

## C.A.R.A. CLAY ARSENAL REVITALIZATION ASSOCIATION



## NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE

 $\Rightarrow$  STRATEGIC PLAN  $\Longrightarrow$ 

JUNE 2001

# C.A.R.A. Clay Arsenal

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## CONTEXT

Clay Arsenal neighborhood lies just north of Downtown, and centers around the major arteries of Main Street, Albany Avenue, and Garden Street. The section west of Main Street lies on a slope slowly rising above Downtown traditionally known as Clay Hill. The area east of Main Street has been known as the Arsenal area since 1812, when a State Arsenal (now demolished) was first constructed at the corner of present-day Main and Pavilion Streets.

Clay Arsenal is a neighborhood bursting with potential. We have a great location and a long proud history. We are one of the few parts of the City growing in population. Our population is young and ethnically diverse, with seniors (age 65 and over) a growing segment of the population.

We recognize that there is a flip side to some of our strengths. An old densely developed neighborhood that has mostly been home to working class people inevitably shows wear and tear. The density of development and the size of residential units may no longer match residents' needs. In renovating and rehabilitating our housing stock, we should seek to lower the density and reconfigure interiors. Our type of residential development yields more rental than homeownership scenarios, raising the concern of absentee landlords. Educational attainment and employment can be issues for immigrant and poor populations, leaving them to deal with social distress. The age and scale of our commercial and industrial development may not match current and future needs without help to determine appropriate uses and partners for redevelopment.

But through the NRZ process we have found that the energy and commitment to make Clay Arsenal a better place are right here in the neighborhood – in our residents, in our institutions and in our non-profit and service organizations.

Our strengths and assets need to be directly focused on issues and challenges that are affecting our daily lives and diminishing our ability to truly function as a neighborhood. To do so will require us to commit to change and to sustain resident involvement. This is why the NRZ process is so important to us right now. It will formalize our mission as advocates for change through a united voice. After all, it is through advocacy and advocacy only, that we have achieved our notable success. Beginning with our efforts to push drug activity out of Bellevue Square and then support its transformation to Mary Shepherd Place, followed by increasing City services for rodent control and trash pick-up, and now monitoring the clean up of 76-80 Pliny Street. Every step of the way, the strength of our voices has led the way.

Clay Arsenal is at a pivotal location, serving as a gateway to/from the downtown for the north end of the city and adjacent communities. In 1997, 14,000 to 16,000 cars per day traveled Albany Avenue through the Clay Arsenal neighborhood. Because it is a transition point between the downtown and the neighborhoods, it sets the tone and the expectation for the quality of life in the entire north end. If people see blight, boarded buildings and other symptoms of distress, the many positive aspects of the neighborhood and its residents will be overshadowed. Negative perceptions will persist and become self-fulfilling. Attacking the physical conditions in the neighborhood will give Clay Arsenal a sense of pride that can be translated into a sense of community. This will also help to reduce crime

in the neighborhood which in the last several years has been overwhelmingly (75% to 80%) in the category of crimes against property.

In spite of being a gateway to downtown and having two major thoroughfares running through it, Clay Arsenal's land development pattern is predominately residential. The development that has occurred along the major roadways (Albany Avenue and Main Street) has been primarily neighborhood level commercial (Albany Avenue) and institutional (Main Street). There is also a small neighborhood business area located at Garden and Mather Streets. Commercial district zones are concentrated in the railroad, Walnut Street and Windsor Street corridors where the proximity of rail service lead to small-scale factory development. Windsor Street is also the location of the only industrial district zoning in the neighborhood. The entire area between the east side of Main Street and the railroad is included in the City's State-designated Enterprise Zone.

## C.A.R.A. VISION STATEMENT

- Thriving commercial corridors provide residents with basic goods and services.
- Our neighborhood is safe, clean, and inviting to both residents and visitors alike and there are ample pedestrian linkages.
- Residential streets and properties are clean, well maintained, and beautifully landscaped.
- There are many inviting public spaces including Tunnel Park/Keney Tower gateway and SAND parquet and there are pocket parks throughout the residential areas.
- Residents fully accept their social responsibility and contribute time and effort to their family and the community.
- Windsor Street is an employment hub for the City, contributing to our tax base while providing training and employment for our residents.
- Architectural significant buildings are being preserved to the greatest extent is feasible.
- There is a full range of housing opportunities, from subsidized to market rate rentals, homeownership initiatives, and rehabilitation programs to housing for the elderly.
- The SAND complex (SAND Elementary School/Ropkins Branch Library & SAND Family Resource Center) is the focal point of our neighborhood, offering cultural, educational, and community opportunities.

## CLAY ARSENAL'S ASSETS

Well established block watch clubs Gateways via Main Street, Albany Ave. and Windsor Street Historic areas and period architecture Housing stock (2 and 3 family) suitable for home ownership opportunities In-fill opportunities within existing commercial corridors Visibility and accessibility of commercial corridors (high traffic) Cultural diversity (African American, Hispanic, West Indian, Vietnamese and more) Available commercial buildings Excellent institutional support: SAND, Community Renewal Team, ONE/CHANE, Women's League Child Development Center, My Sister's Place, Hartford Housing Authority, Hartford Tenants Rights Federation, House of Bread, Community Health Seniors, Inc., Community Partners in Action, Hartford Public Library-SAND/Ropkins Branch, SAND Family Resource Center Library "Walkable" neighborhoods with appropriately scaled commercial development Willie Ware Community Center Mary Shepard Place

## CLAY ARSENAL'S MAJOR CHALLENGES

Residents committed to the neighborhood to make a difference

Negative image (litter, abandoned cars, deteriorated housing, criminal activity)

Personal safety perceptions by non-residents

Lack of neighborhood - scale commercial/retail

Low rate of home ownership

Blighted or abandoned homes

Environmental threats

Code compliance (zoning, health, etc.)

Land uses are often not appropriate for the site or structure

Lack of cohesive or visually unified commercial development lack of critical mass





## Our past...

Clay Arsenal is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City and there are several areas and individual structures that remain today. The Clay Hill Historic District (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) covers most of the neighborhood south of Mather Street. Portions of the district along Albany Avenue include retail and commercial uses. In addition, there are several properties of historic significance listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. The Windsor Avenue Congregational Church at 2030 Main Street; the Union Baptist Church at 1913 and 1921 Main Street; the Widows' Homes at 1846-1860 Main Street; Old North Cemetery, 1821 Main Street; Engine Company 2 Fire Station, 1515 Main Street; the Chevry Lomday Mishnayes Synagogue at 148-150 Bedford Street; and the Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue at 370 Garden Street. The Union Baptist Church and the Old North Cemetery are sites included on the Connecticut Freedom Trail celebrating the contributions of the State's African American citizens.

The neighborhood developed gradually during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Through the years, the area has been home to various groups, Yankees, Irish, Jewish, Blacks, and Hispanics. Prior to 1850, the neighborhood was mostly farms and woodland. In 1844, the Hartford and Springfield Railroad, which now forms the eastern border of the neighborhood, constructed a tunnel under the intersection of Main Street and Albany Avenue. Within five years, Main Street and Albany Avenue were lined with houses. By 1850, several new streets appeared in the southern part of the neighborhood.

Development occurred in an irregular pattern as farms were subdivided for residential developments. The first areas to develop were along Main Street, Albany Avenue and in the southeastern section near Downtown. The rest of the neighborhood filled in with residential development. Churches and schools were built to serve the growing population. Industrial and commercial development grew up adjacent to the railroad.

By the late 1880s, multi-family housing dominated housing development as the neighborhood became home to immigrant working families moving out from the eastside (where Constitution Plaza now stands), the oldest part of Hartford and the port of entry for all new groups. During the next 25 years, side streets were filled with two and three family houses, commercial buildings appeared on the main corridors, and the northern part of Clay Arsenal was built up.

The Black community had significant presence in Clay Arsenal as early as 1860, when Talcott Street Church first located its parsonage on Fairmont Street. Most of the Blacks were concentrated in the east side of Clay Arsenal, which later came to be known as Pigs Town. The name Pigs Town was coined due to the fact that some people used to raise pigs on their properties.

The Black population began to grow significantly during the first World War, when Connecticut Valley tobacco growers recruited large numbers of southern Blacks, often from the same church congregation, to work in the fields and sheds. Most of the workers settled in Hartford to the east side of Clay Arsenal.

Just like the earlier ethnic groups before them, Black families looked for opportunities to move out of the crowded east side. Although most the City's neighborhoods were closed to them, with property owners unwilling to rent or sell to Blacks. The only areas open to Blacks during the World War I era were parts of Clay Hill and South Arsenal. After World War II, Clay Arsenal became an entrance point for Puerto Ricans, Hartford's newest group. Many Puerto Ricans first came to work in the tobacco farms as the southern Blacks before them did, and later made their homes in the neighborhood. A significant portion of Clay Arsenal's residents now are Puerto Ricans and other Latinos who have evolved a strong community, developing its own churches, businesses, and institutions.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, Clay Arsenal saw severe deterioration and disinvestment from which it has not fully recovered. Clay Arsenal has been the poorest of the City's neighborhoods since then. Businesses lost during riots and civil disturbances have not returned and the neighborhood experienced a dramatic decline in population due to the exodus of residents. In the ten year period between 1960 and early 1970, Clay Arsenal lost 3,597 residents, and between 1970 and 1980, it lost 6,406 residents. Unlike most of the City's neighborhoods, however, Clay Arsenal gained 1,139 residents between 1980 and 1990.

## What the 1990 Census says about us...

According to the 1990 census, the Clay Arsenal neighborhood had a total population of 7,869 persons, comprising about 5.6% of the total City population. There were more females (4,214 or 54%) than there were men (3,655 or 46%). Between 1980 and 1990, the female population

increased by 7%. Racial breakdown shows that the majority of the population was Blacks (54%), with 40% of the population classifying themselves as "other race" and 0.06% as White. 52% of residents classified themselves as being of Hispanic origin.

The age profile, to the right, indicates that the Clay Arsenal neighborhood's population tended to be younger than that of the City as a whole. In 1990 the Clay Arsenal median age was 22.5 years and the City median age was 28.6 resulting in a 6 year difference.

There were 1,824 families, of which 1,261 (69%) were families that

Age Group	Number <u>Of persons</u>	<u>Rate (%)</u>	City-Wide <u>Rate (%)</u>		
Under 5 years	947	12.1	8.5		
5-19 years	2659	33.8	23.1		
20-34 years	1977	25.1	30.8		
35-44 years	944	12.0	13.0		
45-64 years	964	12.2	14.6		
Over 65 years	378	4.8	10.0		
Total	7869	100.0	100.0		
Source: 1990 U.S. Census					

categorized themselves as female heads of household, no husband present. Of these families with female heads of household, 949 (75%) were households with children under 18 years of age. More than 60% of children lived in female-headed households in 1990 in Clay Arsenal who were under the age of 19

Families in Clay Arsenal tend to be larger (average of 3.72 persons per family) than in the City as a whole (3.29 persons per family). The family size in Census Tract 5009 (bounded by Sanford Street, the railroad, Canton Street and Main Street) was the highest in the neighborhood at 3.97 persons, followed by Census Tract 5017 (bounded by Albany Avenue/Belden Street, the railroad and Irving Street) at 3.77 persons.

In 1990, 56% of the neighborhood's households reported themselves as households with earnings. The citywide figure was 72.5%. Of these households, 95% reported themselves as receiving public

<sup>\*</sup> Categories included in the census are White; Black; American Indian; Eskimo or Aleut; Asian or Pacific Islander; and other race.

assistance. It is not surprising, therefore, that 57% of all families in the neighborhood had incomes below the poverty level in 1990. The area most impacted by poverty is Census Tract 5009 where 74.7% of all families lived below the poverty level.

### Education/Labor Force

In 1990, neighborhood educational levels for those 25 years and over differed significantly from those for the city as a whole. While 59.4% of Hartford residents had a high school diploma or better (some college, an Associate's degree, a Bachelor's Degree or Graduate degree), only 41% of Clay Arsenal residents fell into this category. 30% of all residents in this age group had less than a ninth grade education; only 3% had attained a Bachelor's degree; no resident reported attaining a Graduate or professional degree.

Lack of education contributes to unemployment. In the 1990 Census, only 47% of Clay Arsenal residents reported that they had worked during 1989. This figure for the City of Hartford was 65%. Within the neighborhood's Census Tracts this figure ranged from a low of 37% in Tract 5009 to a high of 61% in Tract 5017.

## ➤ Language

The 1990 Census indicates that 44% of the persons age 5 years and over living in Clay Arsenal could speak a language other than English. Of these, 99.1% spoke Spanish. Approximately 19% indicated that they did not speak English "very well". In Clay Arsenal, 12.6% reported that they lived in linguistically isolated households; this was lower than the citywide figure of 13.62%

### ➤ Housing

Based upon the 1990 Census the Clay/Arsenal neighborhood contained 2,561 units, 93.5% of which were occupied.

AGE OF HOUSING UNITS

Approximately 91.82% of all units were renter-occupied. This owner-occupancy was concentrated west of Main Street where 65% of the neighborhood's housing is located. Only 8.18% of the units within Clay Arsenal were owner-occupied. There are approximately 50 units in Community

) 1% ) 4%	83 107	3%
4%		
	107	407
		4%
2. 4%	231	9%
5 11%	345	13%
<b>′</b> 14%	340	13%
14%	303	12%
14%	336	13%
3 37%	816	32%
)	11% 14% 14% 14%	11%      345        14%      340        14%      303        14%      336

Residential Facilities (shelters or transitional housing) in the neighborhood. Most of the housing in Clay Arsenal is located in structures having six or fewer units, approximately one-third of which was built prior to 1939.

The City's annual survey
of vacant buildings was
conducted in July 2000
and indicated that there
are 61 boarded buildings
in the neighborhood, the
majority of which are
residential structures.
For the most part these
boarded residential
structures are scattered
throughout the
neighborhood. However,
clusters of boarded
buildings occur on
Bedford Mall (10
structures), on

	<u>City of H</u>	artford	<u>Clay A</u>	rsenal
<u>Units</u>				
1, Detached	6,889	12%	67	3%
1, Attached	2,247	4%	86	3%
2	5,878	10%	207	9%
3 to 4	12,722	23%	648	27%
5 to 9	9,144	16%	858	36%
10 to 19	6,926	12%	360	15%
20 to 49	6,692	12%	128	5%
50 or more	4,824	9%	0	-
Mobile home/	7	<1%	1	-
trailer				
Other	769	1%	43	2%

Bellevue Street in the block between Warren and Battles (3 structures), on Mather Street between Center and Green (3 structures), on Mahl Avenue between Main and Bethel (5 structures), on Belden Street (5 structures) and on Enfield Street (3 structures).

### ➤ Transportation

Census data of 1990 on transportation indicates that 31.7% of workers drove to work alone, 18.8% rode to work in carpools, and 38.5 % used some form of public transportation. The majority of the residents of Clay Arsenal were dependent on the bus system, since 70% of the households were without a car.

Scheduled fixed bus routes serve the City from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. five days a week with limited service available on evenings, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Those routes serving the Clay Arsenal neighborhood are the K along Main Street, the U, T and Q along Albany Avenue, and S along Garden Street. The new Tower Avenue Cross-town L Route, operating between the Copaco Shopping Center in Bloomfield and the Buckland Hills Mall in Manchester, links with the existing K (Barbour Street/North Main Street), Q1 (Vine Street), and T (Blue Hills Avenue) routes. This new cross-town route enhances access to outlying areas for shopping and job opportunities, including industrialized areas in South Windsor.

## **Our Block Watch Network**

There is a network of eight Block Watch Clubs operating in the Clay Arsenal neighborhood that has operated since 1994. ONE/CHANE provides institutional and administrative support for the Block Clubs. In turn, the Clubs are a vehicle through which ONE/CHANE has reached out to residents to foster communication and identify and help those in need.

Each Club meets once a month. The first Tuesday of each month, the Block Club captains meet at ONE/CHANE to share issues, lessons learned, identify problems, etc. This allows information to be assimilated by all Block Clubs and subsequently passed on to the neighborhood. A newsletter in support of this effort is being developed.

Through the Block Club network, ONE/CHANE is building a member base to increase accessibility to a number of programs. For a \$3 membership, attendees to the Annual Meeting eat a full meal for free. Every year, more and more residents are invited through the Block Clubs. Tickets to major events can also be purchased at a discount. There is an annual Thanksgiving Turkey Drive with those in need identified through the Block Clubs. Similarly, at Christmas a Toy Drive identifies children in need. Toys are delivered through the Block Clubs.

## The SAND Complex

The SAND Complex is comprised of the SAND Elementary School and the SAND/Ropkins Branch Library and Family Resource Center. These facilities are linked physically, programmatically and philosophically to provide comprehensive opportunities for educational advancement and social development for students, parents and residents.

SAND Elementary School is a Pre-K through Grade 6 school that had a 1998-1999 enrollment of 370 pupils. The school's current building capacity is 520 pupils. All of the classrooms, libraries and laboratories in the school are wired for Internet access. The number of students per academic computer is 1.9, well below the district's K-6 number of 4.4 and the statewide K-6 number of 6.1. The school has partnered with private companies to provide homework assistance and monitoring support, and linked with other schools and educational facilities to provide academic remediation, tutorial sessions, and summer enrichment programs. In addition to educational benefits these activities allow SAND students to interact with other students and adults of diverse ethnic, professional and economic backgrounds. The school's commitment to providing a rich traditional and non-traditional learning environment has resulted in sustained improvement in Connecticut Mastery Test scores over the last five years.

The Ropkins Branch Library is a community library and neighborhood resource. The current facility of 5,300 square feet was opened in December 1998. It has a collection containing 18,000 items, and includes a Technology Center that provides free public access to its ten computers and Internet service Monday through Friday until 10 p.m. The bilingual staff, under the direction of the Community Librarian, maintains close working relationships with neighborhood and resident groups, institutional and service agencies and private and non-profit organizations to advocate for improving the quality of life in the Clay Arsenal neighborhood. Initiatives already in place include: "Family Place", a literacy program for families with children aged birth to five which organizes regularly scheduled visits to the library by neighborhood day care classes as well as hosting or partnering on programs for young adults such as scouting. Other initiatives include; Always on Saturday, SAND Teen Age Center and the Hartford Youth Project; and community-building services such as the preparation of the Clay Arsenal Business Directory and the "Arsenal of Ideas" newsletter.

## **Mary Shepherd Place**

Mary Shepherd Place formerly known as Bellevue Square, originally contained 309 units. Built in 1942, the development underwent a \$17 million overhaul in 1998 when it was renamed. Currently there are 127 apartments and townhouse units in the development. Five of the original fourteen buildings were demolished, and a new administration and community building was constructed.

The families who reside in the Mary Shepherd Place have to pass a thorough background screening and must participate in family self-sufficiency training under the Campus Learners concept. Under the family self-sufficiency training, the residents are required to draft a five-year plan to assist them in improving their education and economic status. As a result of the program and training, the percentage of unemployed residents went from 85% before the rehab to 45% after the rehab. Furthermore, the complex is managed by a tenant association.

## Programs

#### COMMUNITY:

#### Comprehensive Communities Partnership (CCP)

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

#### Hartford Block Watch Organizer Program

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

#### Hartford 2000

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

#### ECONOMIC:

#### Hartford Façade Improvement Program

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

#### Hartford Peer Lending and Development Corporation

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

#### HEALTH:

#### Capital Area Substance Abuse Council (CASAC)

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

#### Community Health Services (CHS)

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

#### Hartford Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Program

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

#### HOUSING:

#### Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit

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

#### Hartford Homeownership Appraisal Gap Financing Program

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

#### Hartford Housing Preservation Loan Fund

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

#### House Hartford

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

#### YOUTH:

#### Hartford AmeriCorps

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

#### Hartford Street Youth

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

#### Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

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

#### Women Infants and Children

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

#### Yo! Hartford

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

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

## Lower Albany Avenue

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

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

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

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

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

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

## North Main Street

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Windsor Street

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

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

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

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

## Development proposals



#### Main and Pavilion Commercial Development

Main at Pavilion LLC is a partnership between the Hartford Tenant Rights Federation, Inc. (HTRF) and the South Arsenal Neighborhood Development Corporation (SAND) under a wholly owned subsidiary, Public Housing Residents Going Places, Inc. who will be the developer/general partner/property manager. Presently there is \$2.4 million of committed funds from state and federal sources. Servus Brokerage, LLC has been retained as the exclusive brokers to market the property and several tenants/retailers are being evaluated.



#### City Gateway Improvement Program

Gateway structures and/or signs are to be installed to welcome people to the City and its neighborhoods, including a location at Tunnel Park. Contract documents are presently in final review and project expected to be bid in 2001.



#### Enfield Street Initiative

The City-initiated strategy was developed to comprehensively address quality of life issues in a 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. A plan outlining strategies to be applied has been prepared and presented to representatives of the involved neighborhoods: Northeast, Clay Arsenal and Upper Albany.



#### Belden Street Housing Rehabilitation

A comprehensive renovation of Belden Street historic properties extending from Albany Avenue to Main Street is being undertaken. One/CHANE has site control of five of the structures and has begun the development of strategic plans for acquisition and redevelopment of the balance of the block.



#### Widow's Home Rehabilitation

One/ CHANE has acquired this historic property on 1846 – 1860 Main Street.



#### 427-443 Albany Avenue

A proposal for 5,000 to 6,000 s.f. of multi-tenanted commercial/retail space on this vacant Cityowned 0.28 acre site on the south side of Albany Avenue at Brook Street was determined to be infeasible by a site-specific market assessment funded by the Community Economic Development Fund. The study did however point out potentially feasible uses including a single minority-based entrepreneurial or franchise operation, particularly serving other businesses. The site may also be suitable for residential uses or a small community based facility or perhaps a pocket park.



#### Route 44 Corridor Study

This Capital Area Council of Government sponsored corridor evaluation proposed the following improvements in the Clay Arsenal neighborhood:

- Mill existing pavement and resurface to re-establish proper gutter grades and curb reveals
- Concrete sidewalks with brick edging
- Trees and landscaping
- Bollards and landscaping to control illegal parking on sidewalks
- Bus Shelters and textured, colored concrete roadway pavement at all bus stops
- Selective closing or narrowing of existing driveways and installation of curb
- Enlarged street intersection curb radius
- Realignment of intersection at Edwards, East, and Belden Streets
- Revised intersection design at Main Street and new signalization

CRCOG has been keeping the City and affected neighborhoods informed of the proposal. Once the study is completed, the Connecticut Department of Transportation will take its recommendations under advisement. The proposal will be placed on a prioritized list to determine funding. Once funding is in place, the project would need to be publicly bid for design and construction plans.



#### Veeder Place Project

Renovation of the 230,000 sq.ft. former Veeder Root plant (located on Sergeant Street in the Asylum Hill neighborhood) is complete. Several tenants are now occupying space and an extensive marketing effort is underway by the owner in conjunction with the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Connecticut Economic Resource Center to attract additional tenants with the potential to create significant numbers of jobs. Ultimately, the hope is not only to create jobs in the area but also act as a catalyst for other improvements in the area.



Walnut Street/Garden Street/Homestead Avenue Intersection Improvements

This is a City of Hartford project designed 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. The project has been designed and a contractor selected. Construction is expected in Spring 2001. Part of this initiative is a phytoremediation project to reduce/eliminate lead contamination. If the site is cleaned to acceptable standards, interim uses such as a community garden/outside classroom and play lot will be developed.

#### Sustaining Communication and Advocacy

Build strong resident involvement by creating organized and formalized links within the neighborhood and to outside resources.

#### Improving Our Image and Physical Environment

Beautify and maintain our streets, houses, parks and business areas as a sign of pride in Clay Arsenal and as a welcome to visitors and those traveling through our neighborhood. Our houses as "mirrors of self" are the key to self esteem and pride.

#### • Developing a Sense of Community

Develop a physical-social link within the neighborhood by providing the opportunity to share ideas, volunteer, voice concern, be part of decision-making and to access needed resources.

#### Fostering Social Responsibility and Well Being

Each resident accepts the responsibility of contributing to the community and being a positive role model.

#### • Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

Set realistic goals that tie the neighborhood's needs to city, state and private development resources and support projects which are compatible with our vision.

#### • Supporting Home Ownership and Housing Improvements

Everyone has a safe, well-maintained residence to call home, whether as an owner or renter. Link with existing programs and reputable developers to create housing opportunities for residents of all ages and economic circumstances.



# TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 1:

### Support the Main at Pavilion project

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Ensure potential development is sustainable (that there is a market demand for the size and type of services/goods being proposed).

#### Anticipated Result:

Neighborhood commercial development that provides the basic services needed by the neighborhood.

# TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 2:

Focus City and institutional support on specific economic development nodes.

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Seek funding and a partner for performing a neighborhood level market/economic assessment.

Identify targeted development sites on Main Street, Windsor, Street, Albany Avenue and Mather Street.

#### Anticipated Result:

Results of market assessment will provide a baseline for judging future development.

Identification of strong markets will help focus efforts on areas with greatest potential.

Development/Redevelopment sites can be "anchors" for related community development initiatives (streetscapes, tot lots, resident parking, etc.).



Advocate and monitor the clean-up and redevelopment of 76-78 Pliny Street.

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Continue neighborhood-level advocacy to ensure that the site is cleaned up to standards consistent with the intended reuse of the site.

Ensure memorandum of agreement or other formalized process is in place to guarantee clean-up within a specified time.

Request clean-up to highest standards to allow reuse that will benefit the community.

Formalize redevelopment intentions with the City and support compatible community use.

#### Anticipated Result:

Site remediated to the highest standards and redevelopment creates a community-compatible activity.



Initiate dialogue with the Police Department to increase responsiveness and effectiveness of Community Service Officers.

Required NRZ Actions:

Formal contact with Chief of Police and also assigned CSO.

Prepare list of concerns and items for consideration.

#### Anticipated Result:

Schedule for addressing concerns is acceptable and "feedback loop" to monitor success and maintain communication is established.



## **TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 5:**

Partner with a suitable housing developer/program, institutions, and the City to carry out a comprehensive rehabilitation program.

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Review the following list of targeted streets and assign priorities:.

Bedford Street – Mather to Garden Street Bellevue Street – Sanford to Pavilion Street Brook Street – Liberty to Guilford Street Enfield Street – Mather to Greenfield St. Garden Street – Homestead to F.D. Oats Guilford Street – Brook to Bethel Street Liberty Street – Garden to Williams Street Mather Street – Main to Garden Street Pliny Street – Garden to Bethel Street

Obtain mapping from City Planning Department and inventory the priority streets in terms of demolition, rehabilitation, City-owned property, etc.

#### Anticipated Results:

- Development of landlord/tenant rating forms and referral list.
- Identification of eligible homeownership candidates to link with available programs.
- Workshops for home maintenance.
- Recommendations for disposition of City-owned properties
- Increase size of side yards, creation of more off street parking, reduction of density, conformance to required lot sizes.



## **TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 6:**

Launch a public improvements program with priority given to gateways and commercial corridors, and community "centers".

Priority 1:	SAND School/Main Street Neighborhood "Center"
Priority 2:	Main Street/Albany Avenue at Firestone Property Gateway

- Priority 3: Windsor Street / Downtown Gateway
- Priority 4: Albany Avenue

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Review the City's scheduled CDBG funded improvements and submit recommendations.

Examine potential to tie in with larger development initiatives.

Participate in the Upper Albany Main Street Program.

Monitor CRCOG Route 44 improvement recommendations and schedule.

#### Anticipated Results:

Unification of neighborhoods segmented by Main Street and Albany Avenue.

Complimentary, but not necessarily identical streetscape design reflective of local culture and historic element.

Enhanced pedestrian nodes utilizing bump outs, textured pavements and other strategies.

Attention focused on improvements at specific nodes (high concentrations of people, traffic and visibility.

# TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 7:

Launch a series of events, programs, or activities to stimulate community cohesion and provide pathways for communication within the neighborhood and with the City.

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Assemble NRZ subcommittee using Block Watch network.

Solicit volunteers.

Create a consistent communication link between the City and the NRZ and appoint an NRZ contact.

#### Anticipated Result:

Successful voter registration events.

Readily available website.

Increased attendance at Block Watch clubs.

Telephone tree (database of volunteers) is up and running.

Links to school activities are in place.

Community gardens are flourishing.

Historic walks showcase significant buildings..

Historic walking tours are available and proactively marketed to both urban and suburban interests.

Community clean ups occur on a consistent basis.



### Create a Main Street Neighborhood Business Alliance

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Inventory businesses in the Main Street Corridor.

Conduct a series of outreach forums to gauge interest in building an Alliance developing an overall mission and identifying needs.

Solicit members for an Implementation Committee.

#### Anticipated Results:

Improvement of goods and services being delivered to the neighborhood.

Stabilization of local business climate.

Ongoing business assistance.

Increase access to start-up and operational capital.

Support for improvement to the corridor's visual appearance.



### **Develop a Neighborhood Resource Center**

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Assemble a subcommittee charged with exploring programmatic elements. Seek institutional sponsor to assist with a two year pilot program. Establish performance objectives. Seek suitable site (existing building).

#### Anticipated Results:

Determination of feasibility after a two year pilot study is completed.

Determination of need for new construction or continue use of existing location.



# Monitor and Support the Enfield Street Initiative and apply it to other areas in the neighborhood

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Establish a schedule for NRZ–City on-site meetings to discuss progress and address continued challenges.

Identify other target areas, and with the City's assistance, inventory what is to be accomplished.

#### Anticipated Results:

Control of "nuisance activity" (abandoned cars, litter, loud music, etc.).

Increased "eyes of the community" (defensibility) decreases negative perception.

Link to CDBG funds or other sources to achieve physical improvements.

Link to housing initiatives.

Target negative land uses through enforcement and zoning modifications.

# TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 11:

#### Increase green space and establish buffers around non-compatible development

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Identify potential links to existing facilities.

Target vacant lots or buildings slated for demolition.

Meet with City Recreation staff to develop a neighborhood specific strategy.

Communicate to the neighborhood the need for everyone to take ownership of green space.

Identify sites that conflict with surrounding land use.

Request that buffers are integrated into the redevelopment plan.

#### Anticipated Results:

Series of green spaces distributed throughout the neighborhood.

Visual separation of non-compatible development or development near residential areas.

# TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 12:

### Support an overall "traffic calming" analysis throughout the City's neighborhoods

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Consult with the City to discuss needs.

Assemble sub-committee.

Identify problem areas.

Encourage enforcement of speed limits before implementation of other alternatives.

Utilize the Block Watch network.

#### Anticipated Results:

- Reduction of vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.
- "Pedestrian safe" zones near highly populated areas.
- Increased enforcement also yields decrease in nuisance activities (double parking, littering, loitering, loud music).



## **TARGETED ACTIVITY NO. 13:**

# Implore the neighborhood connections to and delivery of services from existing social programs operating or located in the neighborhood

#### Required NRZ Actions:

Inventing social programs and agencies in neighborhood including name, location, funding sources, population served and annual reports.

Develop a series of performance objectives.

Present the performance objectives to the service providers in an open forum to invite comment and commitment.

Identify other means of connecting those in need with those who can help (schools, churches, and community organizations).

#### Anticipated Results:

- Improved delivery of service and greater population served.
- Greater quality of life.
- Earlier intervention and increased delivery will ultimately result in decreased long term Dependency.

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 statues.
- 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

## C.A.R.A. NRZ Implementation Matrix 2001 – 2003

Targeted Activity*	Potential Partners	Anticipated Funding(\$)/ Sources
No. 1: Support the Main at Pavilion project		
No. 2: Focus City and institutional support on specific economic development nodes.		
No. 3: Advocate and monitor the clean-up and redevelopment of 76-78 Pliny Street.		
No. 4: Initiate dialogue with the Police Department to increase responsiveness and effectiveness of Community Service Officers.		
No. 5:Partner with a suitable housing developer/program, institutions, and the City to carry out a comprehensive rehabilitation program.		

\* In order of priority









