

FAQs about NRZs

How did the NRZ program come into existence?

In 1995, the Connecticut State Legislature adopted Public Act #95-340 - "An Act Establishing a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Process." The purpose of the legislation was to provide a tool for the revitalization of neighborhoods with significant numbers of blighted properties. (CGS Chapter 18 Sec. 7-600-608.)

How does a neighborhood form an NRZ?

A neighborhood wishing to obtain the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) designation first creates an NRZ Planning Committee composed of representatives of all neighborhood "stakeholders," i.e. individuals and groups having an interest, financial and otherwise, in the well-being of the neighborhood. Stakeholders might include homeowners, businesses, renters, faith communities, nonprofits, property owners, government, institutions, and schools. At least 51% of the members of an NRZ Planning Committee must be neighborhood residents.

The role of the NRZ Planning Committee is to develop a Strategic Plan for the NRZ. Such a plan must include a vision for the neighborhood and a revitalization plan that will achieve that vision. An NRZ Strategic Plan must answer four questions:

- What does the neighborhood look like today?
- What do we want the neighborhood to look like?
- How do we get there?
- How can we measure our progress?

Once the NRZ Strategic Plan has been adopted by the NRZ Planning Committee, it is submitted for adoption as an ordinance by the governing body of the local government. The NRZ Planning Committee then reconstitutes itself as an NRZ Implementation Committee and continues the work of revitalizing the neighborhood in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

What benefits are available through the NRZ program?

The NRZ designation allows the NRZ and its local government access to several tools provided in the State legislation, such as expanded use of eminent domain, rent receivership and tax agreements, and waivers of environmental, health, and safety codes that jeopardize implementation of the strategic plan.

Are there NRZs throughout the state?

A number of Connecticut municipalities have active NRZs, including New Haven, New Britain, Waterbury, and Bridgeport. Hartford has the distinction of having formed the most NRZs of any community in the state: fourteen.

How does the NRZ program work in Hartford?

Fourteen (14) NRZs have been formed in Hartford. Thirteen have completed their Strategic Plans which have all been adopted through an ordinance by the Hartford Court of Common Council. Some NRZs have amended their plans. The recently formed Southwest/Behind the Rocks NRZ is in the process of writing its Strategic Plan. Other NRZs are in the process of implementing their Strategic Plans.

Each NRZ has a permanent committee or board of directors. The Mayor of the City of Hartford appoints a representative to each of the NRZs. That individual is a voting member of the NRZ committee and participates fully in all of the NRZ's work. His/her special responsibilities include representing the City's interests as a whole, facilitating assistance from City departments as necessary and keeping the Mayor informed of the progress of the NRZ and all substantive issues.

Are NRZs open to anyone?

All NRZ meetings are open to the public and all NRZs welcome the involvement of new people. Anyone who lives, works, worships, owns property, or has any direct interest in an NRZ is encouraged to attend NRZ meetings, volunteer for committees, participate in issue discussions, and obtain information about the work of the NRZ.