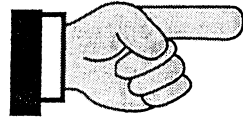


# Parkville's Priority Projects



## #1

### **Complex, Multifaceted Problems Require Multifaceted Solutions**

This neighborhood strategic plan is divided into six major areas. They are economic development, public safety, housing, education, recreation, and beautification. It is recognized that, in order to improve the neighborhood, a multifaceted approach is needed. For example, an abandoned, blighted building is not only a housing issue, but a public safety and beautification issue too. It is for that reason this section was created.

### **Cooperation is Key**

An essential project for the enhancement of the Parkville neighborhood is one that will capitalize on the existing assets, specifically the various civic organizations. Parkville has been fortunate because it has many dedicated individuals working in various organizations. There also has been cooperation among those organizations to get the job done. For example, the Parkville Business Association, the Parkville Seniors, and the City of Hartford, among others, joined together to clean and secure a blighted building in our neighborhood.

The complex problems facing the neighborhood are going to require even more cooperation among all the groups. Limited time and resources also require that individuals and groups work more strategically. For this reason, it is suggested the existing groups form a community group collaborative to discuss how they are going to work together in a more efficient manner.

The neighborhood will only survive if there is greater and meaningful participation by more residents. Therefore this collaborative must look at ways to encourage greater neighborhood participation. A Parkville Newsletter, organized by several groups, to inform residents about important information is one suggestion. A sign publicizing community events, perhaps in front of Parkville Community School is another.

This project has the potential to significantly impact all other actions in the

neighborhood and city in general because it would result in systemic changes in how the city and neighborhoods work together to improve the city. It is for that reason it is priority number one for the neighborhood.

It should also be noted that many of the complex problems confronting the Parkville neighborhood require solutions that are beyond its control. Many of the issues in economic development, public safety, housing, recreation, beautification and education will require systemic changes in departments for the whole city, not just for Parkville. For decades, public policy on state and federal levels has left urban areas at a disadvantage. Government policies in areas such as housing, education, transportation and economic development must change if cities are to thrive. What can Parkville residents and business people do to change this situation? First and foremost, we must concentrate on solutions that are within our control. We must, in a sense, clean up our own house before we can plan to influence others. This plan embodies that spirit. Second, we must strategically work with other neighborhood groups, community organizations and city officials to assure that urban areas such as Hartford get their fair share.

## **1. City Department/Private Agency Collaboration**

Building capacity of departments/agencies and residents

Community Participation Enhancements

Formation of Community Group Collaborative to include:

Comprehensive Community Partnership

Parkville Revitalization Association

Parkville Senior Center

Parkville Community Organization

Parkville Community School Governance Team

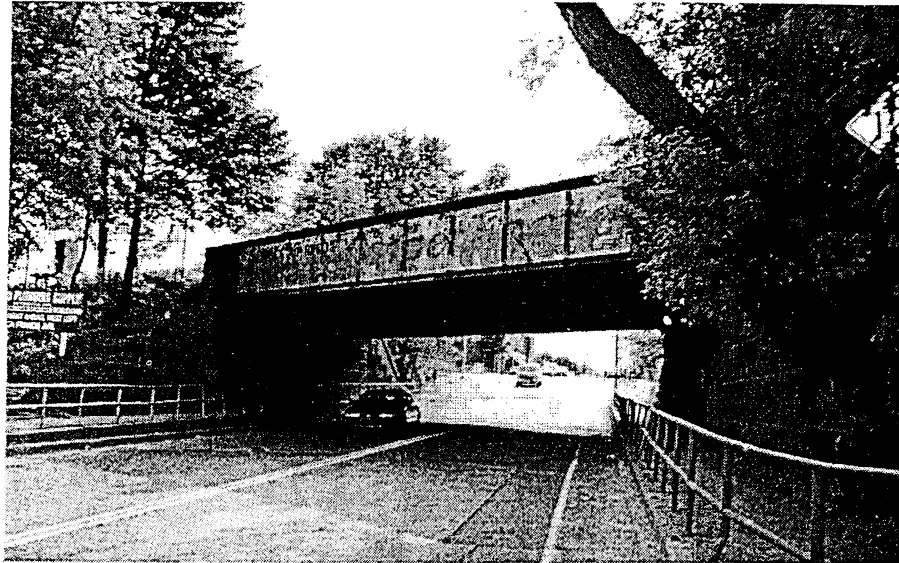
Parkville Business Association

### **Suggested Collaborative Projects**

- Institute a Parkville Newsletter
- Install a Parkville Community Activity Sign (sign at Parkville Community School to publicize neighborhood events and meetings)

### **Suggested Strategies**

- Work with existing neighborhood organizations and the City's Comprehensive Communities Partnership (CCP) program
- Investigate the possibility of the City earmarking funds (CDBG ?) for each neighborhood to hire a resident to coordinate neighborhood projects as part of the CCP process.



## 2. Parkville Gateway Project

Entrances are strategic areas of a neighborhood. They can indicate what is to be found in a neighborhood. Unfortunately, most of Parkville's entrances are marred by neglect. With a concerted effort by a few neighborhood groups, these situations could be turned around and become neighborhood assets. Signs could be placed over the train trestles on Park and Capitol Avenues that welcome people to Parkville and advertise area businesses as RAW has done with its banners. The sidewalks and land under the highway overpasses can be cleaned and landscaped. Perhaps wildflowers and trees could be planted there. The three three-family houses on Prospect near Capitol need to be spruced up. The vacant apartment building on Sisson should be demolished and the property landscaped as an attractive open space. The vacant gas station on Prospect and Park needs a new commercial use.

### Beautification of Entrances to Neighborhood

Park Street at Train Trestle  
Park Street at Prospect Avenue  
Capitol Avenue at Train Trestle

Hamilton Street  
Sisson Avenue  
Capitol Avenue and Prospect Avenue

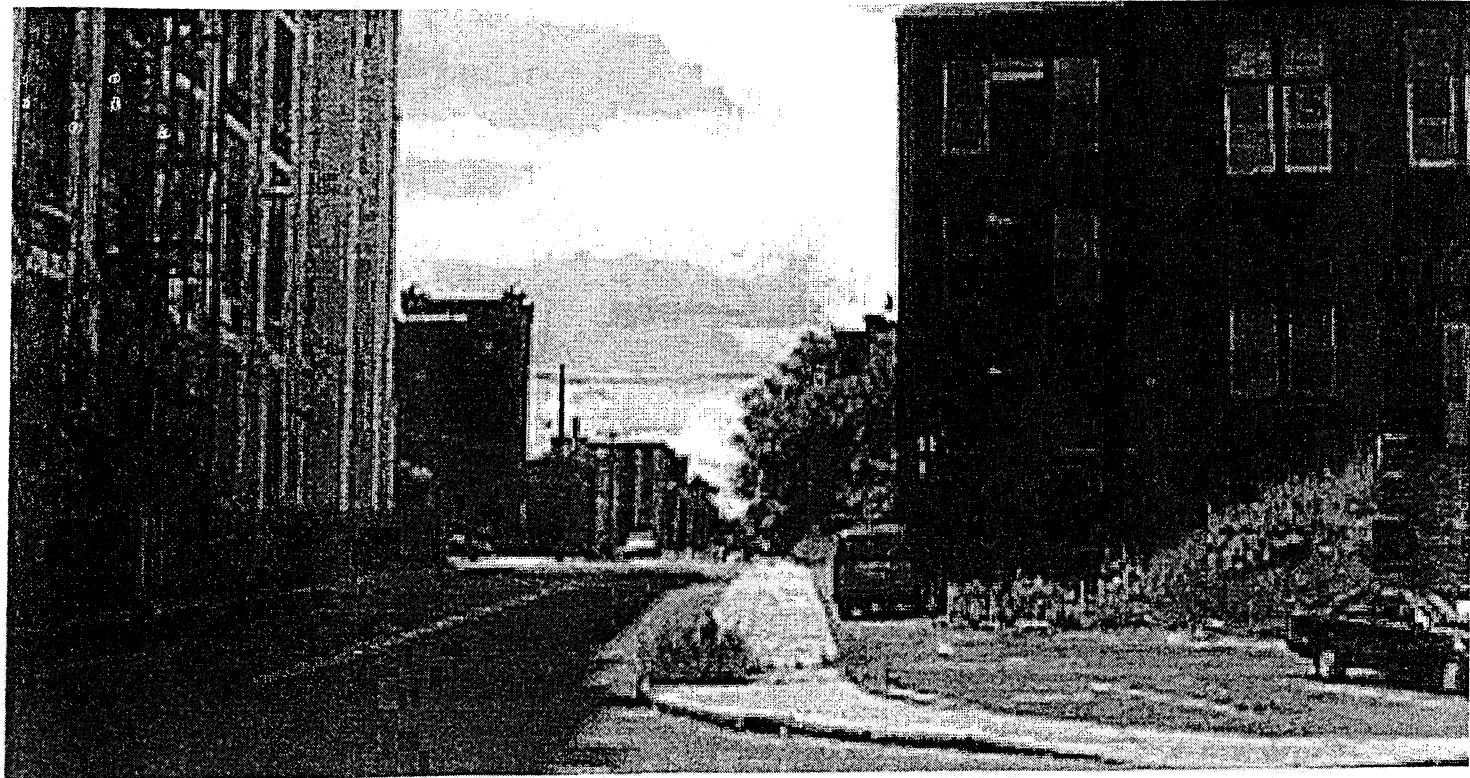
### Suggested Strategies

Clean up  
New Signage  
Landscaping

### Possible Participating Organizations

Parkville Business Association  
Parkville Revitalization Association  
Parkville Community School

Amtrak  
City Public Works Department  
State Department of Transportation



### 3. Parkville Industrial Corridor Project

The neighborhood's industrial corridor needs a strategic plan to revitalize the area. Several positive new developments need to be nurtured so that the area continues to develop. Presently there are a variety of businesses in the historic industrial buildings (office space, various kinds of manufacturing, a restaurant and micro brewery). There is no comprehensive plan.

The Parkville Revitalization Association has been successful in obtaining three grants to be used for a preliminary economic development study. Part of the revitalization strategy needs to include identification of resources. Programs offered by the State, particularly from the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Department of Environmental Protection need to be identified.

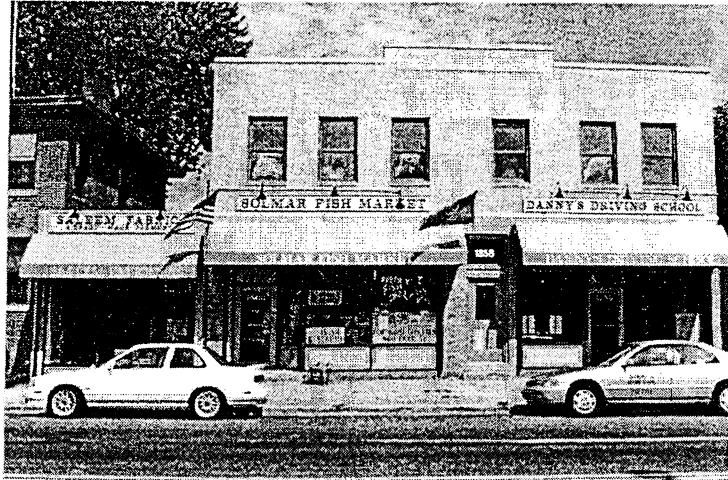
#### Parkville Industrial Corridor Project

Bartholomew Avenue  
Hamilton Street  
Park Street  
Francis Avenue

Olive Street  
Rose Street  
Belmont Street

#### Suggested Strategies

Economic Development Study  
Identification of best site use  
Building demolition  
Building renovation  
Streetscape improvements  
Build on base of industries presently here including creative and aerospace industries  
Identification of resources to implement Plan



## 4. Retail Area Enhancements

Parkville enjoys a fairly vibrant retail area. Park Street commercial spaces are mostly filled and have received a recent facelift. New Park Avenue and Sisson still maintain successful business. However, Capitol Avenue has suffered from general deterioration affecting businesses and residential areas. It is a separate priority project. Business owners still complain about a shortage of parking despite many parking lots in the area. Litter and blighted buildings need to be addressed more strategically.

Parkville's new Business Association and business manager have been addressing issues. A comprehensive plan needs to be developed.

### Improved Retail Corridors

- Park Street
- Sisson Avenue
- New Park Avenue
- Capitol Avenue

### Suggested Strategies

- Continuation of Facade improvements
- Parking enhancements (identification of parking and new signs)
- Streetscape improvements (lighting & trash receptacles)
- Small Business Loan Program

## 5. Heublein Site



Studies done for Heublein indicate that retail would be the best use of the 12 acre property. New development has been recommended and the buildings have been removed. Several ideas have been suggested.

Parkville groups have supported zone changes from Industrial to Business to allow for retail, restaurants and other types of accessories.

Presently, there are plans for a 16 screen multi-plex cinema with an IMAX (large screen) theater. Theaters will be state-of-art with stadium-style seating. The IMAX theater will draw moviegoers from throughout the region and beyond. The total cost of the project is approximately \$20,000,000. This proposal is moving through the City's regulatory process concerning sit review, design, height, traffic considerations, parking, etc.

Other recent developments on New Park Avenue, a Super Stop and Shop in Hartford and a BJ's Wholesale Store, Home Depot and furniture showroom in West Hartford, are transforming an aging industrial/comercial are into a thriving retail area.

Proximity to West Hartford and access to the highway should be seen as assets.

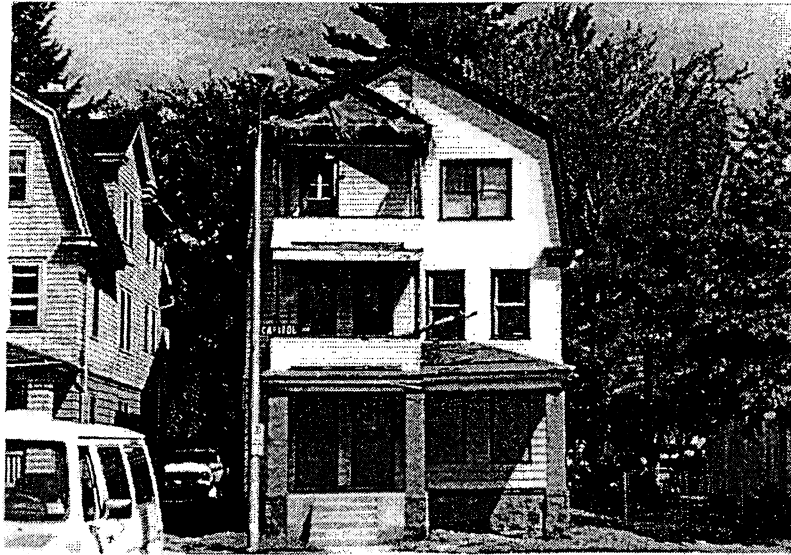
### Suggested Strategies

Parkville neighborhood groups has met with developers to share ideas on how to make this proposal beneficial to Parkville. Proposals that need to monitored are:

- Hiring of local people for construction and theater jobs
- A "gateway" sign on New Park Avenue to welcome people to Parkville
- Additional landscaping and pedestrian friendly environment along New Park Ave.
- Promotional displays of Parkville businesses, particularly restaurants
- Displays on Parkville's history highlighting its industrial heritage
- Bicycle racks for employees and movie goers

Work with the State Department of Transportation to assure changes to I-84 will benefit New Park Avenue development.

Work with City Departments and developers to promote area.



## 6. Capitol Avenue

This area has declined considerably in the last few years. This is unfortunate because the street is a major thoroughfare through Parkville and the city. A large apartment complex is vacant. Other residential buildings need to be renovated or demolished. Several businesses may be out of compliance with zoning and other City ordinances. Coordinated assistance from City departments is essential.

### Capitol Avenue Improvement Strategies

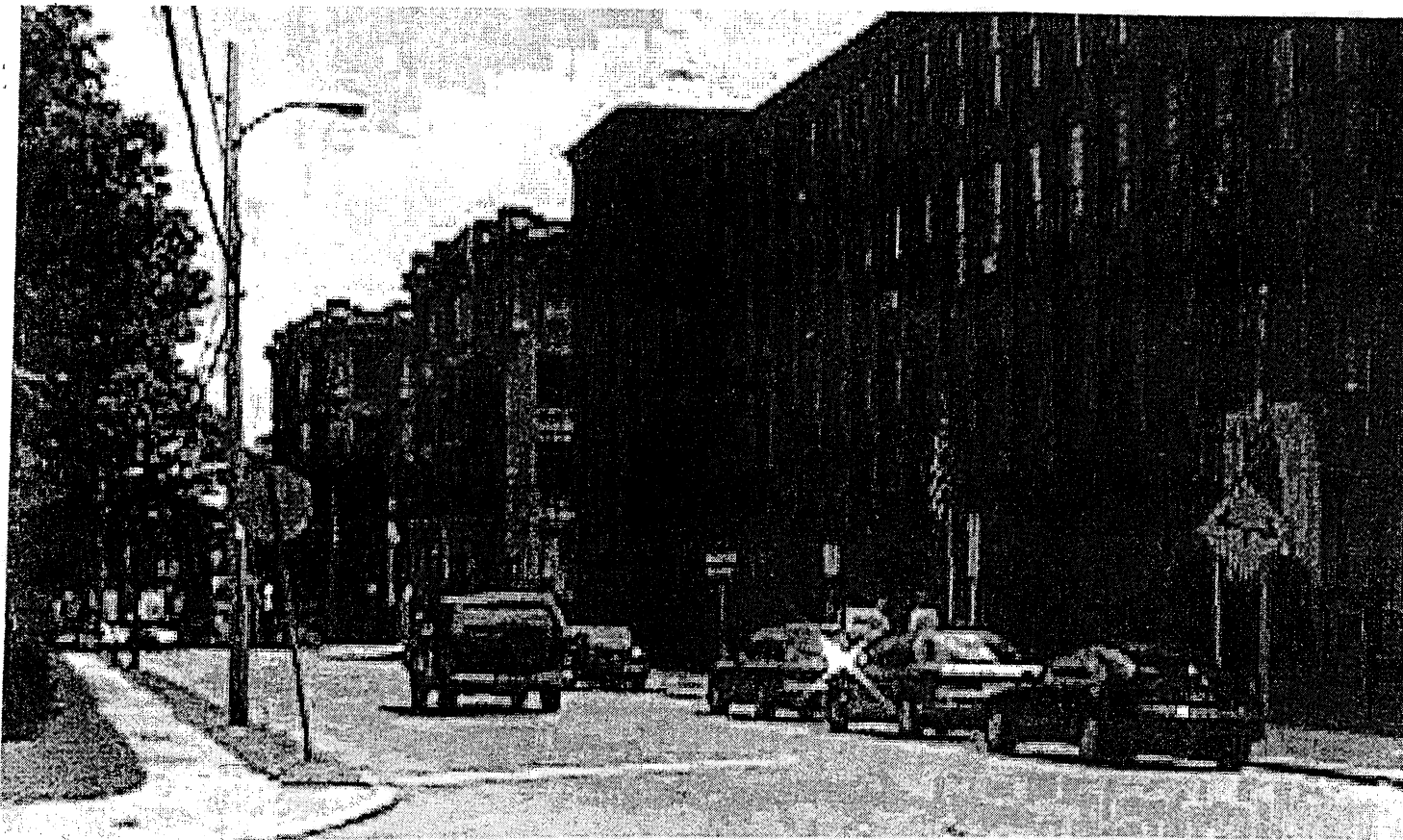
- Renovate housing for home ownership

- Assure zoning compliance

- Identify use of vacant and blighted properties

- Work with other neighborhood groups (West End and Frog Hollow North) and the city to revitalize the street

- Identify Capitol Avenue as "Industrial Avenue" much like 6th Avenue in New York City is know as the Avenue of the Americas. This could be done with signs.



## 7. Orange/Arbor Streets

This area, like others in the neighborhood and the city, has seen some positive developments, but they will be lost unless some strategic action is taken to stabilize the area. Renovations and enhancements to Day Playground and the Real Art Ways complex have been significant. Unfortunately, deteriorating housing and increased crime in the area will affect the success of these projects and the viability of the businesses located in the Arbor Street buildings as well as lead to further housing decline.

Real Art Ways has completed Phase I enhancements. Phase II enhancements include renovations and new construction that will include a theater, cinema, cafe space and exhibition space. The 30 and 56 Arbor Street buildings also house other creative businesses and studio space. The area continue to attract new businesses and residents if it were marketed as an 'Arts Cluster' or 'Creative Industries' area. Artists and others could be introduced to Parkville's affordable housing. The completed Real Art Ways can servie as an anchor for creative industries and for introducing people to Parkville.

### Orange/Arbor Street Improvement Strategies

- Renovation and home ownership
- Streetscape enhancements
- More programming at Day Playground
- Completion of Phase II of Real Art Ways Center
- Marketing Arbor Street buildings; identification of the area as an Arts Cluster or Creative Industries area to spur related development





## 8. Housing Patterns

The neighborhood has experienced changes in housing patterns. The neighborhood's already fragile level of home ownership is decreasing. It is unclear if home owners have moved out to the suburbs and have become absentee landlords or if new owners live in their buildings. Research needs to be done. Information from the city has been difficult to obtain.

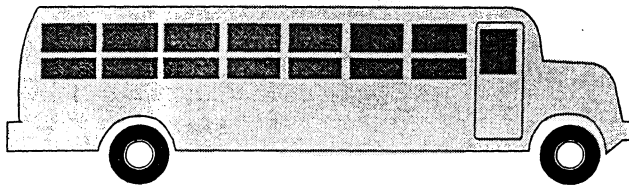
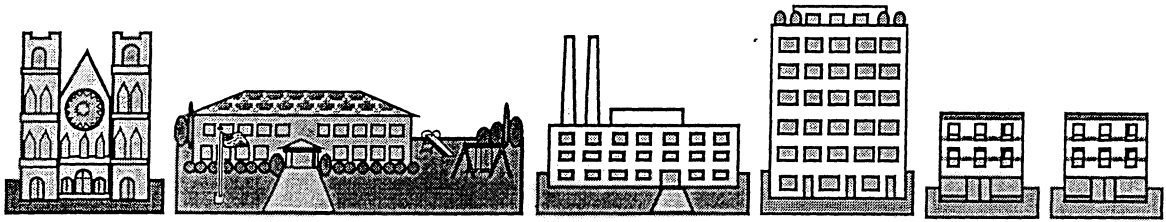
Regardless of the result of the research, home ownership must increase if the neighborhood is going to stabilize. Housing programs need to be identified and publicized. A neighborhood housing fair could be part of a comprehensive marketing strategy. Specific key areas need to be targeted.

### **Home ownership Program**

Target buildings for renovation and home ownership program.

### **Strategies**

- Work with banks and housing agencies to market the neighborhood and home ownership programs
- Develop comprehensive housing stabilization strategy



## 9. Tour of Parkville

### (The Squeaky Wheel Gets the Grease)

Some Parkville residents believe that the neighborhood has not received the attention it deserves particularly from City officials. There is a perception that moneys for city programs often don't make it to Parkville. Police patrols historically have been pulled from the neighborhood. Perhaps this occurs because the Parkville doesn't have a resident council member or because it is ethnically mixed; no council member sees neighborhood residents as their constituency. To address that situation, it is suggested that Parkville have a tour of the neighborhood, particularly for City and State politicians, to inform them of the assets and challenges encountered in the neighborhood. Ideally, that strategy will enhance communication among public officials, residents and business people as well as direct resources to the neighborhood.

#### Tour of Parkville

Parkville's civic groups sponsor a tour for city and state officials and other groups (non-profits, businesses, foundations, etc.)

#### Objectives

- Increase awareness about the assets and challenges in the neighborhood
- Gain support from public officials to improve the neighborhood



## 10. Determining Uses for Vacant Buildings and Properties

Uses for vacant buildings, whether residential or commercial need to be identified as part of comprehensive plans. The general goals are to:

- eliminate blight
- increase home ownership
- provide other amenities (parking, community gardens, open space)

Most empty buildings have already been identified and suggestions for their use are listed below. A general strategy would be to rehab vacant 1 to 3 unit buildings that are in decent shape. The City's home ownership incentive programs could be used to get a first time home owner to occupy one of the units. Where 1 to 3 family houses are too expensive to rehab, the strategy is to demolish them and build 1 to 2 family houses for first time home owners. In two cases where lots are very small, the strategy is to deed property to adjacent neighbors.

Some vacant six family apartments are recommended for demolition and will be replaced by single or two-family houses (except where a community garden or parking is more appropriate). Many of these apartment buildings are in the middle of blocks of 1-3 family houses. There is presently no demand for them and they are too expensive to rehabilitate at present.

PRA has been working with the city to determine plans for problem properties in the neighborhood. \$500,000 from Urban Act Funds have been earmarked to demolish blighted buildings. Other problem properties have been identified that could lead to demolitions or buildings secured for later use (moth balled). A systemic and more comprehensive approach needs to be developed.

## Priority Project Timeline

Priority Project	Start date	Completion date
1. City Department/ Private Agency Collaboration	May '98	ongoing
2. Parkville Gateway Project	Nov. '97	Nov. '98
3. Parkville Industrial Corridor Project	Oct. '97	Oct. 2000
4. Retail Area Enhancements	May '98	ongoing
5. Heublein Site	Nov. '97	Nov. 2000
6. Capitol Avenue Improvements	Oct. '97	Oct. 2000
7. Orange/Arbor Street Improvements	June '98	Nov. '99
8. Housing Improvements	June '98	ongoing
9. Parkville Tour	May '98	yearly
10. Determining Uses for Vacant Buildings/ Properties	Oct. '97	December '98