the MassConn site should be high priority for the NRZ. Moreover, uses in addition to retail should be explored particularly in light of numerous retail proposals being made for the North Hartford area which could be in competition with each other.

Other development opportunities along lower Albany Avenue are more limited in scale. A proposal for retail development has been presented for the city-owned parcel at the corner of Brooks Street

and Albany Avenue. While the site might accommodate a small single business opportunity, it is too small to serve as a retail center. In addition, vacancies and empty storefronts along lower Albany Avenue represent potential opportunity for in-fill retail and services. Such a strategy, however, is as much linked to small business development and entrepreneurial capacity building as redevelopment of real estate.

North Main Street

North Main Street serves as Clay Arsenal's primary north-south arterial corridor connecting the downtown to the Town of Windsor border. However unlike Albany Avenue, which is decidedly retail in character, North Main Street is less consistent in use. South of Sanford Street (Clay Arsenal's northern border), the corridor's primary use is residential and institutional, with cemeteries, numerous churches (and church-owned property) and the SAND Elementary School serving as prominent examples. Above Sanford Street, retail and to some extent, industrial uses are more dominant, although certainly not in any meaningful concentration.

Moreover, despite North Main Street's linkage to northern towns, it is far less used as a commuter corridor for downtown Hartford workers as compared to Albany Avenue. Interstate 91 is the primary traffic venue for such commuters thereby relegating North Main Street to principally neighborhood use. This is particularly the case in lower North Main due to its relative isolation from connecting interchanges with highways (via Boce Barlow Way or Interchange 34 at the border of Hartford and Windsor).

In terms of economic development opportunities along North Main Street within Clay Arsenal, a number of proposals and ideas are in varying stages of conceptualization and/or implementation. One project that has gained momentum is the proposed retail development of the 4.25 acres at Pavilion and Main Street that is owned by the City of Hartford. The project is jointly co-sponsored by SAND and the Hartford Tenants Rights Federation under a joint entity titled "Public Housing Residents Going Places" Inc. The Pavilion site has good visibility with frontage along North Main Street and backs up to the renovated Mary Shepherd Place housing complex.

A significant amount of planning and due diligence associated with the Pavilion project (including a strong business plan, market study and preliminary financial commitments) may be paying off. An exclusive broker has been brought on board in cooperation with the Hartford Economic Development Commission and several prospective tenants are being evaluated. With the appropriate size and mix of development, this project could provide needed services to the immediate neighborhood while capturing commuter traffic.

Other redevelopment sites under consideration along North Main Street include the 4.3 acre "SAND" site and the former Firestone site. The SAND site is owned by the City of Hartford and situated just north of the railroad tracks on North Main Street. The site could potentially be expanded by an additional ten acres with the inclusion of the parcel now occupied by the HUD foreclosed SANA apartments (The City of Hartford has first right of refusal on SANA apartments). At present there is no plan or proposal to redevelop the site although its size, location and public ownership indicates an opportunity that should be further explored through highest and best use analysis and site planning.

The former Firestone site remains vacant. This site's high visibility and strategic location at a key intersection could be a tremendous benefit to the Clay Arsenal NRZ if suitable redevelopment was pursued.

Windsor Street

Like North Main Street, Windsor Street is a focus for both the Clay Arsenal NRZ and Northeast NRZ. This corridor has recently become the focus of a number of new industrial projects including the recent construction of Scott's Bakery. As such, it presents an excellent opportunity to expand the job base within the NRZ through industrial development. Along with good access to highways, Windsor Street is isolated from residential uses (a major security issue), offers competitively priced product, has inventory (both land and buildings), and is moderately stable in appearance. Moreover, stabilization in the surrounding neighborhood that has included redevelopment of Stowe Village and other public housing projects has improved the image of this corridor for business development. The area is also linked to attractive incentive packages due to its location in an enterprise zone.

Meanwhile, there is a recent strengthening in the regional industrial market due in part to productivity changes in how goods are produced and delivered. Both nationally and state-wide, manufacturing jobs appear to be stabilizing after 30 years of consistent decline. This stabilization reflects a significant turnaround for manufacturing-based companies hit hard by changes in the global economy but who have since adapted to become more competitive, efficient and productive in a rapidly changing economy. Meanwhile new businesses are entering the market including high tech, bio-tech and dot.com industries looking for industrial space. This has caused a tightening in the available supply of industrial inventory in the region which has seen little growth since the mid-80s. In turn, this tightening in supply appears to be benefiting Hartford's beleaguered industrial market.

While industrial use appears to be the most obvious market for Windsor Street, ONE/CHANE had proposed a community garden and farmers market for a 2.5 acre site owned by the American Legion located at the corner of Windsor and Battle Street. Although considerable funds have been expended to date in developing this proposal, in light of the Star Hardware announcement and the direction the Pavilion proposal may take, consideration should be given to evaluating the farmers market option for a North Main Street location. This move would have the dual benefit of improving proximity to the food market to a wider resident base (and one that typically lacks vehicle access) as well as preserving consistency of uses along Windsor Street targeting non-consumer businesses.

Aside from maintaining consistency in use, an excellent opportunity exists to participate in a joint marketing effort involving appropriate city and state agencies and Clay Arsenal and Northeast NRZ in promoting Windsor Street for industrial and industrial/business service re-use. Given the corridor's excellent advantages as a business location and its potential to produce a significant level of quality jobs for northeastern Hartford neighborhood residents, it is in the mutual interest of both NRZs to support job creation along the entire corridor in keeping with the industrial character of the area irrespective of where it occurs in Clay Arsenal or Northeast NRZ.