

The Upper Albany Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Committee

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Pamela McKnight	Naomi McKoy	Mary Thorpe
Bertha Watson	Carrie Wilson	Grace Terry
Hubert and Joyce Wiggs	Clarence Ellis	Clara Williams
Rexton Wright	Hartford Housing Authority	

Consultant:
TPA Design Group
New Haven, CT

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We Are Ready to Go!

Never has the time been so right for something positive to happen in our Upper Albany Neighborhood. Although we recognize that we must face a number of hurdles head-on, we now have residents, institutions, and organizations committed to doing things together. We have a recognized mechanism, the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) designation, to help us spring into action. Before this designation is granted, however, we need to determine a course of action. The preparation of this Strategic Plan is the first step.

In many ways, this Plan touches on the breadth of what we want to accomplish throughout the neighborhood although the NRZ designation may not give us all the tools we will be needing in the future.

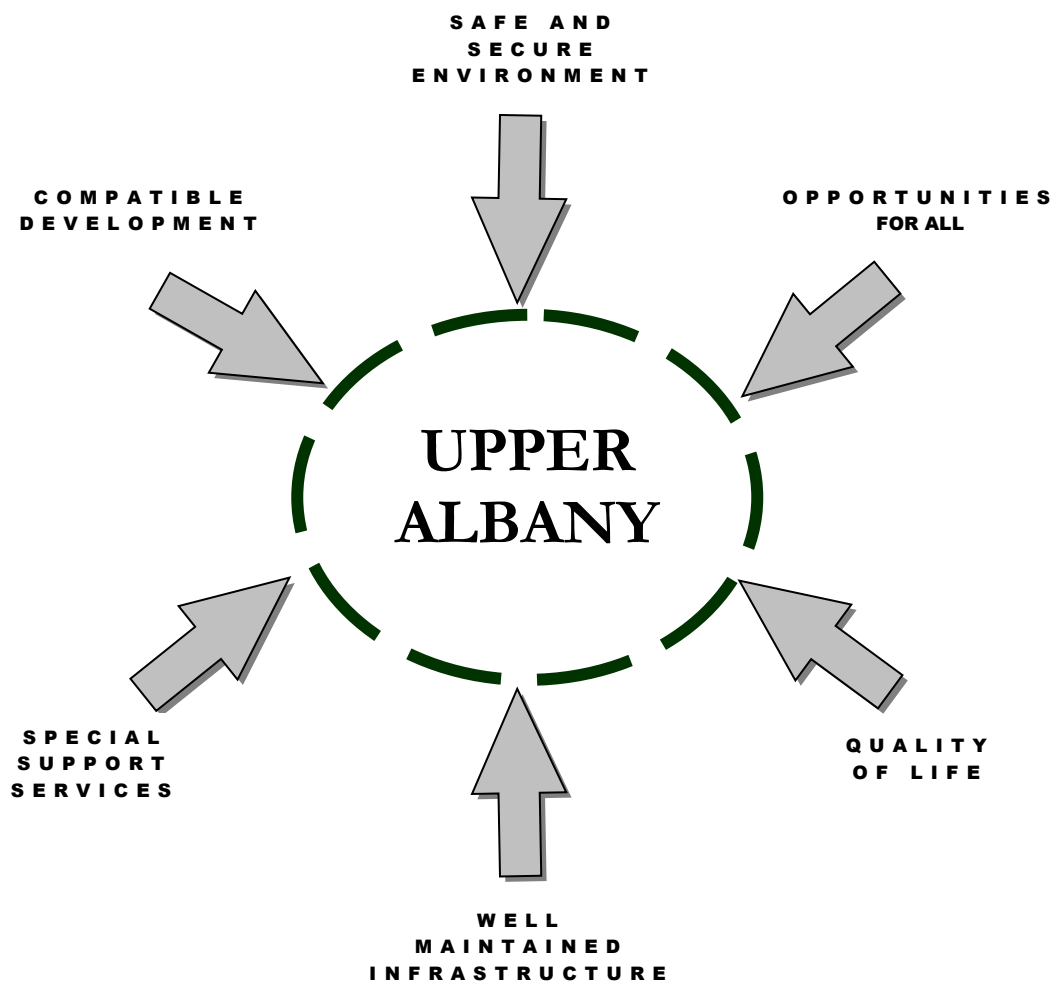
This is why the cooperation between organizations and institutions is so critical. The neighborhood continues to benefit from The Upper Albany Collaborative, The Urban League, the Albany Avenue Merchants Association, The University of Hartford and St. Francis Hospital, to name a few. Our neighborhood is now home to the Artists Collective, a 30-year old institution promoting training and educational programs in the performing arts and support and sponsorship of culturally enriched performances. Most recently, a section of Albany Avenue became part of the Connecticut Main Street Program, which will assist us in addressing overall commercial revitalization and stimulating private investment.

As a neighborhood, we must comprehensively tackle economic, physical, and social deterioration. The Upper Albany Revitalization Zone Organization (UARZO) will help us get started. Through the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone process, we have brought people together, we have identified our assets and challenges, and now we must act.



Members of our community have definite ideas on how to improve the neighborhood and the quality of life for themselves and our neighbors. We possess a strong desire for a safer and more vital environment, a goal to be pursued with coordination and support from UARZO and other community-based organizations, and with positive investments from inside and outside the community. Together we will transform our Upper Albany neighborhood into a neighborhood of choice; the mission to guide all of our efforts throughout the neighborhood and a goal the NRZ designation will help us achieve.

UPPER ALBANY NEIGHBORHOOD ... A NEIGHBORHOOD OF CHOICE



Upper Albany will become a neighborhood of choice: offering a quality of life to all of its residents by welcoming cultural density, providing the necessary services to those in need, maintaining stable residential areas free of crime and blight, and encouraging compatible development that will provide jobs as well as serve our residents.

Our Neighborhood at a Glance

DEMOGRAPHICS*

* Appendix A contains a full neighborhood profile. Data is from 1990 U. S. Census.

Population:	9,665
Ethnicity:	82% Black (not Hispanic) 15% Hispanic
Median Age:	25.1 years
Families:	2,273 57.9% Female Head
Families Below Poverty:	29% Overall 33.2% (Tract 5035: Woodland/Albany/Irving/Greenfield)
Source of Income:	70% of households have earnings received for work performed as an employee
Education:	53% have high school diploma or equivalency 4% have 4-year degree
Occupied Housing Units:	3,114 634 (20%) Owner-occupied 2,480 (80%) Renter-occupied

PHYSICAL

Land Area:	307 acres
Land Use:	Residential 134 acres/44% Industrial 10 acres/ 3% Gov't./ Institutional 36 acres/12% Vacant land & buildings 27 acres/ 9% <i>Source: 1984 Hartford Plan of Development, Existing Land Use Component</i> Mixed-use 10 acres/3% Office/Business 25 acres/8% Open space, parks, cemeteries 6 acres/2%
Transportation:	Albany Avenue and Homestead Avenue (east-west) Blue Hills Avenue (north-south) Bus Service provided by Connecticut Transit Authority
Traffic Counts:	16,000 (avg) per day on Albany Avenue
Water and Sewer:	Provided by and maintained by the Metropolitan District Commission

Positive Forces

Good things are beginning to happen in Upper Albany. Institutional investment in the area is acting as a catalyst for development proposals; people are recognizing the potential that has been waiting to be discovered. Upper Albany has a wealth of human and physical resources that will be the foundation on which its revitalization will be built.

Community Resources

Arts/Culture

The Artists Collective

Educational Institutions

Fox Middle School
Martin Luther King Elementary School
Thurman Milner Elementary School
Faith Seventh Day Adventist
University of Hartford
(many of these are used for community activities, too)

Associations

Upper Albany Revitalization Zone Association
Upper Albany Neighborhood Collaborative
Upper Albany Merchant's Association

Health Care Facilities/ Programs

St. Francis/Mt. Sinai
Community Health Services
Planned Parenthood

Religious Organizations

Christian Activities Council (CAC)
Allen Chapel Church
Christ Temple Church of God In Christ
Faith Seventh Day Adventist Church
First Church of God
Good News Release Center
Liberty Christian Center International
Macedonia Church of God In Christ
North United Methodist Church
North end Church of Christ
Pentacostal Holiness Church
United House of Prayer

**Social
Services**

North Hartford Family Resource Center
CONNTAC-Educational Opportunity Center
Urban League of Greater Hartford
Center for Urban Research, Education and Training (CURET)
CRT Neighborhood Center
CRT – Community Renewal Team – Of Greater Hartford
Golden Years Day Care

**Social
Organizations**

Albany Avenue Senior Center
Barbados American Society
Caribbean American Society
Jamaica Progressive League of Hartford, Inc.
West Indian Foundation

Services

Post Office
Library
Fire station
Dial-a-Ride
Day care facilities
Family Resource Center (at Martin Luther King Elementary)
Connecticut Transit bus routes

**Employment
and Training**

St. Martin's Outreach Center
Urban League

Housing

Horace Bushnell Congregate Homes
First and Second Village Apartments
Mary Mahoney Village
Zezzo House

**Business
Diversity**

Antiques
Appliances
Automotive
Bail Bonds
Bakery
Banks and Financial Services
Copying and Faxing
Dentists
Discount Store
Electric Repair
Electrical Sales
Fire Extinguishers
Florist
Furniture

**Business
Diversity**
continued

Gas Stations
Groceries
Hardware
Heating Repair & Installation
Industrial/Wholesale
Insurance
Laundromat
Lawyers
Liquor/Package Stores
Lounge/Nightclub
Manufacturing
Music
Oil Service
Pawn Shop
Pest Control
Pharmacy
Photographer
Printing
Real Estate/Property Management
Religious Items
Restaurants
Tax Service
Travel Agent
Trucking & Property Management

Miscellaneous

Community Court
Mass Mutual
Upper Albany Main Street Program

Human Resources

Block captains on every street
Long-term homeowners and residents
Neighborhood groups and interested individuals
Black Social Workers Association
Cultural diversity

Physical Resources

Accessibility
Convenient location

Keney Park (open space, golf course, sports fields and courts, Pond House, scenic drives, pool)
Distinctive housing stock
Vacant lots
Possible sites for industrial development
Quiet neighborhoods

Financial Resources

Neighborhood people with resources
Banks: Fleet and Webster
City of Hartford
State of Connecticut

City-wide Resources


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.

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 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.

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.



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

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 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.

The Entrepreneurial Center: offers self-assessment workshops, small business training, assistance with preparation of business plan, support in seeking capital, a team of business advisors, referrals to professional services and on-going training/refresher courses.

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).

Hartford Block Watch Organizer Program: provides funding for a neighborhood organizer to form block watches, maximize community participation and increase block watch 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.

Community Renewal Team, Inc: a non-profit organization providing social and housing services that reduce poverty including job training, housing assistance, child care, education, and arts programs; currently active in the neighborhood.



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.

The Hartford Enterprise Partnership (HEP): Created as part of the Hartford Inner City Strategy, HEP's role is to coordinate and focus existing business resources and new services in the areas of business Advisory Services, Shared Services and Incubator Space, Access to Capital, and Commercial Services Franchising.


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.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving: a region-wide charitable endowment that provides financial and other support to non-profit, tax exempt organizations primarily in the areas of economic and neighborhood development, social services, health care, education, and the arts. Grant application reviews/distribution decisions made at ten meetings each year. Also participates in multi-year special initiatives requiring substantial resources, technical assistance and/or other non-financial support.

Hartford Peer Lending and Development Corporation: micro-lending, training and networking for small businesses and the self-employed.

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.

Urban League of Greater Hartford, Inc.: community health, employment and training, housing, youth and seniors programs.



Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program: 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.

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.

AmeriCares HomeFront: private non-profit organization of volunteers who renovate/repair homes and community facilities for people who are low income, elderly, ill or single parents.

Challenges

The Upper Albany neighborhood realizes that a number of challenges must be overcome in order for our vision to become a reality. We asked residents through a Citizen's Research Education Network (CREN) survey and an NRZ planning workshop to tell us what they thought the neighborhood's most serious problems and needs were. At the workshop residents were then asked to rank the answers based on what they believed were the worst problems for the neighborhood. The issues are physical and social; some have straightforward solutions, others will need time and multi-faceted approaches. All can be overcome through attention and investment in the neighborhood's physical and human resources.

Starting with the problem that workshop participants perceived as the most serious, the issues that need to be addressed in descending order of severity are:

Drugs

Behaviors associated with drug use: loitering, littering, crime, selling drugs on the street

Impacts on the neighborhood: Unemployment of those taking drugs, residents feel unsafe, negative role models for youth, people from other areas coming to Upper Albany to buy drugs, negative image for the neighborhood, people afraid to visit or shop in the neighborhood.

Abandoned Houses

Impacts on the neighborhood: Provide places for illegal activities (drug use and sales, prostitution), are visually unattractive, decrease values of surrounding houses, make surrounding residents want to leave, may be unsafe

Infrastructure in Disrepair

Nature of the problem: Streets in disrepair, drainage and sewers need repair/replacement, street landscape is worn and unattractive (i.e. no grass, trees, fences), street lighting inadequate or broken

Impact on neighborhood: Negative appearance, feeling of not being safe, flooding in streets and basements

People who want to work but don't have the skills

Impact on the neighborhood: Low incomes, crime, sense of hopelessness, loitering, waste of human potential

Too many liquor stores

Impact on neighborhood: loitering, littering, noise, base for illegal activities

Insufficient recreational and enrichment opportunities for all ages, especially organized activities for youth

Impact on neighborhood: Loitering, getting into trouble, not growing or preparing for future

Abandoned, stripped cars on the streets

Impact on neighborhood: Unsightly, evidence of illegal activities, decreases home values

Deterioration of the housing stock

Impact on the neighborhood: Visually unattractive, results in higher rehab costs later or loss of house, decrease in property values

Vacant lots

Nature of the problem: Attract trash, cause holes in streetscape, weeds grow, sites for loiterers and illegal activities

Impact on neighborhood: Create unattractive areas and streetscapes, reduce property values, areas feel unsafe.

Traffic problems

Nature of the problem: Cars speeding, double parking, parked on wrong side of the street in alternate side of the street parking zones

Impact on neighborhood: Cluttered streets, difficulty in driving and walking, inability to shop in businesses (if can't find parking space), difficulty in renting apartments (if no off-street parking)

Irresponsible businesses

Nature of problem: Areas surrounding businesses are unsightly with litter, trash, cars parked inappropriately, and loitering

Impact on neighborhood: Decreases the attractiveness of the neighborhood, frustrates and angers residents

Insufficient number of services for residents (e.g. ATM's, Laundromat)

Impact on neighborhood: Hard to attract new residents or retain existing residents if they have to travel out of the neighborhood to secure basic services

Transportation

Nature of problem: 70% of residents have no car. Bus goes downtown but doesn't circle the neighborhood

Impact on neighborhood: Residents have difficulty getting to and from a job; therefore, hard to retain a job; therefore, have insufficient income, money, etc.

Lack of a homeless shelter in the neighborhood

Impact on neighborhood: People who need this help have to leave the neighborhood or live outside

Noise

Nature of the problem: People play music too loud, have loud parties, are loud when leaving clubs and bars; police don't enforce the noise ordinance

Impact on neighborhood: Anger, frustration, sleeplessness among residents, desire to leave neighborhood and live elsewhere

The CREN Asset Survey includes 250 adults and 157 youths. The Survey was not designed to be statistically valid, although responses were similar to those expressed at the NRZ workshops.

The three top responses to what residents disliked about the neighborhood were:

- crime (30%),
- speeding (8%) and
- loitering (6%)

Of those responding to the Survey top priorities for neighborhood revitalization were:

- job training (69%),
- more local restaurants (66%),
- housing rehabilitation (59%),

- low-income housing (59%)
- and recreational facilities (51%).

Additional challenges identified by the survey include:

- **Making education and job training on-going and long-term priorities**
Impact on the neighborhood: Help residents with skills to participate more fully in the community and the work force, gain certifications and licenses in skill areas and encourage entrepreneurial opportunities; set an example for youth of the value of education and its connection to economic prosperity.
- **Expanding affordable, quality childcare opportunities**
Impact on the neighborhood: Further the economic and social well-being of residents by allowing parents to take advantage of training and employment opportunities; providing residents with childcare skills/experience opportunity to obtain licenses and start businesses; enhanced child development atmosphere.
- **Expanding small business opportunities**
Nature of the problem: Lack of access to credit and training are obstacles.
Impact on the neighborhood: Better shopping, services and employment using residents skills and initiative; improved quality of life.

Skill Inventory

In the Fall of 1999 the Citizens' Research Education Network (CREN) conducted an asset survey in the Upper Albany neighborhood. A total of 250 adult residents and 157 youth residents were surveyed. A variety of survey techniques were used but door-to-door surveying and setting up tables at locations where residents gather (e.g. Community Health Services, the Bennet Building, and City Council voting sites) were the primary means. The survey for residents combined questions on individual skills, education levels, employment, demographics, personal interests, perception of good and bad characteristics of the neighborhood, interest in skills training opportunities and interest in starting a new business. A separate youth survey asked about school quality, the accessibility of higher education and interest in participating in youth council and youth development programs. The following is a summary of the educational and employment experience among Upper Albany residents.

- 49% have high school diplomas or GEDs
- 26% have post-high school education
- 58% would like to further their education
- 69% would like to see more job training in the neighborhood
- 26% of non-high school diploma/GED residents are employed
- 64% of high school diploma/GED residents are employed
- 76% of post-high school education residents are employed

Residents reported experience with the following skills:

Health Care: caring for elderly (37%), the sick (30%), mentally ill (14%), disabled (20%) and teen counseling (18%).

Childcare and Academic: childcare (60%), tutoring (16%) and after-school programs (12%).

Language Skills: 91% reported good/excellent writing skills, 84% good/excellent reading skills (majority of respondents were English-only speakers, only 5% unable to speak English).

Business Skills: filing (43%), typing (38%), computer entry (28%), writing letters (22%), word processing (18%), computer use-youth (88%).

Artistic Skills: music (21%), dance (22%), crafts (16%), painting (15%), hair cutting (12%), cosmetology (7%), disk jockeying (6%).

Construction Skills: painting (40%), hanging wallpaper (22%), construction and repair trades (varied by trade from 10-13%).

Repair and Maintenance Skills: appliances (8%), cars (8%), heating/cooling (6%), equipment operators (15%), building and grounds maintenance (varied by task from 48% to 26%).

Current Proposals

Outlined below are the most notable development proposals that are either in the planning stages or underway in the Upper Albany NRZ:

- ◆ Edgewood Street Improvements Plan – Residential project focusing on reducing the density, increasing homeownership opportunities and improving the quality of life on Edgewood Street between Homestead and Albany Avenues. The plan (1995) proposes to reduce the overall number of residential units on this block from 151 to 122 by reconfiguring existing structures to provide larger units with 4 to 5 bedrooms each or razing structures and replacing them with fewer units per structure. Off-street parking and open space are to be provided wherever possible. The Upper Albany Revitalization Zone Organization has requested that Edgewood Street be closed at the Albany Avenue end as a crime-fighting measure and in order to allow new commercial development on Albany Avenue (see Edgewood/Cabot shopping mall development proposal).

- ◆ Commercial Development Proposal (Edgewood/Cabot) – Proposal to assemble 8 properties to create a 1.2 acre ± site for construction of a commercial retail center to possibly accommodate mid-size grocery, bank and pharmacy. One of the developers currently owns 5 of the properties. Estimated project cost (1998) \$2 million; \$40,000 in Urban Act funds requested in July 1998.

- ◆ Enfield Street Initiative – a City-initiated strategy being launched in cooperation with Upper Albany, Northeast and Clay Arsenal NRZs to comprehensively address quality of life issues in a selected target area on Enfield Street bounded by Mather Street and Capen Street. The plan focuses on coordinating City services and programs with those of area organizations to address public safety, human services, infrastructure and redevelopment needs in the area. A plan outlining strategies in these areas of focus has been prepared and presented to representatives of the NRZs.

- ◆ Route 44 Improvement Plan (Capital Region Council of Governments – Plan includes streetscape improvements on Albany Avenue (sidewalks, brick edging, trees, landscaping, and bollards to control illegal parking on sidewalks); traffic calming along side streets as appropriate (e.g. street closing, speed bumps/humps, reducing street widths, increased police enforcement and speed watch programs); transit improvements (new bus shelters, better bus locations, improved corner radii, installation of concrete bus pads to better define stop locations); traffic signal timing adjustments; closing/combining use of existing driveways to provide access management; restriping of Albany Avenue to one lane in each direction with a left turn lane at each signalized intersection; and roadway improvements to correct drainage problems, improve the intersections at Bloomfield Avenue, Homestead Avenue, Belden Street and Main Street, and widen the road between Blue Hills Avenue and Woodland Street to provide parking in front of the library.

- ◆ Sigourney/Homestead Redevelopment Plan – Adopted by the Court of Common Council on June 22, 1998 (and remains in effect for 20 years) this Redevelopment Plan is the Upper Albany part of the Tri-neighborhood (Upper Albany, Clay Arsenal and Asylum Hill) initiative to redevelopment mixed use areas in the vicinity of Sigourney Street north and south of the railroad. The Plan calls for expansion of the neighborhood business zone on the north side of Homestead Avenue to include two properties on the east side of Edgewood Street and demolition of three structures to create a disposition parcel suitable for neighborhood business redevelopment; and acquisition of all properties in the project area south of Homestead Avenue to create two disposition parcels in areas zoned for commercial development. However, a list of city-owned properties (including Redevelopment Agency properties) does not include any of the properties designated for acquisition under this plan.

- ◆ Irving Street Initiative – Part of the Upper Albany Collaborative’s Housing Rehabilitation Initiative that includes a three phase approach: (1) Resell abandoned properties in a street-by-street sequence, (2) Improve occupied structures and, (3) Provide landscaping and streetscaping to all others. The Irving Street segment is the first street to be targeted. There are five abandoned structures (2 and 3 family homes). One has been acquired and the UAC has acquired tax liens of the other four.

Main Street Program - Albany Avenue between Westbourne Parkway and Irving Street was designated as a Main Street Program Area in July 2000. This preservation-based economic development program that assists in developing a strong local management team to market and manage a designated commercial area through public/private partnerships. Revitalization strategies to be developed revolve around design, organization, promotion and economic restructuring.

The following three proposals, although immediately outside the Upper Albany NRZ, will have instant impact on our neighborhood and will present opportunities to work cooperatively with adjacent NRZ committees.

- ◆ Veeder Place Project – Renovation of the 230,000 s.f. former Veeder Root plant (located on Sergeant Street in the Asylum Hill neighborhood) was intended to create jobs in the area and act as a catalyst for other improvements in the area. Renovation complete, several tenants occupying space, extensive marketing effort underway by owner in conjunction with the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Connecticut Economic Resource Center to attract additional tenants. Giftcorp gourmet food and gift basket operation recently moved into 25,000 square foot building.

- ◆ Intersection Improvements at Walnut Street/Garden Street/Homestead Avenue – City of Hartford project to realign Homestead Avenue to create a direct connection to Walnut Street and a landscaped area to serve as a southern gateway to the Upper Albany neighborhood. Project has gone to bid and a contractor selected. Construction is expected to begin Spring 2000!

- ◆ Thomas Cadillac Site – University of Hartford completed due diligence in November 2000 and is proceeding on evaluating the feasibility of constructing a new music/performing arts school. The University has publicly stated its commitment to adjunct neighborhoods and its willingness to complement not compete with the Artists Collective.



Economic Development Opportunities

Albany Avenue represents the defining core for Upper Albany NRZ and the primary commercial center for Upper Albany residents. It also draws customers from neighboring Northeast, Clay Arsenal, Asylum Hill, and Blue Hill neighborhoods. In addition, this corridor, designated as US 44, functions as a major thoroughfare for the Hartford region linking commuters and travelers between neighboring western/northern suburban towns and the downtown area. For the most part, however, these commuters do not utilize retail, service or business opportunities along Albany Avenue.

To the south, Homestead Avenue runs parallel to Albany Avenue (intersecting with Albany Avenue between University of Hartford and Upper Albany Ave.) and principally functions as a mixed-use industrial corridor with industrial, warehousing, and wholesaling uses found along its southern boundary representing an outgrowth of its proximity to the railroad which runs along Homestead Avenue. While some of the industrial uses remain viable along Homestead Avenue, many of the buildings are dysfunctional relative to today's market and are currently empty or near empty. Meanwhile residential uses generally define its northern border as a natural extension of housing along side streets stretching from Albany to Homestead Avenue.

Between the two corridors, Woodland Street and Sigourney Street serve as important north-south links to Albany Avenue and Homestead Avenue and to other important east-west corridors outside the Neighborhood NRZ boundary, specifically Asylum Avenue and Farmington Avenue. Sigourney Street also connects with I-84 at Exit 47.

Together, these corridors and cross streets represent the principal focus areas within the Upper Albany NRZ for undertaking economic development activities. Strategically, the upgrade and promotion of business development of these areas offers an excellent opportunity to rejuvenate the NRZ that is essential to stabilizing the neighborhood as well as enhance the climate for private investment. 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.

Major objectives of an economic development program in the NRZ within these areas include:

- Job-creation for local residents
- Fulfilling retail/service needs in the community
- Re-investment in the community
- Small business development
- Neighborhood stabilization & upgrade
- Neighborhood empowerment
- Building local capacity to implement projects

Economic Development Issues

In evaluating economic development opportunities for Upper Albany NRZ, a number of factors must be considered.

MARKET SUPPORT

Unlike many other areas of North Hartford, upper Albany Avenue contains a broad mix of retail and services that includes a retail center anchored by a moderately sized supermarket (Bravo) and drug store (Rite Aide). Moreover, Albany Avenue is both well-traveled and serves a significant portion of North Hartford. Nevertheless, retail leakage is occurring in the neighborhood with shoppers taking advantage of expanded options in neighboring Bloomfield and West Hartford. Depending on retail mix, a portion of this market could be re-channeled into the community. In addition, there is the opportunity to capture a drive-by traffic, which presently expends little on the Avenue. However, issues concerning consumer purchase capacity, population changes and retail/service demographic requirements and retail preferences must be considered relative to any proposed project. Physical and economic constraints on future demand must also be factored into evaluation in order to ensure sustainable developments.

Market issues are similarly important when evaluating opportunities for underutilized or vacant industrial space along Homestead Avenue, particularly in cases involving investment property. As an example, the early lackluster lease-up experience of the Veeder Root development in the Asylum Hill neighborhood points out the need to thoroughly understand depth of market issues and potential for market share relative to specific target components.

LOCALATIONAL ISSUES


In terms of retail development, visibility and access (including parking) are critical. Quality and perception of security of the neighborhood are also important factors in the ultimate success of the retail that might be targeted for Albany Avenue or other commercial area in the neighborhood. Meanwhile, security, access (including service delivery access), linkages to markets, locational costs and quality/proximity of labor are prime considerations for manufacturing, wholesaling and distribution-type uses that might be targeted for Homestead Avenue. Understanding locational factors as they relate to marketability of use is essential to developing a sustainable project. In some cases modifications or expansions of the site or immediate area can overcome the locational constraints. If not, it is best to re-think the project.

COMPETING USES/PROJECTS

In addition to potential market demand, marketability is evaluated in the context of existing or proposed competition. To the extent a desired project overlaps markets linked to existing or proposed uses within or adjacent to the NRZ and market share is potentially diluted, care must be taken to evaluate the impact of such a development on the net delivery of retail and services in the community.

Upper Albany Avenue

There is nearly a mile-mile stretch of Albany Avenue between Homestead Avenue to the west and Irving Street to the east. This section of the avenue contains the bulk of the retail located along the length of the corridor with a recent survey identifying over 90 businesses in this area. Many of the businesses are associated with locally-owned small bodegas, personal services (Hair Salons) and restaurants or take-outs principally targeted to walk-up traffic. Bravo Center, however, represents the one neighborhood retail center on the avenue, and the largest such retail complex in North Hartford. The center is anchored by Bravo (small supermarket) and Rite-Aid Pharmacy and includes a McDonalds. Throughout the Upper Albany retail corridor is evidence of the Caribbean/West Indian influence that is highly represented in the local population base.



A number of redevelopment projects are under consideration for Upper Albany Avenue. They include a strip retail center on 1.2 acres targeted for the frontage along the south side of Albany Avenue between Cabot and Edgewood Street. Presently this block contains a Fleet Bank branch that includes a drive-in teller operation. On the eastern end of the block is a food mart. Plans call for leveling existing buildings and upgrading and expanding this block to accommodate a conventional strip center with off-street parking. It is anticipated that Fleet Bank would remain as a prime tenant. One of the major advantages of this proposal is that much of the targeted properties are under single ownership or control of the sponsor of the project thereby reducing acquisition cost and the time to assemble properties. Further site study and market analysis (and ideally tenant commitments), however, would be necessary to better define the project for financing purposes. It would also be critical for this project to be appropriately designed to complement and enhance the corridor including providing ample landscaping and pedestrian-friendly features.

Linked to this proposal by proximity is a plan to expand homeownership along Edgewood Avenue through a combined demolition, renovation and reconfiguration program designed to eliminate blight and reduce high density associated with this area. The plan calls for creating owner-occupied housing with rental units often by conversion of “perfect six” structures into three family complexes having larger units. While potentially complex in concept and costly in implementation, the plan calls for targeting 19 properties for improvement along the street in recognition of the importance of creating a critical mass to the development effort necessary to sustain the impact of any improvements. The proposal does have a well-thought out business plan for the project, however further review and analysis of assumptions – particularly projected acquisition and construction costs and threshold price for homeownership -- is recommended in light of the passage of time since first proposed (1995). Nevertheless, this project in combination with the Cabot-Edgewood strip center proposal provides a unique opportunity to concentrate resources in a single area that could have a significant positive ripple effect on adjacent properties.

Further west, a proposal targets the “Thomas Cadillac” site for reuse as a performing arts/music school for the University of Hartford. The property is located at the strategic intersection of Homestead Avenue, Westbourne Parkway and Albany Avenue and is technically located in the Blue Hills neighborhood but strongly linked to the Upper Albany corridor. The site consists of 11 acres and includes a 54,325 square foot facility that is now vacant. Previous marketing of the site for commercial development generated little interest. If the concept proves feasible and is adopted by the University, a key vacant property in the Upper Albany/Blue Hills neighborhood would be utilized by a major stakeholder in the area. In addition to bringing a key player to the neighborhood, this

proposal also serves to reinforce the relationship Upper Albany has with cultural arts as best defined by the Artists Collective facility.

Major redevelopment focus has also centered on the key intersection of Albany Avenue and Westbrook Street. Much of this effort is linked to a 1.09 acre site that includes the vacant “Woodland Warehouse” facility. Additional property adjacent to the site and owned by the city could potentially be acquired to expand the site. Present plans for the “Woodland Warehouse” site call for a variety of uses that include a community center, a day care center, job and business development services, fitness center and possibly a food court, copying store, ATM and laundromat. The concept for the site is designed to complement and fit into the concentration of retail, office and community-based uses located in the area that include the Bravo Center, the Post Office, public library, the Artist Collective facility, and Colin Bennett office building. Although the project may be ambitious in scope and in need of more rigorous review of marketability, its intent to build on and support the critical mass of uses located at the Woodland/Albany Avenue intersection is appropriate. The project would also serve as a major gateway into the Upper Albany neighborhood from the south.

One other initiative of note that is not real estate oriented, but nevertheless significant in terms of commercial revitalization along the corridor is the designation of Upper Albany Avenue as a Main Street Program area in July 2000. This program focuses on economic development of commercial corridors through development of public-private partnerships and strong retail management. Additionally, the Upper Albany Merchants Association has been successful in promoting business development through a number of programs and initiatives including providing entrepreneurial training, development of business skills and the formation of the Upper Albany Business Network to respond to training and assistance needs.

Homestead Avenue

Homestead Avenue has historically served as a major industrial corridor for the city of Hartford evolving out of its proximity and relationship with the adjacent rail line. However, changes in the way manufacturing and warehousing industry operates and the cost issues associated with inner-city locations have dramatically impacted this role. Today, a number of viable industries continue to operate along Homestead Avenue, but numerous large-scale vacant and underutilized industrial structures are found along this thoroughfare, particularly along its northern end. Coincidentally, with the decline in the importance of this corridor for industrial or warehousing use, Homestead Avenue has grown in importance as a commuter alternative to Albany Avenue for western/northern suburbanites working downtown.

Homestead Avenue also acts as a defining boundary line between Asylum Hill neighborhood (and its many institutional and corporate entities) and Upper Albany and Clay Arsenal neighborhoods. Major connections between these neighborhoods is achieved through Woodland Street, Sigourney Street and Garden Street. Highway access to I-84 is provided to the corridor via Sigourney Street.

Locational advantages of Homestead Avenue as it relates to economic development and attracting or retaining industry include access to labor, linkage to highway I-84 (albeit not a direct exit), and potential sites that can be acquired and redeveloped. The challenges to development are associated with difficulty and cost of redevelopment (including environmental issues), lack of suitable buildings (old and dysfunctional), competition from the region and even other areas of the city, perception of the neighborhood and poor service access along Homestead Avenue (for trucks). Partly in response to these challenges and the potential limitations of industrial expansion in the corridor and other industrial areas, the city adopted changes in the zoning ordinance that would increase the permitted uses in targeted industrial zones that include the Homestead Corridor (Industrial Reuse Overlay District). Expanded uses include art galleries, schools, museums, multi-unit residential and service-oriented businesses.

Current economic development initiatives associated with Homestead Avenue have been modest in comparison to Upper Albany Avenue. The most significant and most visible project is the planned redevelopment of the intersection of Homestead Avenue and Sigourney Street. Once completed, the redevelopment would yield three new commercial parcels totaling 3.9 acres that would be marketed for sale to developers or owner-occupants for commercial and light industrial use (as dictated by zoning). In addition to improving retail opportunities and generating jobs, a major goal of the project is to upgrade and improve an important intersection that links Upper Albany to Asylum Hill and ultimately I-84 interstate access. The project would also coincide with infrastructure improvements slated for Walnut and Garden Street and Homestead Avenue to improve safety and traffic flow along this section of the corridor. It is also anticipated that the improvement of the Sigourney Street/Homestead intersection and the realignment of Homestead Avenue will improve the marketability of Veeder Place located on Sergeant Street and representing the renovation of the 230,000 square foot Veeder Root factory targeting multi-tenant use.

Other projects and development initiatives identified for the Homestead Corridor are smaller in scale and less meaningful in impact. This includes the “Gateway Plaza” proposal targeted for a building at 450 Homestead Avenue located at the intersection of Upper Albany and immediately across from the “Thomas Cadillac” site. The proposal calls for renovation of 9,000 square feet within a 32,000 square foot building that is partially occupied by AutoZone. The proposed use for the renovated space would be for a self-storage facility. While the amount of public subsidy identified in the proposal is modest, job output is nominal. The



city was also awarded a Brownsfield Pilot Site Assessment grant in the amount of \$200,000 to undertake preliminary environmental assessment of targeted properties including properties along Homestead Corridor.

Outside the few initiatives noted above, the Homestead Corridor has received little attention in terms of formulating future strategy and development. Such a comprehensive approach would appear appropriate for this corridor as opposed to singling out reuse options for separate buildings or parcels. Providing a comprehensive context for redevelopment would also serve to better link the Homestead corridor to redevelopment and marketing strategies associated with other major corridors in the city that includes Albany Avenue, Asylum Avenue, and Farmington Avenue. Special consideration for Homestead Avenue should be given to identifying new markets for light industrial real estate not provided elsewhere in the city including contractors, repair shops, wholesalers open to the public, printers, etc.


Overall Strategies

Taking into consideration our assets and challenges and knowing the priorities of our residents and what we feel we need to accomplish, we have put together a comprehensive list of strategies and goals to guide us toward improving our neighborhood.

GOAL I: IMPROVE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

TARGET 1: IMAGE/APPEARANCE

- A. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a physical community focus centered around Albany Avenue and Woodland Street, incorporating the Post Office, adjacent retail properties, N.W. Jones building, the Artists' Collective and Keney Park.
- B. Identify key intersections and gateways and determine the feasible mechanisms for improvements to help define the neighborhood and also support businesses along Albany Avenue.
- C. Identify priority corridors for streetscape improvements (sidewalks, lighting, benches, signage) with priorities given to those linking other initiatives.
- D. Using the Enfield Street Initiative as a model, advocate the establishment of a routine schedule for coordinated City review of health, building and zoning compliance as well as illegal and nuisance activities.
- E. Create and train a volunteer Neighborhood Litter Patrol and develop a support program, including provisions for youth participation.
- F. Inventory and map all green space, playgrounds and vacant lots and identify potential sites for age-appropriate defensible playgrounds.
- G. Evaluate extent of illegal on-street parking, identify areas of greatest concern, and determine feasibility of creating off-street lots that are well lighted and landscaped through demolition of blighted housing.
- H. Inventory existing and future vacant lots and determine suitability for use under their existing zones.



TARGET 2: HOUSING

- A. Identify and map at-risk historic homes (slated for demolition) and seek the assistance of the State Historic Preservation Office to determine the feasibility (physical and economic) of rehabilitating.
- B. Identify homeowners needing assistance with home maintenance in target areas.
- C. Identify existing home improvement programs, create suitable links to those in need, and provide assistance with applications.
- D. Create a suitable mechanism to showcase those homes that have been successfully improved.
- E. Focus rehabilitation initiatives on targeted areas.
- F. Create a landlord/tenant referral database to assist residents with finding good landlords and landlords to find good tenants.
- G. Conduct a housing market/demographic evaluation of the need and affordability of constructing new homes on vacant lots.
- H. Through the demographic analysis, identify the extent of residents eligible for home ownership and provide assistance for enrollment in existing programs.
- I. Assemble a list of standards for housing (scale, type, price range, etc.) construction and rehabilitation and seek out those developers who are willing and have the capacity to willingly comply.



TARGET 3: CRIME AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- A. Organize a volunteer Neighborhood “Patrol Strolls”.
- B. Identify candidates for the Citizens Academy and make referrals.
- C. Meet regularly with the Hartford Housing Authority’s Tenant Federation, Police Department, and other agencies to develop crime reduction strategies, explore funding for appropriate programs and monitor their effectiveness.
- D. Review current zoning regulations and propose changes to eliminate negative land uses such as liquor stores.
- E. Develop a volunteer intergenerational “Eyes on the Neighborhood” program whereby residents are taught effective approaches to taking on community responsibility and providing role models for youth.
- F. Develop a neighborhood code of conduct and communicate it at every level - schools, Community Council, churches, tenant associations, etc.

TARGET 4: PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- A. Continue to monitor MDC’s progress on a three-phase project to separate storm and sanitary sewers. Request annual updates and institution of funding requests.
- B. Continue dialogue with CRCOG to monitor recommendations for improving Albany Avenue and track the proposal with respect to ConnDOT funding and willingness to implement landscaping and streetscape elements.
- C. Request assistance from the City in evaluating the need for traffic circulation analysis and feasibility of improving Woodland and Sigourney Streets.


TARGET 5: INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Organize and host an annual institutional/organizational summit with the goal of fostering communication and cooperation among all of the entities now operating within the neighborhood.
- B. Maintain an inventory of organizations/institutions, contact person, and areas of involvement in the neighborhood.
- C. Initiate dialogue with adjacent NRZs and discuss mutual goals and methods of accomplishing them together.

GOAL II: SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TARGET 1: FORCES AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT

- A. Conduct a non-residential market analysis of the neighborhood, including an inventory of existing businesses by sector (industrial, commercial, retail).
 - 1. Marginal businesses (as defined by market)
 - 2. The need for business assistance
 - 3. The types of business that could be sustained on Albany Avenue
 - 4. The types of uses appropriate for existing industrial corridors
 - 5. The impact of diverting commuter traffic
 - 6. The probability of capturing commuter traffic
 - 7. Appropriate mechanisms to achieve economic stability.
- B. Undertake a “Highest and Best Use” study of the Woodland Moving & Warehouse site and the implications within a broader physical improvement plan to create a “neighborhood center”.
- D. Actively target commercial properties on Albany Avenue for inclusion in the City’s façade program.
- E. Support the activities of the Upper Albany Merchants Association, the newly created Upper Albany Business Network, and the Upper Albany Main Street Program and propose the preparation of a coordinated small business development plan.

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- E. Prepare a comprehensive land use and economic development evaluation of Homestead Avenue that would provide short and long term actions for revitalization consistent with NRZ and Upper Albany Neighborhood goals.

TARGET 2: BUSINESS ATTRACTION/RETENTION IMPLEMENTATION

- A. Working with the Upper Albany Merchants Association, the Upper Albany Main Street Program, the Hartford Economic Development Commission, and business owners inventory “at-risk” businesses throughout the neighborhood to determine the following:
- Number of neighborhood residents and city residents employed
 - What is needed to keep the business in the neighborhood
 - Is the existing site adequate and consistent with NRZ goals
 - Necessary steps for retaining the existing site or relocating to another in the neighborhood
 - The need for specific business assistance (bookkeeping, tax accounting, technology access to capital, etc.)
- B. Support private developer initiatives, which are compatible with the neighborhood and are supported by an objective market analysis.

TARGET 3: NON-PROFIT DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Review the missions and effectiveness of existing non-profit entities operating in the neighborhood;
- B. Evaluate the need to create joint ventures/partnerships with existing entities versus creating a new organization with 501(3)(c) non-profit status.



GOAL III: INVEST IN HUMAN POTENTIAL

TARGET 1: IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF SUPPORT SERVICES

- A. Organize and conduct an annual Neighborhood Support Services Forum to foster collaborative investment in the “Family Capital” model. As part of this forum, re-examine the methods used to identify the neediest clients and monitor success. In particular, focus attention on youth programming.
- B. Evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of using social service ombudsmen who cross institutional and programmatic boundaries to ensure appropriate delivery of support.
- B. Identify informal ways of helping the neediest, such as through faith based organizations.

TARGET 2: EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

- A. Develop the Crafts Circle – a general contracting firm which trains residents and employs those with construction skills to perform work improving the neighborhood.
- B. Evaluate the job creation potential of each economic development initiative proposed for the neighborhood and enter into a “Job Placement Covenant” with the owner/developer to ensure residents are considered or a commitment is made to help train residents so that skill levels match the employment opportunity.
- C. Support the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) initiatives and formal mechanisms that link residents with regional employment opportunities.

Implementation Targets

Although we recognize there is much to do in our neighborhood, we know that we must focus our energies on specific actions that will accomplish our overall strategies. The NRZ process and the mechanisms associated with it will require us to take on numerous responsibilities. Therefore, we need a very clear path to move forward. The actions outlined below represent a two-year implementation plan for the Upper Albany NRZ Committee:

ACTION: REVIEW AND PRIORITIZE THE REMAINING IMPELEMENTATION TARGETS AND DETERMINE POTENTIAL PARTNERS, COST RANGES, AND THRESHOLDS FOR PERFORMANCE MONITORING.

1. Review each target and based on reasonable probability of success, outline the steps needed to carry the action forward.
2. When necessary arrange coordination meetings or use other suitable means of communication to elicit cooperation from potential partners or supporting institutions.
3. Determine several cost ranges and funding sources.
4. Establish achievable thresholds for evaluating measures of success.

ACTION: NON-RESIDENTIAL MARKET ANALYSIS

Inventory existing businesses by sector (industrial, commercial, retail) and evaluate market forces and trends to focus on the following key information:

1. Marginal businesses (as defined by market)
2. The type and level of business assistance needed
3. The types of business that could be sustained on Albany Avenue
4. The types of uses appropriate for existing industrial corridors
5. The probability of capturing commuter traffic
6. The impact of diverting commuter traffic on Albany Avenue commerce
7. Appropriate mechanisms to achieve economic stability.

NEED: This analysis is the cornerstone of all economic development initiatives in the neighborhood.

ACTION: COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION OF HOMESTEAD AVENUE


1. Inventory all properties to create a Geographic Information System (GIS) -accessible file which includes:
 - Assessors map designation
 - Size
 - Ownership
 - Number/size buildings
 - Known or perceived environmental issues
 - Land use status
 - Occupancy status
 - Utilities
 - Tax status

2. Prepare a redevelopment plan including the following:
 - Identification of hurdles (i.e., uncooperative owners, tax delinquency, contamination, etc.)
 - Determination of ultimate role and function of Homestead Avenue as a transportation corridor
 - Gauge interest in creating a business alliance of major stakeholders
 - Determination of suitable reuse options involving relocation or expansion for local stakeholders and attraction of new businesses.
 - Identification of implementation phasing
 - Identification of funding sources, including a State-designated Municipal Development Plan
 - Assignment of responsibility and monitoring

NEED: Re-investment in Homestead Avenue represents one of the most viable opportunities in the City and these overall benefits would provide significant impetus for other actions in the neighborhood.

ACTION: COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING REHABILITATION/BLIGHT REMOVAL PROGRAM

1. Implement the Edgewood Street Improvement Program
 - a. Review program assumptions and update as necessary
 - b. Conduct market analysis and prepare financial pro-forma
 - c. Examine phasing options

- 
- d. Determine acceptability of creating cul-de-sac at intersection with Albany Avenue
 2. Support the Upper Albany Collaboratives's Housing Rehabilitation Initiative.
 - a. Monitor implementation
 - b. Provide letters of support when necessary
 - c. Utilize NRZ powers when necessary
 3. Monitor the Enfield Street Initiative
 - a. Establish a consistent line of communication between the NRZ, other neighborhood institutional stakeholders, and the City.
 - b. Monitor progress and periodically schedule outreach forums to discuss achievements
 - c. Examine mechanisms that would replicate this approach in other areas of Upper Albany.
 4. Focus subsequent improvement initiatives on the following streets: Deerfield, Lenox, Adams, Cabot and Sterling.
 - a. Identify historic and/or visually significant homes
 - b. Identify owner-occupied structures and determine the level of assistance:
 - Type I: Painting and general exterior maintenance
 - Type II: Limited structural improvements (roof, stairs, porches and limited weatherization)
 - Type III: Extensive rehabilitation (windows, doors, siding, structural)
 - c. Identify existing assistance programs and assist with creating a referral program.
 5. Monitor and support demolition of blighted properties.
 - a. Compare designated properties with list of historic or significant homes
 - b. Provide input to City with regard to targeted properties
 - c. Examine feasibility of utilizing land from demolished structures for off-street parking, expansion of side yards, pocket parks, or community gardens
 - d. Work with the City to establish a consistent treatment for all residual properties (mulch or seed and fence, if necessary).

NEED: There is widespread need for housing rehabilitation. Blighted properties are often harboring illicit activities and are increasingly affecting the surrounding

residents' quality of life as well as personal safety. There are also homeowners who do not have sufficient capital to properly maintain their property. Yet, many of these individuals offer stability to the neighborhood in other ways.

ACTION: UPPER ALBANY NEIGHBORHOOD “CENTER” AT WOODLAND STREET/ALBANY AVENUE

1. Meet with corporate and institutional stakeholders to develop an implementation plan and garner support.
2. Continue to monitor the funding of CRCOG-endorsed improvements to Albany Avenue/Woodland intersection and approaches and determine CONNDOT's role in supporting streetscape improvements.
3. Seek support and funding for the rehabilitation of the N.W. Jones Building.
4. Undertake a “Highest and Best Use” study of the former Woodland Moving & Warehouse site to assess the feasibility of proposed uses and to explore its context in the neighborhood “Center”. Also consider the vacant Mobil Station.
5. Evaluate options for utilization of the existing US Post Office through meetings with the Post Master and the U. S. Postal Service-New England Division in Windsor, CT. options may include:
 - a. Retain Post Office and support significant upgrades and parking expansion; or
 - b. Expand church parking and move Post Office to the former Woodland Moving and Storage site.
4. Seek funding assistance from public and private sectors to develop design plans.

NEED: Because of the significance of the existing land uses adjacent to this intersection and the function of Woodland as a major thoroughfare, creating a physical/visual center at this confluence will serve as a catalyst for future improvements and will provide a significant link to the surrounding neighborhood as well as Albany Avenue merchants.

ACTION: ON-GOING COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH CORE ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

1. Maintain open and consistent dialogue among key stakeholders including:
 - Upper Albany Neighborhood Collaborative
 - Artists' Collective
 - Urban League
 - Upper Albany Merchant's Association
 - Upper Albany Main Street Program
 - Community Council
 - University of Hartford
 - St. Francis Hospital
 - Mass Mutual
 - Adjacent NRZ organizations
2. Through the core organizations, identify the social programs that have had measurable results in the neighborhood and create effective pathways between those in need and those who can help.

NEED: There are numerous organizations operating in Upper Albany. The NRZ's focus on dovetailing not duplicating its efforts with the major stakeholders will allow the NRZ to devote more time to other priorities.

ACTION: SUPPORT CABOT/EDGEWOOD STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND USE THE PROCESS TO FINE-TUNE THE NRZ'S APPROACH TO REVIEWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS.

1. Request that the Developer submit to the NRZ the following for review:
 - a. schematic site plan
 - b. evidence of (or approach to) site control
 - c. evidence of due diligence
 - d. summary of financing plan
 - e. description of size and types of proposed uses
 - f. leasing schedule
 - g. implementation schedule
2. Work with the Developer to identify potential waivers necessary, public improvements required, etc.

NEED: The redevelopment of this assembly of parcels would provide another location where “critical mass” along Albany Avenue has been established by sustainable businesses. The effort would also complement the Edgewood Street Empowerment Program.

ACTION: MAJOR GATEWAYS AND STREET SIGNAGE PROGRAM

1. Meet with the City to discuss priorities and funding sources.
2. Meet with adjacent NRZs and institutional partners to garner support.
3. Develop preliminary concepts for priority gateways and prepare cost estimates.
4. Identify potential funding partners and determine the appropriate sponsor.
5. Examine the following potential gateways to determine suitable matches with funding sources.
6. Seek institutional or private support to promote the initiative.
7. Discuss planting options with local volunteer organizations.

NEED: The neighborhood would benefit from a comprehensive gateway program directed toward creating a positive presence and serving as a focus of neighborhood pride.

ACTION: UNDERSTAND AND UTILIZE APPROPRIATE WAIVERS

1. Meet with regulatory agencies to discuss the overall process for requesting waivers.
2. Gain an understanding of the “lead-time” necessary to obtain certain waivers.
3. Prepare a checklist of potential waivers that may be requested and discuss ways in which the NRZ can use them to leverage positive action in the neighborhood for a specific project. Among those that may be considered are:
 - a. Expedited Connecticut Historical Commission review

- b. Building, fire, accessibility and other State and Federal codes
- c. City ordinances/regulations
- d. Lead paint/asbestos removal thresholds

NEED: The NRZ legislation grants certain powers to the neighborhood. Many of these require lead-time for sign-offs. Other powers may not be as helpful as intended for specific actions. Therefore it is critical for the NRZ to understand how to best use its powers and in fact, if waivers and other powers are the best approach to achieving certain goals.

ACTION: EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING 501 (C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

1. Request annual reports/financial status reports on the following:
 - Christian Activity Council
 - Albany Development Corporation
 - Upper Albany Collaboration
 - North Hartford Development Corporation
 - North Hartford Initiative

NEED: Because there are existing non-profit organizations operating in the neighborhood, the NRZ should first evaluate their effectiveness as partners before assuming that a new entity is necessary.

ACTION: REPLACE THE DEERFIELD STREET DEER STATUE

1. Contact suitable corporate and institutional sponsors
2. Identify at least three vendors qualified to cast a new statute (bronze, cast iron, or other suitable substitute).
3. Obtain bids.

NEED: The deer statue which graces the entrance of Deerfield Street is a highly visible feature that most residents in Upper Albany have an emotional attachment to. It has been repaired a number of times. Replacing the statue with a maintainable fall version would provide a much-needed boost to residents.

ACTION: MONITOR PROPOSED AND ON-GOING PROJECTS TO DETERMINE IMPACTS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL LEVERAGING TO ACCOMPLISH NRZ GOALS

Develop a decision-making matrix to assist the NRZ with evaluation of development proposals and use it as a checklist for each project. Elements to be considered include:

- Submission of a business plan acceptable to a bank or an objective market analysis
- Financing Plan
- Potential jobs, wages, and skill levels
- Job training program
- Mechanism for linking residents to jobs
- Anticipated tax revenues to be generated
- Timeline for completion
- Quality of site plan and visual appearance

NEED: Because there are existing non-profit organizations operating in the neighborhood, the NRZ should first evaluate their effectiveness as partners before assuming that a new entity is necessary.

ACTION: EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD BASED YOUTH CENTER.

1. Based on the Upper Albany Collaborative's strategy to establish a facility and the City's initial analysis of potential sites, support efforts to finalize site sustainability.
2. Support efforts to define programmatic and physical needs and forecast futures demands, working with existing social service agencies or other institutions with supporting data.
3. Determine need to procure an interim site (using an existing facility) prior to construction of a new center.

Housekeeping

We have been meeting on a regular basis, have plenty of institutional and organizational support, and are ready to tackle implementation. As we move things forward, we need to keep an eye on a number of administrative responsibilities including:

Record Keeping:

- Record minutes to all meetings in sufficient detail to reflect the context of the discussion. Detailed minutes will be extremely helpful in preparing reports and demonstrating our success.
- Have one person maintain files at one location – and file everything chronologically, if administrative, or alphabetically for projects and other implementation related items.

Performance Monitoring:

- On a quarterly basis, take time out to review the implementation targets.
- An Annual Report must be prepared and submitted for reviewed the State Office of Policy and Management and then approved by the City Council.

Plan Revisions:

- This Plan should be reviewed prior to preparation of the Annual Report so that changing priorities or other circumstances that dictate modification can be proposed.



Appendix A

Appendix A

Neighborhood Profile

The Upper Albany neighborhood, comprised of nearly 478 acres, developed in the late 1800s as the original Hartford settlement expanded beyond the downtown area. Before this time, Upper Albany consisted primarily of outlying farmlands. Albany Avenue was the primary route linking Hartford to the next economic hub to the west – Albany, NY.

Transportation improvements had a great impact on the development of City neighborhoods. The railroad lines built in the mid-1800s facilitated connection between Hartford and surrounding towns as well as Springfield and New York. Horsecar lines developed in the late 19th century along major streets such as Albany Avenue, encouraging the development of communities farther away from the downtown’s older residential sections.

The Upper Albany neighborhood further developed as a residential community in the early 1900s, with a major trolley line that ran along Albany Avenue. Between 1897 –1909 Upper Albany experienced a housing boom; twenty-one streets were created, subdivided and built-up. By the mid-1920s all the streets in Upper Albany were built and the neighborhood was known as a “streetcar suburb”. Today, 45% of the neighborhood’s land area is devoted to residential purposes. Much of this housing stock, primarily low (1-2 family) and medium density (3-6 family) structures, still exists in the neighborhood. In fact, 23% of the homes in Upper Albany were constructed prior to 1939. High density housing is found in several elderly facilities such as Mahoney Village, Horace Bushnell Congregate Homes, Faith Manors, First Village 1 and 2. Other high-density housing can be found primarily along portions of Vine and Woodland Streets. There are scattered high-density buildings on the many of the streets to the south side of Albany Avenue, some belonging to Hartford Housing Authority. Over half of the existing homes were built between 1940 - 1970.

The physical development of Upper Albany reflected the key elements of a neighborhood. It provided places to work, live, shop, learn and play which, in turn, created a mixture of land uses.

Albany Avenue and Homestead Avenue developed as mixed-use areas. Albany Avenue developed as a commercial center with businesses and shops to serve the resident population. Homestead Avenue developed primarily as an industrial and manufacturing area and is still an important employment center for the neighborhood. Some of the manufacturers have been located here for many years. In fact, Smith Worthington Saddlery Company has been making horse saddles in Hartford since 1794.

Both of the avenues had residential units intermixed with other uses. The side streets developed primarily as residential. About 32% of the land is comprised of a combination of uses such as commercial, office, mixed, streets, and open space. Keney Park provides the largest open space in the neighborhood. While most of Keney Park is located in the Northeast neighborhood, it is accessible through Greenfield Street, and used by area residents. There are also playgrounds and open space in the neighborhood schools. Institutional uses comprise 12% of the land area. These uses include Fox Middle School, Martin Luther King School, Vine Street School, Quirk Middle School, Horace Bushnell Church, other churches on Albany Avenue, and the Salvation Army on Homestead Avenue. There are approximately 22 vacant acres in residential zones and 15 acres in business/commercial zones remaining in the neighborhood. These land uses patterns still exist today and are upheld by current zoning designations. The following table summarizes the distribution of land uses in Upper Albany.

Existing Land Use		
<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Residential Uses</u>		
1 – 2 Family House		64.0
3 – 6 Family House		56.7
Over 6 Family House		<u>13.6</u>
Sub-total	134.3	44%
<u>Mixed and Non-Residential Uses</u>		
Residential/Mixed Use	6.5	3.6%
Other Mixed Use	3.1	1.0%
Business/Commercial	24.1	7.9%
Office	0.8	0.03%
Industrial	9.6	3.1%
Institutional/government	35.9	11.7%
Open Space/Parks/Cemeteries	6.2	2.0%
Vacant Land & Buildings	27.1	8.8%
Transportation (Streets)	<u>59.4</u>	<u>19.4%</u>
Sub-total	172.7	56.0%
TOTAL	307	100%

Source: Hartford Planning Department, 1994 Land use Survey

Most of the residential development in the neighborhood is medium density homes that were constructed as two-to-three family structures. Originally they were owner-occupied and often housed several generations of the same family in one building. Today they are mostly renter occupied. As the following table indicates there is a very low incidence of single family housing in the Upper Albany neighborhood.

Units In Structure				
	City of Hartford		Upper Albany Neighborhood	
1 (DETACHED)	6,727	12%	137	4%
1 (ATTACHED)	2,114	4%	137	4%
2	5,789	10%	440	13%
3 OR 4	12,752	23%	1,326	39%
5 TO 9	9,457	16%	661	20%
10 TO 49	13,699	12%	646	19%
50 OR MORE	4,787	9%	-	-
MOBILE HOME OR TRAILER	4	<1%	-	-
OTHER	769	1%	46	1%
	56,098		3393	

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, 1990 USER-DEFINED AREAS PROGRAM

The most recent data available on building condition is from the City's 2000 Vacant Building Survey conducted by the Planning Division of the Department of Housing and Community Development. The following table summarizes the results of this survey as well as the actions in the neighborhood scheduled for vacant properties by the Capital City Economic Development Authority.

Ninety-nine of the properties in the survey are residential (including 12 apartment structures), three are apartment structures with commercial uses, two are warehousing uses, one is a mixed use building and one is owned by a non-profit. Five of the properties are city-owned; a sixth city-owned residential property was recently sold and will be rehabilitated.

The largest concentration of boarded/mothballed buildings is on Edgewood Street. Four of the twelve Edgewood Street properties listed in the survey are city-owned. A comprehensive housing rehabilitation project known as the Edgewood Street Improvement Program has been proposed to stabilize the section of Edgewood Street south of Albany Avenue. Seven of the boarded/mothballed buildings listed in the survey have been identified as part of this project area, including three city-owned properties. In addition, one of the mothballed properties is included in the Sigourney

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Project	2	11
Source: City of Hartford, Planning and Development Division		

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	<u>Crimes Against Persons</u>	<u>Crimes Against Property</u>	<u>Total</u>
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Economic revitalization of the neighborhood will help to overcome the issues of blight and crime that are reflected in many people's image of the Upper Albany neighborhood. The City of Hartford, which owns a significant number of properties, some in key locations, will be a major player in moving forward the neighborhood's goals for enhancing livability in the neighborhood. The following table summarizes city-owned property in Upper Albany.


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Source: Connecticut Department of Transportation

City-Owned Property:

Board of Education	4
Hartford Housing Authority	7
Police Department	1
Street Division	1

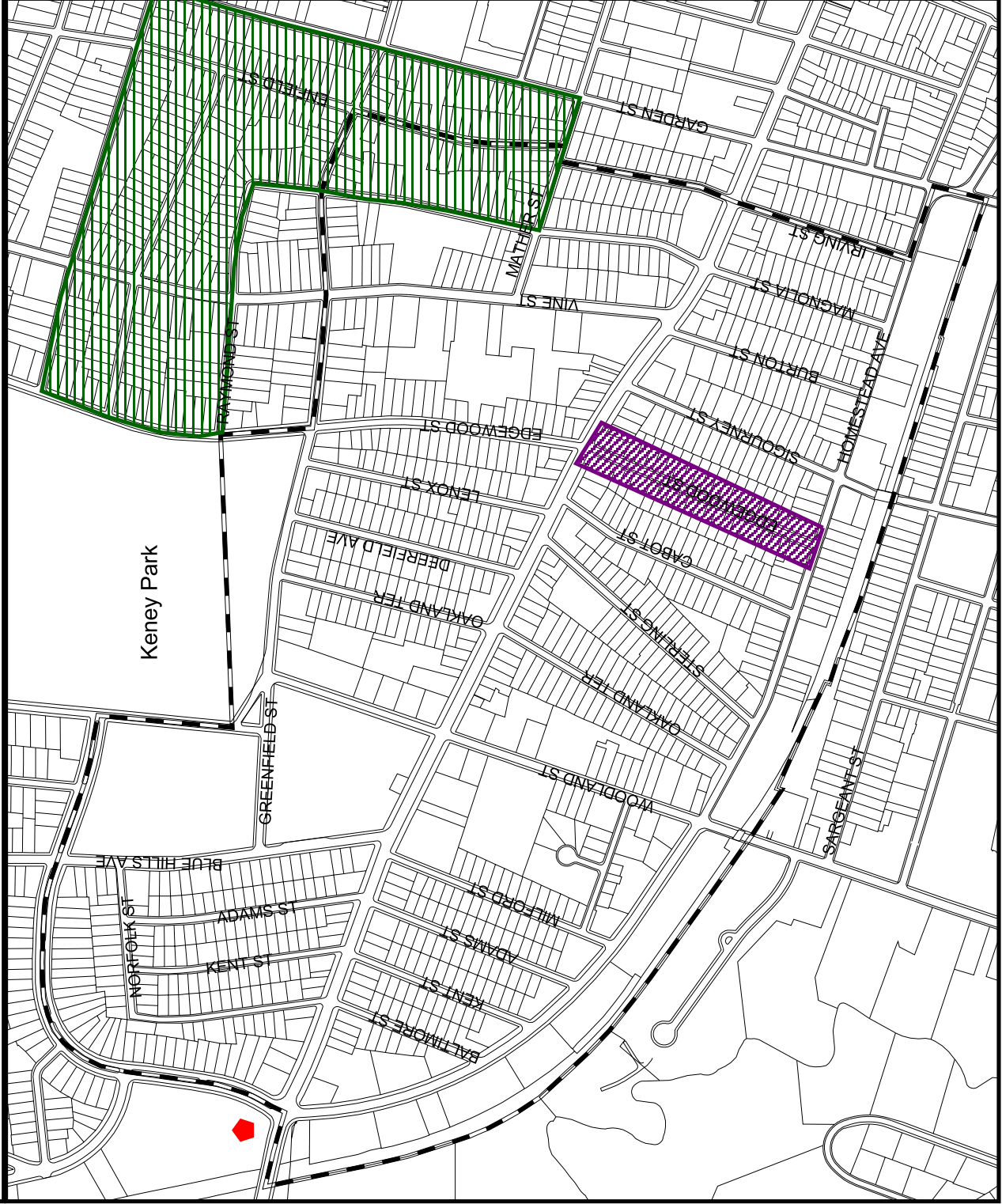


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The long-established Albany Avenue commercial corridor is also a major transportation link connecting outlying areas and adjoining communities to downtown via Homestead Avenue, Woodland and Sigourney Streets. Areas along Albany Avenue and Homestead Avenue have the potential to provide goods and services as well as employment opportunities to populations beyond the neighborhood because of this access. As the table below indicates, traffic volumes along Albany Avenue have declined in the last ten years. Traffic flow, safety improvements, parking, enhanced image, and a desirable mix of uses that will attract people to the area will be needed to maintain the economic viability of this traditionally commercial area. Improvements on Route 44 by the Connecticut Department of Transportation and at the Homestead Avenue/Walnut Street junction should move forward as catalysts to revitalizing these major economic corridors.

Upper Albany NRZ -- Hartford, CT



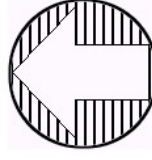
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

 Edgewood Street Improvement Plan

 Enfield Street Initiative

 University of Hartford
Hartt School

250 0 250 500 Feet



TPA

Planning
Engineering
Landscape
Architecture

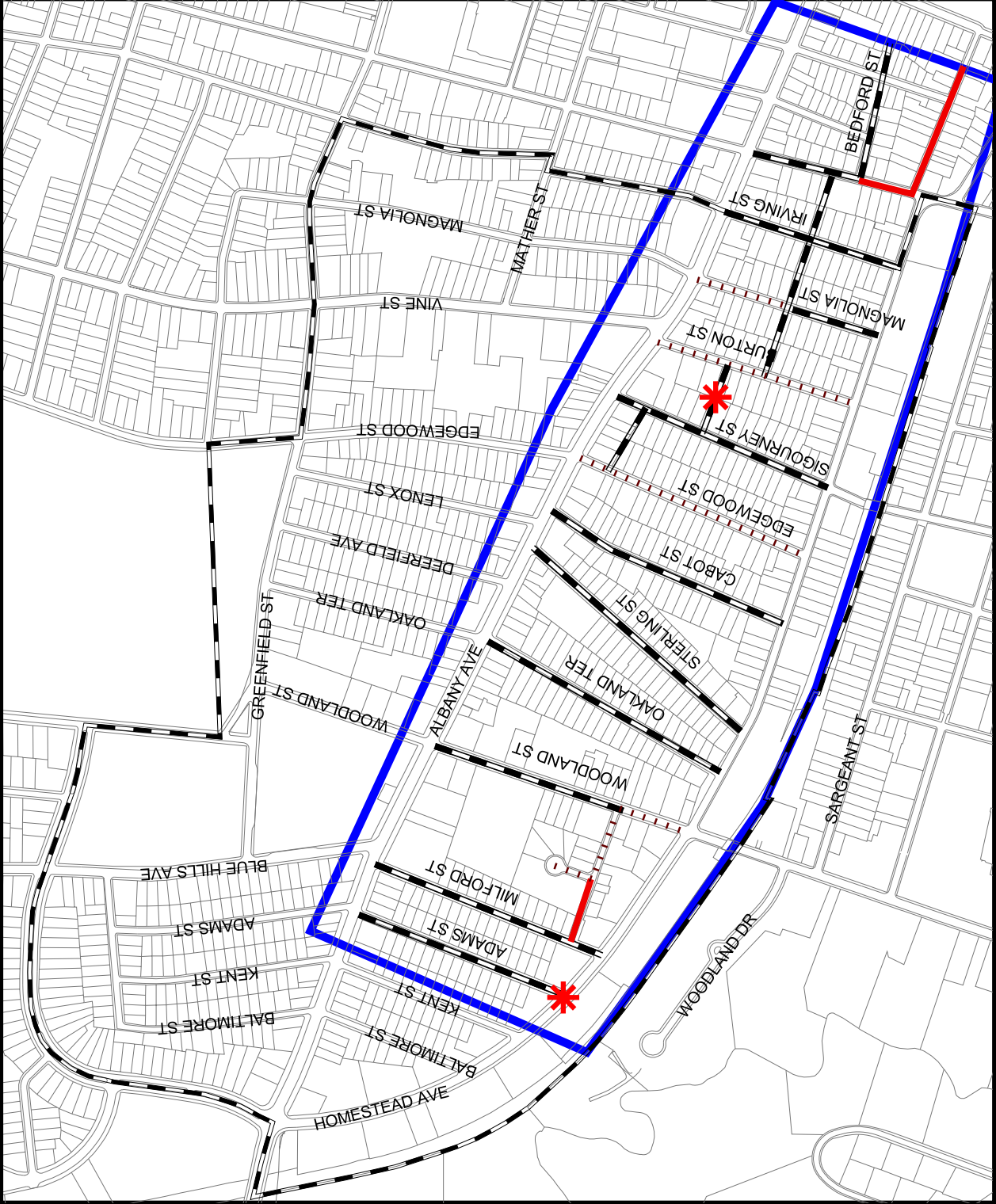
Design Group

85 Willow Street
New Haven, CT 06511
TEL: 203.562.2181

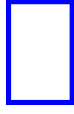
Map Source: MDC and City of Hartford
Map Created By: Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

June 6, 2001

Upper Albany NRZ -- Hatrford, CT



MDC Backwater Valve Project Area



MDC Project Area



Sewer Cleaned



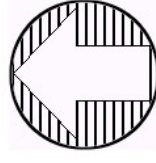
TV Inspection and Cleaning



TV Inspected



Areas Repaired



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Landscape
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Design Group

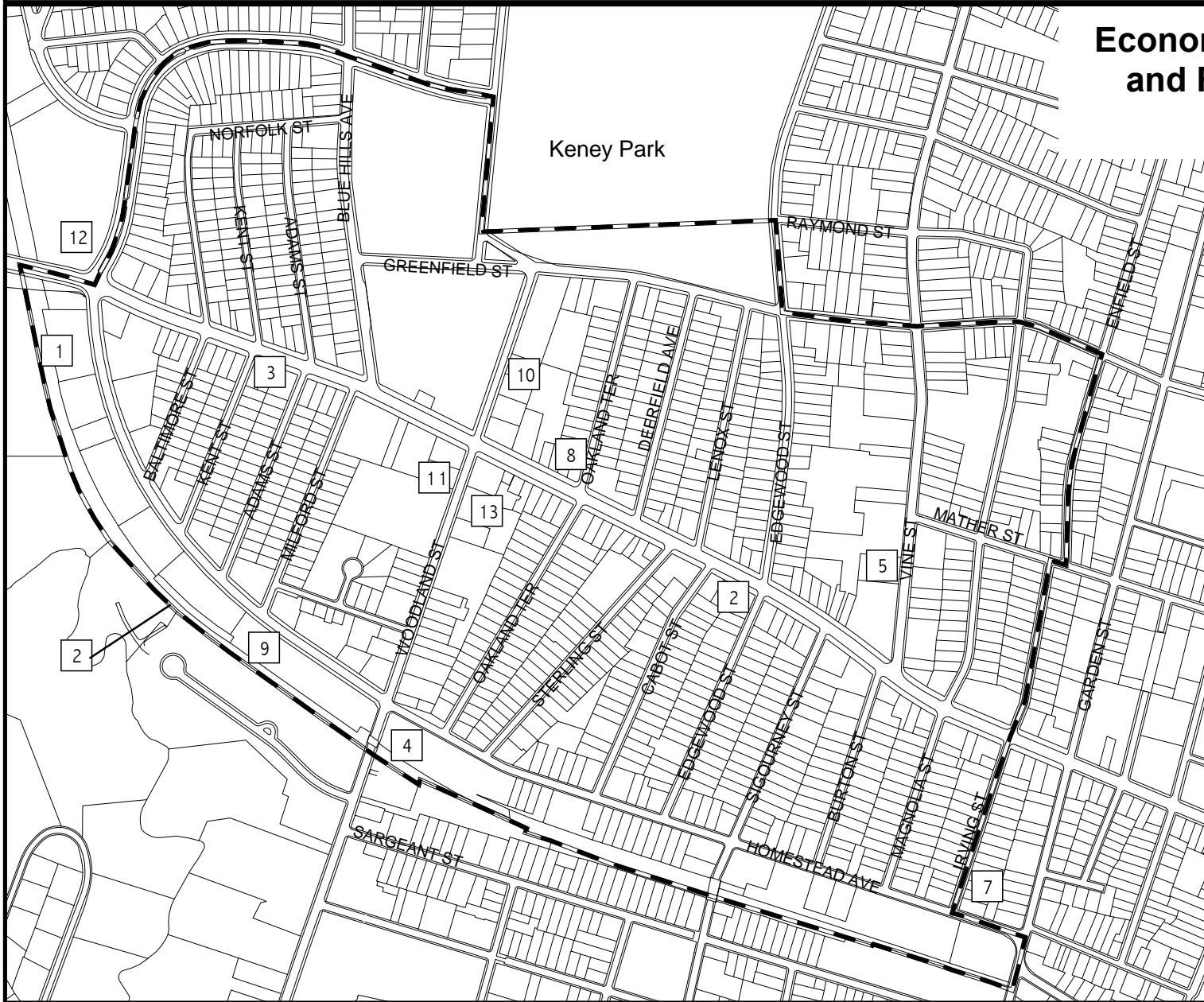
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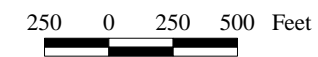
June 6, 2001

Upper Albany NRZ -- Hartford, CT

Economic Development and Redevelopment Priorities



1. American Linen
2. Edgewood Commercial/Housing Development
3. "Foot Zone" Reuse
4. Former Sealtest Site
5. Green Houses at Mahoney Village
6. Homestead Avenue Business Corridor
7. Irving Street Housing/UANC Development
8. Oakland Terrace Property
9. Philbrick Spencer
10. St. Martin's Nursing Center
11. U.S. Post Office
12. University of Hartford Thomas Cadillac
13. Woodland Moving & Warehouse



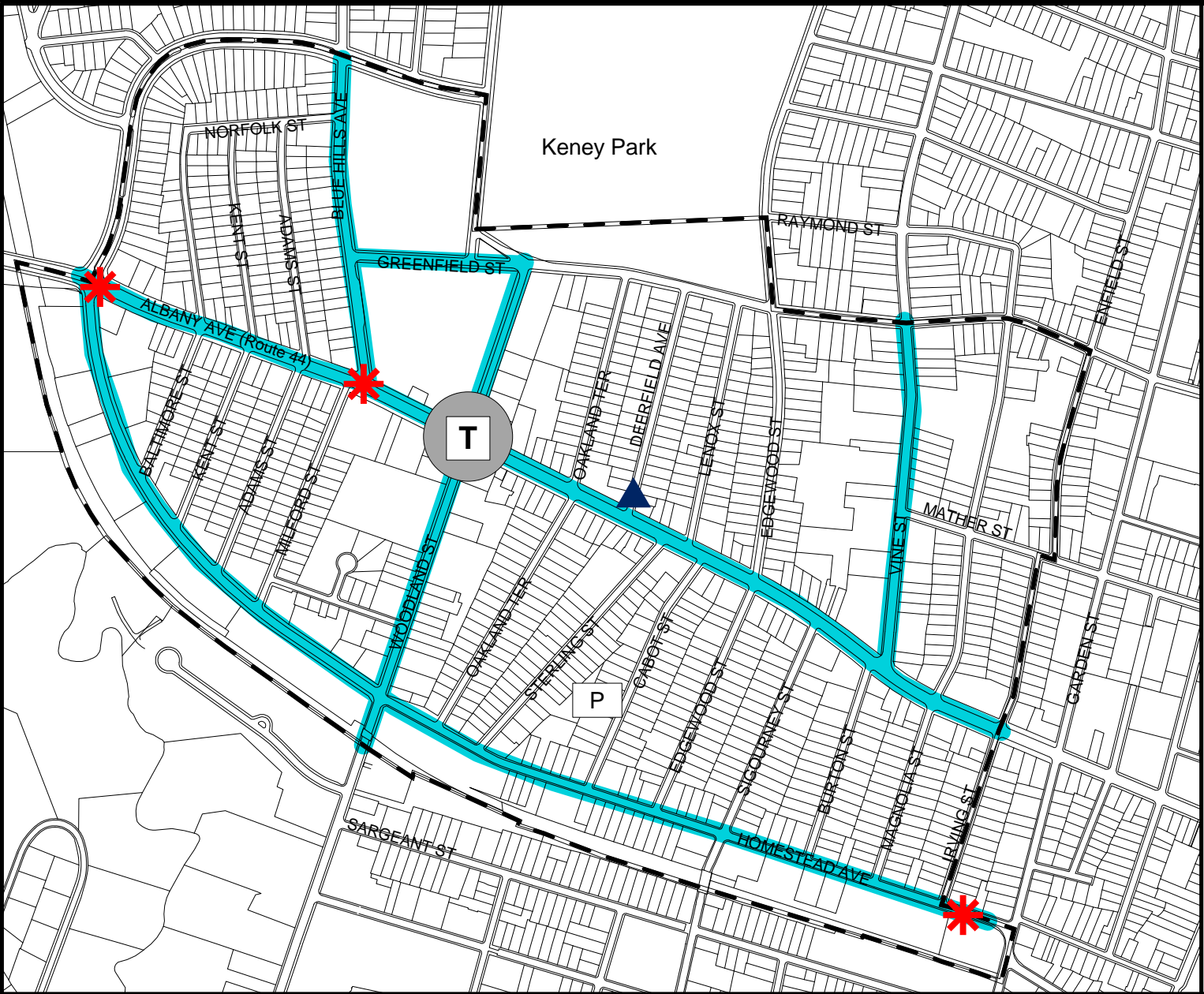
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 Map Created By: Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

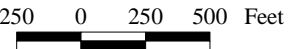
June 7, 2001

Upper Albany NRZ -- Hatrford, CT



PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Gateway Improvement
-  Cabot Playground Improvement
-  Town Center
-  The Deer Statue Replaced



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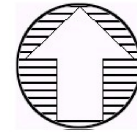
Map Source: MDC and City of Hatrford
 Map Created By: Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

Upper Albany NRZ -- Hatrford, CT

CONTEXT

- 1 Artist's Collective Inc.
- 2 Auto Zone
- 3 Bravo Plaza
- 4 Community Health Services
- 5 Fire Station
- 6 Former Sealtest Site
- 7 Former Woodland Moving/Warehouse
- 8 Fourth Congregational Church
- 9 Keney Park
- 10 Lewis Fox Middle School
- 11 Library
- 12 Martin Luther King School
- 13 Mary Mahoney Village
- 14 McDonald's
- 15 Milner School
- 16 NW Jones Building
- 17 Police Sub-Station
- 18 Thomas Cadillac Site
- 19 Upper Albany Neighborhood Collaborative
- 20 Urban League of Greater Hartford

250 0 250 500 Feet



TPA

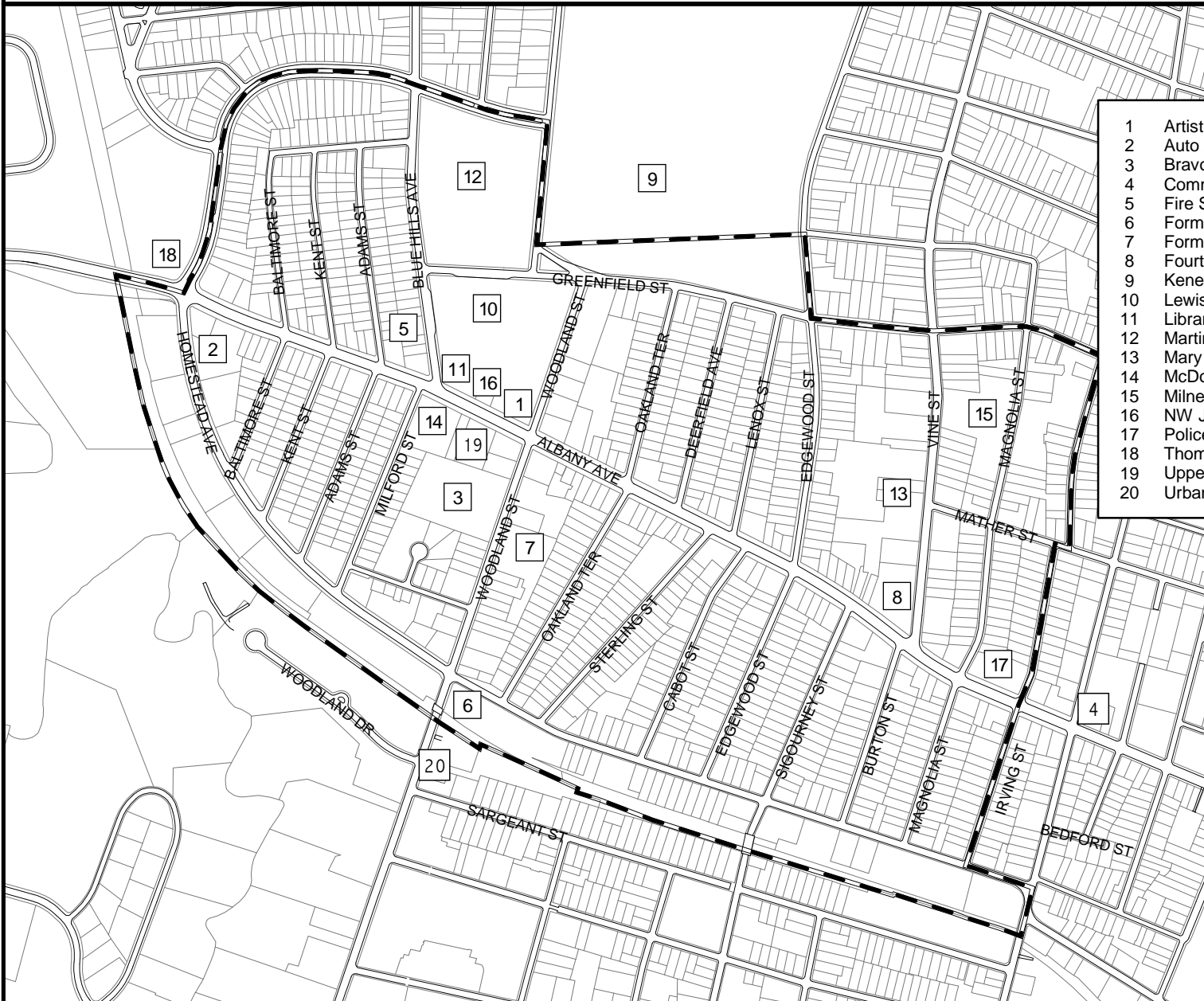
Design Group

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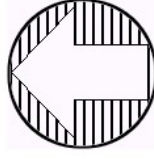
Map Source: MDC and City of Hartford
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June 7, 2001



Upper Albany NRZ -- Hatrford, CT

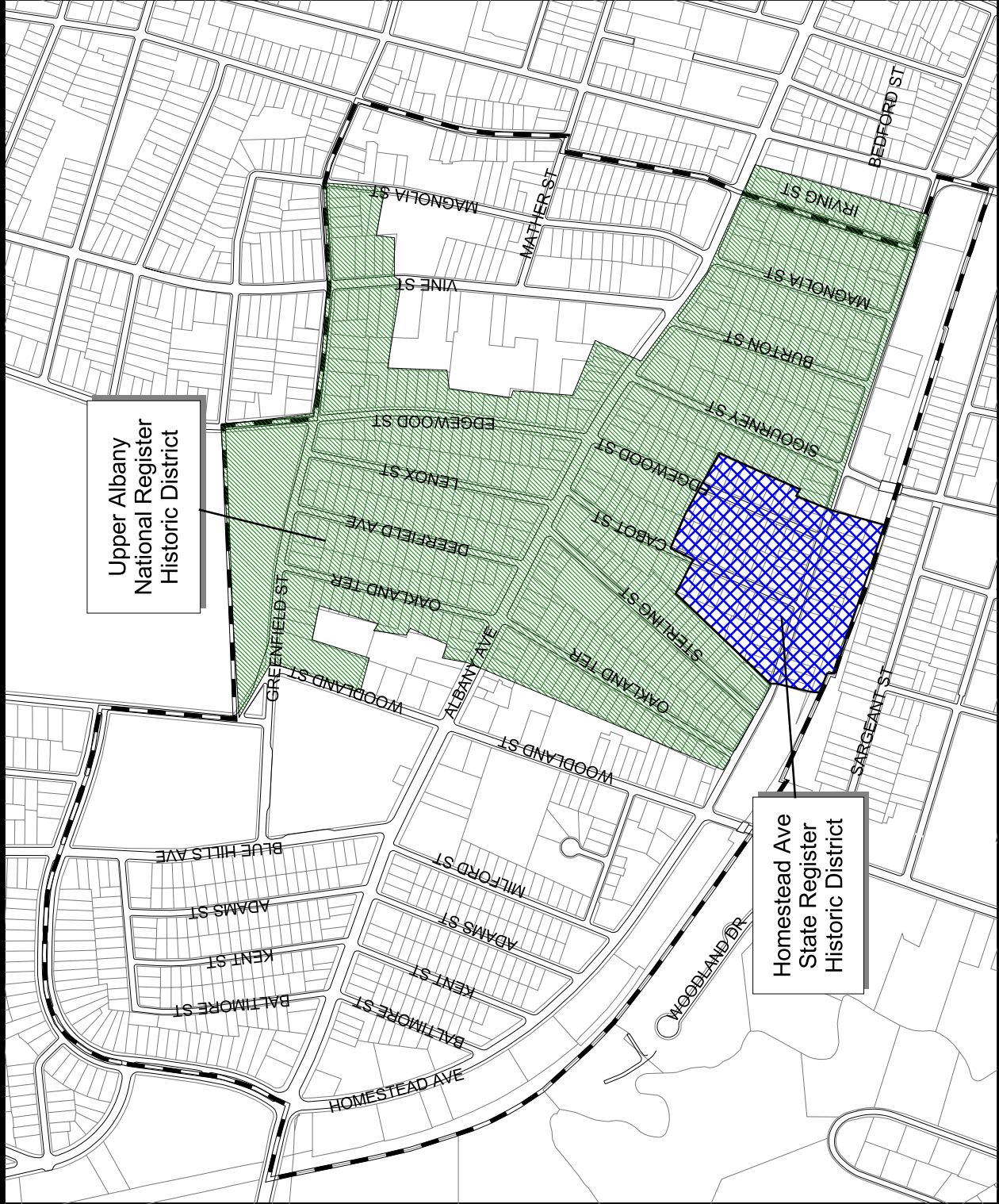
HISTORIC DISTRICTS



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Architecture
88 Willow Street
New Haven, CT 06511
TEL: 203/562-2181

Map Source: MDC and City of Hartford
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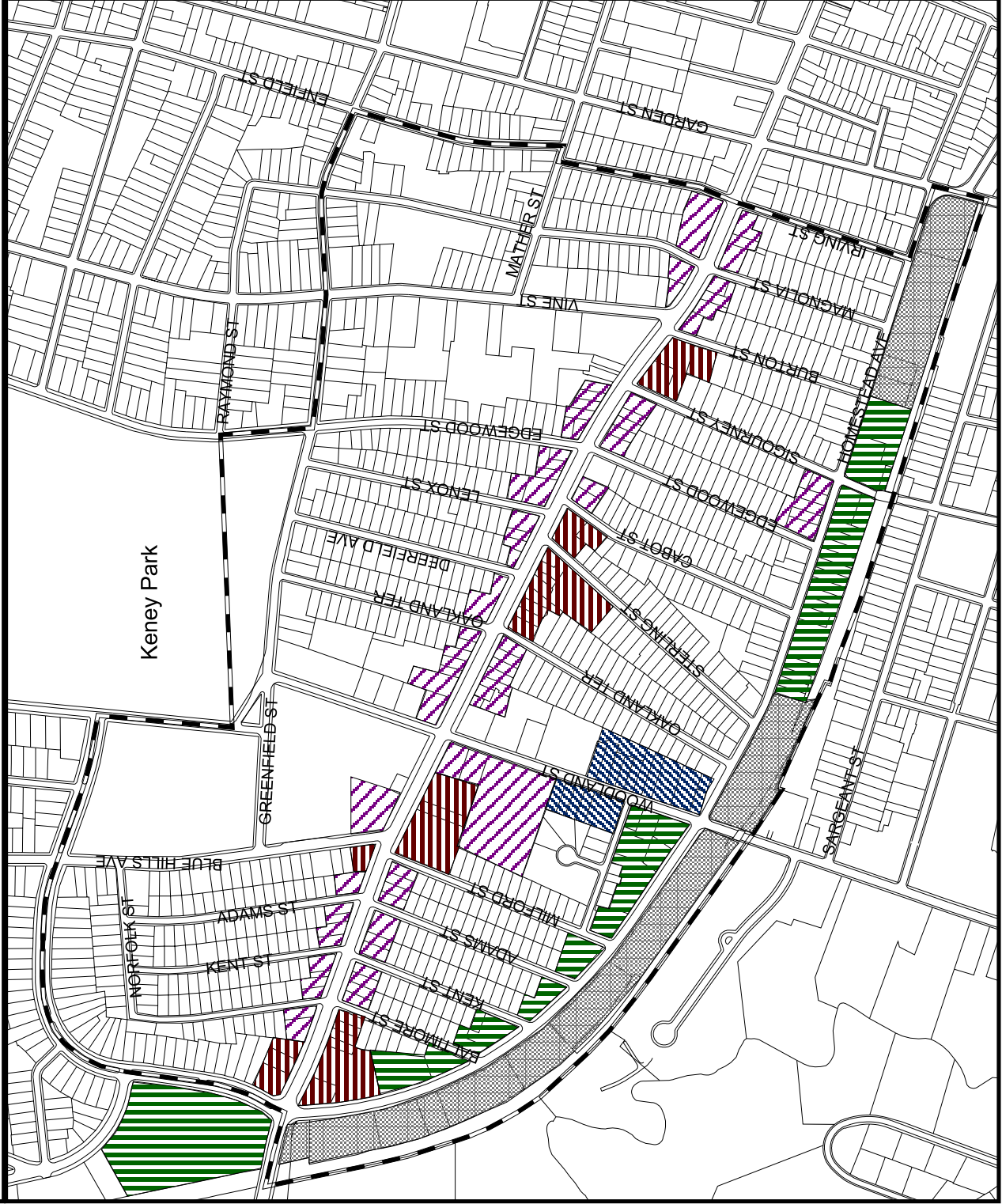
June, 6, 2001








Upper Albany
National Register
Historic District

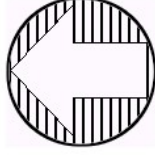
Homestead Ave
State Register
Historic District

Upper Albany NRZ -- Hartford, CT



GENERAL ZONING

-  Commercial
-  General Business
-  Industrial
-  Neighborhood Business
-  Residential/Office



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June 6, 2001

Appendix A

Neighborhood Profile

The Upper Albany neighborhood, comprised of nearly 478 acres, developed in the late 1800s as the original Hartford settlement expanded beyond the downtown area. Before this time, Upper Albany consisted primarily of outlying farmlands. Albany Avenue was the primary route linking Hartford to the next economic hub to the west – Albany, NY.

Transportation improvements had a great impact on the development of City neighborhoods. The railroad lines built in the mid-1800s facilitated connection between Hartford and surrounding towns as well as Springfield and New York. Horsecar lines developed in the late 19th century along major streets such as Albany Avenue, encouraging the development of communities farther away from the downtown’s older residential sections.

The Upper Albany neighborhood further developed as a residential community in the early 1900s, with a major trolley line that ran along Albany Avenue. Between 1897 –1909 Upper Albany experienced a housing boom; twenty-one streets were created, subdivided and built-up. By the mid-1920s all the streets in Upper Albany were built and the neighborhood was known as a “streetcar suburb”. Today, 45% of the neighborhood’s land area is devoted to residential purposes. Much of this housing stock, primarily low (1-2 family) and medium density (3-6 family) structures, still exists in the neighborhood. In fact, 23% of the homes in Upper Albany were constructed prior to 1939. High density housing is found in several elderly facilities such as Mahoney Village, Horace Bushnell Congregate Homes, Faith Manors, First Village 1 and 2. Other high-density housing can be found primarily along portions of Vine and Woodland Streets. There are scattered high-density buildings on the many of the streets to the south side of Albany Avenue, some belonging to Hartford Housing Authority. Over half of the existing homes were built between 1940 - 1970.

The physical development of Upper Albany reflected the key elements of a neighborhood. It provided places to work, live, shop, learn and play which, in turn, created a mixture of land uses.

Albany Avenue and Homestead Avenue developed as mixed-use areas. Albany Avenue developed as a commercial center with businesses and shops to serve the resident population. Homestead Avenue developed primarily as an industrial and manufacturing area and is still an important employment center for the neighborhood. Some of the manufacturers have been located here for many years. In fact, Smith Worthington Saddlery Company has been making horse saddles in Hartford since 1794.

Both of the avenues had residential units intermixed with other uses. The side streets developed primarily as residential. About 32% of the land is comprised of a combination of uses such as commercial, office, mixed, streets, and open space. Keney Park provides the largest open space in the neighborhood. While most of Keney Park is located in the Northeast neighborhood, it is accessible through Greenfield Street, and used by area residents. There are also playgrounds and open space in the neighborhood schools. Institutional uses comprise 12% of the land area. These uses include Fox Middle School, Martin Luther King School, Vine Street School, Quirk Middle School, Horace Bushnell Church, other churches on Albany Avenue, and the Salvation Army on Homestead Avenue. There are approximately 22 vacant acres in residential zones and 15 acres in business/commercial zones remaining in the neighborhood. These land uses patterns still exist today and are upheld by current zoning designations. The following table summarizes the distribution of land uses in Upper Albany.

Existing Land Use		
<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Residential Uses</u>		
1 – 2 Family House		64.0
3 – 6 Family House		56.7
Over 6 Family House		<u>13.6</u>
Sub-total	134.3	44%
<u>Mixed and Non-Residential Uses</u>		
Residential/Mixed Use	6.5	3.6%
Other Mixed Use	3.1	1.0%
Business/Commercial	24.1	7.9%
Office	0.8	0.03%
Industrial	9.6	3.1%
Institutional/government	35.9	11.7%
Open Space/Parks/Cemeteries	6.2	2.0%
Vacant Land & Buildings	27.1	8.8%
Transportation (Streets)	<u>59.4</u>	<u>19.4%</u>
Sub-total	172.7	56.0%
TOTAL	307	100%

Source: Hartford Planning Department, 1994 Land use Survey

Most of the residential development in the neighborhood is medium density homes that were constructed as two-to-three family structures. Originally they were owner-occupied and often housed several generations of the same family in one building. Today they are mostly renter occupied. As the following table indicates there is a very low incidence of single family housing in the Upper Albany neighborhood.

Units In Structure				
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Albany Avenue between Sigourney and approximately mid-block east of Woodland Street is included in the Upper Albany Historic District. The Upper Albany Historic District is a predominantly residential district listed on the National Register of Historic Places that crosses from the Upper Albany neighborhood into the Northeast neighborhood. The majority of the district's structures represent the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival architectural styles. The portion of the district that is along Albany Avenue is commercial in character and includes some redeveloped areas with contemporary facades. The Fourth Congregational Church (Albany Avenue at Vine Street), a landmark in the Upper Albany neighborhood, is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Homestead Avenue Historic District, which adjoins the Upper Albany National Register district on Sterling, Cabot and Edgewood Streets, is listed on the State Register of Historic Places. Many of the Edgewood Street houses located in the State District are blighted and several are currently boarded.

The only Redevelopment Plan in effect in the neighborhood is for the Sigourney /Homestead Project, part of a major development initiative by the City that includes the Veeder Place Development in Asylum Hill. The Upper Albany portion of the Initiative involves the realignment of Walnut/Garden and Homestead Streets, street widening and bridge repairs on Woodland Street, and the creation of 3 parcels on Homestead Avenue at Sigourney for new commercial development. The provisions of this plan will be in effect until June 2018.

The long-established Albany Avenue commercial corridor is also a major transportation link connecting outlying areas and adjoining communities to downtown via Homestead Avenue, Woodland and Sigourney Streets. Areas along Albany Avenue and Homestead Avenue have the potential to provide goods and services as well as employment opportunities to populations beyond the neighborhood because of this access. As the table below indicates, traffic volumes along Albany Avenue have declined in the last ten years. Traffic flow, safety improvements, parking, enhanced image, and a desirable mix of uses that will attract people to the area will be needed to maintain the economic viability of this traditionally commercial area. Improvements on Route 44 by the Connecticut Department of Transportation and at the Homestead Avenue/Walnut Street junction should move forward as catalysts to revitalizing these major economic corridors.