

BLUE HILLS NRZ

OUR PURPOSE



In order for us to sustain the quality of living we now have in Blue Hills we must be committed to improving ourselves and how we live. Each of us, by making a contribution in any way we can, will collectively and significantly have a positive effect. We must do this for ourselves and for our children. We cannot accomplish all our goals at once but it is very important for us to always keep our purpose in mind. We have eight specific principles that will guide us as we move forward:

- Preserve property values
- Sustain/improve public services
- Encourage compatible responsible property maintenance
- Expand neighborhood-level communication
- Encourage community development
- Monitor impacts of external forces
- Support activities that build self-reliance and social responsibility
- Attract sustainable development and continue to improve our commercial core

BLUE HILLS NRZ

AREAS FOR ACTION



IMAGE AND PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Residents take pride in caring for their properties in Blue Hills and the Blue Hills Avenue commercial area has benefited from the City's façade improvement program. We feel that there is a need to address our overall image by giving attention to various components of our public facilities including our streets, parks, and buildings. Improving our image will present a physical "Welcome" to all our visitors. At the same time, these improvements will make residents feel good about their neighborhood and will provide the necessary physical backdrops to improve public safety.

- ◆ **Streetscape/Façade Improvements**

- Blue Hills Avenue Commercial District
- Gateway: Albany Avenue at Homestead and Blue Hills
- Gateway: Blue Hills Avenue at Bloomfield line
- Mark Twain Drive
- Westbourne Parkway median
- Holcomb Street: Vine to Ridgefield

- ◆ **Signage/façade guidelines: Albany Avenue, Blue Hills, and other commercial properties**

- ◆ **Park and Recreation Facilities/Community Space**

- Improved/formalize Keney Park entrances
- Increase green space and pocket parks
 - Burnham Street (between Blue Hills Avenue and Salisbury Street)
 - Corner of Salisbury Street and Harold Street
 - Corner of Cornwall and Granby Streets
 - Corner of Greenfield and Ridgefield Streets
- Greenway along Park River Branch: Coordinate with City and CT DEP
- Community Gardens: Identify new sites

- ◆ **Infrastructure**

Monitor delivery of public services (snow removal, trash pick-up, rodent control, etc.)

Identify deficiencies in water, sewer, storm water, roads, sidewalks

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our neighborhood is primarily residential and institutional uses. With construction of the CVS now under way, there remains but a handful of sites to target for economic development. We want to confine future development to our presently zoned commercial areas, but welcome development that is compatible with our neighborhood. We seek developers and land uses that will be good neighbors and will serve the needs of our residents.

♦ Redevelopment Sites

Thomas Cadillac Site

Westbrook Village/Bowles Park

♦ Blue Hills Commerical District

Review recommendations of Blue Hills Avenue Business District Improvement Study

Greenhouse site reuse

Continue to support neighborhood level businesses

Technical analysis of parking demand and needs

Traffic calming strategies

♦ Oak Hill School

Continue to monitor the evolution of new programs

Discuss future need for analysis of underutilized areas

Maintain open lines of communication with Board of Directors

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

Despite the stability of our neighborhood, we need to continue to improve on the quality of life of Blue Hills residents, individually and collectively. This will require honest and objective monitoring of activities occurring within or affecting Blue Hills.

♦ Public Safety

Community Policing

“Eyes on the Neighborhood” training

♦ Educational Facilities and Programs

Expand library branch on Blue Hills Avenue

Playscape at Mark Twain School

Improve railroad crossing at Annie Fisher School

Seek opportunities to partner with local schools

♦ Social Responsibility

Tie in violence/drug prevention programs with NRZ activities/programs

Develop a neighborhood code of conduct

BLUE HILLS NRZ

ASSETS AND CHALLENGES



ASSETS

Well Kept Homes

Stable Population

High Level of Homeownership

Institutional Partners

New Bus Line to Buckland Mall

Block Clubs

Spectacular Views

Park River

Keney Park

Blue Hills Commercial Center

Recreation Areas and Playgrounds

Places of Worship

Blue Hills Branch Library

Blue Hills Fire Station

CHALLENGES

Gateways

Pedestrian Corridors/Link

Zoning Compliance/Nuisance Land Uses

Blue Hills Commercial Area Parking

Thomas Cadillac Site/Dattco Bus Depot

Westbrook Village and Bowles Park
Public Housing Stabilization

Drainage Problems Near Commercial Core

Vacant Lots

Public Space

Loss of Community Gardens

Increase Resident Involvement

Streetscape (lighting, sidewalks, etc)
Improvements

Quality of Life (noise, trash, supervision
of children)

Public Safety

♦ **Land Use and Zoning**

Monitor negative land uses
Limit multifamily units to 3

♦ **Housing**

Monitor abandoned structures
Monitor code enforcement activities of City
Support activities and programs to sustain the quality of housing stock
Disseminate information on proper home rehabilitation and maintenance
Continue to monitor the level of homeownership and assess need for intervention

COMMUNICATIONS

Informed and educated residents are our best line of defense in our efforts to maintain a stable neighborhood and improve upon our quality of life. Improving upon our existing communication pathways while forging new ones will ensure broader representation of the neighborhood, improve participation in community events, and, when necessary, provide a mechanism for mobilizing support for specific issues.

♦ **Within the neighborhood**

Block Clubs
Blue Hills Civic Association
Blue Hills Merchants Association
Institutions

♦ **Between the NRZ and the City**

Planning Division: Notification of proposed zoning variances, site plan approvals, etc.
Police Department
City Manager
Public Works

♦ **With prospective developers**

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

Work with the Developer to identify potential waivers necessary, public improvements required, etc.

♦ **With other NRZs**

Initiate dialogue with adjacent NRZs and discuss mutual goals and methods of accomplishing them together.

BLUE HILLS NRZ CONTEXT



The Blue Hills Neighborhood, situated in the northwest corner of the City, boasts a stable residential population supported by a high level of homeownership and complemented by a strong institutional presence. The north-south orientation of Blue Hills Avenue, providing spectacular views to the western ridge, gave rise to the neighborhood's name. Blue Hills occupies a strategic position between the older central city to the east and suburban development to the north and west.

The neighborhood is comprised of primarily single-family and two-family residences, some 700 public housing units within Westbrook Village and Bowles Park, and a commercial corridor along Blue Hills Avenue. Oak Hill School (Connecticut School for the Blind), Saint Francis Medical Center/Mount Sinai Hospital Campus, The Village for Families & Children, and part of the University of Hartford are prominent institutions in Blue Hills.

Blue Hill's Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) boundaries are consistent with the City's long-established neighborhood boundaries, with the exclusion of those residential properties on the east side of Bloomfield Avenue, whose owners have expressed a preference for joining residential owners on the west side of Bloomfield Avenue in the West End NRZ.

Specifically, as shown on the Context Map, the NRZ's boundaries are from Keney Park north along Coventry Street, west along the Bloomfield municipal boundary, and then south along Bloomfield Avenue, excluding the residential properties on the east side, continuing along Albany Avenue and then northeast along the Westbourne Parkway to Ridgefield Street.

These boundaries include two major institutions that have indicated a preference for being included in the Blue Hills NRZ – the University of Hartford and the Village for Families and Children, both of which have a long history of cooperation with Blue Hills; and includes the University of Hartford housing complex, which the U.S. Census includes with other parts of Blue Hills in Census Tract 5038.

The Blue Hills Civic Association, which serves as the Blue Hills Problem-Solving Committee, and which initiated formation of the Blue Hills NRZ, concurs in these boundary definitions.

As one of the last neighborhoods in the City to be developed, the character of Blue Hills reflects the suburban scale that flourished as the area was transformed from a predominantly rural

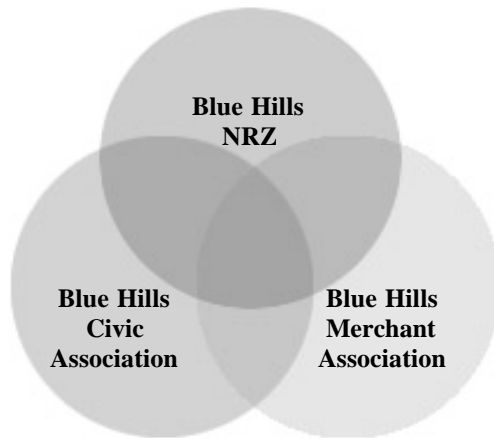
farming area to a low density white collar neighborhood. This transformation was spurred by a growing insurance and banking industry.

Residential growth was accompanied by an increasing institutional presence. The Hebrew Home for the Aged and Mount Sinai Hospital, now part of Saint Francis Medical Center, were brought into the neighborhood by the Jewish community which predominated up through the 1960s. Oak Hill School and the Children's Village (now the Village for Children & Families) followed. The University of Hartford's campus now occupies part of the neighborhood's western border along with the private Watkinson School. A magnet elementary school is under construction on the University's campus. Presently, Annie Fisher, Sarah Rawson and Mark Twain Elementary Schools and Weaver High School are within the neighborhood. Two other public institutions, the Blue Hills branch of Hartford Public Library and Fire Station 16, are located within the Blue Hills business district.

Although vacant or commercially developable property is scarce, Blue Hills will soon benefit from a newly constructed CVS at the corner of Blue Hills Avenue and Manchester Street/Tower Avenue.

The quality of life afforded residents of Blue Hills has historically attracted upwardly-mobile people from a range of ethnic backgrounds and cultures. The neighborhood is now home to predominantly African-American and Caribbean-American people. Increasingly, perceptions of inferior schools drug trafficking, and taxes are eroding the neighborhood's confidence in its ability to sustain its standard for living. As a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, Blue Hills is intent on pro-actively meeting this challenge.

BLUE HILLS NRZ HOW WE STARTED



When the opportunity to become recognized as a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) first presented itself, we did not pursue it because we were not quite sure what it meant to our neighborhood. We consider ourselves a stable area with a high percentage of home-ownership and although we are not without problems the Blue Hills Civic Association (BHCA) has played a prominent role in addressing many of our quality of life issues.

After attending a presentation on NRZ legislation and learning more about the specific powers that may be associated with a formal designation, we reconsidered. We also believed that state-sanctioned recognition could help us pursue whatever funds that would be made available. We also thought that an NRZ could provide follow-through on the implementation of many issues and ideas that surface through the BHCA.

And so the first meeting of the Blue Hills NRZ Planning Committee convened. After meeting several times, we assembled a draft plan. In December 1999, we held a public meeting to present our ideas. As the plan evolved it was also presented to the Blue Hills Merchants Association. Ideas raised at those meetings were subsequently incorporated.

In August 2000, the City of Hartford offered funding to us to secure a consultant to finalize the Plan. With this plan now completed we are anxious to begin implementation.

As we envision it, the Blue Hills Civic Association and the Blue Hills NRZ will have common ground. The Civic Association will continue its function as our neighborhood “watch dog”. After all, the Association has done a fantastic job of focusing on our people and specific issues and also garnering institutional support. Our newly-created NRZ will initiate the physical actions that are needed in Blue Hills and when necessary will help secure the necessary powers such as code waivers or receivership to accomplish specific actions. The NRZ will also be the first line of communication with the City when a development is being proposed in our neighborhood.

As the graphic below illustrates, we have a third entity with which we share common ground – the Blue Hills Merchants Association. This group has essentially functioned as the neighborhood’s de facto economic development committee. We have limited areas for new development and so Blue Hills Avenue and the merchants and people occupying the corridor contribute directly to our local economy.

BLUE HILLS NRZ

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION: 2001-2003

NRZ ADVOCACY

- Construction of CVS Pharmacy
- Village for Families and Children
- Protection of Cultural Landmarks (St. Justin's Church and Fire House No. 16)
- Improved public transportation

NRZ ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

- Blue Hills Avenue Business District Streetscape
- Blue Hills Avenue Business District – Implementation of Improvement Study Recommendations
- Westbourne Parkway Streetscape/Gateway
- Mark Twain Drive Improvements
- Thomas Cadillac Site Development – with University of Hartford
- Westbrook Village Bowles Park Improvements or Redevelopment – with the Hartford Housing Authority and State of Connecticut
- Code Enforcement/Public Safety – with the City of Hartford

NRZ MONITORING

- Blighted Properties
- Connecticut Institute for the Blind
- North Hartford Senior Center
- North West Boys and Girls Club
- University of Hartford/Northern Gateway – Bloomfield

BLUE HILLS NRZ NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

The Blue Hills Civic Association



Founded in 1992, the Civic Association is, as its bylaws describe it, “a non-profit, community-based organization whose sole purpose is the betterment of its neighborhoods and the lives of its members, and representation of their interests”. Its officers and board of directors are elected at an annual meeting in June. This meeting is open to all residents of Blue Hills and those working and having a substantial interest in the welfare of the Blue Hills community.

Originally created in response to local zoning issues, the Civic Association played a key role in maintaining tranquility during the demographic transition of the late 1960s from a predominantly white to a predominantly African-American population. After a period of quiescence that began in the late 1970s, the Civic Association was revived in 1988 with help from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Since its revival, the Civic Association has identified block clubs, built on the Police Department’s concept of Block Watches, as a key element to engage residents in rebuilding a sense of community purpose. There are currently about 30 such block clubs whose members participate in the annual City “Hartford Cleans Up!” and “National Night Out” as well as meeting periodically to discuss areas of local and community concern.

The organization sponsors regular “Blue Hills Town Meetings” to give residents an opportunity to hear and question City officials and candidates seeking public office.

In addition, the Civic Association manages directly a wide variety of programs:

- Sponsors an annual Summer Youth Employment Training Program that places youngsters in job sites in Blue Hills non-profit agencies and also provides counseling/training.
- Manages a Blue Hills Summer Basketball League for boys and girls ages 9 to 16, which includes an educational component on sportsmanship, drug avoidance, completion of schooling and avoidance of teenage pregnancy, as well as a pro-active program to improve parents’ child-rearing skills.
- Developed a database of more than 700 senior citizens in Blue Hills.

- Developed a pioneering pilot program, “Junior-Senior Partners”, to pair Weaver High school students with elderly residents, aiming to overcome seniors’ fear of young people, help young people appreciate the contribution the older generation has made, and have each junior partner escort his or her senior partner to a few events.
- Provides Blue Hills schools with a unique “Tele-Reminder” service, employing people in the community to telephone parents on the eve of PTO or other school events to encourage greater parental participation.
- Collaborates with the University of Hartford to provide student opportunities for community service.
- Sponsors an annual “Blue Hills Housing Opportunity Day” designed not only to provide the usual educational component of other housing fairs, but also to stimulate interest by responsible homeowners in home ownership in Blue Hills.
- Publishes a tabloid newspaper distributed to all residents, as a vehicle to share information and promote community spirit.

This work has been accomplished almost entirely with volunteer effort. The Civic Association has three full-time positions – a block organizer, funded by the City of Hartford, an Executive Director and an office manager – and a total budget of about \$100,000 a year.

The Civic Association is the beneficiary of rent-free office space on the campus of CIB/Oak Hill, but covers its own costs of mailings, office equipment, and telephones. The Association is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization, and by the State of Connecticut as a non-profit corporation.

BLUE HILLS NRZ NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Blue Hills Avenue Commercial Area



The Blue Hills Avenue Commercial Area is located between Boothbay Street and the Bloomfield town line. This 0.3 mile stretch of State Highway 187 (Blue Hills Avenue) primarily serves the local Blue Hills community, although many businesses draw customers from outside the area, especially the northern suburbs of Bloomfield and Windsor. The average daily traffic along Blue Hills Avenue in 1999 was 12,600 cars. The fact that there are few vacant storefronts or gaps within this corridor points to the presence of a viable community retail environment. A strong ethnic retail base exists in the corridor with a growing core of West Indian businesses.

Most of the retail and service establishments along Blue Hills Avenue are located in single story retail buildings or in mixed-use two story structures with apartments above. These structures range in age from 1900 to 1960, with half dating from 1925 to 1930. As much of the surrounding housing stock was built after World War II, the commercial center was well established as the area continued to grow around it. The age and compact nature of the area has resulted in limited availability of off street public parking. However, on-street parking is allowed.

The Blue Hills merchants Association is “a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide a voice to the interest, needs and development of its commercial district”. Founded in 1980, the association seeks to create work opportunities, advancement, commercial development, growth and professional networking. Its goal is to celebrate diverse cultural backgrounds while promoting communication, understanding and unity with all merchants within and around the Blue Hills business district. The Blue Hills Merchants Association also serves as a link between merchants, residents, state and local officials.

The association sponsors, annual elections, monthly board meetings, job fairs, street carnivals, sales events and membership drives. In addition, the Blue Hills Merchants Association lobbies for commercial development in support of neighborhood needs and to create new job opportunities.

The Blue Hills Merchants Association works in conjunction with the Blue Hills Civic Association and the Blue NRZ to bring a better quality of life to merchants, residents and the community as a whole.

Forty retail and service businesses are presently operating in the commercial center. These include branch banks, personal and professional services, convenience and specialty food and beverage markets, and restaurant/take-out locations. Community retail and services include dental offices, a weekly newspaper, laundry/dry cleaning locations, and a gas station.

All of these businesses are locally owned and managed with some owning the buildings in which they operate. Owner-occupied as opposed to tenant-based establishments are considered to provide an important base for long-term stability of the corridor. This stability has resulted in the absence of blight and abandonment common in many other urban neighborhoods.

Through funding from the Community Economic Development Fund, the “Blue Hills Avenue Business District Improvement Study” was recently completed. The purpose of this report is to serve as a planning resource to neighborhood and business groups in Blue Hills in the on-going efforts to support and enhance business development on the corridor. Specifically, the following areas are addressed:

- To provide a basic understanding of the demographic and economic forces affecting the Blue Hills neighborhood which would impact strategies for business development along the Blue Hills Avenue corridor.
- To provide general recommendations and options to consider in support of business development for the Blue Hills Avenue Corridor.

The report includes an analysis of demographic, economic and market information regarding Blue Hills in general and the Blue Hills Avenue business district in particular in order to provide a framework for evaluating business development options for the district. An inventory of businesses, buildings, commercial transactions and vacancies is also included. Recommendations in support of business development goals for the corridor are then presented (see Appendix D).

BLUE HILLS NRZ

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Community Resources



RECREATIONAL

Ruby Long Park (Joseph V. Cronin Playground)
Keney Park
Playscapes at Breakthrough Charter School, Rawson School
Playscape triangle at Cornwall and Lyme Streets
Athletic Facilities at Weaver High School
Indoor Pool at Weaver High School
Rail Line
Granby Street Soccer Field, across from Bowles Park
Blue Hills Recreation Center

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Apostolic Fellowship of Hartford, 700 Blue Hills Avenue
Blackwell Memorial A.M.E. Zion Baptist Church, 680 Blue Hills Avenue
Blue Hills Baptist Church, 686 Blue Hills Avenue
Calvary Church of God, 663 Blue Hills Avenue
Church of Christ Deliverance, 159 Blue Hills Avenue
Church of God of Prophecy, 650 Blue Hills Avenue
Greater Bible Way Church, 738 Blue Hills Avenue
New Testament Church of God, 339 Blue Hills Avenue
St. Justin Church, 230 Blue Hills Avenue
Way of the Cross Church of Christ, 45 Granby Street
Charity SDA Church, 25 Cornwall Street

EDUCATION

Schools

Annie Fisher School, 280 Plainfield Street
Breakthrough Charter School, Chatham Street
Jumoke Academy, 250 Blue Hills Avenue
University of Hartford Magnet School
Mark Twain School, 395 Lyme Street

Connecticut Institute for the Blind/Oak Hill School, 120 Holcomb Street
Sarah J. Rawson School, 260 Holcomb Street
University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Avenue
Watkinson School, 180 Bloomfield Avenue
Weaver High School, 415 Granby Street

Libraries

Blue Hills Branch of the Hartford Public Library, 655 Blue Hills Avenue

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Area Businesses

Bally's Food Center, 679 Blue Hills Avenue
Barall & Konover, 714 Blue Hills Avenue
Bennett's Uniforms Plus, 665 Blue Hills Avenue
Beverly's Jamaican Bakery, 630 Blue Hills Avenue
BKT – Shirts Plus, 641 Blue Hills Avenue
Blue Hills Boutique, 628 Blue Hills Avenue
Blue Hills Greenhouse, 615 Blue Hills Avenue
Blue Hills Mini Mall, 672 Blue Hills Avenue
Carlos Supermarket, 660 Blue Hills Avenue
City Kids, 643 Blue Hills Avenue
Clothes Line Laundromat, 668 Blue Hills Avenue
Cruz Market, 657 Blue Hills Avenue
CVS, 461 Blue Hills Avenue
Dae Dae's, 672 Blue Hills Avenue
Dr. Joel E. Rosenblatt, 682 Blue Hills Avenue
Dr. Michael L. Greene DDS, 711 Blue Hills Avenue
Eden Books, 680 Blue Hills Avenue
Fred's Cleaners, 624 Blue Hills Avenue
Garment Care Cleaners, 691 Blue Hills Avenue
Global Gas Station, Blue Hills Avenue
Hair Gallery Beauty Salon, 639 Blue Hills Avenue
Hair It Is, 658-A Blue Hills Avenue
Hair World, 656 Blue Hills Avenue
Hurst Capital, 649 Blue Hills Avenue
Karen's Beauty Salon, 626 Blue Hills Avenue
Kings Lawn Service, 101 Pershing Street
La Damen Salon, 658 Blue Hills Avenue
L.P. Hair Salon, Blue Hills Avenue
Modern Package Store, 654 Blue Hills Avenue
Northend Agents, 680 Blue Hills Avenue
Petal Beauty Salon, 656 Blue Hills Avenue
Pets in the Hood, 657 Blue Hills Avenue
Phat Hats, 641 Blue Hills Avenue
Ross Tax & Real Estate Service, 656 Blue Hills Avenue
Russwood Barber, 672 Blue Hills Avenue
Scott's Jamaican Bakery, 626 Blue Hills Avenue
Shallimar Barber & Beauty Salon, 653 Blue Hills Avenue
Super Jo's, 641 Blue Hills Avenue
Tax & Travel Services, Blue Hills Avenue
Unisex Salon, Blue Hills Avenue

Banks

The Community's Bank, 649 Blue Hills Avenue
Fleet Bank, 711 Blue Hills Avenue

Restaurants

Apron Strings Restaurant, 675 Blue Hills Avenue
Chinese Food Restaurant, Blue Hills Avenue
Mr. Pizza, 671 Blue Hills Avenue

Health Care/Medical Facilities

Blue Hills/Cedarcrest, 51 Coventry Street
Rehabilitation Hospital of CT, 490 Blue Hills Avenue
Saint Francis Care/Mount Sinai Campus, 500 Blue Hills Avenue
Burgdoff/Fleet Health Center
Alcohol and Drug Recovery Centers (ADRC)

Day Care

Nurture Nest Day Care and Pre School, 25 Cornwall Street

HOUSING FACILITIES

Bowles Park Housing Project
Westbrook Village Housing

INSTITUTIONS/COMMUNITY SERVICES

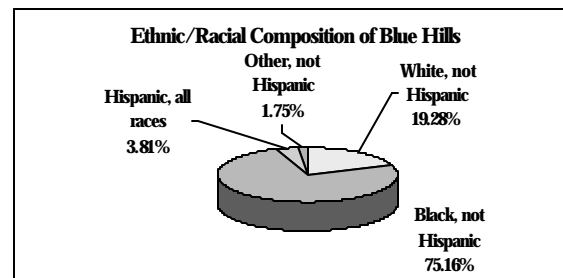
CT Institute for the Blind, 120 Holcomb Street
The Hartford Artisans' Center, 120 Holcomb Street (CT Institute for the Blind campus)
The New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Marketplace, 120 Holcomb Street (CT Institute for the Blind campus)
Northwest Boys and Girls Club, 1 Nahum Drive
Blue Hills Community Center
Blue Hills Civic Association, 120 Holcomb Street
Klingberg Family Centers, 120 Holcomb Street
The Village for Families & Children, 1680 Albany Avenue
Urban Prevention Programs, 321 Holcomb Street

BLUE HILLS NRZ NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Demographics

The residents of Blue Hills are predominantly African-American, middle-income, single-family homeowners. Residents are proud of their neighborhood, which exudes a sense of stability distinguished by well-maintained homes and a newly renovated shopping district. Three distinct census tracts cover Blue Hills: 5038, 5039 and 5040. According to the 1990 Census, the neighborhood's total population was 13,921 people. Blue Hills is the largest primarily African-American and Caribbean American community in Hartford and possibly Connecticut. In tracts 5039 and 5040, current estimates put this population segment at 90% with 3,260 households.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the 1990 population was 75.16% Black, 19.28% White, 3.81% Hispanic and 1.75% other races. From 1980 to 1990 the Blue Hills population decreased by 4.50%. Population and race data from the 2000 Census have recently been released. This data indicates that the Blue Hills population is continuing to decrease, and the African and Caribbean American populations have shown a slight increase. However, this initial data for 2000 is presently clouded by the fact that some 2544 students at the University of Hartford were incorrectly included in the counts for West Hartford rather than Hartford and Blue Hills. Hartford is appealing to have the counts adjusted. Until that is done the 2000 population can only be estimated by adding in the 2544 students and assuming a racial split of 90% White and 10% Black in the student population. This yields an estimated 2000 population of 12,984 persons who are 75.9% Black/African American, 19.2% White and 4.9% other races. Persons of Hispanic/Latino Origin (any race) comprise an estimated 3.7% of the population.



1990 U.S. Census, UDAP Program, Hartford Planning
Department

Figure 1

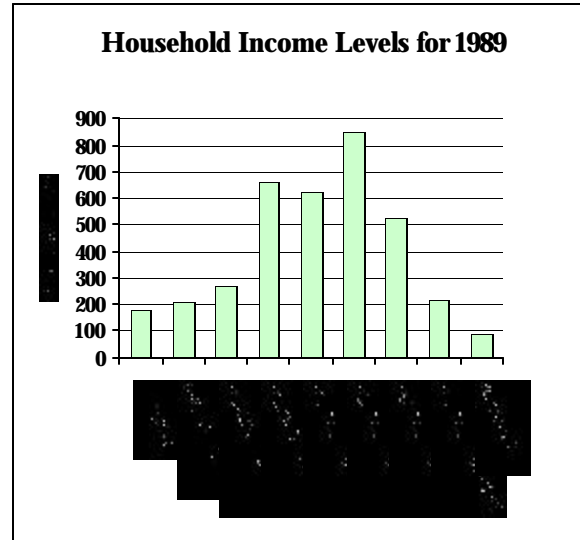
At the time of the 1990 Census 20.9% of the population was foreign-born; total households considered linguistically isolated numbered 34, less than 1% of the population. All 1990 Census information was supplied by either the U.S. Census UDAP Program, the Hartford Planning Department's Special Census run by neighborhood or 1990 U.S. Census tract level information. Blue Hills is comprised of Census tracts 5038, 5039, and 5040.

In 1990 the overall median age in the neighborhood was 24.8 years, one of the lowest in the City. When examined at the tract level, we find an approximately 10-year difference in median ages of residents in Tracts 5039 and 5040 and those in Tract 5038. Tract 5038 includes the Bowles Park and the Westbrook Village housing complexes. The Blue Hills Civic Association, based on informal surveys conducted since the 1990 Census, estimates that one-third of all households in the private sector are headed by a senior citizen. It is anticipated that the 2000 Census will reflect an aging of the population.

The 1990 Census recorded 2,924 families. Married couple families accounted for 50% of all families and almost one-half of married couple families had children. Female headed families, no husband present, accounted for 43.6% of all families; of this number slightly over one-half of the families had children. Female-headed families comprised 77% of all families in Tract 5038.

1990 median household income in the Blue Hills neighborhood was \$32,460, second highest in the city and well above the citywide figure of \$22,140. Family median income was the third highest in the City at \$35,751 (citywide figure, \$24,774). The Blue Hills per capita median income, however, was \$10,402, lower than the citywide per capita median income of \$11,081. Household income levels in 1990 are summarized in Figure 2.

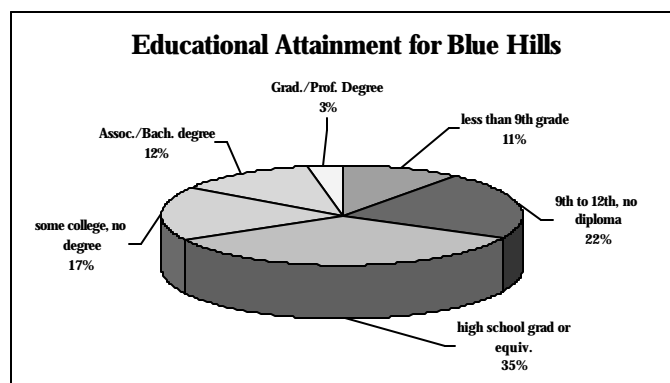
According to the 1990 Census 207 families were living below the poverty level, a slight decrease from 1980. This represents 7% of all the households in Blue Hills. Compared to other NRZ neighborhoods, this number is relatively low. There is a concentration of lower income households in tract 5038 where Westbrook Village and Bowles Park are found. In the other two tracts, nearly one-third of all households have incomes between \$50,000-\$75,000. Blue Hills was one of five city neighborhoods with less than 10% of families below the poverty level, and tied with the West End for second lowest incidence of poverty in the City. However, slightly more than one-half of the Blue Hills families living in poverty were headed by women with children (54.6%). Approximately 35% of all persons below the poverty level were less than 18 years of age; 11% were age 65 years or more. These numbers indicate a broad spectrum of economic circumstances within a single neighborhood.



1990 U.S. Census, UDAP Program,
Hartford Planning Department

Figure 2

1990 educational attainment levels for the neighborhood show that 67% of the population had attained high school diplomas or beyond. This exceeds the comparable City of Hartford attainment level by approximately 8.0%. However, the neighborhood recorded a lower percentage of residents who attained a bachelor's degree than the citywide percentage of 19%. (Figure 3).



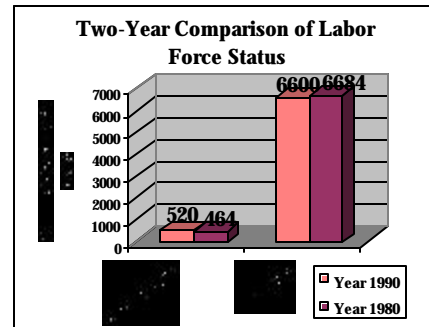
1990 U.S. Census, UDAP Program
Hartford Planning Department

Figure 3

In the Blue Hills neighborhood, 92.6% of the residents were employed in 1990. A moderate 7.3% of the labor force were unemployed. The citywide unemployment rate in 1990 was 10.73%. Figure 4 illustrates the comparison figures for 1990 and 1980.

Blue Hills is a predominately residential neighborhood with very little commercial zoning. Commercial zones are located on Blue Hills Avenue between the Bloomfield town line and Boothbay Street (the largest area and comprising the neighborhood's business district), Blue Hills Avenue between Manchester and Branford Street (where a CVS Pharmacy is being constructed), and at Albany Avenue and Westbourne Parkway (the former Thomas Cadillac site). The Blue Hills Avenue areas are zoned B-4, Neighborhood Business; the Albany Avenue site is zoned C-1, Commercial District. RO-2, Residence-Office Districts adjoin the B-4 districts in two locations

on Blue Hills Avenue and is the zoning designation on the Saint Francis Care/Mount Sinai Campus and The Connecticut Institute for the Blind/Oak Hill and Blue Hills/Cedarcrest properties. The RO-2 Districts allow multiple residence high-rise structures. The Blue Hills Branch of the Hartford Public Library and Fire Station 16 are located on Blue Hills Avenue in the neighborhood business district. The remainder of the neighborhood is zoned for one family or one and two family residential development. Institutional uses such as the University of Hartford, Watkinson School and The Village for Families & Children campuses are located in residential zones. Blue Hills has the largest amount of land area devoted to institutional uses in the city. Many of these institutional uses provide jobs and services to the neighborhood.



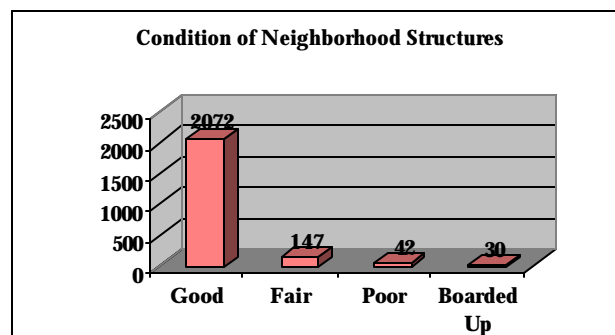
1990 U.S. Census, UDAP Program, Hartford Planning Department Figure 4

The 1990 Census recorded 3,789 units in the neighborhood, with a 2.77% vacancy rate, the lowest vacancy rate in the city. This low vacancy rate appears to be continuing. In March, 1998 the Civic Association conducted a field survey of private sector vacancies and houses for sale supplemented by information provided by realtors serving the area, and found fewer than 70 houses for sale or visibly unoccupied.

The neighborhood prides itself on having the city's second highest homeownership rate at 54.37%. This results in a well-cared for and more stable neighborhood, since people are more deeply invested in the care and maintenance of their own property. Black households owned approximately 90% of all owner-occupied units in the neighborhood in 1990.

In July 2000, the Blue Hills Civic Association reported that their surveys and research indicate there are an estimated 3,100 households in the private sector (not including the 750 households residing in Westbrook Village and Bowles Park), of which more than two-thirds are owner-occupied. This includes 658 two-family homes, two-thirds of which are owner-occupied. There are an estimated 866 renter households living in two-family houses and fewer than 100 families renting single-family homes. The limited numbers of apartment buildings in Blue Hills are located in and around the commercial zones.

As the last section of Hartford to be developed, Blue Hills has a somewhat younger housing stock than many of the city's neighborhoods. Only 20% of its housing stock was built prior to 1940 (37% city-wide). This factor, coupled with the high incidence of homeownership, has greatly reduced the amount of deterioration found in the private housing stock. Figure 5 indicates 1990 figures on housing condition. Conditions in the neighborhood generally remain steady. Stable housing contributes to the overall solid residential atmosphere of the Blue Hills neighborhood and is a positive asset for the community to build on. The 1990 Census data also showed that there were no structures in Blue Hills lacking plumbing facilities, 19 units lacking kitchens and fewer than



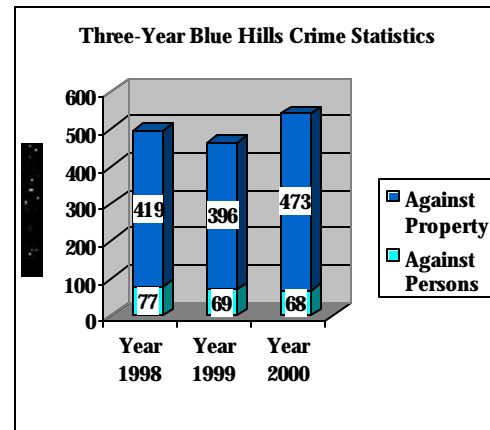
City of Hartford Planning Department, Summer 1994

Figure 5

4% of households were without telephones. A majority of households in Blue Hills were found to own vehicles.

The Blue Hills neighborhood is a stable residential-friendly neighborhood, but it is not immune to crime. Figure 6 illustrates the crime patterns from 1998 through 2000. Drug trafficking has also been a problem the community has been forced to confront.

There are three elementary schools located in the neighborhood: Rawson School, a Kindergarten through Grade 6 school originally built in 1921 (last major renovation 1927); Mark Twain School, a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6 school originally constructed in 1952 (last major renovation 1963), and Annie Fisher School, a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6 school originally constructed in 1965. Annie Fisher, which has experienced a nearly 6% decline in enrollment since 1993-1994, was operating overcapacity and using two portable classrooms during the 1998-1999 school year. In the same timeframe, Rawson School had a 5% increase in enrollment and was operating at 93% of building capacity, while the Twain School had slightly less than a 1% decline in enrollment and was operating at 88% of capacity.



Hartford Police Department.

Figure 6

Performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test has improved in all of the neighborhood's elementary schools and, with the exception of Grade 6 at Rawson (all test categories) and Grade 6 at Fisher (mathematics category only), exceed District-wide performance levels in all categories for meeting the State Goal and the Mastery Test Index. The Mastery Test Index rates overall student performance, not just those reaching the goal. As a basis for developing improved educational services, student performance is being monitored to identify areas of need. Grants, business and school partnerships and budget requests are used to improve and expand activities and programs. All of the schools also offer supplementary programming where students interact with sister schools, community volunteers and others in efforts to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation.

In addition to these three Hartford School District elementary schools, there are two Charter schools, the Jumoke Academy (Grades K through 6) and the Breakthrough Charter School (Grades Pre-K through 8), located in the neighborhood. A state charter school is a public nonsectarian school organized as a nonprofit corporation and operated independently of the local or regional board of education. The Breakthrough Charter School, a local Charter School (established by the local school district), opened in the Fall of 1998 and had an enrollment of 133 students during the 1998-1999 school year. The Jumoke Academy, a state charter school which opened in the Fall of 1997, had an enrollment of 150 students during the 1998-1999 school year. Weaver High School (Grades 9-12, total enrollment of 1,255 students during the 1998-1999 school year) is also located within the neighborhood's boundaries.

In September 2001, an inter-district Kindergarten through Grade 5 magnet school will be opened on the University of Hartford campus. Students from Hartford and six participating suburban communities will be eligible to apply to attend. The school will have a capacity of 360 students.

BLUE HILLS NRZ NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Institutional Support

The University of Hartford

The University of Hartford is an independent, nonsectarian, coeducational liberal arts institution with a total enrollment of approximately 6,900 students, nearly 61% of whom are full-time undergraduate students. The University is located in three communities (Hartford, West Hartford and Bloomfield), with much of its 320 acre main campus located in the Blue Hills neighborhood. The University interacts with its neighbors through a number of programs, including:

- Center for Community Service – students, faculty, staff and alumni provide service to the communities and public services agencies in Hartford, Bloomfield and West Hartford through volunteer service or class room service – learning programs.
- University Park, Inc. – a Hartford based regional 501(c)3 organization of for-profit, non-profit and municipal government organizations working together to improve the business, services and cultural climate of the University’s “regional neighborhood”. Through community planning, organizational cooperation and targeted use of limited resources, University Park is working to make a difference in education, health and social needs, employment opportunities and economic stability, and preserving, strengthening and promoting community/neighborhood quality of life.
- The Summer Place – a camp offering enrichment courses and athletic activities for first through ninth graders. Activities are conducted on the University campus and at the neighboring Watkinson School.
- Educational Main Street – an educational partnership linking the University with five Hartford schools (including Fisher and Rawson elementary schools and Weaver High School, all in Blue Hills) for activities and programs designed to enhance school performance, prevent dropouts and prepare students to pursue post-secondary education.

The Village for Families & Children

The Village for Families & Children is a private, non-profit community service agency dedicated to reversing the increase in child abuse and family violence. The Village’s preventive and protective services include outpatient counseling services (including partnerships with schools, health service providers and juvenile justice centers), adoption and foster care placement, community-based programs (including Family Resource Centers in 10 Hartford schools), residential services, quality improvement and applied research.

The Connecticut Institute for the Blind/Oak Hill

CIB/Oak Hill provides community-based residential facilities, day services and education programs for people with severe multiple disabilities and blind adults. Supplemental services include respite services, summer and computer camps, the Ella Anderson Resource Room (information needs/services), awareness/support training, equipment adaptation services, the

Hartford Artisan's Center , the New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Marketplace and the Blindness Related Supports Program to enhance daily living skills and create independent living opportunities.

Saint Francis Care/Mount Sinai Campus

The former Mount Sinai Hospital facilities on Blue Hills Avenue is now a satellite location for several Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center healthcare services including the Rehabilitation Center, the Burgdorf/Fleet Health Center (includes medical-surgical, women's, pediatric and adolescent health, psychiatric and dental services as well as offices providing Public Health services and programs available through the City) and dependency services provided by the Hartford-based Alcohol and Drug Recovery Centers (ADRC).

The Blue Hills Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Committee Members

DIRECTORS

Carolyn Burton, Chairperson	Blue Hills Property Owner
Linda Hamlet, Vice Chair	Blue Hills Merchant
Keisha Freckleton, Secretary	Blue Hills Tenant
Patricia Miller, Ass't Secretary	Blue Hills Property Owner
Andrew Woods, Treasurer	Blue Hills Property Owner
Barbara Wiggins, Parliamentarian	Blue Hills Resident

Community Representatives:

Blue Hills Civic Association

Noel McGregor
Temple Shannon
Don Noel

Blue Hills Merchant Association

John Allen
Deanne Davis
Vacant

University of Hartford

John Carson (Vera Smith)

Religious Groups

Paula Gripes

Saint Francis/Mount Sinai

Paul Shillman

Village for Children & Families

Bill Baker

Oak Hill

Donald Romanik

City Managers' Office

James Wright (George Jones)

Blue Hills Tenants

Richard Parmalee
Vacant

Blue Hills Property Owners

Daniel Andrews

Peter Roach

HHA Administration & Tenants

Paula Capra

Vacant (Bowles Park)

Vacant (West Brook Village)

Schools

Douglas McCrory

Blue Hills Residents

Karen Bailey-Addison

Sharon Edwards

Julia Darby

Clarke King

Ruth Hall

John B. Stewart, Jr.

Sam Saylor

Administrative Actions

As the NRZ moves into the implementation stage the following should be considered:

APPROVING THE FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN

- ❖ The plan, as modified following the public hearing, must be approved by City ordinance. The ordinance will also create the NRZ committee that will oversee implementation of the Plan, including the committee's powers and membership. The categories of membership of this Implementation Committee must be consistent with the broad-based representation that was required of the Planning Committee.

THE ROLE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Implementation

- ❖ Continue the work of the Planning Committee.
- ❖ Encourage the City of Hartford to participate in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Plan.
- ❖ Make recommendations for the allocation of municipal funds, tax agreements, or other mechanisms to achieve implementation of the Plan.

Plan Revisions

- ❖ The Plan should be used as a road map as well as a report card. The approved Plan should be examined on a yearly basis to stay in line with accomplishments, initial goals, changing priorities and any other circumstances which would warrant revision.
- ❖ Revisions must be approved by the Implementation Committee, submitted to the OPM for review and comment, and approved by the Court of Common Council.
- ❖ Revisions to the Plan may be required to take advantage of some of the powers available under the NRZ legislation.

Waivers

NRZ designation allows for local and state government to waive various code requirements. Any waiver of codes or regulations found necessary for implementation purposes must be specifically identified in the Strategic Plan before the waiver process can begin. For each waiver identified the Strategic Plan must specify:

- The existing code requirement or regulation;
- The address of the property for which waiver is sought;
- The costs of meeting the existing code requirement or regulation; and
- The proposed alternative, showing that the waiver will not create a substantial threat to the environment, public health, safety or welfare of the neighborhood.

- ❖ To take advantage of an expedited Connecticut Historical Commission review of properties designated as having historical significance within the NRZ, the Plan must provide a listing of such properties and identify the planned use of those properties.
- ❖ To take advantage of the NRZ legislation to request that the City acquire property in the neighborhood through “eminent domain,” the Plan must identify the intention to authorize municipal corporations to take property and the procedures required in state statutes.
- ❖ To use the NRZ opportunity to enter into rent receiverships, the Strategic Plan must describe any plans for petitioning the judicial branch for appointment of a receiver and include the following for each property:
 - The address of the property;
 - A description of the condition of the property;
 - An estimate of the cost to bring the properties into compliance with state and local codes and regulation or into compliance with any waivers requested in the above section; and
 - A description of why a receiver should be appointed, how this action will prevent further deterioration of the property, and how it will assure that environmental, health and safety standards are met.
- ❖ The City Manager must be notified within five days of the Implementation Committee’s decision to waive codes as identified in its adopted Strategic Plan. The City Manager must then notify the local official responsible for code enforcement and the Secretary of OPM.
- ❖ The Secretary of OPM must then notify the state official responsible for the code enforcement. The state or local official must hold a public hearing within ten days of notification from OPM. The City Manager must be notified by the state or local official within five days after conclusion of the hearing of the decision regarding the waiver request. This decision is final.

Record Keeping

- ❖ Record minutes to all meetings in sufficient detail to reflect the context of discussion. Detailed minutes will be extremely helpful in preparing reports and demonstrating success.
- ❖ Have one person maintain files at one location – and file everything chronologically, if administrative, or alphabetically for projects and other implementation related items.
- ❖ Following the City’s approval of the Strategic Plan, the Implementation Committee is required to submit reports on implementation of the Strategic Plan twice in the first year after adoption and once annually thereafter to the:
 - City Manager
 - Court of Common Council
 - Office of Policy and Management