

neighborhood revitalization zone plan

West Side / West End Neighborhood
Bridgeport, Connecticut

December 9, 2007

With Special Appreciation

The NRZ Planning Committee extends special appreciation to the following stakeholders in the West Side / West End community for their significant involvement, support, ideas, and contributions during the planning process.

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I. Purpose and Background of NRZ Strategy

WHAT IS AN NRZ?

The Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) process was established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1995. The legislation outlined a process that encouraged stakeholders in a community to collaborate with all levels of government to improve neighborhoods that were affected by adverse or blighted conditions. The legislation requires the neighborhood to work together to determine its priorities and create a plan to revitalize the area. Once this plan is developed, submitted, and approved, the neighborhood can be designated an NRZ, or a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. One main benefit of becoming an NRZ is the ability to bypass often onerous regulations and rules that might otherwise impede an implementation process.¹

TYPICAL NRZ PLANNING STEPS

Typically, the NRZ planning process includes the following steps:

- **Assembling the community and the planners.** During this stage, the community leaders, associations, property owners, businesses, agencies, organizations, and residents all come together to start to work on the planning process. With the help of planning consultants, the community starts to identify the highest-priority development needs in the neighborhood and the projects that will revitalize their local area. In this neighborhood, the West Side / West End stakeholders have been assembled and meeting regularly since fall 2006.
- **Learning about the needs and priorities of the community and seeking input.** The planners and the stakeholders work together to create venues for public input and gather data and information to inform the highest priority projects that will be included in the plan. Input is sought through workshops, surveys, interviews, informal conversations, and data analysis. The West Side / West End process consisted of extensive data collection and analysis, a series of individual interviews and surveys, four public workshops to seek input, and one two-day design charrette.
- **Developing and refining recommendations.** After data has been collected and input has been incorporated, the planning consultants develop a draft set of recommendations which is then refined by the community stakeholders.
- **Drafting the NRZ Plan.** After agreement is reached on the recommendations, the NRZ plan is drafted, reviewed, refined, and submitted to the State.
- **Implementing the projects identified in the plan.** Many of the projects can be immediately implemented, and others may be eligible for assistance (e.g., hire designer to develop draft façade guidelines for neighborhood).



THE WEST SIDE / WEST END NRZ PLANNING PROCESS

While the West Side / West End neighborhood has considered pursuing NRZ distinction for several years, the neighborhood initiated its formal planning process to seek the NRZ designation in December 2006. The process of applying to become an NRZ contained several steps, including:

- Data collection on demographics, area crime, zoning and land use, housing stock, historic districts, coastal management areas, traffic conditions, proposed public improvements, proposed new developments, real and personal property tax, and property identifications
- Input provided during the monthly West Side / West End Stakeholders Meetings
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, January 13, 2007
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, February 10, 2007
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Thursday, March 22, 2007
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Monday, March 26, 2007
- Input provided through a Design Charrette held on Friday, June 8, 2007 and Saturday, June 9, 2007
- Input provided through resident survey responses and individual interviews with 38 residents (see Appendix B for list of interviewees)
- Input provided through business survey responses and individual interviews with 27 business owners (see Appendix B for list of interviewees)
- Input provided through a meeting of senior residents of the Sycamore Apartments at 285 Maple Street

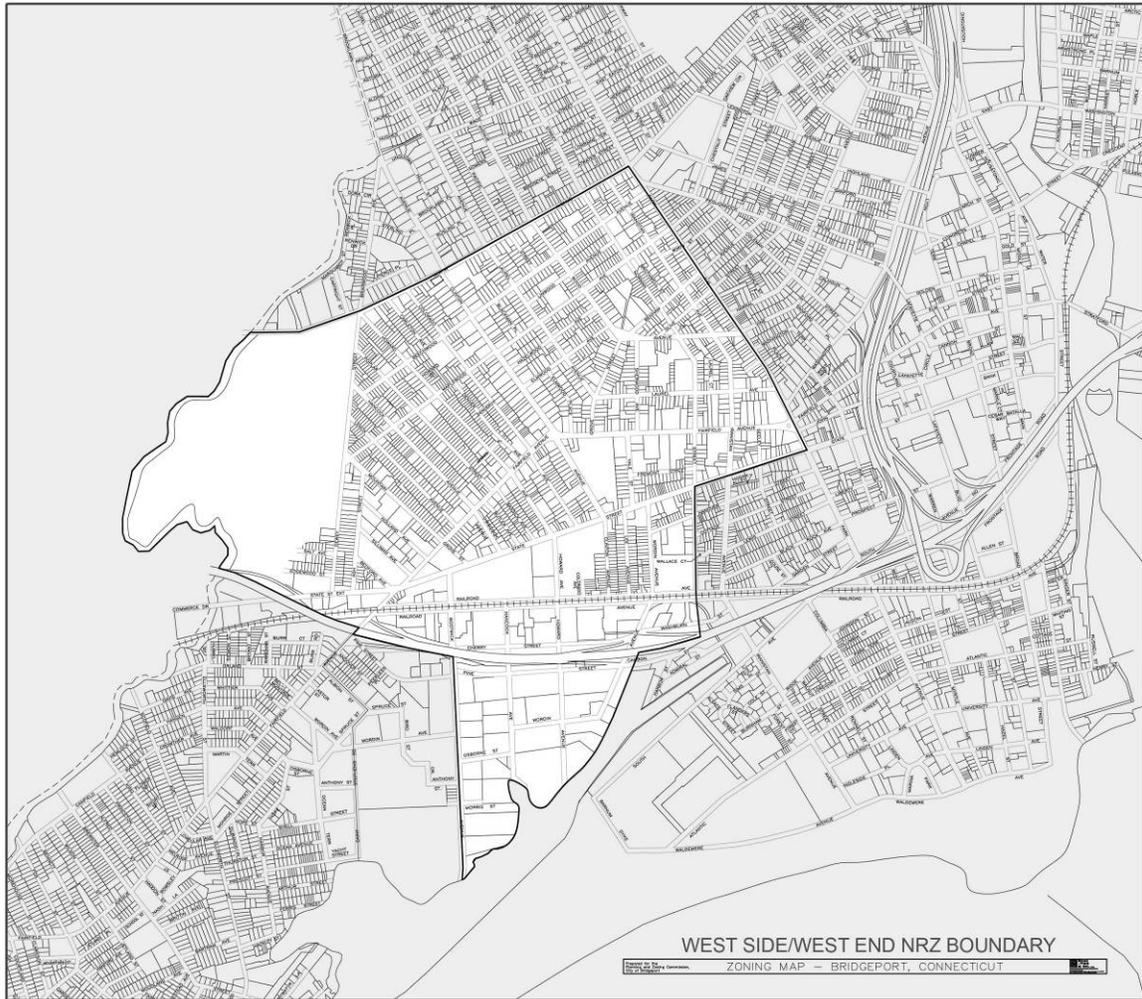
¹ State of CT Office of Policy Management, “Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Strategic Planning Guidelines,” pp 1-2.

LIMITATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are based on our analysis of the information available to us, with special appreciation for the assistance of the City of Bridgeport, the West End Association, and the residents and stakeholders of the West Side / West End neighborhood. We assume that the information is correct, complete, and reliable. To the best of our ability, we analyzed trends and the information available to us in drawing conclusions and making the appropriate recommendations. Our analysis does not take into account the potential impact of major economic shocks on the national, regional, or local economies, nor does it take into account any generally unforeseen conditions. We strongly recommend that any actions taken in response to this report be carefully considered and analyzed on their own merits based on the specific circumstance at the time of implementation.

II. NRZ Boundaries

The West Side / West End neighborhood is one of two communities located on the lower west side of the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut. The West Side / West End neighborhood includes a municipal development area, four historic districts, longtime commercial and residential owners and renters, along with the cultural and ethnic diversity that has become representative of the City of Bridgeport. The West Side / West End neighborhood comprises, in whole or in part, five U.S. Census Tracts: 703, 709, 710, 711 and 712. The neighborhood is bounded by Bostwick Avenue and Mt. Grove Cemetery to the west, Cedar Creek to the south, Iranistan Avenue and Park Avenue to the east, and North Avenue to the north. These boundaries are also clearly delineated in the West Side / West End NRZ Bylaws.



* Established West Side / West End neighborhood boundaries

III. NRZ Characteristics and Economic Profile

A. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The West Side / West End neighborhood is a densely populated 1.2-square-mile area in the southwest side of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Overall, West Side / West End residents are slightly younger and have a lower level of education than Bridgeport residents do as a whole. The West Side / West End neighborhood is home to a large number of minorities, which is similar to the composition of the rest of Bridgeport. More specifically:

Population Size and Density Bridgeport is denser than Fairfield County and the State, with a population density of 8,996 persons per square mile (2005), compared with 1,453 in Fairfield County and 706 in the State. The West Side / West End neighborhood with an estimated population of 17,451 based on the 2000 Census Tract Data, boasts over 14,500 persons per square mile.

Population Growth. Bridgeport’s population is growing at a pace close to that of Connecticut and the region overall, with a 0.5% growth rate per year anticipated between 2005 and 2010, compared with a 0.5% growth rate anticipated for Fairfield County and a 0.7% increase anticipated statewide in Connecticut.

Race and Ethnicity Bridgeport is far more diverse than Fairfield County and Connecticut as a whole, and the West Side / West End neighborhood is consistent with the diversity of Bridgeport. Compared with 81% of Connecticut’s population that is White, only 46% of Bridgeport and only 33% of West Side / West End residents are White. The West Side / West End neighborhood has a much larger African American population (35%) than is seen in the State and a high “Other” population, composed largely of 1,187 residents who identified as being of two or more races. The West Side / West End neighborhood contains a large number of individuals who self-identify as Hispanic, with 42% Hispanic and 58% identifying as non-Hispanic.

Figure 1: Race and Ethnicity

Race	WS/WE Tracts		Bridgeport		County		State	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	5761	33%	65924	46%	708206	78%	2858875	81%
Black	6150	35%	40511	28%	88379	10%	318835	9%
Asian	1003	6%	6330	4%	38839	4%	117997	3%
Native Am	120	1%	1032	1%	2792	0%	14298	0%
Other	4417	25%	30140	21%	71047	8%	224275	6%
Total	17451		143937		909263		3534280	

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census. City, County, and State data based on 2005 CT DECD.

Education The West Side / West End neighborhood demonstrates significantly greater difficulty with educational attainment of its residents than Bridgeport and the State. While 83% of the State has at least a high school diploma, only 65% of Bridgeport residents and 54% of West Side / West End residents have a high-school diploma. The 2000 census revealed that in this neighborhood at that time, almost one-fifth (19.2%) of residents over age 25 had less than a ninth-grade education. More than one-quarter of the neighborhood’s population (27.3%) had some high-school education but no diploma. Of the approximately 17,450 people living in the neighborhood, 2.5% had a graduate or professional degree.

Data provided in the 2007 housing policy report indicates that while other statistics remain consistent today, there is improvement in reports of higher education. This new study reveals that 10% (as opposed to 2.5%) of West Side / West End residents have college or professional degrees.²

² CZBllc Bridgeport housing policy report

Gender The West Side / West End gender breakdown is consistent with county, state, and national breakdowns, with 48.4% men and 51.6% women.

Age The West Side / West End age breakdown is slightly younger than the general population of Bridgeport, Fairfield County, and the State. Compared with the County and State, the neighborhood has a higher percentage of younger individuals ages 0-24 (49%, compared with 33% in the County and State). The neighborhood has a disproportionately small population of individuals ages 65 and older (7%, compared with the City, County, and State averages of 12-14%).

Figure 2: Age

Age	WS/WE Tracts		Bridgeport		County		State	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0- 24 years	8,504	49%	57,593	40%	301,572	33%	1,149,329	33%
25- 64 years	7,748	44%	69,501	48%	486,733	54%	1,901,623	54%
65+ years	1,199	7%	16,843	12%	120,958	13%	483,328	14%
Total	17451		143937		909263		3,534,280	

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census. City, County, and State data based on 2005 CT DECD.

B. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The City of Bridgeport is developing its first Housing Policy for the municipality. Studies done in support of policy conclusions suggest the following³:

1) Bridgeport’s housing market is improving.

A number of successful market-rate housing development initiatives indicate that there is a market in Bridgeport for commuter housing and housing for young professionals. This housing, however, appears to be most viable in downtown Bridgeport. There is scattered new housing development in the South End as well.

It has been almost a decade since new housing was developed in the West Side. More recent projects include Mutual Housing Association of Southwestern Connecticut’s affordable housing development on Yale Street as well as historic restoration projects in the same area. We were only able to identify one current plan or proposal for major housing development in this neighborhood.

2) Bridgeport’s housing stock is generally poor.

An inordinate number of 3-unit and 6-unit rental structures owned by absentee landlords are the bane of Bridgeport’s residential existence. The densest areas maintain the highest crime rates, greatest poverty, and greatest physical deterioration.

In the West Side / West End, this is the case to a slightly lesser extent. The West Side’s redeeming features are the number of one-family and two-family homes and neighborhoods; the presence of local businesses and numerous service organizations which positively contribute to physical aesthetics; commercial and institutional development initiatives; and the existence and maintenance of historic structures and local districts.

A total of four Historic Districts exist within the neighborhood. They include the Lindencroft Historic District (Yale Street) in the Northwestern section of the Neighborhood. The Railroad Avenue Historic District in the neighborhood’s center is on the National Register of Historical Places, as is the Bassickville Historic District (Bassick Street) in the neighborhood’s west side. At the neighborhood’s north end is the Stratfield Historic District.

Due to these conditions, the West Side, unlike most Bridgeport neighborhoods, has an opportunity to market factors that communities “of choice” often claim—namely, unique in their historic details, affordable, and offers long-term as well as start-up housing for the working class.

³ CZBllc Bridgeport housing policy report

3) Housing Stock Analysis

There are approximately 5,356 residential properties in census tracts making up the West Side / West End. The 2000 census identifies approximately 724 vacant units scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Recently, a blighted property survey was conducted by City Scan. The City Scan report lists 461 properties in the neighborhood as marginally at risk, at risk, or blighted. Of the 461 properties surveyed, 302 are residential, 24 are mixed use, 42 are commercial and 81 properties are vacant. Of those properties, 48 are in need of major repairs; and 315 are in need of basic maintenance. There are 83 vacant lots in the neighborhood.⁴

Looking specifically at residential properties we find that about 6% of the housing stock of the West Side is marginally at risk, at risk or blighted. This represents a number of units to seriously address, but also represents a significantly lower number of at-risk properties than other Bridgeport neighborhoods like the Hollow or East Side. (See Appendix H for blighted property addresses.)

4) Bridgeport’s middle-class and working-class population is waning.

Generally, families move out of the city when they can. Those with fewer choices are plagued by social and economic ills. In the West Side, the majority of residents are renters. The majority of renters are rent-burdened and the majority of homeowners are mortgage-burdened. This means that these families spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. In the case of the West Side, families are generally spending 50% or more of their income on housing.

Occupancy. A total of 68% of all units in the West Side / West End neighborhood are renter occupied, leaving 32% owner occupied. This percentage is extremely significant to the viability of this residential neighborhood. The number of owner-occupied properties, which is still lower than Bridgeport’s average, is skewed some, as it represents all units, not just residential units. In 2000, 43% of Bridgeport’s households were owner-occupied. That number increased to 49% in 2005.⁵

	West Side / West End 2000	Bridgeport
Owner-Occupied	4,594	21,758
Renter-Occupied	3,884	28,549
Median Year Built	1940	1952
Median Rent	\$638	\$577
Median Value	\$117,000	\$107,700
# Units per Structure		
1	698	17,993
2 or Duplex	1338	9,644
3 or 4	1571	11,161
5-49	1171	10,097
50 or more	578	5,427

WS/WE Housing Stock Analysis

Housing Types. The West Side / West End’s housing stock is described as “low-density Urban” as it comprises⁶:

- 698 single-family homes;
- 1,338 two-family structures;
- 1,571 three- or four-family homes;
- 1,171 buildings with between 5 and 49 units, and
- 578 buildings with over 50 units.

Affordable Housing Development. Two local community development corporations have been involved (past or present) in the development of affordable housing in the local neighborhood: Mutual Housing Association of Southwestern Connecticut, Inc. and Habitat for Humanity. In addition, the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust is a development corporation which might be involved in affordable housing development in the neighborhood. However, even moderately priced homes in the region are out of financial reach for many residents who live in this region.

⁴ City Scan Blighted Property Survey

⁵ 2000 Census and 2005 American Community Survey

⁶ CZBllc Bridgeport housing policy report

C. INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Within the West Side / West End neighborhood, the median household income ranges from \$12,469 to \$34,477, depending on census tract. All census tracts show a median household income that is significantly below that of the City of Bridgeport (\$51,262 in 2005), Fairfield County (\$72,573), and the State (\$59,761).

Figure 3: Median Household Income

Median Household Income Level	
Tract 703	\$12,469
Tract 709	\$25,926
Tract 710	\$25,873
Tract 711	\$34,477
Tract 712	\$23,942

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census.

In Bridgeport:

- 62% of households earn less than \$50,000 a year.
- 53% of households are renters and 47% are homeowners.
- 40% of households are rent burdened.
- Earnings are rising at two-thirds the country's rate.
- Housing price increases and rent increases are going up faster than Bridgeport incomes.
- Rental housing has little vacancy and new home construction is not affordable for most residents.⁷

Bridgeport's area median income (AMI) is currently \$79,900 for a family of four. The larger part of the West Side neighborhood is only minimally comprised of families making the area's median income or more. For instance, 30 to 40% of residential properties in the north-central part of the neighborhood (more specifically, Howard, Colorado, Clinton, Laurel and Wood avenues between North Avenue and State Street and Beechwood, Linwood, Maplewood, Hazelwood, and Elmwood streets bounded by Wood Avenue and Howard Avenue) are occupied by families at or above the area median income. It is worth noting that at the center of this, the most viable composition of household incomes is the Stratfield Historic district. In the remainder of "residential" West Side, only 16 to 28% of families make the AMI.

D. WORKFORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

Of the 5,824 neighborhood residents who are employed, more than one quarter (28%) are working in the service sector, another quarter (25%) are working in sales and office employment, and yet another quarter are working in production, transportation, and material moving (25%). The remaining group, just under a quarter of the population, are split between management and professional employment (15%), construction and maintenance (7.5%), and farming, fishing and forestry (<1%).

While the State boasts an unemployment rate of 4.2%, the estimated rate in Bridgeport is 7.2%, which is fourth highest in the state after Hartford (9.4%), Waterbury (7.4%) and New Britain (7.3%). The Bridgeport workforce is estimated to be approximately 62,000 people. Currently nearly 58,000 are working and 4,473 are unemployed.⁸

Figure 4: Employment

Employed Population 16 years and over	5,824	
Occupations		
Service	1,605	27.6%
Sales and office	1,455	25.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving	1,449	24.9%
Management, professional and related	864	14.8%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	437	7.5%
Farming, fishing and forestry	14	<1.0%

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census.

⁷ Department of Labor: April, 2007.

⁸ Department of Labor: April, 2007.

E. RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY

In the West Side/West End neighborhood, there are almost 40 community-serving organizations. There are also new and improved resources for businesses and residents to utilize, including:

- Bridgeport Police Substation, 1354 State St.
- Chase Manhattan Bank, 1460 State St.
- New public facilities – Cesar Batalla High School
- Social Service and Related Agencies

Social Service Organizations	
<p>Daycare Centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Children’s Garden, 539 Clinton Avenue □ Bright Beginnings, 816 Fairfield Avenue □ Gary Crooks Memorial Center (BPHA) □ Bassick Headstart <p>Substance Abuse Treatment/Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Mary Magdalene House, 405 Clinton Avenue □ Hosanna Ministry, 1416 Fairfield Avenue □ The Helping Hand Center, 1154 Iranistan Avenue □ Transitional Living Center II/Iranistan House, 964 Iranistan Avenue □ Center for Human Services, 1549 Fairfield Avenue □ Horizons, 1635 Fairfield Avenue □ Rescue Mission, 1088 Fairfield Avenue <p>Alternative Incarceration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Sherwood House (juvenile), 29 Sherwood Avenue □ Isaiah 61:1 Inc., 112-120 Clinton Avenue □ New Beginnings, 753 Fairfield Avenue <p>Health Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Southwest Community Health Center, Inc., 361 Bird St, 510 Clinton Ave, and 1046 Fairfield Ave □ Park City Primary Care Center, 64 Black Rock Ave □ Bridge House, 880 Fairfield Avenue □ Visiting Nurses Services, 765 Fairfield <p>Disability Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The Kennedy Center, 184 Garden Street □ Bridge House, 880 Fairfield Avenue □ Family Services Woodfield, 475 Clinton Avenue 	<p>Senior Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Astoria Park, 725 Park Avenue <p>Homeless Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Rescue Mission, 1088 Fairfield Avenue □ YMCA Families in Transition, 11-13, 19-21 Clinton Avenue □ Urban Model, 410-414 Poplar Street □ Alpha Home, inc., 647 Clinton Avenue <p>Veteran Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Home for the Brave, 655 Park Avenue <p>Youth Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, 475 Clinton Avenue □ Progressive Training Associates, Inc., 965 Fairfield Avenue □ St. John’s Family Center, 768 Fairfield Avenue □ Project Learn (Silliman Memorial Baptist Church), 1728 Fairfield Avenue □ ASPIRA □ Family Services Woodfield, 475 Clinton Avenue <p>Domestic Violence Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, 753 Fairfield Avenue <p>HIV/AIDS Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Helping Hand Center, 1146 Iranistan Avenue □ Helping Hand Center, 1154 Iranistan Avenue □ Family Services Woodfield, 475 Clinton Avenue
Schools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Regional Vocational Aquaculture School, 60 St. Stephen’s Road □ Bryant School (Pre-K – 6), 86 Whittier Street □ Bassick High School, 1181 Fairfield Avenue □ Maplewood School (Pre-K - 6), 240 Linwood Avenue □ Curiale School (K-8), 300 Laurel Avenue □ Cesar Batella Elementary School 	<p>Adult Education and Counseling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The International Institute, 670 Clinton Avenue □ Progressive Training Associates, Inc. 965 Fairfield Avenue □ Mercy Learning Center, 637 Park Avenue □ The Spanish American Development Agency, 1317 State Street
Community Policing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ West Side Police Precinct, 1354 State Street 	

We should note that while any one of the facilities housing these organizations may leave something to be desired in terms of aesthetic quality, as resources for the community, they are indeed assets.

IV. Economic Development and Market Assessment

A. ECONOMIC BASE

In order to fully understand the issues surrounding the West Side / West End neighborhood, it is important to look at the market on a broader level to include Bridgeport and Connecticut. In this report, major regional considerations are taken into account during planning, and include the following:



- Connecticut’s “Cautiously Optimistic” Economic Market.** The Connecticut Department of Labor announced that it believes in a “cautiously optimistic” economic forecast for Connecticut in its April 2007 *Connecticut Economic Digest*.

As examples of generally positive indicators, the unemployment rate is 4.2%; personal income is anticipated to rise 4.7% for the past year; net business formation increased over the past year, signifying a net increase in the number of businesses registered with the Secretary of State; Connecticut’s labor force increased by 1.2% over the past year; and unemployment rates decreased by 0.2%.⁹

- Increasing Disparity in Income Gap.** The New England region experienced the largest increase in the income gap in the country between 1989 and 2004, as reported by the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire. The institute reported that this difference is caused particularly by the loss of manufacturing employment for low-skilled workers, a greater demand for high-skilled and high-tech employment, and the push of low-skilled jobs to where the cost of business is lower. Connecticut was among the top five states in the nation to experience this increase in income disparity, and Bridgeport is one of the 20 metropolitan areas with the highest income disparity in the nation. Suggested solutions to close this widening gap are upgrading education for all residents, increasing the opportunity for people to receive technological training, and ensuring economic opportunities with retraining to help those displaced.¹⁰

- Utility Costs.** Businesses throughout Connecticut feel the impacts of high utility bills, and overhead costs have been cited as one of the major issues for several West Side / West End business owners. During interviews with business owners, one interviewee said, “[Connecticut Light & Power] and taxes. That’s what chips away at our businesses.” Another said, “My major costs of doing business are [United Illuminating] and taxes.” When compared to other states, Connecticut is ranked 47th in its retail price of electricity out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to the United States’ Government Energy Information Administration, and 48th in the nation according to the 2006 Small Business Survival Index.

“CL&P and taxes. That’s what chips away at our businesses.”
 --West End Business Owner

- Competing in a Global Marketplace.** Companies in the West Side / West End speak openly about the challenges associated with competing in the global marketplace, particularly with the high costs of business in Connecticut and the Northeast. As an indication of this challenge, it is important to note that several major businesses have moved their operations from Connecticut in recent years, citing the high cost of doing business in this state. For example, Bayer moved from West Haven to New Jersey. International Paper moved from Stamford to Memphis, Tennessee. Meadwestvaco Corporation moved from Stamford to Glen Allen, Virginia. Stop ‘n Shop Distribution Center moved from North Haven to Freetown, Massachusetts. Unilever moved from Trumbull, Connecticut to New Jersey. According to the 2006 Small Business Survival Index, Connecticut is ranked 45th in the nation for its state

⁹ <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/misc/cedapr07.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://hr.blr.com/news.aspx?id=75692&source=RSA&effort=4>

and local property taxes, 47th in the nation for the number of health insurance mandates required for employees, 48th in electric utility costs, and is ranked at the very bottom (51st) for its state gas tax.

Connecticut Rankings in 2006 Small Business Survival Index (out of 50 states and Washington, D.C.)		
Issue	Rank	Actual / Range from other states
Capital gains tax rates	22	5.000 (lowest: 0.000, highest: 10.300)
Corporate income tax rates	30	7.500 (lowest: 0.000, highest: 9.990)
State and local property taxes	45	4.29 (lowest: 1.33, highest: 5.31)
Number of health insurance mandates	47	2.50 (lowest: 0.65, highest: 3.10)
Electric utility costs (State average revenue per KWH for electric utilities relative to US average)	48	1.67 (lowest: 0.59, highest: 2.42)
Workers' compensation benefits per \$100 of covered wages	14	0.83 (lowest: 0.36, highest: 3.76)
Crime Rate	12	2.91 (lowest: 2.00, highest: 6.23)
Number of bureaucrats (full-time-equivalent state and local government employees per 100 residents)	15	5.28 (lowest: 4.16, highest: 8.59)
State gas taxes	51	0.450 (lowest: 0.080, highest: 0.450)

* Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council's Small Business Survival Index 2006, http://www.sbecouncil.org/Media/pdf/SBSI_2006.pdf

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSIDERATIONS

Looking more closely at the neighborhood itself, the climate for redevelopment in the West Side / West End is moving in a positive direction. The West Side / West End neighborhood has seen more than \$15 million in public and private improvements in the last three years, including the private commitment of more than eight companies and the public commitment of new school construction.

Economic Location One of the greatest economic advantages of the West Side / West End neighborhood is its location. The neighborhood is in immediate proximity to major transportation channels, including I-95, the Port of Bridgeport, Amtrak and MetroNorth commuter service to New York City. Its proximity to water recreation activities, waterfront parks, and cultural activities in downtown Bridgeport provides a potentially high quality of life for its residents.

Top Employers The top local employers in Bridgeport are Bridgeport Hospital, People's Bank, St. Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport Health Care Center, and Sikorsky Aircraft (2006).¹¹ While none of these top employers are located in the West Side / West End neighborhood, their proximity to the neighborhood is advantageous, particularly for residents seeking local jobs.

Economic Drivers Bridgeport's economy is largely driven by the trade, manufacturing, and services sectors. While services constitute 44% of both the number of firms and the employment figures, manufacturing constitutes 16% of the employment, and trade constitutes 15% of the employment.¹²

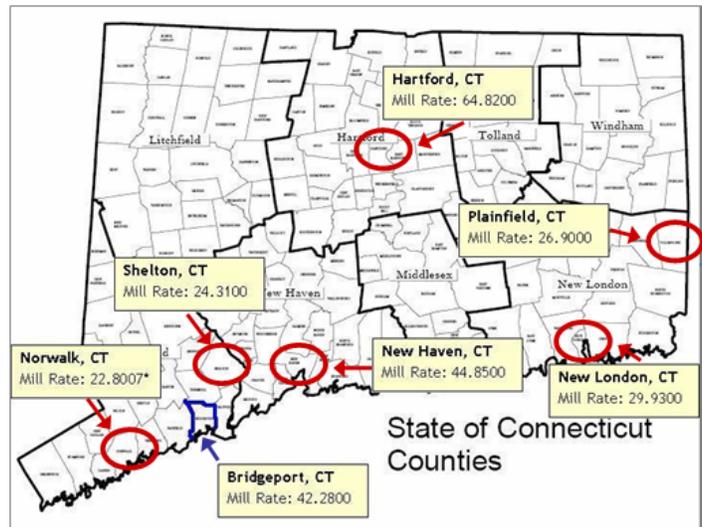
Challenging Tax Rates During interviews with local businesses, the high tax rate and the unique rules regarding personal property depreciation were cited as key factors regarding a company's ability to compete and a company's willingness to stay in Bridgeport and in this neighborhood. As one interviewee said, "Our mill rate is 42. Theirs is 26. Why wouldn't I go?" The chart below compares Bridgeport's mill rate with those of similar-sized, similar-urban areas along major Connecticut transportation corridors. The mill rates of surrounding towns also have an impact on business decisions on relocating. For the 2006-2007 fiscal year, Milford's rate is 34.3600, 7.92 mills below Bridgeport; Ansonia's mill rate is 32.3000, 9.98 mills lower; Stratford's mill rate is 28.8600, 13.42 mills below; Derby's rate is 17.48 mills below Bridgeport's; and Shelton's is 24.3100, at 17.97 mills lower.

¹¹ Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, 2006.

¹² Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, 2006.

Nearby Towns	# of Mills Below Bridgeport
Milford	7.92
Ansonia	9.98
Stratford	13.42
Derby	17.48
Shelton	17.97

2006-2007



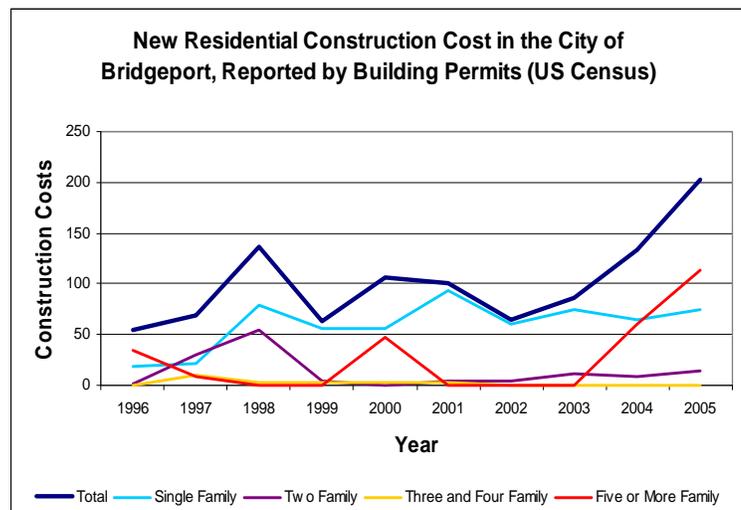
* Average of multiple mill rates in Norwalk ranging from 21.4490 to 23.2380.

Labor Force

With a high school graduation rate in this neighborhood of only 53%, the labor force in the immediate neighborhood is not nearly as strong as it could be. However, there is mixed feedback on the quality of the local labor force. On one hand, businesses in the neighborhood are making a genuine effort to hire locally. One business reported that 75% of its employees are from Bridgeport, another stated that 40% live in Bridgeport, and a third said, "Hiring has not been an issue—we have over half of our employees from Bridgeport." At the same time, the interviews revealed that finding qualified labor is hard for the more skilled professions and that losing the older, more skilled labor to retirement will be a very important issue for businesses in the next five years.

Housing Permit Activity

New residential construction permits in the City of Bridgeport suggest an increase in the investment of residential housing in Bridgeport. Census data shows an increase of 218% in the cost of residential construction in the past five years and an increase of more than 500% in the past 10 years (see graph). In 1996, the total construction cost associated with building permits filed was \$1,915,070, compared with \$4,095,081 in 2000 and \$13,013,227 in 2005. In 2006, Bridgeport registered 25 housing permits. In the first two months of 2007, Bridgeport had already registered 20 housing permits.



Quality of Uses

The West Side / West End has a wide mix of residential, business, nonprofit, and public representation in the neighborhood. However, the quality of many of the commercial uses is lacking, and some low-end uses are over-represented (for example, liquor stores and convenience

stores). As one interviewee stated, “The last thing we need is another nail salon or barber shop.” The commercial strip malls are of generally poor quality, in need of higher quality tenants and higher quality appearances. The neighborhood would benefit from improvements to its commercial corridors and diversification of its commercial corridors, including filling the uses that are not represented. The neighborhood specifically reports seeing a need for a restaurant where businesses can take clients for lunch, as well as additional banking options (only one bank exists in the entire neighborhood, on State Street).

Public Investments

Often, public investments stimulate private investment. The most significant public investment in this neighborhood is the Cesar Batalla High School on State Street.

Private Investments

Private investments into the neighborhood are a good indicator of the neighborhood’s own willingness to invest in its property. There are several new investments that make a statement about the private market’s faith in the neighborhood.

- AKDO Intertrade built a new 115,000-square-foot facility and showroom at 1501 State St. for its marble, tile, and granite wholesale distributor business. The business employs 50, and represents a \$10-million investment
- ASAP Bedliners has built a new \$1.4-million facility addition at 435 Howard Ave
- Chaves Bakery built a new \$7-million facility on State Street
- Hine Brothers International on Wordin Avenue spent over \$3 million in improvements
- A Royal Flush on Pine Street contributed over \$1 million to its property.
- State Hardware and Industrial Supply on State Street spent \$0.6 million on improving its facility.
- Carr’s Ice Cream is located in a new facility on State Street.
- The Bead Building on State Street was renovated.
- Southwest Community Health Center opened its new facility in April 2007.

Area Investments

Even though some improvements in the area are outside of the specific boundaries of the neighborhood, they will likely have a positive “spillover” effect into the neighborhood. These area investments include:

- New Walgreens at 1000 Park Avenue
- New Super Stop & Shop at 2145 Fairfield Avenue
- New residential property at 570-578 State Street (20 apartment units, with first-floor retail)
- Black Rock Library expansion, an estimated \$3.5-million project
- New Superior Court and Center for Juvenile Matters, located on the corner of Congress Street and Housatonic Avenue, is a \$39.6-million project
- Bijou Square Historic Redevelopment
- Marin-Garfield Fire Station at 950 Boston Ave., a \$5.5-million project
- Marin-Garfield Park, a \$1.8-million project with new playing fields and a new playground.
- Expanded Wonderland of Ice at Glenwood Park, a \$5.3-million project at 123 Glenwood Ave. (East Side)
- Fairchild-Wheeler, 36-hole municipal golf course in Fairfield
- New public facilities, maintenance garage, and administrative building at 990 Housatonic Ave. on the East Side, a \$27.5-million investment
- Veteran’s Memorial Park Improvements of 107 acres in northern Bridgeport, including three athletic fields, hiking trails and nature pathways, estimated to total \$5.6 million (in design phase)
- Housatonic Community College planned expansion
- Bridgeport Hospital expansion
- Park City Hospital
- Fairfield Metro Center / Fairfield Cinema

Proposed Projects

Another good indicator of the local economic climate is the projects that are being proposed. Immediately in the neighborhood, at least four projects have specific proposals, including:

- New State Street commercial development for food service establishments at 1163-1197 State St., including private financing of a \$1.1-million project
- Bridgeport Fuel Cell Park, a \$60-million project

- State Street Sealey Mixed-Use Proposal, costing \$1.5 million
- Housing proposal related to the properties on Cherry Street

Reluctance to Invest

While certain businesses and residents are making investments into the neighborhood, reluctance to make investments is also extremely evident. Many businesses acknowledged this reluctance in their interviews. Businesses widely acknowledge that some of the businesses in the neighborhood do not “sit pretty,” and that it is time to change the rough image and fix up the buildings in the neighborhood. One business owner said, “We need to improve our image.” Another said, “We need to improve the image of our neighborhood.” Another said, “You are riding along [I-95] and think, ‘Why would anyone get off the highway here?’ ” One merchant reported that the condition of the neighborhood makes hiring difficult, stating, “I was trying to hire a manger. His wife told him he couldn’t work in a neighborhood that looks like this.” Another business reported it they lost a \$15-million contract with a well-known technology company because of the condition of the block; it was unable to convince the company that it would be a secure manufacturing environment. While it is widely recognized that the image of the neighborhood needs to improve, many businesses are not spending the money to improve their appearance. One business explained, “We’re a smaller business with not a lot of cash and we don’t spend it on the outside.” Another one admitted, “We’re not a stellar example of what Bridgeport should look like.” And yet another claimed that, “[At least] we’re not the worse one on the block.” This commentary suggests a reluctance to make the property investments, largely because these businesses do not see that the investment will result in increased property values.

“You are riding along [I-95] and think, ‘Why would anyone get off the highway here?’ ”
--West End Business Owner

Business Flight

On a local level, impacting the West Side / West End neighborhood, several small businesses have moved out of the neighborhood but continue to operate elsewhere. For example, Bead Industries, Bryant Electric, Champ Envelope, and Eagle Snacks all moved to Milford, Connecticut. Furniture manufacturer Amotek Lusa relocated to Monroe, Connecticut. Hubbell Wiring Company relocated to Newtown, Connecticut and Puerto Rico, and Casco Products Corporation moved to Shelton, Connecticut. Although the exact reasons why these businesses moved out of the West Side / West End is unknown, the effects manifest themselves as vacant properties, fewer jobs, lower tax revenue, and a sense of apprehension for those businesses that stay behind.

EMERGING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

In response to this information, the following were identified as emerging economic development issues and opportunities:

- Crime / safety (theft, vandalism, employee safety, customer safety)
- Labor force (availability, skill level, training, retention)
- Zoning code enforcement
- Anti-dumping enforcement
- Elimination of blight (for customers, for employees)
- Traffic, parking, and transportation (truck access, curb cuts, turning radius)
- Environmental remediation issues of existing sites
- Infrastructure (in particular, sewer issues)
- Real estate taxes
- Personal property taxes
- Cost of energy for the businesses
- Cost of production and ability to compete in a global economy
- Visual destabilizing factors (chain link fencing, barbed wire)
- Ability to expand business physical plants
- Clear determination of land use in certain areas
- Prime properties are not developed with active, vibrant uses
- Quality of commercial districts
- Interest in a façade improvement program
- Marking the arrival within the neighborhood (e.g., working fountains, signage)

V. Review of Land Use Issues

IDENTIFICATION OF LAND USE DISTRICTS AND ZONES

The City of Bridgeport’s Property Tax Data contains identification of Property Class, which determines the different property types (e.g., commercial, residential land, condominiums). For the purposes of this analysis, the approximate area for the West Side / West End neighborhood was determined and the property listings within those boundaries were analyzed.

NOTE ABOUT PROPERTY CLASSES, ASSESSED VALUE, AND TAX REVENUE

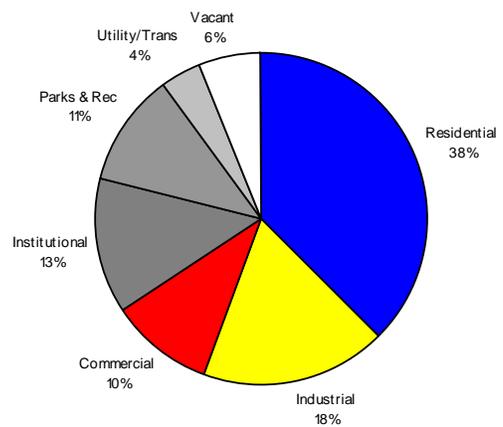
It must be noted that these numbers do not directly translate into tax revenue, as many of the commercial properties may be owned or operated by the State or municipal entities and therefore do not pay taxes or are owned and operated by nonprofit organizations and therefore are exempt. In addition, many exemption, deferral, and PILOT programs exist, which do not allow for direct translation of assessed value to tax income.

LAND USE

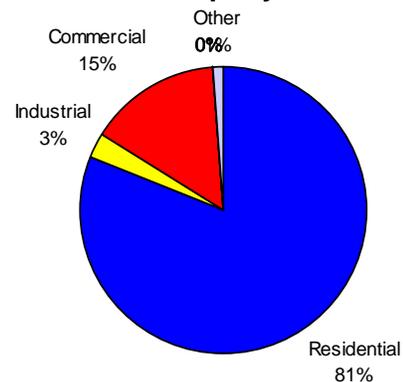
The West Side neighborhood encompasses nine of the 19 land-use designations described in the City of Bridgeport’s Zoning Ordinance. Those uses include Residential-AA (single family), Residential-A (single family), Residential-B (two-family), Residential-BB (two- and three-family), Residential C (four- or more family), Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, Office/Retail Neighborhood, Office/Retail General, and Office/Retail Storefront. The approximate distribution of land uses is as follows:

- Residential – 37%
- Industrial – 18 %
- Institutional – 13%
- Parks and Recreation – 11%
- Commercial – 10%
- Vacant – 6%
- Utility/Transportation – 4%

% of Land Zoned for Each Use



% of Properties in Each Property Class



PROPERTY CLASS

The West Side / West End neighborhood has nearly 7,000 properties. According to City of Bridgeport property data, approximately 81% of the properties (5,615 properties) in the neighborhood are classified as residential uses, including homes, condominiums and residential land. Approximately 15% (1,056 properties) are classified as commercial, including commercial condos, commercial apartments, and commercial land. Only 3% (194 properties) are classified as industrial or industrial land in the neighborhood.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATED TO ZONING AND LAND USE

Benefits of diverse zoning (such as what the neighborhood currently has):

- Broad tax base
- Diversification of revenue, and therefore stabilization

Benefits of more consistent zoning:

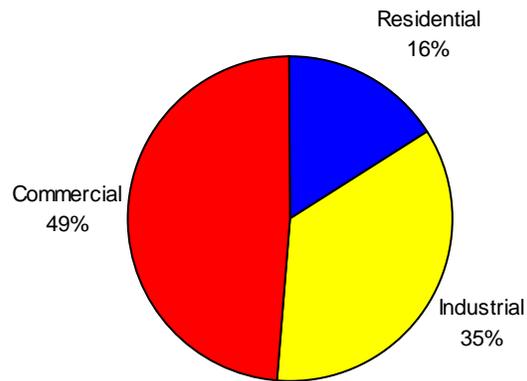
- Services and regulations can focus on specific types of business / residential activities within each zone
- More consistent / similar goals among community members

REAL ESTATE ASSESSED VALUE

While the property class breakdown shows a primary presence of residential property, an analysis of the assessed value of these properties shows that the commercial and industrial properties outweigh the assessed value of the residential properties. The commercial properties constitute 49% of the total assessed value, the industrial properties constitute 35% of the total assessed value, and the residential properties constitute 16% of the assessed value.

In addition, the analysis found the average assessed value per property class. Commercial properties had the highest average assessed value (\$1,672,474), industrial properties had the second-highest average assessed value (\$969,404), and residential properties had the final average assessed value (\$126,671).

% of Real Property Assessed Value in Each Property Class



Property Class Data for the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood

Property Class	# in Class	Total Assessed Value (2006)
Public	25	4,816,026
Com/Res Mixed	34	6,236,103
Commercial	738	846,258,927
Comm Apt	162	127,892,471
Comm Condo	6	9,437,601
Comm Land	116	9,080,657
Condo Options	9	141,080
Industrial	151	323,192,834
Industrial Land	43	1,267,154
Public Utility	7	269,847
Residential	4497	641,899,207
Residential Condo	869	60,800,479
Residential Land	249	8,555,906
Total	6,906	2,039,848,292

* City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

Average Assessed Value for Primary Property Classes in the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood

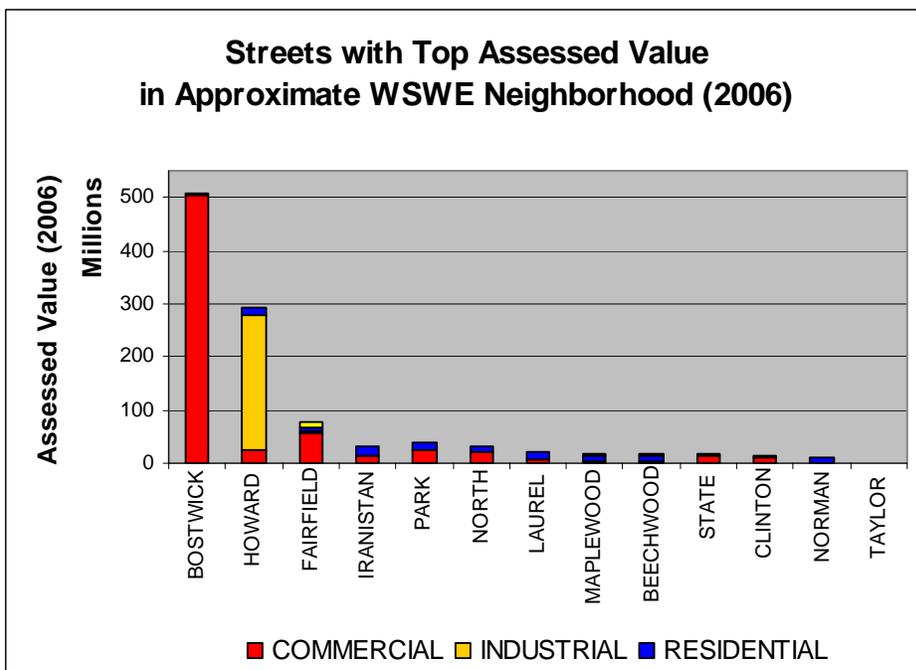
Property Class	Average Assessed Value (2006)
Commercial	1,672,474
Industrial	969,404
Comm/Res Mixed	183,415
Residential	126,671

* City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

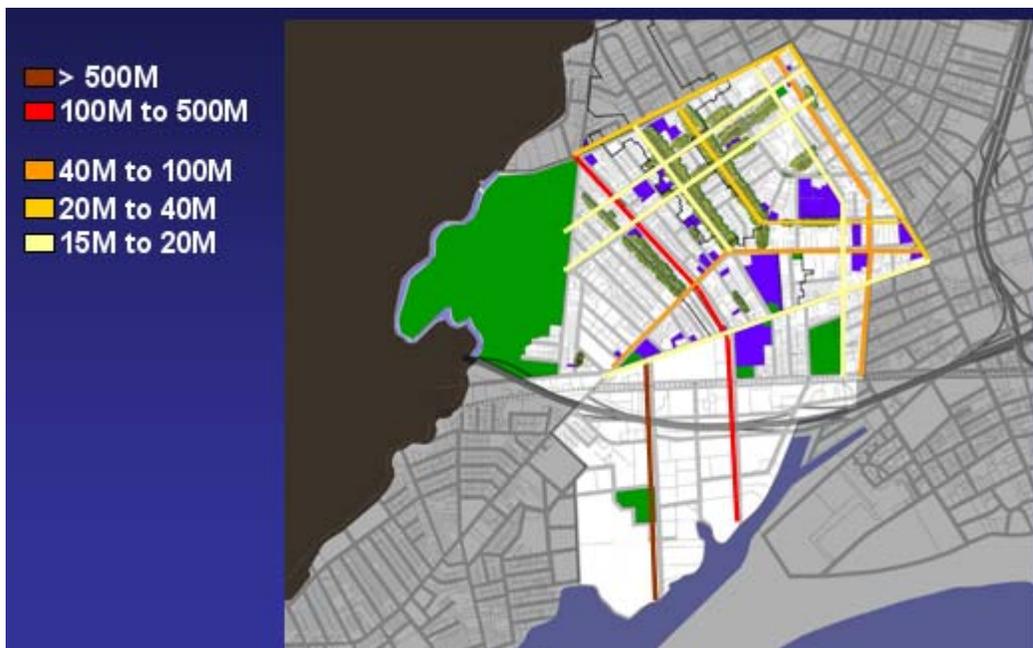
IDENTIFICATION OF STREETS WITH HIGHEST ASSESSED VALUES

The data was assessed to determine the streets with the highest assessed value and the source of this value (commercial, industrial, or residential). The graph to the right summarizes these findings:

- Bostwick and Howard avenues contain the two highest assessed values, with a combination of commercial and industrial uses.
- Fairfield, Iranistan, Park, North, State and Clinton are streets that are primary commercial corridors of value.
- Laurel, Maplewood, Beechwood and Norman are streets with especially high residential value. The map below identifies these streets within the neighborhood.



The map below gives another visual of the streets in the West Side / West End neighborhood with the highest assessed values.



IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES WITH HIGHEST ASSESSED VALUES

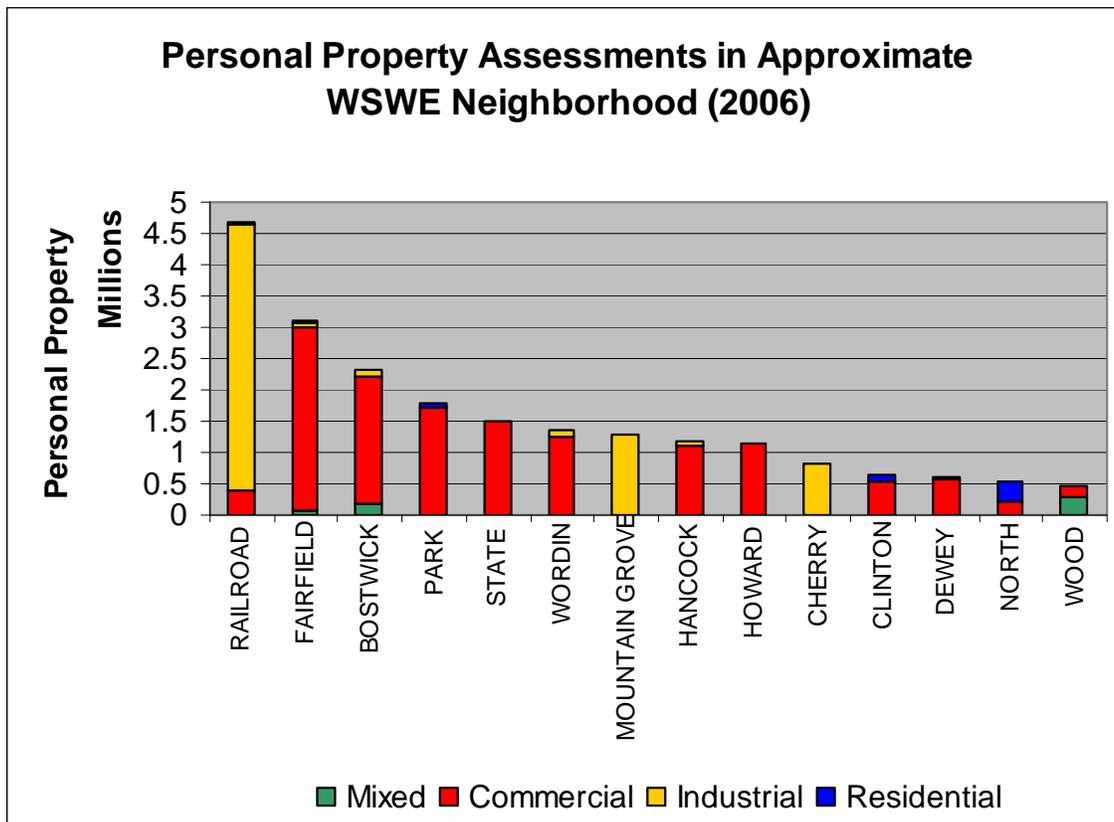
Within the neighborhood, the individual properties with the greatest assessed values were largely held by either municipal entities or nonprofit organizations which do not pay property taxes.

Individual Properties with High Assessed Value in the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood	
Over \$200 million	City of Bridgeport & Municipal Entities Connecticut Resources (95 Howard Ave.)
\$15 - \$20 million	Mt. Grove Cemetery Association
\$10 - \$15 million	University of Bridgeport (Iranistan Ave.)
\$5 - \$10 million	60 Arlington Realty LLC et al. (1001 Fairfield Ave.)
\$1 million - \$5 million	Bodine Corporation Bridgeport Garden Apartments, Inc. (2821 Fairfield Ave.) Bridgeport Grocery, LLC (1700 Park St.) Bridgeport Rotary Club Housing (585 Norman St.) Chaves Bakery Family Services Woodfield O&G Industries (260 Bostwick Ave.) SGB, LLC (365 Cherry St.) St. John Episcopal Church (3025 Fairfield Ave.) St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church (625 Beechwood Ave.) Yale Street Limited Partnership (1095 Fairfield Ave.)

* City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

STREETS WITH HIGHEST PERSONAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

The data was assessed to determine the areas that hold the highest assessed value of personal property and the source of this value (commercial, industrial, or residential). The graph below summarizes these findings; it shows Railroad Avenue with the highest personal property assessments, followed by Fairfield Avenue, Bostwick, Park, State, Wordin, Mountain Grove, Hancock, Howard, Cherry, Clinton, Dewey, North, and Wood avenues.



INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES WITH HIGHEST PERSONAL PROPERTY VALUES

Individual Properties with High Personal Property Value in the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood	
Over \$1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O&G Industries (Bostwick Avenue) Continental AFA Dispensing Co (Fairfield Avenue) AKDO Intertrade (State Street) Delage Landen Operational (Railroad Avenue)
\$500,000 to \$1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Dudgeon, Inc. (Railroad Avenue) Chaves Bakery (State Street) Markal Finishing Company (Bostwick Avenue) Reproduction Services, Inc. (Wordin Avenue) Hubbell, Inc. (State Street)

* City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

VI. Neighborhood Assessment and Needs

ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

The West Side / West End neighborhood has many assets to offer its businesses, residents and stakeholders. While the neighborhood is subject to significant challenges (see chart below), some issues are not unique to this neighborhood or to Bridgeport (for example, rising utility costs) and other issues can be changed. The neighborhood is seeing steady business presence, employment, and strong mixed-use developments, which lends diversification to the economy. In addition, the strong public investments that have been made in the neighborhood are serving as stabilizing factors, and businesses have made significant investments as well. Property remains affordable—and therefore attractive for development—and outsiders are starting to show an interest in making investments in the neighborhood.

Strong Positive Indicators	Real Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong loyalty • Strong business presence • Strong presence of employers • Strong combination of mixed uses • Strong public investments serve as base for increasing property values • Property remains affordable • Proximity to I-95, train, port, New York City • Businesses are doing well • Some businesses are making significant investments in new buildings (e.g., AKDO, Chaves) • Outside developers are starting to show interest in investments • Aesthetic quality of historic housing • “Destination” sites (Mountain Grove Cemetery, Park Street Fountain, Klein Memorial, Clinton Avenue) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High taxes (higher than surrounding towns) • Presence of blight • Rising cost of utilities • Security / safety • Shortages of educated and/or skilled labor • Shortages of parking • Outdated infrastructure (sewer, sidewalks) • Low property values lack incentive for owners to improve their properties • Lack of community identity or “brand”

BLIGHT AND PROPERTY ABANDONMENT

Assets:

- City blight elimination program
- Viability of historic districts
- Limited blight compared to other Bridgeport neighborhoods

Challenges:

- Perception of neighborhood for residents, employees, business owners and visitors
- Insufficient street lighting as well as lack of appropriate scale of lighting (e.g., through appropriate size & style of light fixtures)
- Concentrated blight and destabilizing indicators on certain streets and in certain areas of the neighborhood:
 - State Street blocks, 1142, 1144 and 1142 (Blocks 1227 and 1151 are comprised of a large vacant developable lot),
 - Poplar Street south of Maplewood Avenue,
 - Lenox Avenue south of Maplewood Avenue,
 - Laurel Avenue parallel to Fairfield Avenue,
 - Norman Avenue south of Maplewood Avenue,
 - Iranistan Avenue south of Wood Avenue,
 - Colorado Avenue south of Maplewood Avenue and
 - Dewey Street between Salt and State streets.

HOUSING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Assets:

- Healthy mix of unit types and scales
- Significant ownership population
- Access to jobs and other resources

Challenges:

- Department of Housing controls approximately 2,500 housing units in the area
- Neglected multi-unit properties
- Untrained or absentee landlords
- Need to increase ownership and ownership opportunities
- Lack of available developable properties for housing

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Assets:

- Proximity to waterfront
- Presence of open space

Challenges:

- Waterfront primarily used for industrial purposes
- Zoning permits contiguous industrial and residential uses
- Need for resource-conservation incentives to alleviate cost of living and business
- Brownfields created by abandoned heavy industrial uses
- Presence of lead and asbestos in older housing stock

BUSINESS CORRIDOR AND GATEWAY ISSUES

Assets:

- Strongly defined commercial corridors, identified as: State Street, Fairfield Avenue, Clinton Avenue, Industrial District, Railroad Avenue, Dewey Avenue, Park Avenue
- Private investment along commercial corridors
- Some premier properties along commercial corridors
- Access to public transportation

Challenges:

- Infrastructure issues, especially sidewalks, litter, and lighting, along corridors
- Gateways into West Side / West End are not visibly defined
- Areas around on and off ramps to I-95 in the neighborhood are not cared for
- Lack of organization/consistent design standards along commercial corridors



Portion of commercial strip at Wood Avenue

- No incentive system for businesses to invest in their infrastructure / façades
- Enforcement of anti-dumping laws
- Impact of blight on the perception of the neighborhood

RECREATION, OPEN AND PUBLIC SPACE, YOUTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

Assets:

- West Side Park, located at Bostwick Avenue and Osborne Street, is 4.5 acres with a softball field, basketball and tennis courts, and a playground.
- Wordin Park, located at Wordin Avenue and St. Stephen’s Road, is 14.3 acres of mostly undeveloped land. Baseball diamonds and a playground are located within the park.
- Went Field, at Wordin and Railroad avenues, is a park that offers ball fields and courts and a playground.
- The West End Park, located at Fairfield Avenue and State Street, is a passive park.
- Two passive parks exist within this census tract. McGovern Park, located on Beechwood Avenue at Norman Street, and Wood Park, located at Wood and Benham avenues, which has a gazebo.
- Mount Grove Cemetery is located at 2675 North Avenue.
- Burr Creek Marina
- Winfield Park
- A significant recreational resource outside the neighborhood’s boundaries but possibly contributing to local recreation is Seaside Park in the City’s South End.
- Small internship program available for youth seeking summer employment
- Almost 40 nonprofit organizations serving youth, seniors, homeless individuals, substance abusers, and other groups within the community

LIST OF NONPROFITS SERVICING YOUTH AND SENIORS

<p>Daycare Centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children’s Garden, 539 Clinton Avenue ▪ Bright Beginnings, 816 Fairfield Avenue ▪ Gary Crooks Memorial Center (BPHA) ▪ Bassick Headstart <p>Substance Abuse Treatment/Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mary Magdalene House, 405 Clinton Avenue ▪ Hosanna Ministry, 1416 Fairfield Avenue ▪ The Helping Hand Center, 1154 Iranistan Avenue ▪ Transitional Living Center IT/Iranistan House, 964 Iranistan Avenue ▪ Center for Human Services, 1549 Fairfield Avenue ▪ Horizons, 1635 Fairfield Avenue ▪ Rescue Mission, 1088 Fairfield Avenue <p>Alternative Incarceration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sherwood House (juvenile), 29 Sherwood Avenue ▪ Isaiah 61:1 Inc., 112-120 Clinton Avenue ▪ New Beginnings, 753 Fairfield Avenue <p>Health Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southwest Community Health Center, Inc., 361 Bird St, 510 Clinton Ave, and 1046 Fairfield Ave ▪ Park City Primary Care Center, 64 Black Rock Ave ▪ Bridge House, 880 Fairfield Avenue ▪ Visiting Nurses Services, 765 Fairfield Avenue <p>Disability Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Kennedy Center, 184 Garden Street ▪ Bridge House, 880 Fairfield Avenue ▪ Family Services Woodfield, 475 Clinton Avenue 	<p>Senior Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Astoria Park, 725 Park Avenue <p>Homeless Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rescue Mission, 1088 Fairfield Avenue ▪ YMCA Families in Transition, 11-13, 19-21 Clinton Avenue ▪ Urban Model, 410-414 Poplar Street ▪ Alpha Home, inc., 647 Clinton Avenue <p>Veteran Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home for the Brave, 655 Park Avenue <p>Youth Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, 475 Clinton Avenue ▪ Progressive Training Associates, Inc., 965 Fairfield Avenue ▪ St. John’s Family Center, 768 Fairfield Avenue ▪ Project Learn (Silliman Memorial Baptist Church), 1728 Fairfield Avenue ▪ ASPIRA ▪ Family Services Woodfield, 475 Clinton Avenue <p>Domestic Violence Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, 753 Fairfield Avenue <p>HIV/AIDS Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helping Hand Center, 1146 Iranistan Avenue ▪ Helping Hand Center, 1154 Iranistan Avenue ▪ Family Services Woodfield, 475 Clinton Avenue
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Challenges:

- Limited recreational space for youth activities outside of schools
- No adequate green space or recreational land in residential areas of West Side / West End
- Deferred maintenance of pocket parks, such as the park at Beechwood and Laurel avenues
- Lack of communication / coordination among youth-serving agencies
- Summer internship program only provides employment for a fraction of students seeking summer jobs.
- Antiquated schools discourage enthusiasm for education in youth

JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT, SMALL BUSINESS NEEDS

Assets:

- Low-cost office space for small businesses
- At the time of the 2000 census, approximately 52% of employed West Side West End residents drove alone to work (less than the City of Bridgeport's average at the time of 66.4%). Approximately 20% traveled to work by public transportation (higher than the City's average at the time of 8.4%) and approximately 7% walked to work (higher than the City's average of 3.6%).

Challenges:

- Perception of safety for potential employees traveling from outside of neighborhood
- Only one bank in the neighborhood
- Low level of educational attainment for neighborhood workforce
- Nowhere to move to within the neighborhood if expansion is desired
- Not a high-quality retail business mix
- High state and local property taxes (45th in nation according to 2006 Small Business Survival Index: http://www.sbecouncil.org/Media/pdf/SBSI_2006.pdf)
- Large number of health insurance mandates (47th in nation according to 2006 Small Business Survival Index)
- Electric utility costs for Connecticut are ranked 48th in the nation according to 2006 Small Business Survival Index and Connecticut is ranked 47th according to the Energy Information Administration for industry average retail price of electricity
- State gas taxes are the worst in the nation (51st according to the 2006 Small Business Survival Index)

LINKAGES, TRANSPORTATION, PARKING AND ACCESS

Assets:

- *Interstate I-95.* Interstate I-95 is a major six-lane expressway that follows the Eastern United States coastline from Florida to Maine. In Connecticut, I-95 is an east-west highway; however, because of its regional significance it is designated a north-south highway (south being westbound and north being eastbound).
- *Fairfield Avenue.* Fairfield Avenue (SR 700 in the West Side / West End) is a divided roadway with two lanes of travel in each direction. A 4.5-foot-wide median separates the two directions of traffic as it enters the neighborhood but ceases just beyond the neighborhood border at the overpass of Interstate I-95; the avenue then becomes a major one-way arterial running northeast to southwest.
 - According to ConnDot counts, the 1998 average weekday daily traffic on Fairfield Avenue was 17,500 vehicles per day at a point just outside the western boundary of the neighborhood, where Fairfield Avenue has travel in two directions.
 - Where the avenue runs in one direction, the average daily traffic is approximately 9,200 cars.
- *State Street.* State Street (route 130 in the West Side / West End) is another major one-way arterial running eastward.
 - Average daily traffic for State Street in this area is approximately 9,000. State Project 15-202, implemented in 1997, connected signals along SR 700 and incorporated responsive timing plans depending on traffic patterns and density, thus improving traffic control along the roadway.
- *U.S. Route 1 – North Avenue.* U.S. Route 1 is a major roadway that follows the eastern United States coastline from Florida to Maine. As with I-95, this major arterial is an east-west roadway that connects towns along the Connecticut shoreline. For many years Route 1 served as the main roadway between New York City and Boston. In the vicinity of West Side / West End, Route 1, locally called North Avenue, is a four-lane arterial roadway with a decorative center median. The average daily traffic of Route 1 at the neighborhood's western edge was approximately 14,500 in 2003.

- *Bridgeport Port Authority.* A portion of the boundary for the Bridgeport Port Authority falls within this census tract. The Port Authority was established in 1992 to assist the city in developing its waterfront and industrial land use plans.
- *Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority.* The greater Bridgeport Transit Authority operates bus and shuttle service throughout Bridgeport, Fairfield, Stratford and Trumbull, with Route 15 service extending to Shelton and Derby and the Coastal link (CL) along Route 1 from Milford to Norwalk. The following routes travel through and stop in the West Side / West End:
 - Route 1 – runs east/west, traveling along Fairfield Avenue, State Street, Bostwick Avenue and Wordin Street. in the West Side / West End. It also runs from the Milford Avenue and the Hollister Heights Loop in Stratford to Crowther and Canfield streets in Fairfield.
 - Route 2 (CL) – runs southwest/northwest along Route 1 through Norwalk, West Port, Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford and Milford (to the Post Mall). In the West End, the bus passes through State Street (north) and Fairfield Avenue (south).
 - Route 3 – runs north/south between the Westfield Shopping Park in Trumble and Park avenues between John and State streets at the eastern corner of the West Side / West End neighborhood.
 - Route 5 – runs southwest/northeast between Seaside Park in the South End and Hawley Lane Mall in Stratford. The southwestern-most end of the line runs along Iranistan Avenue at the eastern-most edge of the West Side / West End neighborhood.
 - Route 6 – runs north /south from the University of Bridgeport in the South End to Chopsey Hill Road and Trumbull Gardens in the North End. The southern end of the route runs along Park Avenue and crosses the intersection of Park and State at the West Side / West End neighborhood’s eastern corner.
 - Route 11 – runs east/west from the Black Rock Turnpike in Fairfield along a portion of North Avenue, Clinton Avenue, Hazelwood, Wood Avenue, Park Avenue and across the intersections of Fairfield and Park and State and Park.
 - Route 19 – forms a loop within the South End, running along State, Park and Broad streets primarily. The loop turns at the corner of State and Park, at the eastern-most corner of the site.
 - Route 20 – runs southwest/northeast from Atlantic Street in the South End to the intermodal terminal downtown. The route’s center loops into the West Side / West End from State Street at the corner of Park Avenue to Iranistan Avenue to John Street.

Challenges:

- Specific businesses have problems finding space to park commercial vehicles
- Limited parking for employees on Railroad Avenue
- Pedestrian infrastructure appears neglected
- Enforcement of laws restricting cars parked on lawns and sidewalks

URBAN DESIGN

Assets:

- Four historic districts in neighborhood, including the Lindencroft Historic District (Yale Street) in the northwestern section of the Neighborhood; the Stratfield Historic District on the neighborhood’s north end; and the Railroad Avenue Historic District in the neighborhood’s center and the Bassickville Historic District (Bassick Street) in the neighborhood’s west side, both of which are on the National Registry of Historic Districts.
- Appropriate neighborhood scale in most viable areas (such as historic districts)
- Well-defined public/semi-private/private transition (selected areas)

Challenges:

- Prime properties are not developed with vibrant, active uses
- Few incentives currently exist for business owners or residents to maintain or improve the façades of their buildings.
- Historic district boundaries often do not encompass buildings on either side of a given street.
- Long, non-walkable, neighborhood blocks
- Lack of pedestrian/vehicular buffer (selected areas)
- Lack of neighborhood “identity”

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

Assets:

- Well-defined commercial / traffic corridors
- Well-defined neighborhood gateways or points of entry.

Challenges:

- Uneven and broken sidewalks / roadways and curbing
- Lighting is not targeted to increase perception of safety
- No consistent signage throughout neighborhood
- Gateway fountains / signage missing or broken
- Lack of trash receptacles
- Abundance of litter
- Sewer issues under transportation overpasses and on select residential streets
- Flooding at Park and Laurel Avenues
- Flooding at Park Avenue and Wood Avenue/Vine Street
- Flooding at Fairfield Avenue and Railroad Avenue
- Inconsistent street cleaning / plowing
- Inconsistent bulk trash removal

IMPACT OF RECENT AND PROPOSED PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS

Assets:

- New Walgreens
- New Super Stop & Shop
- New Fairfield Avenue Shopping Center
- New AKDO Intertrade (50 employees, \$7.3 million)
- New ASAP Bedliners showroom (\$1.4 million)
- New State Street commercial development (\$1.1 million)
- New location for Carr’s Ice Cream

Challenges:

- No active proposal for housing development

PUBLIC SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

Assets:

- Police substation in the neighborhood
- Nonprofit organizations that address issues surrounding HIV / AIDS, substance abuse, domestic violence, disabilities, and healthcare for residents.

Challenges:

- Chain-link fences / barbed wire present the perception of unsafe conditions
- High rate of nuisance crimes

Bridgeport Crime Report – Year-to-End Totals		
	2005	2006
High Offense Crimes	7,562	7,538
Aggravated Assaults	410	332
Property Crime	3,514	3,061
Burglaries	690	630
Larcenies	2,217	1,892
Motor Vehicle Theft	607	539
Murder	21	30
Forcible Rape	25	42
Robbery	264	284

West Side / West End Reporting Districts – Year-to-End Totals		
	2005	2006
High Offense Crimes	1,016	925
Aggravated Assaults	75	50
Narcotics	89	100
Burglaries	256	240
Larcenies	132	116
Motor Vehicle Theft	156	126
Murder	4	3
Forcible Rape	8	6
Robbery	132	127

- High rates of communicable diseases and HIV / AIDS compared with the State and surrounding areas. For example, as of December 2006, Bridgeport had 855 residents diagnosed and living with AIDS, the third-highest rate of any city in Connecticut after Hartford and New Haven.
- High rates of infant mortality, compared with the State and surrounding areas.
- High-risk birth rates and prenatal care. In Bridgeport, 0.4% births were to mothers younger than 15 years old (compared with 0.2% in all of Connecticut), and 5.9% younger than 18 years age (compared with 2.7% in all of Connecticut), (Source: 2000 data), with 10.5% at low birth weight (compared with 7.5% in all of Connecticut). Twenty-one percent (21%) of Bridgeport births had late or no prenatal care, compared with 10.6% in all of Connecticut.
- High lead screening and incidence rates. In 2001, 6,203 children under the age of six years were screened for high lead levels. Fifty-four of these children were found to have rates from 20-44 ug/dL (0.9%, compared with 0.4% statewide) and four children were found to have rates higher than 55 ug/dL (0.1% compared with 0.0% statewide).
- High cancer rate. In 2000, Bridgeport had 639 new cancer cases, compared with 461 in Hartford and 510 in New Haven.¹³

¹³ All health data provided by DataHaven, <http://research.yale.edu/datainitiative>.

VII. Targeted Development Opportunities

Community members participating in the NRZ workshops identified the issues that were most important to them, as well as prime opportunities in the neighborhood. These major issues were: 1) Streetscape improvements and gateways, 2) Façade improvements, 3) Zoning enforcement, historic preservation and adaptive reuse (especially of schools), and 4) Youth programs.

Community stakeholders also identified prime redevelopment areas in the neighborhood. These areas included the Hubbell site on State Street and the site behind Label Systems on Railroad Avenue.

At this stage of the neighborhood analysis, we have identified the following key opportunities:

- 1. Zoning Clarification / Redefinition:** Lack of agreement currently exists in portions of the neighborhood with regard to ideal and acceptable land uses, and an inordinate number of different zoning designations exist. These factors can create confusion and dissension over proposed new projects. Through this NRZ process, a significant opportunity exists to simplify the zoning designations in the neighborhood and to clearly articulate the allowable uses in each area of the neighborhood. This clarification will provide clearer guidance to both the public and private stakeholders that are involved in any redevelopment project in the neighborhood.
- 2. Commercial Corridors:** The major commercial corridors for the neighborhood are State Street, Fairfield Avenue, Clinton Avenue, and the industrial district south of the railroad tracks (see Image 1). These primary corridors bisect the neighborhood and run through its center. The secondary commercial corridors include Park Avenue, North Avenue, Wood Avenue, Dewey Avenue, and Railroad Avenue. However, commercial, industrial, and residential uses (ranging from international enterprises to small neighborhood markets) are interspersed throughout the neighborhoods. Significant opportunities exist for these commercial corridors to be better defined, supported, and their growth be reinforced by corresponding zoning. In addition, significant opportunities exist to provide valuable incentives for private investment to improve the quality and appearance of existing commercial corridor properties (e.g., through façade improvement grants).

Adherence to Commercial Corridor standards would be enforced by the Board of Zoning Appeals, Historic District Commission or a local Design Review Board and would regulate:

- Signage
- Security mechanisms
- Window advertising
- Awnings
- Accessibility
- Screening
- Lighting

- 3. Connecting the Premier Properties:** Premier properties exist in this neighborhood. Premier properties are those that use high quality building materials, show meticulous landscaping and maintenance, create the perception of safety, engender a positive impact on adjacent property values, and are exemplary. Significant opportunities exist to connect these premier properties together to create a seamless corridor that is well-maintained, creates a continuous perception of safety, ripples down a positive impact on property values, and generates momentum for positive growth from the premier corridors.
- 4. Improving the Public Infrastructure:** Issues do exist with the sewer, sidewalks, and infrastructure in commercial corridors as well as residential areas. Addressing these problems will make it easier to attract new investment to the neighborhood and will help reinforce the private investments that businesses and residents are making on their property.
- 5. Eliminating Blight and Visual Destabilizing Indicators:** Currently, blight and other destabilizing indicators exist and act together to weaken the neighborhood. Examples include boarded up homes, homes that have suffered from fire, chain link fences, barbed wire fences, litter, and illegal dumping. This process presents a prime opportunity for anti-dumping enforcement, zoning enforcement, additional street cleaning, and an emphasis on removing the destabilizing factors in the neighborhood. This, in conjunction with additional safety, such as neighborhood block watches, will work together to readjust the balance in the neighborhood.

Image 1: Major Commercial Corridors

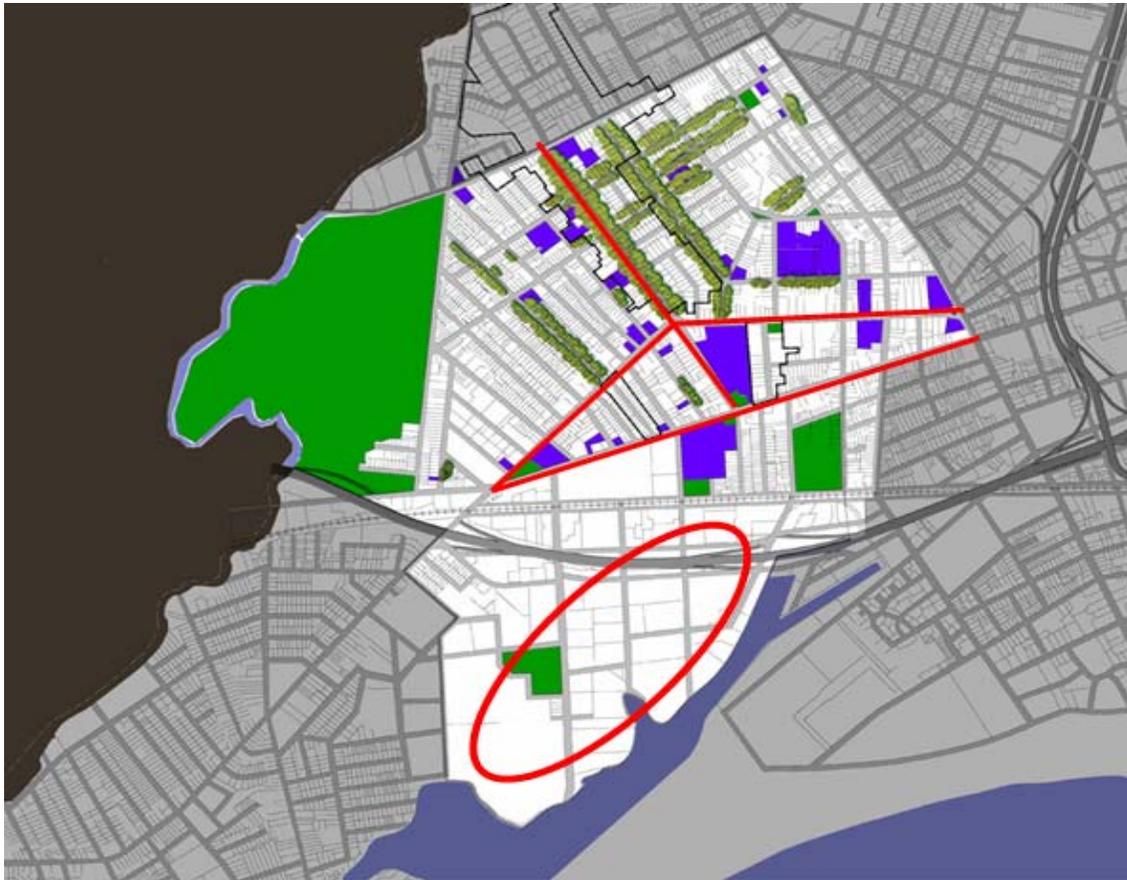
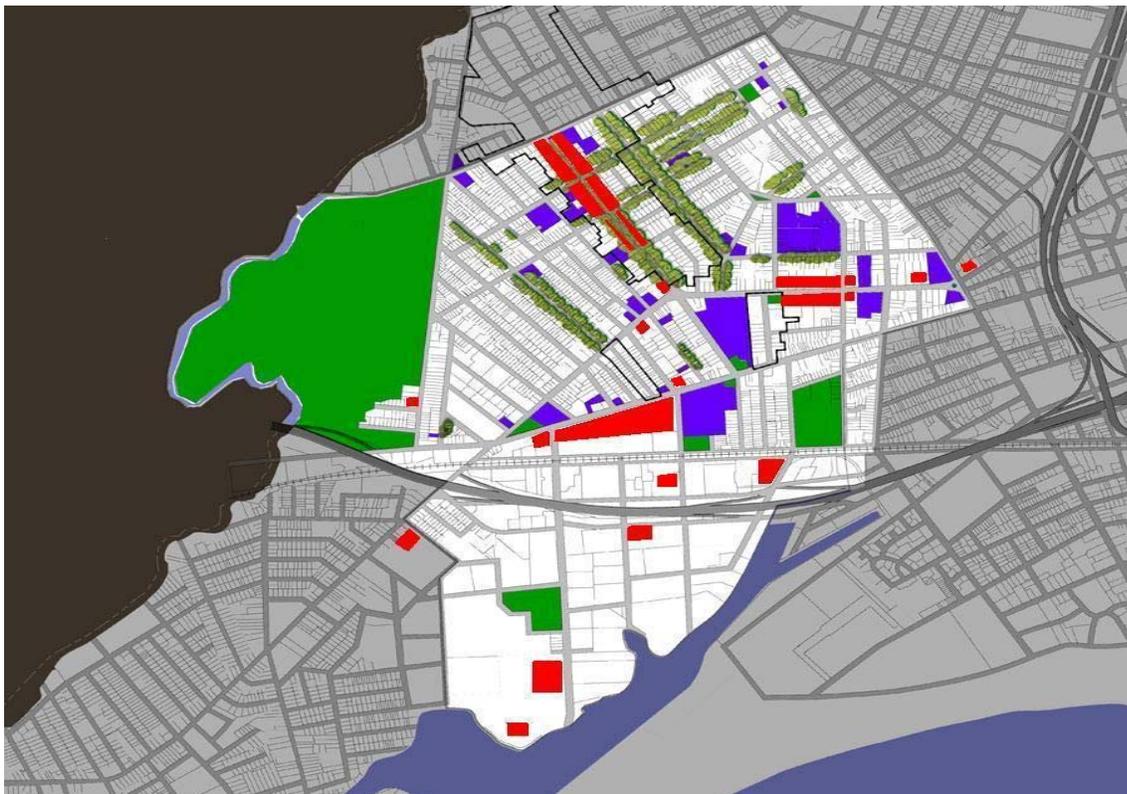


Image 2: Premier Properties



VIII. Defined Issues and Neighborhood Vision

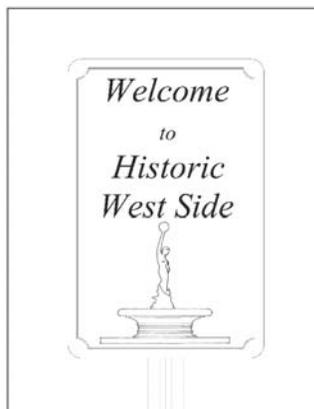
A. DEFINED ISSUES

Participants in the NRZ planning process generated a working list of neighborhood issues, which includes:

- Crime / safety (theft, vandalism, employee safety, customer safety)
- Labor force (availability, skill level, training, retention)
- Zoning code enforcement
- Anti-dumping enforcement
- Impact of blight (on customers, on employees)
- Traffic, parking, and transportation (truck access, curb cuts, turning radius)
- Environmental remediation issues of existing sites
- Infrastructure (in particular, sewer)
- Real estate taxes
- Personal property taxes
- Cost of energy/utilities
- Cost of production and ability to compete in a global economy
- Visual destabilizing factors (chain link, barbed wire)
- Ability to expand business physical plants
- Clear determination of land use in certain areas
- Prime properties are not developed with active, vibrant uses
- Quality of commercial districts
- State or federal regulatory policy
- Interest in a façade improvement program
- Marking the arrival within the neighborhood through gateways (e.g., working fountains, signage)
- Presence of trash receptacles to reduce litter
- Street cleaning (particularly on the side streets)
- Infrastructure investment (sidewalks, lighting)
- Youth activities and positive involvement in the community (e.g., local internships)

B. NEIGHBORHOOD VISION

The work groups involved in the planning process did not develop a specific vision “statement” for the neighborhood. What received general consensus for residents and business owners alike was the “branding” of the neighborhood as the **Historic West Side**, emphasizing the neighborhood’s rich historical past and physical assets while setting it aside as Bridgeport’s premier historic community. The residents, merchants, social service providers, religious community and other stakeholders wish to welcome all who will live, play, work, shop, worship and do business in the West Side:



IX. NRZ Strategy

As a result of careful planning, analysis, and stakeholder input, the consultants recommend the following 25 components to create a successful revitalization strategy for the West Side / West End neighborhood. An implementation timeframe is also indicated, with immediate implementation (■) occurring within one year, short-term implementation (▣) in one to five years, and long-term implementation (⊞) in six to ten years. Each strategy is further defined on the following pages.

A. Implementation		
1.	Identify/create an entity to oversee implementation of the plan	■ Within 1 year
B. Land Use and Environment		Implementation
2.	Simplify and streamline zoning to reinforce commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods, as recommended in attached map (Appendix E)	■ Within 1 year
C. Housing		Implementation
3.	Promote residential rehabilitation programs for owner-occupants and rental property owners	▣ 1-5 Years
4.	Promote enforcement of housing quality standards	■ Within 1 year
5.	Help the City reconcile its property use records and actual use conditions in the neighborhoods	■ Within 1 year
6.	Provide education and training for renters, homeowners, and landlords	▣ 1-5 Years
7.	Address high-priority blighted residential properties	▣ 1-5 Years
8.	Embrace and develop diverse residential options in the neighborhood	⊞ 6-10 Years
9.	Create/enforce outdoor-space requirement for future large-scale residential development	⊞ 6-10 Years
D. Historic Preservation		
10.	Provide support for property owners to maintain historic districts	▣ 1-5 Years
11.	Revise historic district boundaries	▣ 1-5 Years
E. Economic and Business Development		Implementation
12.	Support focused and beneficial industrial waterfront land uses and higher density commercial uses near highway access points	■ Within 1 year
13.	Address high-priority blighted commercial properties	■ Within 1 year
14.	Create commercial rehabilitation and façade improvement programs	■ Within 1 year
15.	Recognize premier commercial and industrial properties and support both private investments to become premier properties and linkages between premier properties	■ Within 1 year
16.	Encourage new communication between small business owners on State Street, Fairfield Avenue, and Wood Avenue	▣ 1-5 Years
17.	Support diverse types of businesses and revenue in the neighborhood	⊞ 6-10 Years
F. Design Review and Development Standards		
18.	Establish a city-wide design review board and standards of development for residential and commercial properties	▣ 1-5 Years
G. Public Infrastructure		Implementation
19.	Strengthen the neighborhood's gateways	■ Within 1 year
20.	Implement specific infrastructure improvements (see Target Analysis Map in Appendix E)	▣ 1-5 Years
21.	Standardize trash removal, bulk trash removal, and recycling	▣ 1-5 Years
H. Public Safety and Health		Implementation
22.	Create a neighborhood council or block watch for the West Side / West End neighborhood	▣ 1-5 Years
I. Youth Services		Implementation
23.	Create youth programming	▣ 1-5 Years
J. Parks and Recreation		Implementation
24.	Improve parks and park infrastructure	▣ 1-5 Years
K. Traffic, Transit and Parking		Implementation
25.	Provide traffic lights or other traffic-calming devices at trouble intersections	⊞ 6-10 Years

A1. IDENTIFY/CREATE AN ENTITY TO OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

First and foremost to the West Side / West End Community should be the establishment of a legal entity that can grow and develop with the neighborhood and gather and develop resources for long-term sustainability.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Nominate an individual or sub-committee to review existing by-laws. Use these as the basis of a revised document to govern the implementation process. Nominate and elect officers. These steps will be helpful whether a more formal organization such as a legal not-for-profit organization is formed or the committee (now the West Side Implementation Committee) continues to operate as a community organization.
- Adopt revised by-laws. The newly-formed Implementation Committee should review/revise existing by-laws. New by-laws should reflect changes in membership, including number, quorum requirements, demographics and mission.
- Nominate individual or sub-committee to coordinate and draft the 501(c)3 application.
- For implementation purposes, assign one committee member (possibly a sub-committee chair) to each of the eleven (11) target areas identified. That person will serve as point-person or liaison between the Implementation Committee and City Staff or the Committee and other organizations such that those resources are not unnecessarily bombarded by uncoordinated communication. To streamline communication, one committee member may serve as point-person for multiple areas (issues) with similar contacts.

Target Areas Include:

- A. Implementation
- B. Land Use and Environment
- C. Housing
- D. Historic Preservation
- E. Economic and Business Development
- F. Design Review and Development Standards
- G. Public Infrastructure
- H. Public Safety and Health
- I. Youth Services
- J. Parks and Recreation
- K. Traffic, Transit and Parking

- The Bridgeport Public Library can serve as a valuable knowledge-base for beginning a 501(c)3 organization. The following webpages are useful, informative links to assist in the founding of a 501(c)3 organization in the State of Connecticut.

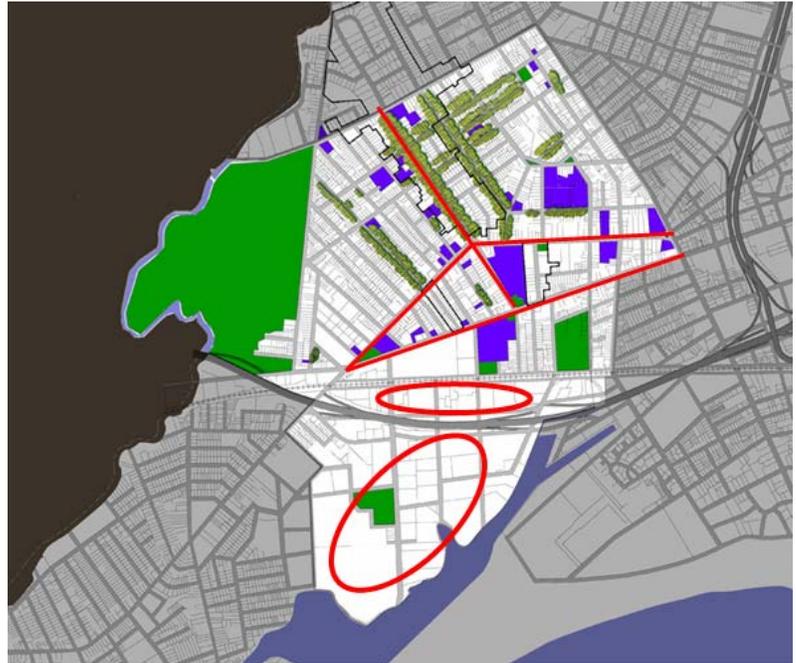
- <http://www.sharinglaw.net/npo/links.htm>
- http://www.managementhelp.org/strtr_org/strtr_np/strtr_np.htm
- http://nonprofit.about.com/od/nonprofitbasics/For_Beginners.htm

In this scenario, the West Side/ West End Planning Committee should nominate members (those members may be planning committee members and/or other community members. We would suggest limiting the number of members at first because the next step is to vote to adopt by-laws to include the mission of implementation any changes in Board membership (ie # of members, demographics)

B2. SIMPLIFY AND STREAMLINE ZONING TO REINFORCE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, AS RECOMMENDED IN ATTACHED MAP (APPENDIX E)

It is essential for cities and neighborhoods to identify their major economic development corridors, as these then become areas of focus for certain investments, improvements, and concentration in the neighborhood revitalization plan. Based on the analysis of the property and personal property values, the streets and zones have been identified that constitute the neighborhood's major economic development corridors.

- State Street is a major commercial corridor. On the western end, the large parcels create a prime opportunity for larger uses (e.g., industrial and showroom). On the eastern end, the smaller parcels and proximity to residential provide opportunities for smaller businesses and retail that serve the local population.
- Fairfield Avenue is a major commercial corridor.
- Clinton Avenue is an important commercial corridor for the professional sector of businesses, including legal, accounting, and private practice medical providers.
- The area between Railroad Avenue and I-95 (commonly called "The Smile") is a major commercial and industrial corridor that is poised to transition the neighborhood between its commercial State Street corridor and its more southern industrial district.
- The industrial district that is south of Interstate 95 is a largely light industrial district with some heavy industrial and commercial uses.
- Secondary economic development corridors include Dewey, Park and Wood avenues.



The Planning Committee believes zoning changes and continued enforcement of these changes that are recommended in this section would contribute to long-term improvements in the West Side / West End. These recommendations will help to:

- Reinforce the neighborhood's gateways
- Buffer residential areas from dense and active industrial areas
- Strengthen the identity and distinctiveness of the neighborhood's commercial corridors
- Create greater consistency on streets
- Set up clear program areas that can be more easily instituted and have greater impact
- Preserve certain zones and use natural boundaries within the neighborhood to separate uses

The major components of the recommended zoning changes made by the Planning Committee are as follows:

- Change the zone for Winfield Park from industrial to residential to conform to its current use.
- Change the zone for a portion of Dewey Street between Maplewood Street and State Street Extension, and a piece of land surrounded by Bedford Avenue, Ash Street, and State Street Extension to residential uses to conform, in large part, to existing use.
- Change the zone for the location of Aspira, at 1600 State Street, to residential to maintain consistency with the piece of open space in front of the building and to allow for future use that would benefit the

residential community. Committee members suggested eventually turning the property into a park, a museum, or some other public space.

It should be noted that the Planning Committee made several decisions that were inconsistent with the recommendations of the Planning Consultants. These include: leaving unchanged the single property that is currently zoned for heavy industrial uses, converting the zoning for 1600 State Street to residential use, and maintaining industrial zones north of State Street. The Planning Consultants made several recommendations to create buffers between industrial and commercial uses, but the Planning Committee expressed significant concern about losing quantities of industrially-zoned land that is becoming increasingly scarce and increasingly valuable.

It should be further noted that while the Planning Committee recognized and supports the existing commercial use on Clinton Avenue, they opted to retain residential zoning on this street to require that the professional firms apply for a special exception for additional uses. The concern was that if it was converted to a commercial zone, the diversity of commercial uses allowable would increase and the historic and professional character that currently works well along Clinton Street could be compromised. With this consistency to the current conditions, new commercial may be allowed, but must continue to obtain variances or conditional-use permits in order to move onto Clinton Avenue. This decision is supported by the Planning Consultants.

Finally, there was not complete consensus on “the Smile” - a swatch of land nestled between I95 and the Metro North railroad tracks. One stakeholder advocated intensely for a ‘mixed-use’ designation minimally providing for the establishment of programs geared toward adaptive-reuse of older, dilapidated industrial buildings. Such a designation would consider, if not allow, residential development in an area that is currently designated light industrial. An opposing view, expressed by residents and business-owners, suggests protecting industrial lands in the neighborhood and maintaining natural ‘buffers’ as exist in this particular area.

Please see Appendix E: Maps for a visual representation of the current and proposed changes to the West Side / West End neighborhood zoning.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Give input into The City of Bridgeport’s Master Planning process. www.bridgeportmasterplan.gov
- Nominate WS/WE NRZ Liaison to the Zoning Department in order to provide advocacy and awareness for the WS/WE at the city level of government.
- If maintaining viable light industrial businesses is one of the neighborhood goals, the NRZ Implementation Committee might create a neighborhood marketing program to attract light industrial uses to areas the neighborhood desires to remain light industrial. A starting point might be to create a database of existing industrial properties including square footage, parking provisions and amenities. (See Whalley Avenue Special Services District at: <http://www.precisionlinemedia.com/whalley%20district/> or contact the Whalley Avenue Special Services District Director, Sheila Masterson (203)776-5455. Also see the town of Orange Commercial Property Database at: <http://www.orangeedc.com/properties.htm> which is linked to the Town’s website. <http://www.orangeedc.com/> gets you there). The benefit of such a database and public access to it is, it can be used to attract whatever business/residential or other developers the neighborhood desires.

C3. PROMOTE RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR OWNER-OCCUPANTS AND RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS

Publicize, support, advocate, and encourage the use of programs that assist in overall neighborhood revitalization such as emergency repair, soft-second mortgages for homebuyer rehabilitation, lead remediation, historic tax credits, exterior paint, and energy conservation.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Identify and cooperate with any existing organizations (e.g. the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust) within the community that could assist in the promotion of the following state and federal programs. The following websites provide information and links regarding current state and federal programs that specialize in rehabilitation and home improvement for residential property owners:
 - Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) -- (<http://www.dsireusa.org/>)
 - Connecticut Housing Investment Fund - Energy Conservation Loan
 - Connecticut Clean Energy Fund - Solar PV Rebate Program
 - Office of Policy and Management - Replacement Furnace Rebate Program
 - The expanded Bridgeport American Dream Program currently is providing \$250,000 in loan funds to help first-time homebuyers become successful and enduring homeowners in Bridgeport. Additional funds will be added to the program as needed. Eligible households must be first-time homebuyers at or below 80% of the median income, which for a family of four in Bridgeport is \$59,600. Individuals must be purchasing homes within the City of Bridgeport, cannot have owned a home within the past three years, and must have participated in homebuyer counseling offered by a City approved agency.

Loan funds may be used for down payment and closing costs to purchase a primary residence in Bridgeport. Examples of the ways in which loan funds may be used include:

- The assistance may help eligible applicants with up to 50% of the minimum down payment required by a participating lender.
- The program can provide eligible applicants with up to \$5,000 in closing cost assistance.
- Additionally, the program may fund the gap between the cost of the home and the maximum first mortgage amount minus the buyer's down payment.

The maximum amount of combined assistance that may be awarded to any one applicant cannot exceed \$25,000. Previously, the maximum amount an individual could receive was \$10,000.

The following agencies will be providing the homeownership education counseling:

- ACORN Housing: 203-366-4180
- ASPIRA: 203-336-5762
- Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust: 203-332-7977
- Faith CDC: 203-502-7632
- Housing Development Fund: 203-969-1830
- Mutual Housing: 203-336-8792 (Ext. 20224)
- Urban League: 203-327-5810 (Ext.105)
- NeighborWorks Mortgage Foreclosure Counseling: 1-888-995-HOPE (Ext. 4673)

The “Bridgeport American Dream” Homeowner Education and Down Payment Assistance Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) HOME Partnership Investment Program. HOME is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. Each year HUD allocates approximately \$2 billion among the states and hundreds of localities nationwide.

To learn more about the “Bridgeport American Dream” Homeowner Education and Down Payment Assistance Program and receive an application, please contact the City of Bridgeport’s Office of

Housing and Community Development, (203) 576-8144. Program information and the application will be posted to the City's Web site, <http://www.ci.bridgeport.ct.us>, shortly.

- Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) – (<http://www.chfa.org/MainPages/default.asp>)
 - Connecticut Housing Finance Authority - Urban Rehabilitation Grant
 - Connecticut Housing Finance Authority – Down-payment/Closing Loan
 - Note: CHFA programs require a counseling agency (e.g. Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust) to locally administer their programs.
- Implementation Committee should initiate talks with OPED at the City of Bridgeport regarding the creation of a residential rehabilitation program, lead abatement program and/or house-painting program.

C4. PROMOTE ENFORCEMENT OF HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

Develop mechanism for reporting infractions on nuisance laws, historic district regulations, and housing quality standards. Educate property owners on those quality of life issues and regulations.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact Tom Coble (Director of Neighborhood Revitalization/Anti-blight) to learn of all the current municipal enforcement strategies and how the WS/WE NRZ can assist those operations.
- Educate all members of the WS/WE NRZ regarding the current issues and applicable city regulations of its housing quality. Coordinate the content of this education effort with the Neighborhood Revitalization/Anti-blight office.
- Create a shared reference resource to maintain community awareness of its enforcement options.
- See also C7 for preliminary list of blighted residential properties.

C5. HELP THE CITY RECONCILE ITS PROPERTY USE RECORDS AND ACTUAL USE CONDITIONS IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Appropriate designations (whether through zoning, construction permits, or changes to type of occupancy) has been found to be outdated on City records, muddying transfer records and disabling enforcement. Reconciling City records will go a long way to empowering stakeholders in assisting government by serving as community “watchdogs.”

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Identify set of exact instances in which City records do not reconcile with what is on file at the City (e.g., situations where City shows only two units in a dwelling but three actually exist) to establish concrete examples (this was identified as a problem during numerous workshops)
- Connect with City departments that handle property records (Dennis Buckley, Zoning Enforcement Officer, 576-7217, Peter Paajanen, Building Department, 576-7225)
- Meet with them to learn about how things are filed on City records and to help them understand that consistency with current situations is a priority to the NRZ, ask for their help to create greater consistency and identify who to contact if discrepancies are identified to get them fixed
- Meet with individual property owners and/or visually scan properties to determine whether the city record or the actual condition is accurate.

C6. PROVIDE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR RENTERS, HOMEOWNERS AND LANDLORDS

Homebuyer education and a continuum of homeowner training will enable purchasers to buy and maintain their residential properties over the long term. Additionally, as long as there are multi-family properties in the West Side / West End, there will be a need to train and inform investors and landlords in caring particularly for rental properties.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- The members of the WS/WE NRZ should act in cooperation with housing organizations like the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust (<http://www.bntweb.org>) and possibly Mutual Housing Association of Southwestern Connecticut to increase the provision of education and training for renters, homeowners, and landlords in the West Side.

C7. ADDRESS HIGH-PRIORITY BLIGHTED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

The City’s anti-blight program has already begun to identify and to cite blighted properties. Continued vigilance along these lines will ultimately create a culture of maintenance and care in this community.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Remain connected to OPED’s office of Neighborhood Development and Anti-Blight. (Tom Coble, Director)
- Initiate enforcement on identified blighted properties including but not limited to those identified in City-Scan’s Blighted Property Survey below:

980-982	Howard Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
76	Elmwood Place	Blighted building	Residential
50-52	Ash Street	Blighted building	Residential
92	Howard Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
169	Laurel Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
1482-1484	Iranistan Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
161-163	Beechwood Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
90	Edgewood Street	Blighted building	Residential
145-147	Beechwood Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
850-852	State Street	Blighted building	Mixed-use
601	Colorado Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
85	Lee Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
480	Clinton Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
203	Benham Street	Blighted building	Residential
30	Ash Street	Blighted building	Residential
1-7	Buena Way	Blighted building	Residential
75-77	Ash Street	Blighted building	Residential
4-6	Lesbia Street	Blighted building	Other
180	Lenox Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
90	Lee Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
40	Salt Street	Blighted building	Residential
1822-1824	Commerce Drive	Blighted building	Residential
881-887	Hancock Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
1289	Railroad Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
1325	Railroad Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
125	Lee Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
969	Maplewood Avenue	Blighted building	Residential

C8. EMBRACE AND SUPPORT DIVERSE RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Prospective homebuyers who are not prepared for conventional single-family homes or for multi-family dwellings desire more opportunities to purchase condominiums and coops. Appropriate siting and development of such units could work to revitalize parts of the neighborhood, provided that such development does not increase density beyond the characteristics of the neighborhood, does not replace existing housing, and respects the existing historic architecture and scale of the neighborhood.

Additionally, despite statistics that show the neighborhood has a disproportionately small population of individuals ages 65 and older (at 7%, compared with the City, County, and State averages of 12-14%), community sentiment supports theories that this population is stagnated by the lack of available housing for seniors living alone. The desire to provide housing for seniors living in the neighborhood might be supported by soliciting interest by housing developers to develop units in targets areas in the West Side / West End.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Create internet accessible database of available properties, squarefootage, property type etc. for marketing purposes as resource for potential developers. (See examples/contacts under B2. SIMPLIFY AND STREAMLINE ZONING TO REINFORCE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS)
- See also practices of Not-for profit multi-family residential developers such as NeighborWorks New Horizons <http://nwnh.net/> (formerly Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut) for examples of affordable artist housing, family housing and pilot supportive housing programs. (contact Executive Director, Seila Mosquera, 562-4514)
- One progressive not-for-profit agency has created impressive elderly housing in Waterbury – adaptively reusing abandoned industrial buildings :see www.newopportunitiesinc.org/

C9. CREATE /ENFORCE OUTDOOR SPACE REQUIREMENT FOR FUTURE LARGE-SCALE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Residential density should not increase except proportionally with available outdoor space. In order to maintain a reasonable ratio of outdoor / open space to developed, residential space, there should be imposed upon prospective developers a specific requirement of outdoor space for every unit created in the form of green space, balconies, rooftops, courtyards, and so forth, subject to design standards. This will work to maintain the residential scale and environment of the West Side.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- The West Side NRZ should have active representation in the City of Bridgeport’s zoning ordinance review process.
- The zoning ordinance currently requires a minimum of 250 s.f. per unit open space. That number could be raised to some larger number of s.f. per/unit for buildings with 10 or more units. One provision which would serve overall neighborhood development and might mitigate opposition from potential developers might be to allow that space requirement to be accommodated off-site in the form of a park or playground as long as the property is within 500 feet of the development site.
- In the absence of concrete legislative changes, West Side’s liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals should give testimony at hearings regarding large-scale development – advocating for open space as conditions of approval.

D10. PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR PROPERTY OWNERS TO MAINTAIN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Support for historic property owners should include:

- Disclosure of historic designation upon property sale/disposition
- Rehabilitation grants for long-standing residents
- Educational programs informing residents of resources available to them
- Lead paint remediation assistance
- Signage introducing various historic districts to create local identity and “brand” could also lead to marketing opportunities
- Initiate streetscape improvements and incentives for private investment in the same in historic districts
- Develop clear design standards enforceable by the Historic Commission

Facilitation of use of State and Federal programs, such as the Historic Tax Credit Program, will also go a long way in preparing residents to care for historic properties.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- CT Trust for Historic Preservation (General Resource) -- (<http://www.cttrust.org>)
 - CT Tax Incentives and Credits listed by CT Trust -- (<http://www.cttrust.org/index.cgi/107>) include:
 - CT Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit (State)
 - CT Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program (State)
 - Expanded CT Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program (State)
 - Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (Federal)
 - Low Income Housing Investment Tax Credit
 - National Trust Community Investment Corporation
 - New Markets Tax Credits
 - Small Deal Fund
- Review 1997 Connecticut Historical Commission’s Bridgport Historic Buildings Project for consistency and apply to the State Historic Preservation Review Board for changes to any designations.

D11. REVISE HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Regardless of property condition or details, in some sections of the West Side / West End neighborhood, historic boundaries provide that certain properties are bound by historic requirements while others adjacent to or across the street from those properties are not so bound. Consistency across adjacent properties will encourage investment in the district as well as provide for enjoyment of the properties by all who live in the district.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop a sub-committee to review current property conditions/compliance and to recommend boundary changes to the larger Implementation Committee.
- See Revised Zoning map in Appendix E for preliminary boundary changes. Any extension of these should be reviewed to ensure compliance to The same should be forwarded to the Stratfield Historic District as well as the City of Bridgeport for consideration.
- Review 1997 Connecticut Historical Commission’s Bridgport Historic Buildings Project for consistency and apply to the State Historic Preservation Review Board for changes to any designations.

E12. SUPPORT FOCUSED AND BENEFICIAL INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONT LAND USES AND HIGHER DENSITY COMMERCIAL USES NEAR HIGHWAY ACCESS POINTS

The City of Bridgeport as a whole is moving to construct valuable housing properties along its waterfront. However, as a city that has historically supported both history and working waterfront ports, the West Side / West End neighborhood remains one of the primary neighborhoods in Bridgeport in which maintaining an active, industrial waterfront is important. The industrial businesses are an important component of the diverse contributors of value to this neighborhood. These industrial businesses provide many high-quality jobs to the neighborhood and to Bridgeport, have high assessed tax values, and are long-term stakeholders in the West Side / West End community. Although it is the recommendation that zoning remain primarily the same in the neighborhood's southern waterfront (see map in Appendix E), it is important that the industrial waterfront be utilized by businesses that:

- Include waterfront access for business activities
- Provide quality jobs to neighborhood and Bridgeport residents
- Provide valuable tax revenue
- Are willing to invest in the local neighborhood

Industrial uses that focus on energy and green industries are encouraged as part of this plan.



Additionally, the “Smile” area (consisting of the area between Railroad Avenue and the pass-through of Interstate 95) should include higher density commercial and industrial uses than it currently has. The natural boundary of the railroad tracks and Interstate 95 makes this an ideal location for commercial and light industrial facilities, with minimal residential foot traffic (we will note here again that there may not be complete community consensus around this issue). Because these businesses contribute to Bridgeport's perception for drivers on the highway, the new developments in this area should create:

- Higher density commercial & industrial uses
- Exemplary highway visibility
- A buffer between the industrial & residential components of the neighborhood

This should include well-kept buildings and tree planting / landscaping to improve the visibility and perceptions of the neighborhood from the highway. This commercial / light industrial mix will create a buffer between the industrial businesses and Cesar Batalla School and the high-density residential that is in place on the northern side of Railroad Avenue.

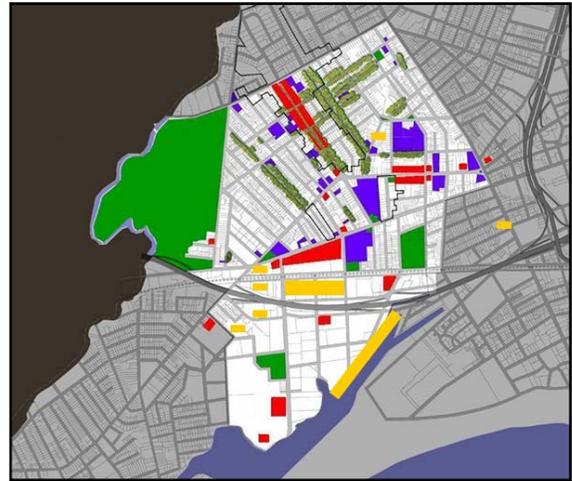
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact William Minor (Director of Land Use and Construction Review, 576-7222) and ask to be included on mailing list for all zoning and planning agendas
- Contact Fleeta Hudson (City Clerk, 576-7081) and Tom White (Legislative Director for the City Council, 332-3009) and ask about process to be informed of all City Council and Committee meeting agenda items
- Monitor agenda to determine any/all instances in which these projects arise for these properties, using Bill Coleman (Senior Economic Development Associate, 576-3980) as a resource for information about agenda items that are proposed for this area
- Submit letters, provide testimony during the public hearing / public comment portions in favor of projects that meet these criteria and in concern of projects that do not

- See also recommendation for creating a property database in “B2. SIMPLIFY AND STREAMLINE ZONING TO REINFORCE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS”.
- Explore ‘Green’ industry uses as alternatives to high-impact industrial development. See practices of the Chicago Center for Green Technology (<http://egov.cityofchicago.org/>), Half Moon Outfitters in North Charleston South Carolina (http://www.halfmoonoutfitters.com/halfmoon/dept.asp?s_id=0&dept_id=30), or general information at the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) <http://www.usgbc.org/>

E13. ADDRESS HIGH-PRIORITY, BLIGHTED COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

Blighted properties are those properties that are abandoned, not kept-up, or poorly cared for. They are often marked by litter and trash, broken windows, or graffiti. Marginally at-risk and at-risk properties identified have less offensive characteristics, but are identified as sliding into blighted states. These properties serve to degrade the character, perception of safety, and willingness of investment into a community. According to City-Scan, in the West Side / West End neighborhood there are 42 marginally at-risk, at-risk, and blighted commercial properties and 24 marginally at-risk, at-risk, and blighted mixed use properties.



The accompanying map shows in yellow properties that have been identified by residents and stakeholders in the West Side / West End neighborhood to be addressed, and include:

- 72 Cherry Street – privately owned
- Hubbell property – privately owned
- SCG Co. property (450 Wordin Avenue) – privately owned
- Richard Dudgeon Building & CL&P Lot – privately owned
- Burnt building S of I-95
- Foundry Site – privately owned
- Blue Sky Bar Ice Cream site, 325 Cherry Street – privately owned
- Cedar Creek Waterfront – multiple owners
- Former Park City Hospital – City-owned
- Elias Howe Elementary School – City-owned
- Wood Avenue Square – multiple owners
- 980 Howard Avenue – privately owned
- 76 Elmwood Place – privately owned
- 50 Ash Street – privately owned
- 92 Howard Avenue – privately owned
- 169 Laurel Avenue – privately owned
- 1482 Iranistan Avenue – privately owned
- 161 Beechwood Avenue – privately owned
- 90 Edgewood Street – privately owned
- 145 Beechwood Avenue – privately owned
- 850 State Street – privately owned
- 601 Colorado Avenue – privately owned
- 85 Lee Avenue – privately owned
- 480 Clinton Avenue – privately owned
- 203 Benham Street – privately owned

- 4-6 Lesbia Street – City-owned
- 180 Lenox Avenue – privately owned
- 90 Lee Avenue – owned by the West End Land Corporation
- 40 Salt Street – privately owned
- 1822 Commerce Drive – privately owned
- 881 Hancock Avenue – privately owned
- 1289 Railroad Avenue – privately owned
- 1325 Railroad Avenue – privately owned
- 125 Lee Avenue – privately owned
- 969 Maplewood Avenue – privately owned

If targeted and revitalized, these properties would make a substantial and positive impact on the West Side / West End neighborhood, both to residents and stakeholders internally and to outsiders passing through.

Adaptive reuse is encouraged in ways that match the proposed zoning for these areas.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

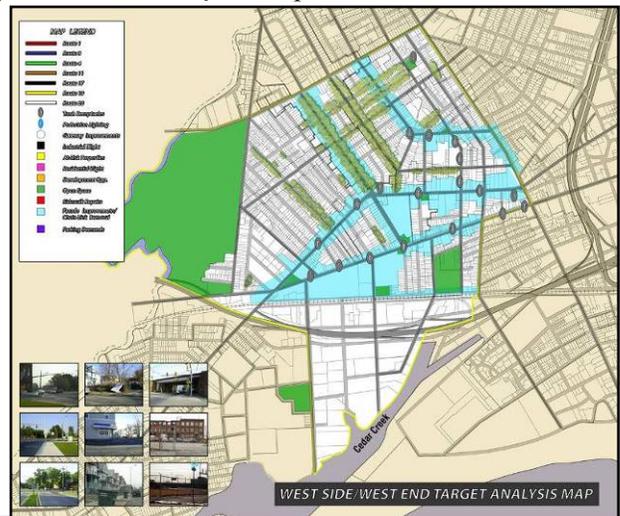
- Research list of blighted properties using Bridgeport’s Vision Appraisal Database <http://data.visionappraisal.com/BridgeportCT/> to determine ownership
- Schedule meeting with Bill Coleman (576-3980) and Tom Coble (576-3931) to review list of properties and identify a small set of properties that are highest priority and which immediate action can be taken (e.g., blight enforcement, condemnation, citation, public works improvements) and which programs may apply to the different properties
- In the vein of cooperation, contact private owners on behalf of the NRZ, request a meeting to explain the NRZ, its purpose, and invite property owners to talk about their property, their plans for development/improvement of their properties, learn about the limitations of what they can do, and discuss different options about how the NRZ can help them improve their property
- Follow through to help property owners find assistance (e.g., façade improvement program, grants)
- See the EPA’s website for brownfield redevelopment resources. <http://www.epa.gov/>
- See article re: grants awarded in Naugatuck Valley <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/04grants/naugatuck.htm> (HTML) Money for testing, and actual phase I, II and III reports can serve prospective developers well in acquisition negotiations.

E14. CREATE COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

Many issues that exist in the neighborhood, such as the perception of safety and presence of blight, are easily fixed through streetscape improvements. Through input received during public sessions and our own analysis, commercial corridors in the neighborhood that would greatly benefit from façade improvements and chain-link fence and barbed-wire removal programs were identified and are shown in the map here in blue.

Even though façade improvement programs create immediate benefits for individual businesses, typically the programs create spillover benefits to the greater community. They generate a positive image of the West Side / West End and its buildings, they encourage private investment, and increase the ability to attract new residents and new businesses. They also increase property values, create more business activity, and improve the consistency of design in the neighborhood.

The second public session included a focus group around the possibility of creating a façade improvement program in



the West Side / West End. The group identified several ideas that they would like to see considered for this neighborhood's façade improvement program, including:

- Keep the program simple
- Provide design assistance, in recognition that property owners may not have expertise in this area
- Require that business owners maintain the historic characteristics of buildings
- Encourage business owners to create transparency from the street into their business activities (e.g., discourage covered-up windows)
- Include requirement for ongoing maintenance of the property
- Require that the program be open to businesses that either own or lease, as long as the lease had a minimum of two years left on the lease to ensure that the business had a stake in the ongoing maintenance of the property
- Use effective funding that does not come with long restrictions (in other words, use bond funds)
- Allocate enough funding to make an appreciable impact on a corridor
- Structure the program so that it uses a combination of grant funds and matching funds that require private investment (e.g., grant for first \$10,000, then second grant of \$10,000 must be matched by private investment)

Commercial and retail areas, especially around schools, where trash receptacles needed to be installed were also identified and added to the map. The neighborhood recommended that area trash cans be emptied every couple of days to prevent litter overflowing the receptacles and people picking through the garbage looking for returnable cans and bottles. By improving business facades and reducing or eliminating litter in commercial areas, the neighborhood would greatly improve its image to those living in the community as well as visitors passing through.

(See **Section F18** for examples of standards to be adopted and/or activities to be regulated)

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Schedule meeting with Steve Tyliczszak (Director of Economic Development Division within OPED, 576-7221), Keith Cryan (209-6279), and Bill Coleman (576-3980) to learn about existing façade improvement program, including who is eligible, what are the program requirements, and what current level of funding is available, and to talk about options for the program within the WSWE neighborhood.
- If program exists and is ready for new applicants, review the list of blighted commercial properties, identify prime targets, contact the business owners, and ask to meet with them to talk about the NRZ process and invite them to talk with the City about a potential façade improvement program.
- If sufficient program or funding does not exist, work with the City Hall team to start refining and developing the program to meet WSWE neighborhood needs
- Further, research private funding that may be allocated toward façade improvements in the WSWE neighborhood.

E15. RECOGNIZE PREMIER COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES AND SUPPORT BOTH PRIVATE INVESTMENTS TO BECOME PREMIER PROPERTIES AND LINKAGES BETWEEN THESE PREMIER PROPERTIES

Premier properties are critical to identify in a neighborhood, because they serve as the anchor for any economic development revitalization plan. Premier properties are those that use high quality building materials, show meticulous landscaping and maintenance, create the perception of safety, engender a positive impact on adjacent property values, and are, overall, exemplary. Significant opportunities exist to connect these premier properties together to create a seamless corridor that is well-maintained, creates a continuous perception of safety, ripples down a positive impact on property values, and creates momentum for positive growth from the premier property anchors.

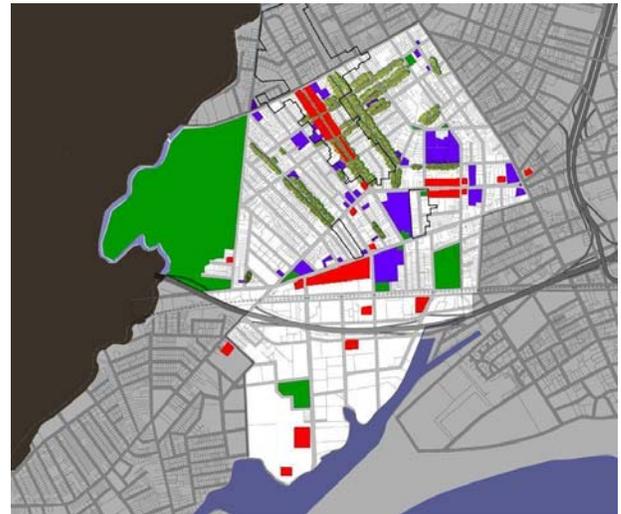


* Examples of premier properties in the West Side / West End neighborhood

The premier properties in the West Side / West End are shown in the map below in red. While the graphic is not all-inclusive, it demonstrates the location and massing of these, and visually demonstrates areas that are ripe for linkages.

Priority areas to concentrate economic development to encourage linkages between premier properties and strengthen the major economic development corridors are identified as follows:

- State Street, particularly on the north side across from the new development at AKDO Intertrade, Chaves Bakery, and Cesar Batalla School
- Fairfield Avenue, particularly on the eastern portion, solidifying the financial investments recently made there
- Clinton Avenue, between Fairfield and State Streets
- Dewey Street, across from the Mt. Grove Cemetery
- Railroad Avenue, particularly on the southern portion of blocks that have already been improved
- DRS Technologies North Avenue Between Stop and Shop & the Hess Gas Station
- Areas around the I-95 ramps



Priority infrastructure to support the premier properties and to encourage their ongoing maintenance includes:

- Instituting a commercial Façade Improvement Program, creating incentives for change on State Street, Fairfield Avenue, Dewey Avenue, and on Park Avenue between State Street and Wood Avenue.
- Instituting a Premier Property Program, providing recognition for properties that meet a certain standard.
- Incentives for businesses to replace chain-link fences with other security measures that promote the perception of safety
- Sidewalk improvements in areas in which premier properties exist or in which they are being fostered
- Street paving and curbing in areas in which premier properties exist or are being fostered
- Ornamental street lighting for decorative and security purposes

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Work together to create the criteria for the premier property selection process, including:
 - How frequently will the award be given out (e.g., annually? Every other year?)

- How many properties will be chosen each time?
- What criteria does a property have to meet to be considered a premier property worthy of special recognition? (it should be strict, so the award is meaningful)
- What types of properties are eligible? (Residential? Commercial? Industrial? Mixed-Use? Private? Public?)
- What form of recognition will be awarded? (e.g., plaque, certificate, lunch at local restaurant, award ceremony)
- How will possible winners be identified? (e.g., nominations)
- Who is responsible for running the award program (e.g., NRZ subcommittee)
- What are the funding requirements and the source of these funds
- Develop a public awareness strategy to raise awareness of this award
 - Identify media outlets and methods of getting the word out (e.g., homeowner’s association meeting)
 - Call media outlets to announce that award is being established and to explain the purpose of the award, the criteria, the timeframe, and the process
- Run the award program

E16. ENCOURAGE NEW COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS ON STATE STREET, FAIRFIELD AVENUE, AND WOOD AVENUE

The larger businesses in the neighborhood routinely meet and support each other through the West End Association, but no formal mechanism exists for the small business owners in the neighborhood to communicate with each other. It is our recommendation that this mechanism be formed (perhaps as part of the larger Chamber of Commerce) to foster communication, idea-sharing among local business owners, and to foster a building sense of community and stakeholdership in the neighborhood.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Schedule meetings with business owners on State Street, Fairfield Avenue, and Wood Avenue to determine what their needs are, in terms of communication between business owners
- Based on these interviews, identify different options for folding interested business owners into networks (e.g., form new small business network, connect in through chamber of commerce, connect in through West End Association, create business owner directory, identify small business ‘leader’)

E17. SUPPORT DIVERSE TYPES OF BUSINESSES & REVENUE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

While some communities might focus on the “silver bullet” approach where they believe one single development will lead them toward economic prosperity, we recommend that the West Side / West End neighborhood continue to support diverse contributors in the neighborhood. In this neighborhood there is not one single high value generator, as one might find with Yale University in New Haven or the insurance companies in Hartford. Instead, a wide variety of users contribute value. For example, while Mt. Grove Cemetery Association may not pay taxes because of a nonprofit status, it contributes an excellent physical presence and a premier property that is a stabilizing factor within the neighborhood. Similarly, while Richard Dudgeon, Inc. is not at the top of the list on real estate assessments, the business is near the top of the list for personal property assessments. Similarly, a business such as Label Systems may be a leader in providing jobs to local neighborhood residents. This report finds that the neighborhood has an unusually diverse group that all generate value, including:

- Property holders
- Real estate assessments
- Personal property assessments
- Jobs for local workers, which in turn provide training, health care, pensions, stability
- Services for residents and businesses
- Foot traffic and its spillover effects
- Attracting new visitors to Bridgeport and the West Side / West End neighborhood

- Excellent physical presence
- Property remediation
- Pride

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact William Minor (Director of Land Use and Construction Review, 576-7222) and ask to be included on mailing list for all zoning and planning agendas
- Contact Fleeta Hudson (City Clerk, 576-7081) and Tom White (Legislative Director for the City Council, 332-3009) and ask about process to be informed of all City Council and Committee meeting agenda items
- Monitor agenda to determine any/all instances in which these projects arise for these properties and use Bill Coleman (Senior Economic Development Associate, 576-3980) as an information resource regarding agenda items that are proposed for this area
- Keep an eye out for opportunities to raise awareness about the different ways that different entities all contribute to the neighborhood (e.g., high personal property tax payer, high tax payer, hires local residents, provides safe place for children to go after school)
- Submit letters, provide testimony during the public hearing / public comment portions in favor of projects that help contribute to the economic diversity of the neighborhood

F18. ESTABLISH A CITY-WIDE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD AND STANDARDS OF DEVELOPMENT FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

It is recommended that the City of Bridgeport:

- Establish City-wide design review board and local Design District standards, using the West Side / West End neighborhood as a “pilot program” and taking into account the Stratfield Historic District
- Develop standards for residential property improvements (new construction and rehabilitation)
- Develop standards for commercial property improvements (new construction and rehabilitation)
- Develop standards for streetscape improvements
- Establish a façade improvement program for commercial and residential buildings

Such standards would regulate, among, other details:

- Signage
- Security Mechanisms
- Window Advertising
- Window Coverings
- Awnings
- Accessibility
- Screening and
- Lighting

It is worth noting that the community’s efforts to standardize exterior commercial and residential improvements should not be stagnated by the process for developing City-wide standards. The West Side neighborhood can begin by developing a set of standards for development that would serve the local community and might inform a model for the City of Bridgeport.

A community Design Charrette produced the following prototypical recommendations for commercial corridor façade and streetscape improvements:



WOOD AVENUE I





WOOD AVENUE II



STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact William Minor (Director of Land Use and Construction Review, 576-7222) to learn about existing design review standards and what plans may be in the works for developing standards for development for residential and commercial properties.
- Develop recommended interface between existing system and WSWE neighborhood (e.g., hire planner to draft standards for WSWE neighborhood, seek a seat on the design review board)
- To improve and maintain the seasonal needs of each WS/WE gateway, the members of the NRZ, or a subcommittee thereof, should continue to nurture relationships with local organizations like the West Side Business Association and the local school student population.
- Contact Director of Public Works for information on City Plans for Streetscape Improvements.

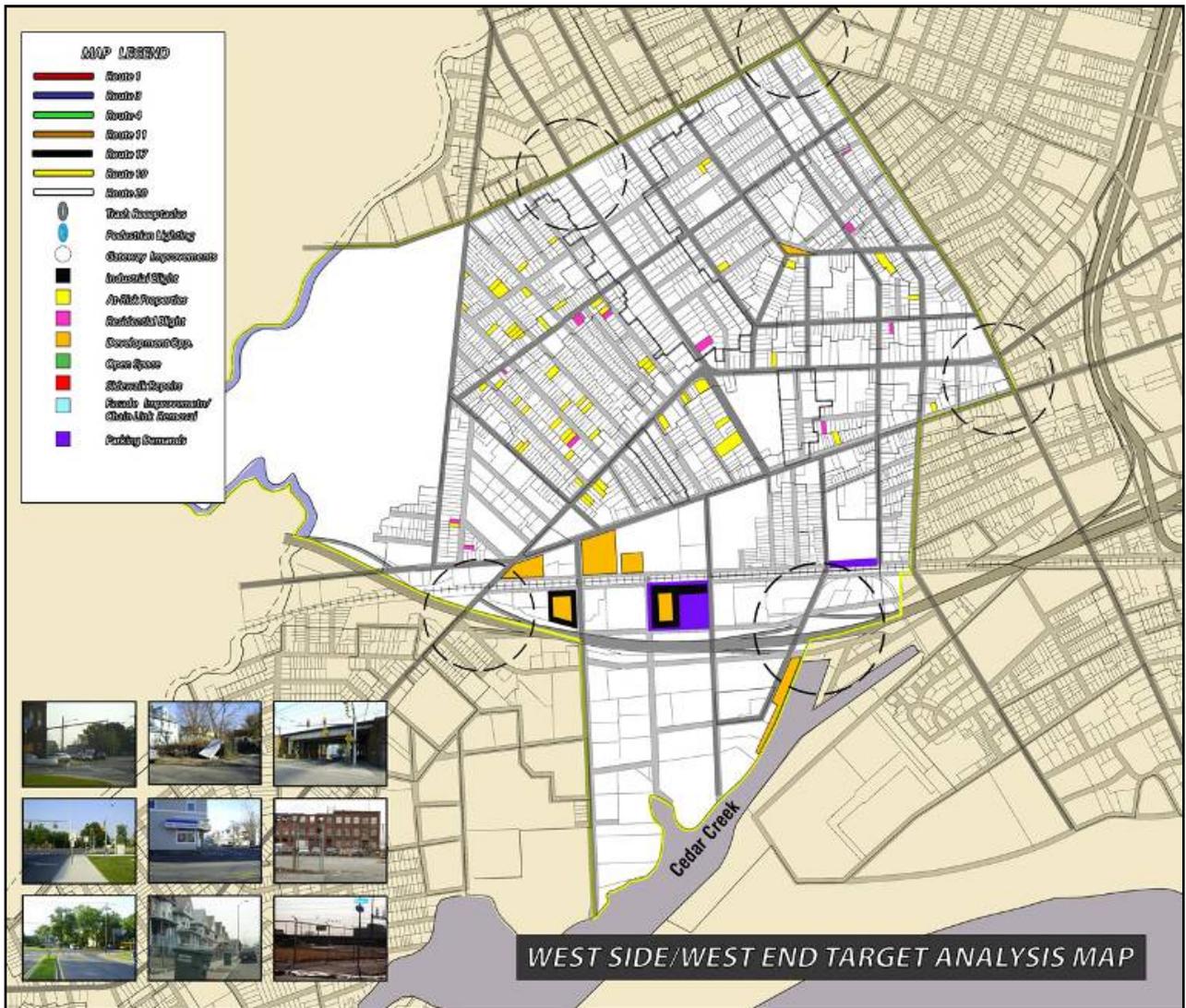
- Other municipal advocates include Tom Coble and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Neighborhood Revitalization).
- To improve and maintain the seasonal needs of each WS/WE gateway, the members of the NRZ, or a subcommittee thereof, should continue to nurture relationships with local organizations like the West Side Business Association and the local school student population.

G19. STRENGTHEN THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S GATEWAYS

There are five main gateways identified in the West Side / West End neighborhood. They are located at the intersection of North Avenue and Park Avenue at the northern point of the neighborhood, at the intersection of Clinton Avenue and North Avenue at the neighborhood's northern border, at and in between the intersection of Park Avenue with Fairfield Avenue and State Street on the eastern side of the neighborhood, at the on-ramp on Fairfield Avenue and off-ramp leading onto Fairfield Avenue (exit 25) for Interstate 95 on the southwest corner of the neighborhood, and at the on- and off-ramps on Wordin Avenue (exit 26) for Interstate 95 in the southeast corner of the neighborhood (please refer to map).

The consultants recommend that the fountains at the eastern point and southwestern point of the neighborhood be reactivated. Further, clear and personalized signage indicating entrance into and exit from the neighborhood be implemented. Finally, landscaping, including shrubbery, trees, and flowers should be planted at all five gateways to create a sense of place and convey pride in the neighborhood.

(See Appendix F)

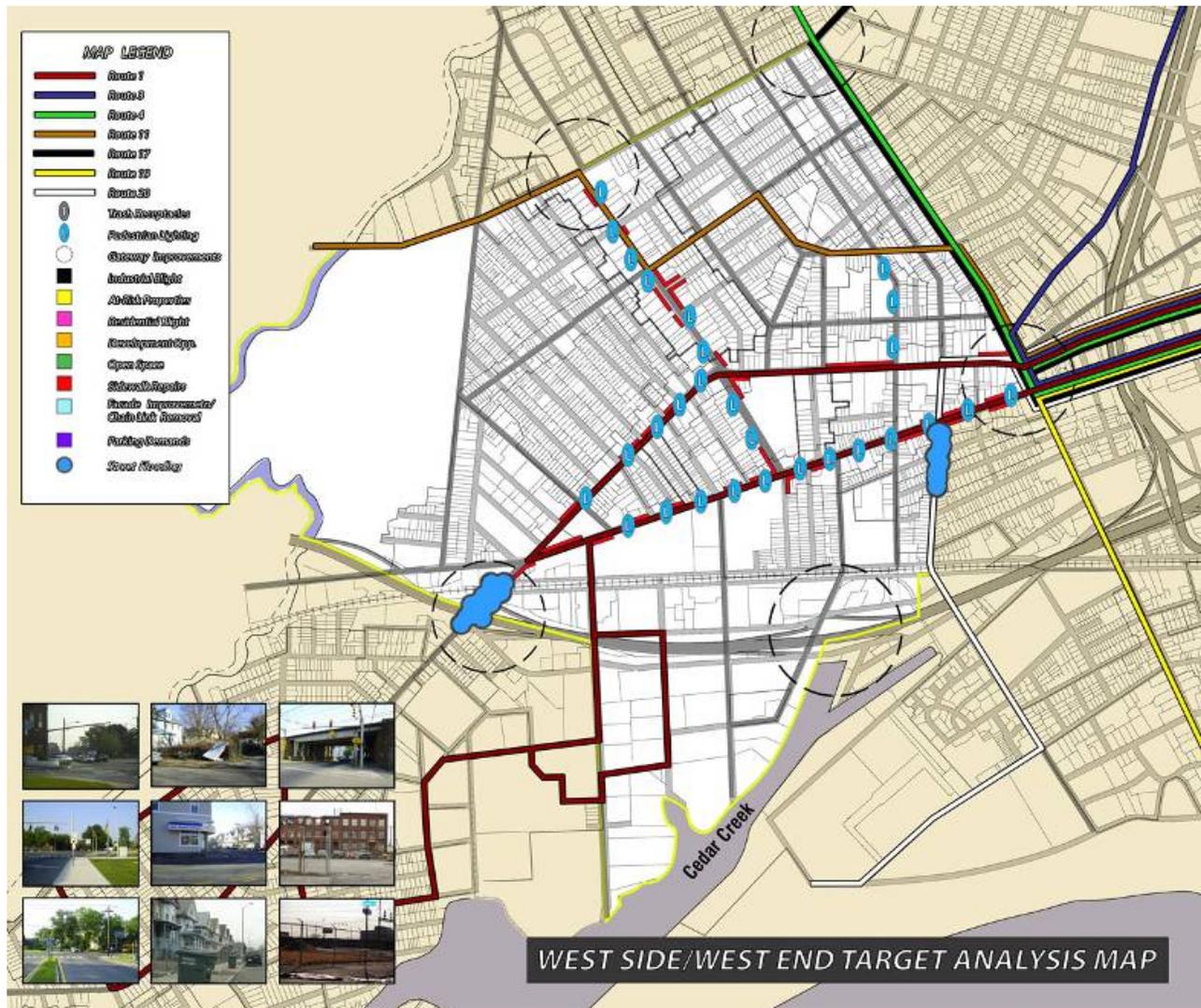


STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- To improve and maintain the seasonal needs of each WS/WE gateway, the members of the NRZ, or a subcommittee thereof, should continue to nurture relationships with local organizations like the West Side Business Association and the local school student population.
- Contact new Director of Public Works (formerly George Estrada) for information on City Plans for gateway revitalization
- Other municipal advocates include Tom Coble and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Neighborhood Revitalization).

G20. IMPLEMENT SPECIFIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Prioritize improvement targets for sidewalks, sewers and lighting (including additional or changes to traffic lights). Support city-wide sewer separation program.



STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact the Director, Department of Engineering for general engineering issues
- Contact Tom Coble (Director of Neighborhood Revitalization/Anti-blight) for updates on signage and street furniture RFP's
- To report faulty street lights, see directions on the City of Bridgeport's website: http://ci.bridgeport.ct.us/newdepartments/public_facilities/streetlight2.aspx for filling out a Trouble Report Form or call (203) 576-7200 or (203) 576-3950

Alternatively, email: santia@ci.bridgeport.ct.us

G21. STANDARDIZE TRASH REMOVAL, BULK TRASH REMOVAL AND RECYCLING

Significant complaints around trash collection and removal exist in the community. They include:

- Inconsistent bulk trash pick up
- Inconsistent recyclable material pick up
- Litter and street trash

To address those concerns, the NRZ should:

- Work with the City to locate trash receptacles throughout the West Side / West End neighborhood, some of which will be maintained by business and property owners
- Support the creation of local litter and trash removal ordinances
- Encourage strict enforcement of litter laws, by the City and by the police department

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact Tom Lattin (Public Facilities Department, 576-7976) and Tom Coble (Deputy Director, Neighborhood Revitalization/Anti-Blight, 576-3931) and schedule a meeting to brief them on the NRZ process, the proposed location of new trash receptacles (mapped in the Plan), and to learn about the trash removal system in the City, including:
 - Trash removal ordinances in the City regarding trash removal / littering fines, etc.
 - Trash removal schedule on different streets in the neighborhood
 - Trash removal frequency
 - Trash removal tools that can be used (e.g., elephant truck)
 - Procedures and schedule for bulk trash removal
 - Other areas in the City which have street receptacles
- Based on this meeting, decide how to proceed (e.g., work with the City on scheduling adjustments, work with business owners on putting out private receptacles)

H22. CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL OR BLOCK WATCH FOR THE WEST SIDE / WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD

- Support an increase of foot/segue patrols in neighborhood
- Establish/find funding for block watches
- Incorporate CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) tools into design standards for new construction

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Determine the blocks most needing community vigilance and advertise the block watch program to the owners or tenants, organizing an initial informational meeting. Multiple block watches will be necessary to canvas the whole neighborhood
- Contact Captain Leonard Samatulski for Block Watch program support information.
- See instructions below for Blockwatch coordination found on the City of Bridgeport's website:

Neighborhood Block Watch

The Neighborhood Block Watch Program is one of the finest programs available with respect to involving citizens in the crime prevention process. By utilizing this program, citizens become the "eyes and ears" of the police department. Citizens become involved by watching their neighborhoods and reporting suspicious activities. Block watches are organized and individualized for various neighborhoods. These watches can be effectively used for apartment buildings, businesses, or single- and multi-family neighborhoods.

To start a Block Watch:

1. Organize a core group of at least five people in your neighborhood. Set up an agenda and an action plan.
2. Write to Lieutenant William Chapman, Community Services Division, BPT Police Department, 1395 Sylvan Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606, stating that you want to start a Block Watch and include the number of people involved and the tentative date and time of your first meeting.
3. Representatives from Community Services will come to your meeting and assist you in formulating your block watch. Community Services will also supply your group with the necessary materials for your use. At this meeting, the representatives will also coordinate a time for a second meeting to finalize your membership in the block watch program.

For more information about the Neighborhood Block Watch Program please call (203) 576-8278, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Other such programs include:

Neighborhood Watch - Citizen Patrols

Citizens involved in the Neighborhood Watch Program take to the streets. Participants of this program walk in groups of three or more people, extending the "eyes and ears" of the block watch. The goal of this component of the Neighborhood Block Watch is to establish a positive "presence" in the neighborhood, thereby reducing the opportunity for criminal activity. The participants of the program are trained to observe the activities and report any suspicious activity to the police department. We do not advocate that the participants of the Citizen Patrols act as police officers.

Neighborhood Reclamation Programs

The Office of Community Services realizes that it is important to try to ensure a better quality of life in our neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by establishing partnerships with neighborhood groups in an attempt to reduce the fear levels of residents. Some of the projects that have been undertaken thus far include boarding up abandoned property which is sometimes used for criminal activity, increasing lighting on streets in an attempt to reduce criminal activity, distributing surveys in the neighborhoods to find out what issues are concerns to the residents, neighborhood clean-ups, landscape designs, researching traffic patterns, neighborhood block watches, graffiti removal, and security surveys. For more information regarding Neighborhood Reclamation Programs, please call 576-8258.

I23. CREATE YOUTH PROGRAMMING

a. COLLEGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN BRIDGEPORT SCHOOLS AND LOCAL COLLEGE VISITS

Although comments throughout this process represented the complexity of the involvement of youth in the community, the majority of business owners in the West Side / West End neighborhood believed that much of the local labor force was not adequately trained to fill their job vacancies. They attributed much of the problem to inadequate student preparation in Bridgeport's schools.

During the second public meeting held in February 2007, a focus group explored youth issues for the West Side / West End neighborhood. One issue that arose was the lack of organized trips for high school students to visit local colleges and universities, as well as HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) around the country. The group's stakeholders felt that this would be an essential program to implement for students wishing to explore higher education options.

b. AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH

The February 2007 youth focus group also indicated that there was a lack of coordination among youth-serving agencies, not only in the West Side / West End neighborhood, but in the whole City of Bridgeport. The recommendation from that group that arose was to convene all youth-serving agencies to coordinate activities that serve youth. A Neighborhood Revitalization Zone calendar of all youth activities could be maintained on the City of Bridgeport’s website, along with a list of youth-serving agencies in each neighborhood and throughout the city. It would be necessary to designate an individual or organization to gather information on upcoming events, distribute that information to other youth-serving agencies for publicity purposes, and have it posted on the NRZ website.

In relation to after-school programming, the group recommended that students be allowed a reduced-fare or free passes to take public transportation when traveling to organized after-school activities. It was recommended that the NRZ Committee work with the City of Bridgeport to explore possible scenarios, looking at programs in other cities for suggestions.

c. INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS IN THE SUMMERTIME

Another issue related to youth as well as the local workforce pertains to job readiness of local students. Although participants noted that the City of Bridgeport has a small summer internship program for Bridgeport students, they recommended that it be expanded significantly to accommodate more students looking for quality summer jobs with local businesses. The group also suggested that business owners in the West Side / West End also make a commitment to employ and mentor youth in the summertime.

d. JOB-READINESS CURRICULUM IN SCHOOLS

Both students and local employers would also benefit from a formalized job-readiness curriculum in the Bridgeport high schools. Some employers complained about the lack of local employees who understood the basic principles of showing up to work on time, dressing appropriately for work, and other basic issues contributing to a person’s reliability and employability. Basic curriculum in schools that could be practiced in summer internship settings would better prepare students for jobs after high school or after pursuing higher education opportunities.

e. SCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

A small group of students from the Curiale School who gave an impassioned presentation at the West Side Design Charrette have already formed to advocate for better conditions and resources at existing schools. Those efforts should be encouraged and supported by the West Side community.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Identify at least two youth to serve on the NRZ Implementation Committee
- Contact representatives from local colleges and schools in the neighborhood, schedule a meeting to brief them on the NRZ process, and ask them about the ways that the NRZ committee can help
- Ask businesses if they have any interest in hiring local interns and in what specialty areas
- Contact local colleges, high school career offices, or teachers/professors in the specific areas to see motivated students that may be seeking internships in these areas
- Existing programs include:

D.A.R.E. Program

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program is taught in all of the elementary schools in the City of Bridgeport. Six police officers assigned to the Community Services Division are responsible for teaching this program. In 1995, the program was extended to the ninth grade in a pilot program at Central High School. For more information regarding the D.A.R.E. Program, please call Officer Ruby Crear at 576-8278.

G.R.E.A.T. Program

The Gang Resistance Education and Training Program is another program that is taught by six officers assigned to the Community Services Division. This is a pilot program which is taught to students at the seventh grade level. For more information regarding the G.R.E.A.T. Program, please call 576-8278.

The Repair Shop Program

The goal of the Repair Shop Program is the restoration of self-esteem, pride and positive attitude to high risk youth. This is accomplished through the use of artwork – showing the important of artwork and its relationship to a better quality of life. This is a highly structured and supervised program, providing a safe environment for high-risk youth. For more information regarding The Repair Shop Program, please call 576-8278.

Alternatively, contact Tammy Papa at the City of Bridgeport - 576-7262.

J24. IMPROVE PARKS AND PARK INFRASTRUCTURE

Plan improvements to parks and open space in the neighborhood, including Beechwood and Laurel parks and Bassick and Curiale schools.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact Bridgeport Parks and Recreation for an update of current municipal plans for the WS/WE.

K25. PROVIDE TRAFFIC LIGHTS OR OTHER TRAFFIC-CALMING DEVICES AT TROUBLE INTERSECTIONS

Investigate further the intersections in which additional traffic lights, traffic signage, or additional action should be taken to mitigate traffic concerns. Attention should be paid in particular to the following intersections that were identified through this process:

- Yale Street and Fairfield Avenue
- Yale Street and State Street
- Park Avenue and Olive Street

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop traffic plan for neighborhood to include calming devices, budget and development proposal.
- The City of Bridgeport's Traffic Division can be reached at 576-7868

XI. Performance and Review Standards

Performance and review standards for the recommendations outlined above should be further finalized by the West Side / West End NRZ group that was created as part of this process. The consultants recommend that the group review goals quarterly, and be updated by the City of Bridgeport on the progress of such goals that being implemented by them (for example, the façade improvement program).

appendices

Appendix A. Bylaws

BYLAWS

WEST SIDE/WEST END NRZ BY-LAWS

Article I

Section 1. Name

The name of the organization shall be the West Side/West End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Committee, hereinafter referred to as West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee.

Section 2. Offices

The principal location of West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee shall be in West Side/West End Neighborhood of Bridgeport, Connecticut. All meetings of the West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee shall take place within the West Side/West End of Bridgeport.

Article II

Section 1. Mission Statement

In accordance to Public ACT 94-240 of the Connecticut General Statutes, an Act to Establish the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, the West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee shall be responsible for formulating an NRZ Strategic Plan. The primary mission of the West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee is to improve and preserve the West Side/West End through the collaborative efforts of the residents and other stakeholders, including but not limited to, representatives of businesses; non-profit organizations; health and other service providers; cultural and religious institutions; and organized community associations. The main goal is to improve the quality of life, and to protect and advance the well being of the community. The objectives are to increase the income levels of residents by advancing economic development and job creation; to improve educational achievements; to increase home ownership and to create decent and affordable housing; and to assist in the creation of services for the youth, the elderly, and other disadvantaged members of the community. This organization shall not be affiliated with any political party, organization or group. Furthermore, the West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee shall not endorse candidates for political offices.

Section 2. Boundaries

The boundary of the West Side/West End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) shall be the existing Neighborhood boundary of West Side/West End Neighborhood, as defined by the City of Bridgeport. The Neighborhood Map of the City is attached at the end as “Appendix A” and constitutes as part of these By-laws.

Article III Membership

Section 1. Eligibility

Eligible members of the West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee include residents, owners of properties located in the neighborhood, individuals and representatives of businesses, cultural, educational, social service agencies, religious and citizen organizations located in the West Side/West End Neighborhood or have a significant impact on the West Side/West End Neighborhood.

Article IV Meetings

Section 1. Notice of Meetings

Written notice of the meetings shall be distributed and received by members at least five days prior to each meeting.

Section 2. Quorum

A majority of Planning Committee Members must be present to constitute a quorum, and at least three of which must be residents.

Section 3. Regular Meetings.

The West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee shall meet at least eight times per year at a location within the neighborhood boundaries and at a time and date agreed upon by the members.

Section 4. Voting

Decision on any question shall be made by a majority vote of those members constituting a quorum. There shall be no voting by proxy. Any member who has a personal, professional, business or other interest in any parcel of property that might be subject to the Strategic Plan shall be required to disclose said interest and shall reclude himself or herself from any vote thereon. All votes shall be recorded by Secretary of the Planning Committee, and together with minutes of meetings, shall be made available to the community-at-large.

Article V The Planning Committee

Section 1. Membership

The Planning Committee shall consist of twenty-one (21) persons. At least fifty-one percent (51%) of the Committee's members must be residents of the West Side/West End neighborhood. In addition, the City may appoint a representative as a voting member to the Planning Committee. The composition of the Planning Committee shall be as follows:

- 11 Residents (P.A. 95-340 requires that majority of Committee members be residents) of which 2 are Youth Resident Representatives (13-18 years old)
- 2 "Small Business" Representatives
- 1 "Large Businesses/Employers" Representatives
- 1 Non-Resident Representatives of Owners of Investment Properties in the West Side/West End (Residential, Commercial or Residential)
- 2 Representatives of Churches and Other Religious Organizations
- 2 Representatives of Community Organizations and Other Non-Profits
- 2 Representatives from the Public Sector, including the City's appointed representative.

For the purpose of this section "small business" is defined as any business operating within the West Side/West End with 10 or fewer employees. "Large Business" is defined as any business operating within the West Side/West End with more than 10 employees. *With regard to resident members, individuals will be required to provide proof of residency within the West Side/West End (e.g., Driver's License, State Identification Card, Utility Bills, etc.).*

Section 2. Elections and Eligibility

Resident Property Owners and Resident Tenants must reside within the West Side/West End. All other members of the West Side/West End Planning Committee may reside outside of the West Side/West End, as long as they represent a business, church or other religious organization, community organization or other non-profit, or public sector entity that is located within the West Side/West End or substantially impacts the West Side/West End community.

Section 3. Election and Representation

Election of representatives to the West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee shall take place once per year. Each constituent group shall determine the method of election, setting forth its procedure in writing and providing a copy of same to the West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee. Elections of members shall take place within One Hundred Twenty (120 days) of the approval by the City of Bridgeport of a resolution designating the West Side/West End community as an NRZ pursuant to state statute.

Section 4. Term of Office

Members of the Planning Committee shall serve for a period of one (1) year, or until such time as an NRZ Strategic Plan has been approved by the City and passed on to an NRZ Implementation Committee, at which time the Planning Committee shall be dissolved, whichever is shorter.

Article VI

Section 1. Motions and Proposals

Proposals may be introduced to the committee by any member, unless the proposal directly affects a property, project or program of a participating group, in which case only the affected party may introduce the proposal. If more than one group has such an interest, any and/or all of them may introduce a measure. A proposition which is re-introduced after being tabled at a previous meeting may be tabled again if six committee members vote to table it again.

Section 2. Amendments

Amendments to the By-laws may be proposed in writing to the Planning Committee if at least three members of the Planning Committee request and amendment to the By-laws. Any amendment shall require a 3/4 vote of all Committee members to take effect.

Article VII

Officers and Committees

Section 1. Name and Number

Since the purpose of the NRZ Planning Committee is to formulate a Strategic Plan for the West Side/West End, the only officers shall be a President, whose responsibility shall be to preside over meetings of the Committee, a Vice-President, who shall act in the President’s place in his or her absence, and a Secretary, who shall be responsible for maintaining records of the Planning Committee, recording minutes and votes, and providing notice of meetings to the Planning Committee and notice of public hearings or forums to the community at large. The offices of President, Vice-President, and Secretary shall be elected for one-year terms by a majority vote of the members of the Planning Committee.

Section 2. Subcommittees

The West Side/West End NRZ Planning Committee shall consist of at least the following Subcommittees, each of which will be assigned tasks and meet according to a schedule determined by the whole: (1) Business and Economic Development; (2) Education; (3) Employment and Training; (4) Health, Safety & Family; (5) Housing; (6) Infrastructure; and (7) Outreach and Communications.

Article VIII Presentation of Plan

In no case shall the NRZ Planning Committee present a plan to the City of Bridgeport without first holding at least one public hearing on same, open to all residents and stakeholders within the West Side/West End community. Notice of said meeting shall be made in writing, and provided not less than two weeks prior.

Upon approval of the NRZ Strategic Plan by the City of Bridgeport, and presentation of same to the State of Connecticut, the NRZ Planning Committee will dissolve. Any assets of the NRZ Planning Committee, including all work product, will be transferred to the NRZ Implementation Committee, a separate 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization, whose mission will be to carry out the particulars of the Strategic Plan.

Appendix B. Sources of Input

This West Side / West End NRZ Strategic Plan is informed by numerous sources of information and input, including:

- 72 Cherry Street Associates
- A to Z Rentals and Sales
- American View Productions
- Anonymous #1
- Anonymous #2
- Aspira of Connecticut, Inc
- Beckson Manufacturing
- Calzone Case
- Captain's Cove Marina
- Community Closet
- Cricket Hosiery, Inc.
- Richard Dudgeon, Inc.
- Enviro Express, Inc.
- Fischel Properties
- Paul H. Gesswein + Co, Inc.
- Identification Products Corporation
- Label Systems, Inc.
- Lindsay Financial & Tri-State Realty
- Markal Finishing Company, Inc.
- Mezes & Sons, Inc.
- Modern Plastics
- O&G Industries, Inc.
- Resco / Wheelabrator
- Royal Flush
- Santa Energy
- Southwest Community Health Center
- State Hardware
- St. John's Episcopal Church

Appendix C. NRZ Planning Committee Members

Residents

Frank Borres
Leticia Colon
Aldora Lindsay
Paul Mendes
Raphael Mojica
Emma Stewart
Cora Thompson
Evelyn Wiggins

Small Business

*Ted Bresky
Rich Carraro
Mike Muthersbaugh

Large Business

Vinny Langone

Non Resident Investor

Bob Weitzel

Churches/Religious Org

Rev Joseph Delahunt
Rev Geoffrey Hahneman

NFP/ Community Org

Greg Dunn
Richard Warren

Public Sector

Bill Coleman
Angie Saltaro

Appendix D. Articles, Communications

ARTICLES, COMMUNICATIONS

- 1) Flyers and Letters to Stakeholders
- 2) Newsletter I
- 3) Newsletter II
- 4) Economic Development Assessment
- 5) Housing Assessment
- 6) Legal Notices

West Side/West End Neighborhood Revitalization Program

Note your preferences as a community member and drop this card in the mail. Postage is paid.
Por favor marca sus preferencias y echa la forma al correo. El franqueo esta pagado.

Name (Nombre) _____
 Street & Apt. # (Calle y Apt #): _____
 City & Zip (Ciudad y ZIP): _____
 Email Address: _____

- Please inform me of upcoming neighborhood planning events and workshops.
Informame por favor de reuniones de planear.
- Please send me newsletters that report community proposals and progress.
Mándame, por favor hojas informativas que dicen del progreso y algunas propuestas.
- Please inform me of volunteer opportunities for community leaders.
Informame por favor de oportunidades de voluntario para líderes de la comunidad o personas interesadas.

Neighborhood Revitalization Committee
 c/o Zared Enterprises
 233 Blatchley Avenue
 New Haven, CT 06513-3710



West Side/West End Neighborhood Revitalization Program

Join Your Community Today.
 Make A Difference For Tomorrow.

The West Side/West End NRZ Invites YOU
 To Participate In
 Our Neighborhood Planning Process:

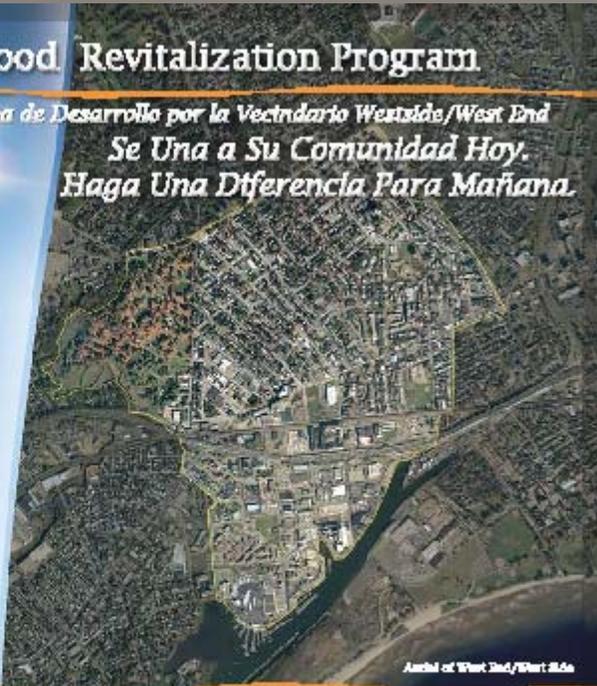
- Help us identify and solve neighborhood problems.
- Come learn about Bridgeport's NRZ process.
- Participate in informational workshops and small business opportunities.

*Nosotros del West Side/West End NRZ le invitamos a
 Participar En Un Proceso de la
 Planificación de Nuestro Vecindario:*

- Nos ayude identificar y resolver los problemas de nuestro vecindario.
- Viene para aprender acerca del proceso de los NRZ's en Bridgeport.
- Participe en las oportunidades de compartir información del proceso y especialmente oportunidades por empresas pequeñas.

Programa de Desarrollo por la Vecindario Westside/West End

*Se Una a Su Comunidad Hoy.
 Haga Una Diferencia Para Mañana.*



Aerial of West End/West Side





233 Blatchley Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513 (203) 773-0747

2 January 2007

Re: West Side / West End *Neighborhood Revitalization Zone*

To Whom It May Concern,

The West Side and West End neighborhoods have begun the planning process to become a registered Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ). This status will entitle the collective of these neighborhoods to receive Federal and State assistance. The planning process will also result in a chartered organization, created to act as the neighborhood's advocate and to implement the goals and projects that result from our immediate planning process.

We at Zared Enterprises, LLC and the Capstan Group are the professional planning and development consultants selected by the West Side / West End NRZ Selection Committee in November, 2006. Our work toward the West Side / West End NRZ Proposal is paid for by the City of Bridgeport and the not-for-profit Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF).

We have contacted you and your organization hoping to reach as many active and concerned community members as we possibly can. Everyone is invited to participate in the NRZ's UPCOMING COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS. During these workshops we plan to gather the input of the community members, as well as inform the larger community of the important details and scope of the West Side / West End NRZ planning process. Further information regarding these workshops can be found on the enclosed postcards.

Please distribute these informational postcards as you see fit and encourage members of your community to fill out the back of the card (return postage has been paid). Please note that any personal information will be used only for the NRZ planning process and will not be sold.

Now is the time to encourage members of your community to empower themselves and to contribute to the future of the West Side and West End Neighborhoods.

Feel free to contact me through my office at Zared Enterprises with any questions you may have. Thank you in advance for your attention to this time-sensitive process.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Applebee
Planning Consultant

(Enclosure)

Dear _____

RE: West Side / West End NRZ Planning Workshop
January 13_ 9am to 12:00pm _ St. John's Episcopal Church

The West Side / West End NRZ wishes to extend to you a personal invitation to attend the first of three planning workshops designed to produce a strategic plan for the neighborhood. West End/West Side NRZ is the latest neighborhood NRZ to be formed in the city that now includes the Hollow, East End and East Side.

This first workshop will focus on a presentation by Zared Enterprises, the planning consultants for the NRZ, on an assessment of existing conditions & issues followed by a facilitated forum to solicit feedback from attendees on priorities and needs in the neighborhood.

The workshop is scheduled for January 13 (Saturday) 9:00am to 12:00pm at St. John's Episcopal Church at 768 Fairfield Avenue (corner of Park and Fairfield). Refreshments and food will be provided.

Community Economic Development Fund is overseeing the management of the NRZ process in West Side / West End. If you have any questions about the workshop or the NRZ plan, please feel free to call their on-site manager Tom Corso, 203-372-1200 ext 303.

Also if you cannot attend (or even if you can) please visit West Side / West End NRZ's web page designed by Zared: www.westsidewestendnrz.org. This web page is a work in process that will fill out as the planning process proceeds.



233 Blatchley Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513 (203) 773-0747

27 January 2007

Re: West Side/West End Community Workshops

Dear West Side/West End Stakeholder:

Zared Enterprises and the Capstan Group held **WORKSHOP #1** of the West Side/West End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone planning process on Saturday, January 13, 2007. There were a number of energetic attendees, including the Honorable Mayor of Bridgeport, John Fabrizi. The collective generated three immediate action items for the West Side/West End community which are outlined below. Morale was high and many were enthusiastic about identifying these attainable, short-term community projects:

- **Street Fountain Renovations and Neighborhood Signage**
- **New Community Trash Receptacles**
- **Community Garden / Spring Clean-Up**

These and other topics including; **Youth Programs, Land Use and Historic Preservation, Façade Improvements and Property Development**, will serve as points of discussion for focus groups at our next Community Workshop (see details below).

All action items and focus points were the culmination of a planning discussion that Zared Enterprises and the Capstan Group began with slide presentations, providing the attendees an overview of the current neighborhood conditions. Details of their Planning and Economic Development presentations can be found online soon at www.westsidewestendnrz.org and will be included in an upcoming newsletter to the WS/WE community. Their presentations described extant commercial activity and opportunity, infrastructural concerns, transportation needs, public open space and verdant corridors, land-use constraints and opportunities and the identification of blighted or at-risk properties, among other neighborhood issues.

Attendees also enjoyed the three raffle drawings which provided a fun break from the planning activities. The first raffle winner received a **gift certificate to Walgreen's**, the second won a **gift certificate to Chaves' Bakery**, and the final winner went home with a **KODAK digital camera!**

Your next opportunity to participate is just a couple weeks away! **Workshop #2** will be held again in the community room of **St. John's Episcopal Church at 768 Fairfield Avenue** at the corner of Park Avenue on **Saturday, February 10th, from 9AM -12 Noon**. We hope you will attend some part if not the whole morning. Just think, you could be our next raffle winner – and an asset to your community in the process!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 10th, 9AM-12 Noon. Children are welcome! See you there!

Warmest Regards,

Regina Winters
Principal
Zared Enterprises

Zared Architecture & The Capstan Group

RADIO CUMBRE PSA BLURB

The West Side and West End neighborhoods have begun the planning process to become a registered Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ). As an NRZ, West Side / West End will be eligible for state programs designed to address blight and re-investment in the community. The planning process will also result in a chartered organization, created to act as the neighborhood's advocate and to implement the goals and projects that result from our immediate planning process.

We at Zared Enterprises, LLC and the Capstan Group are the professional planning and development consultants selected by the West Side / West End NRZ Selection Committee in November, 2006. Our work toward the West Side / West End NRZ Proposal is paid for by the City of Bridgeport and the not-for-profit Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF).

(Translated on the air by Yolanda Worrell)

West Side/West End Neighborhood Newsletter

a publication of the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Committee

RESIDENT MEETINGS/ REUNIONES DE LOS RESIDENTES

Public Input Workshop #1 Saturday, January 13, 2007 St. John's Episcopal Church



The first Public Input Workshop took place at St. John's Episcopal Church on Fairfield Avenue. This workshop was a forum for West Side/West End residents and Stakeholders, City Staff and elected officials to gather along with NRZ planning consultants for the first of a series of meetings scheduled to occur during the planning process.

WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS

Regina Winters of Zared Enterprises began the meeting by introducing herself and Economic Development Consultant, Elizabeth Grossman of The Capstan Group, the primary presenters for the morning. Ms. Winters went on to explain what NRZ status means, what process a community undertakes to achieve NRZ status, and noted that the result of this and the remainder of the planning sessions are to develop a viable application to the State of Connecticut for Neighborhood Revitalization Zone status.

Público Input Workshop # 1 Saturday, January 13, 2007 St. John's Episcopal Church

Los residentes de West Side/West End e Interesados, Trabajadores del Municipio y oficiales elegidos se congregaron junto con NRZ planeando a asesores para la primera parte de una serie de reuniones programadas a ocurrir durante el proceso planificador. La reunión fue mantenida en el salon de camaradería de La Iglesia Episcopal de San Juan en Fairfield Avenue.

LA BIENVENIDA Y LAS INTRODUCCIONES

Regina Winters de Zared Enterprises empezó la reunión presentándose y presentando a Economic Development Consultant, Elizabeth Grossman de Capstan Group, las principales presentadoras de la mañana. La Señorita Winters procedió a explicar qué quiere decir NRZ status, qué proceso una comunidad debe seguir para lograr un NRZ status, y tomar en cuenta que el resultado de esto y del resto de las sesiones planificadoras son para desarrollar una aplicación viable para el Estado de Connecticut por Neighborhood Revitalization Zone status.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RAFFLE WINNERS!

¡FELICITACIONES PARA LOS GANADORES DE LA RIFA DEL DÍA!

ANGIE STALTARO. PAUL MENDES,
and MICHAEL BROWN

coming up...

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2007 at St. John's

La SIGUIENTE REUNIÓN:

La siguiente reunión está programada para el Sábado, 10 de febrero del 2007 en St. John



233 Blatchley Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513 (203) 773-0747

8 March 2007

Re: *West Side/West End Housing Workshop*

Dear West Side/West End Stakeholder:

Zared Enterprises and the Capstan Group held **WORKSHOP #2** of the West Side/West End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone planning process on Saturday, February 10, 2007. There were as many as 40 attendees this time! The larger group was divided into four smaller focus groups with very cool titles!

- **IN THE ZONE** – Discussed issues of zoning and land use compliance and historic preservation
- **DRESS FOR SUCCESS** – Standards for commercial and residential façade improvements were the main topic for this focus group
- **WHERE THE SIDEWALK BEGINS** – Discussed signage and streetscape improvements
- **THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS** – This group discussed the challenges faced by our youth and how they might be addressed by employment and enrichment programs

Attendance and participation was better than ever. We have a commitment from the City of Bridgeport and the Honorable Mayor John Fabrizi for trash receptacles that we hope will be adopted by local businesses. We also have a commitment for signage at key locations in the neighborhood. These and other topics including **Youth Programs, Land Use and Historic Preservation, Façade Improvements and Property Development**, will serve as points of discussion for focus groups at our next Community Workshop (see details below).

Attendees also enjoyed the three raffle drawings which provided a fun break from the planning activities. The first raffle winner received a **gift certificate to Dunkin' Donuts**, the second won **tickets to any given performance at the Klein Memorial Auditorium**, and the final winner went home with a **gift card worth \$300 from Southwest Airlines!**

Next on the schedule are two community Focus Sessions:

<p>Economic Development Workshop <i>(For business owners)</i></p> <p>Location: <i>AKDO Showroom (1435 State Street)</i></p> <p>Date: <i>Thursday, March 22</i></p> <p>Time: <i>5:00PM refreshments, 5:30 Workshop</i></p>	<p>Housing Workshop <i>(For neighborhood residents)</i></p> <p>Location: <i>Family Services Woodfield (475 Clinton Ave)</i></p> <p>Date: <i>Monday, March 26</i></p> <p>Time: <i>6:00 to 8:00 PM</i></p>
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Please come out and share your needs as a business owner on March 22nd, and your thoughts on the availability and quality of housing in your neighborhood on March 26th. At the Housing Workshop, learn about home-buying and home maintenance programs that you might be eligible to receive and enjoy.

Meanwhile visit us at www.westsidewestendnrz.org!

Regards,

Tim Applebee
Zared Enterprises

Zared Architecture & The Capstan Group



233 Blatchley Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513 (203) 773-0747

22 May 2007

Re: *West Side/West End Community Charrette*

Dear West Side/West End Stakeholder:

Let me take this moment to thank every one of you who has contributed in any way to the West Side NRZ planning process. It has truly been an exciting and insightful experience thanks to all of your input and support. I believe we, the consultants, are going to have some valuable and concrete recommendations for the long-term growth and development of this wonderful community. And now (drum roll...)

WE ARE IN THE HOME STRETCH!!!

Your **final** opportunity to influence the outcome of the draft plan will be at an upcoming **Design Charrette**.

Zared Enterprises and the Capstan Group will hold a two-day charrette covering four topics which have surfaced time and again as we've interviewed and surveyed you the stakeholders and researched best practices and market trends. Thus we'll cover the following topics in this two-session charrette:

- 1) Gateway Development
- 2) Zoning and Land Use Boundaries
- 3) Commercial Façade Improvement, and
- 4) Streetscape and Infrastructure Development

**Cesar Batalla Elementary School
606 Howard Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06605**

**Friday, June 8, 2007, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm
and
Saturday, June 9, 2007, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm**

**REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED
CHILDREN ARE WELCOME**

We are very excited to get some ideas on paper that will be included in the final plan, so come prepared to **THINK BIG!**

Continue to visit us at www.westsidewestendnrz.org for updates and information on the process to date!

Warmest regards,

Regina Winters, AIA, NCARB

West Side/West End Neighborhood Newsletter

a publication of the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Committee

Focus Groups Plan for Action

Regina Winters of Zared Enterprises and Lisa Grossman of The Capstan Group conducted the second of four community workshops in preparation for the West Side/West End NRZ application. Raegan LaRochelle and Tim Applebee assisted Regina and Lisa, all together leading four different focus groups. The themes of these four groups were determined by attendees of the first community workshop in January 2007.



The Young and the Restless:

Raegan lead the group that discussed youth issues of the neighborhood. They recognized that productive youth participation stemmed from a neighborhood that productively involves itself with its students. Students and youth must be made aware of opportunities and empowered to use them.

Where the Sidewalk Begins:

Tim lead the group concerned with the open space, signage, and streetscape of the neighborhood. This group discussed pervasive littering and positive streetscaping strategies like signage and trash receptacles.

Dress for Success:

Lisa focused on the façade improvement possibilities open to the community. They discussed and identified essential attributes of a façade improvement program proposed for this community.

In the Zone:

Regina lead the group whose focus was zoning and land-use issues facing the West Side/West End community. The issues discussed included blight enforcement, parking needs, and the community-wide education of zoning compliance issues.

Resumen del Grupo de Enfoque

Regina Winters de Zared Enterprises y Lisa Grossman de The Capstan Group dirigieron el segundo de cuatro talleres comunales en preparación para la aplicación West Side/West End NRZ. Raegan LaRochelle y Tim Applebee ayudaron a Regina y Lisa, todos conjuntamente dirigieron cuatro diferentes grupos de enfoque. Los temas de estos cuatro grupos fueron determinados por asistentes del primer taller comunal en Enero del 2007.



Los Jóvenes y Los Inquietos

Raegan encabeza el grupo que discutió asuntos juveniles del vecindario. Reconocieron que la participación productiva del joven se apoya de un vecindario que productivamente se involucra con sus estudiantes. Los estudiantes y los jóvenes deben ser informados de oportunidades e incentivarlos a usar esas oportunidades.

Donde la Vereda Comienza

Tim guía el grupo preocupado con el espacio abierto, la señalización propagandística, y del embellecimiento del vecindario. Este grupo discutió la basura y las estrategias positivas del embellecimiento de las calles como la señalización propagandística y contenedores de basura.

vestna para el éxito

Lisa se enfocó en las posibilidades de mejoramiento de la fachada abiertas para la comunidad. Ellos discutieron e identificaron los atributos esenciales de un programa de mejora de la fachada propuesta para esta comunidad.

En la Zona

Regina guía el grupo cuyo enfoque fue zonificación y los problemas del uso del terreno que enfrenta la comunidad de West Side/West End. Los asuntos discutidos incluyeron ejecución de daños grandes, necesidad de estacionamiento, y una amplia educación en la comunidad acerca del cumplimiento de asuntos conforme a la zonificación.

Public Notices

Public Hearing

The West Side NRZ is holding a public hearing on September 20, 2007, 6:30 p.m. at Cesar A. Batalla Elementary School, 606 Howard Avenue, Bpt., CT. The purpose is to review the West Side Draft NRZ Plan. The Plan may be reviewed at the Bridgeport City Clerk's Office, Room 204, 45 Lyon Terrace; the Bridgeport Public Library, 925 Broad Street; or Center for Women and Families, 753 Fairfield Avenue, Bpt., CT.

MONROE

Public Notices

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The West Side NRZ is holding a public hearing on September 20, 2007, 6:30 p.m. at Cesar A. Batalla Elementary School, 606 Howard Avenue, Bpt., CT. The purpose is to review the West Side Draft NRZ Plan. The Plan may be reviewed at the Bridgeport City Clerk's Office, Room 204, 45 Lyon Terrace; the Bridgeport Public Library, 925 Broad Street; or Center for Women and Families, 753 Fairfield Avenue, Bpt., CT.

Legal Notice

West End - West Side NRZ Bylaws

Pursuant to requirements set forth in CT Public Act 95-340, An Act establishing a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Process, this legal notice is hereby given that NRZ Bylaws have been amended for the West End - West Side NRZ that includes the change in requirements for a quorum.

A copy of the West End-West Side NRZ Bylaws can be obtained on West End-West Side NRZ web site
www.westsidewestendnrz.org
or by written request to:

Greg Dunn
Recording Secretary
c/o Mutual Housing Assoc.
434 Maplewood Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Public Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

WEST END - WEST SIDE NRZ ByLaws

Pursuant to requirements set forth in CT Public Act 95-340, An Act establishing a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Process, this legal notice is hereby given that NRZ ByLaws have been adopted for the West End - West Side NRZ that includes the formation of a planning committee charged with reviewing and approving a strategic plan for the neighborhood.

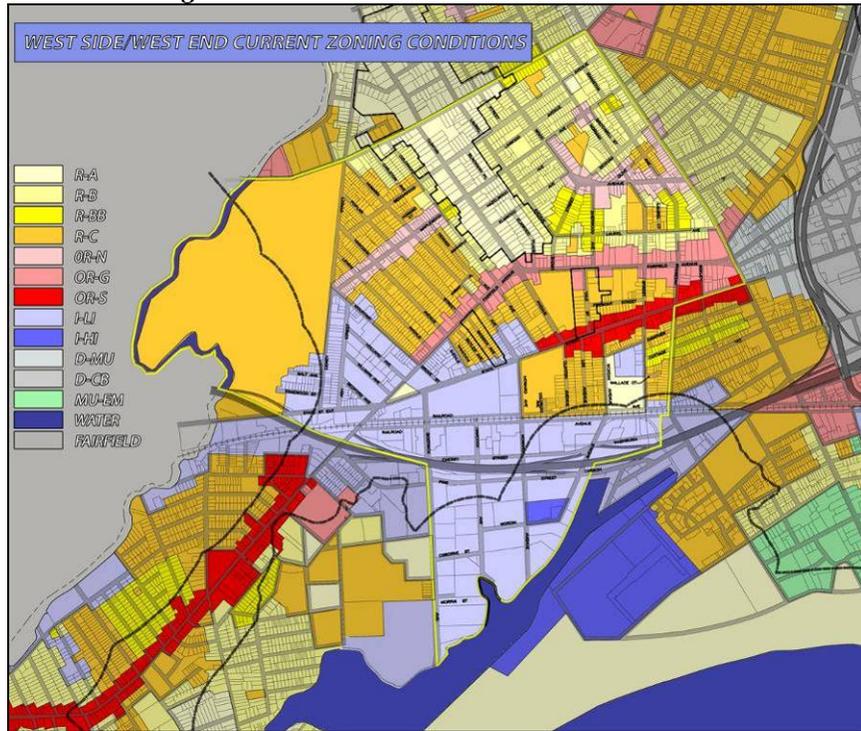
A copy of the West End-West Side NRZ ByLaws can be obtained on West End-West Side NRZ website www.westsidewestendnrz.org, or by written request to Community Economic Development Fund project manager:

Tom Corso
AMS Consulting, LLC
350 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

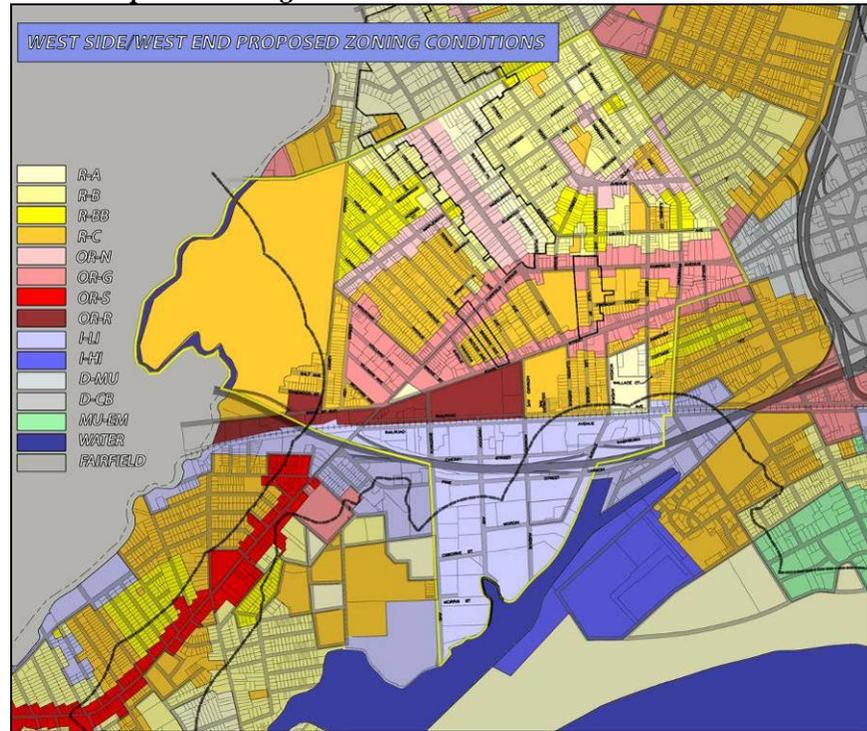
Appendix E. Maps

Current and proposed zoning maps for the West Side / West End neighborhood

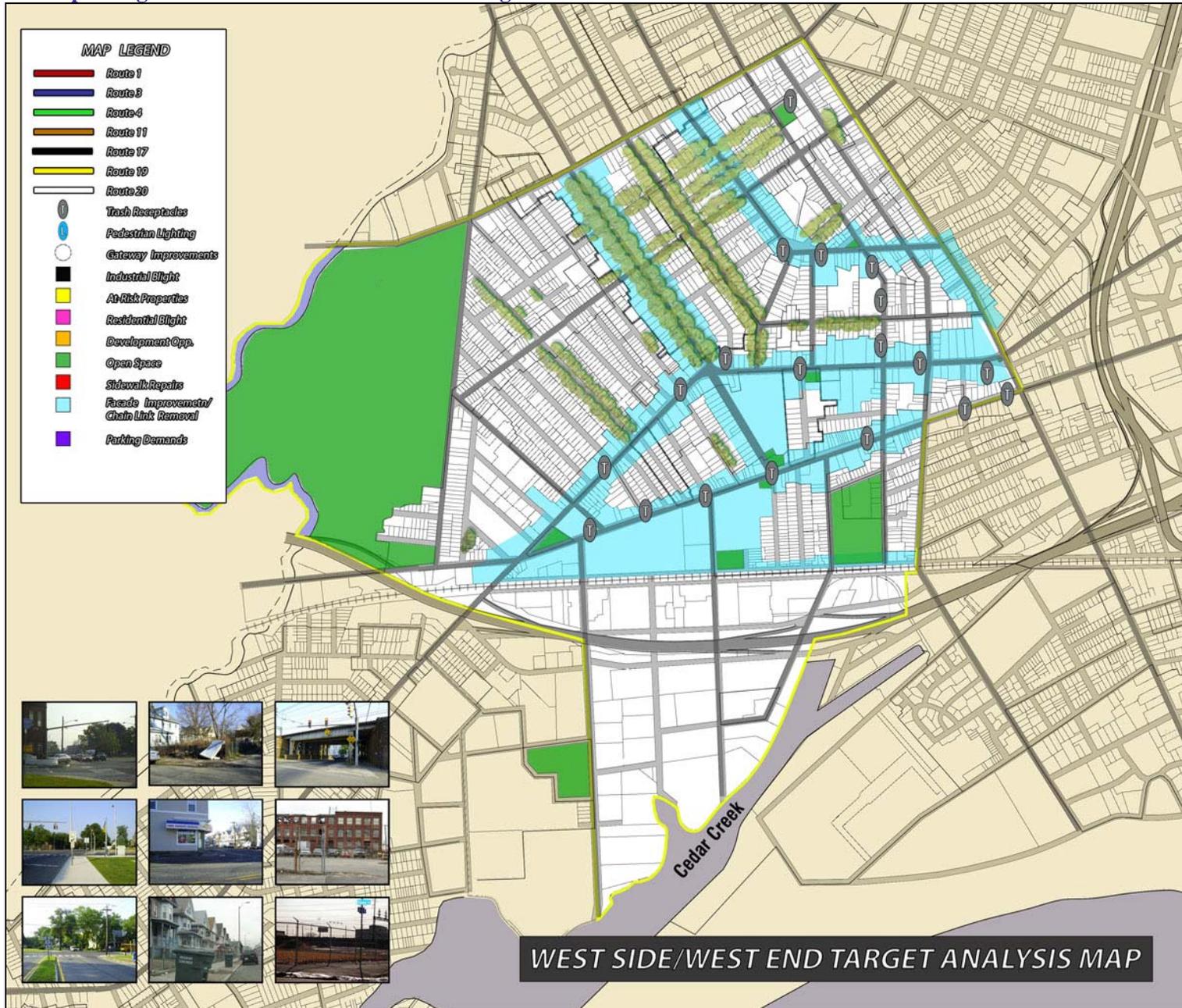
Current Zoning:



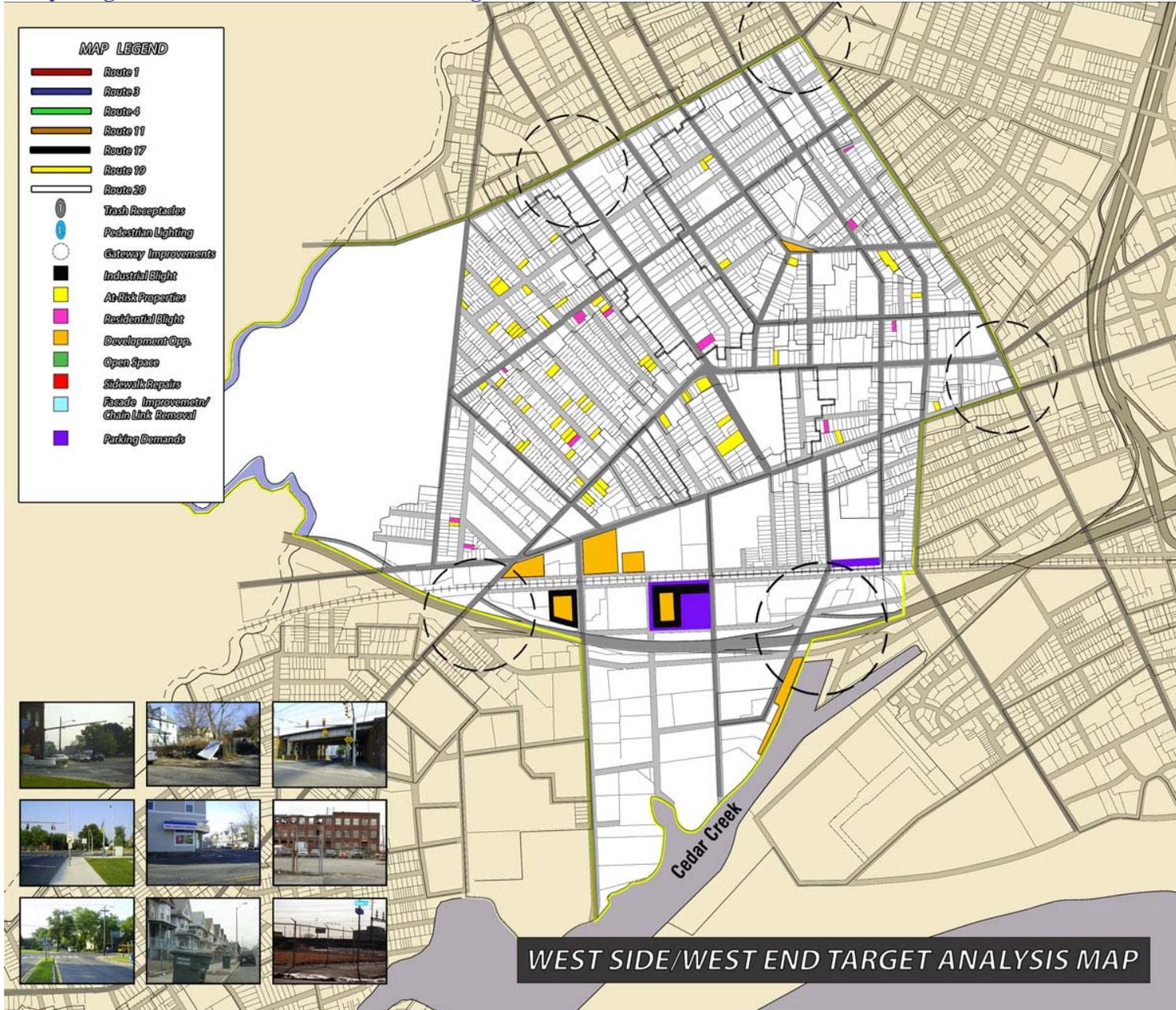
Proposed Zoning:



Proposed Streetscape Targets for the West Side / West End Neighborhood



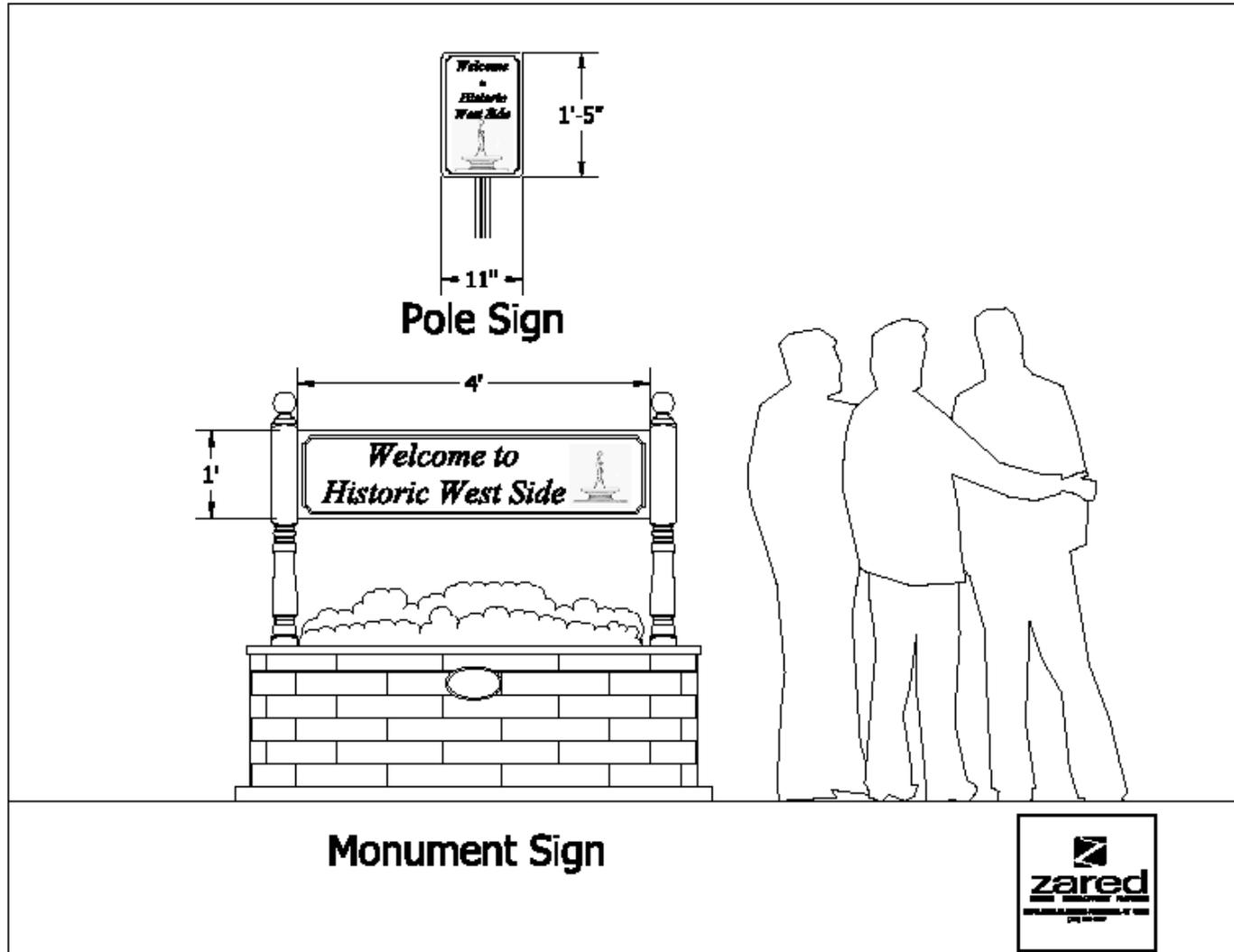
Proposed Gateway Targets for the West Side / West End Neighborhood



Proposed Infrastructure Targets for the West Side / West End Neighborhood



Appendix F. Proposed Gateway and Neighborhood Signage



Appendix G: economic market analysis

West Side / West End Neighborhood
Bridgeport, Connecticut

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I. Context for the Economic Market Study

DEFINITION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The West End/West Side neighborhood is one of two communities located on the lower west side of the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut. The West Side / West End neighborhood includes a municipal development area, four historic districts, longtime commercial and residential owners and renters and the cultural and ethnic diversity that has become representative of the City of Bridgeport. The West Side / West End neighborhood comprises, in whole or in part, five U.S. Census Tracts : 703, 709, 710, 711 and 712. The neighborhood is bounded by Bostwick Avenue and Mt. Grove Cemetery on the west, Cedar Creek on the south, Iranistan Avenue and Park Avenue on the east, and North Avenue on the north.

NRZ PLANNING PROCESS

While previous attempts had been made, in 2006, the West Side / West End neighborhood engaged in a formal neighborhood planning process to seek designation as a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. This process contains several steps, including:

- **Assembling the community and the planners.** During this stage, the community leaders, associations, property owners, businesses, agencies, organizations, and residents all come together to start to work on the planning process. With the help of planning consultants, these communities start to identify the highest priority development needs in their neighborhood and identify the projects that will revitalize their local neighborhoods. In this neighborhood, the West Side / West End stakeholders have been assembled and meet regularly.
- **Learning about the needs and priorities of the community and seeking input.** The planners and the stakeholders work together to create venues for public input and gather data and information to inform the highest priority projects that will be included in the plan. Input is sought through workshops, surveys, interviews, informal conversations, and data analysis.
- **Developing and refining recommendations.** After data has been collected and input has been incorporated, the planning consultants develop a draft set of recommendations which is then refined by the community stakeholders.
- **Drafting the NRZ Plan.** After agreement is reached on the recommendations, the NRZ plan is drafted, reviewed, refined, and submitted to the State.
- **Implementing the projects identified in the plan.** Many of the projects can be immediately implemented, and others may be eligible for assistance (e.g., technical support).

PURPOSE OF THE ECONOMIC MARKET STUDY

This Economic Market Study is one piece of this planning process that informs what generates value in the neighborhood and what economic and market considerations need to be taken into account when developing the final recommendations in the NRZ Plan. Specifically, the purpose of the market study is to: (a) create an economic and market assessment of the market conditions in the community; (b) identify the highest priority economic issues in the community; and (c) develop a preliminary set of findings and associated recommendations to address these issues. The NRZ Plan will contain more in-depth recommendations for economic development and specific projects and implementation guidance.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND INPUT

The Economic Market Study is informed by numerous sources of information and input, including:

- Data collection on demographics, crime, zoning and land use, housing stock, historic districts, coastal management areas, traffic conditions, proposed public improvements, proposed new developments, real and personal property tax, property identifications
- Input provided during the West Side / West End Stakeholders Meetings
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, January 13, 2007
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, February 10, 2007

- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Thursday, March 22, 2007
- Input provided through business survey responses
- Input provided through interviews with business owners

Input From:		
72 Cherry Street Associates	Cricket Hosiery, Inc.	Markal Finishing Company, Inc.
American View Productions	Richard Dudgeon, Inc.	Mezes & Sons, Inc.
Anonymous #1	Enviro Express, Inc.	Modern Plastics
Anonymous #2	Fischel Properties	Santa Energy
Aspira of Connecticut, Inc	Paul H. Gesswein + Co, Inc.	Southwest Community Health Center
Beckson Manufacturing	Identification Products Corporation	State Hardware
Calzone Case	Label Systems, Inc.	St. John's Episcopal Church
Community Closet	Lindsay Financial & Tri-State Realty	

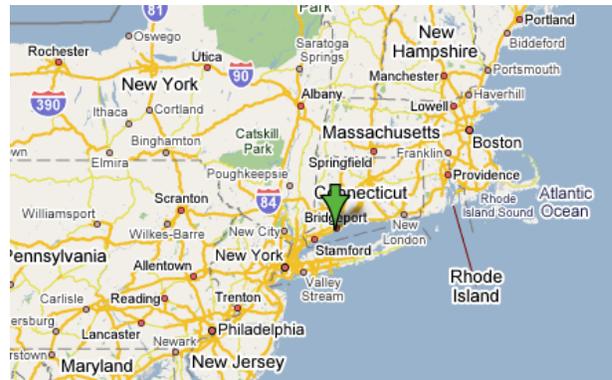
LIMITATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are based on our analysis of the information available to us, with special appreciation for the assistance of the City of Bridgeport and the West End Business Association. We assume that the information is correct, complete, and reliable. To the best of our ability, we analyzed trends and the information available to us in drawing conclusions and making the appropriate recommendations. Our analysis does not take into account the potential impact of major economic shocks on the national, regional, or local economies, nor does it take into account any generally unforeseen conditions. We strongly recommend that any actions taken in response to this report are carefully considered and analyzed on their own merits based on the specific circumstance at the time of implementation.

II. Market Analysis: Regional Considerations

WHY CONSIDER THE REGION

Economic markets are fluid, and their boundaries rarely directly coincide with political boundaries, such as city or state lines. Smaller economic markets often are directly affected by the larger economic markets in which they operate. For example, the United States' economic market would be directly affected by a stock market crash in Asia, by a labor shortage in Europe, or by a major increase in inflation in Latin America. Similarly, it would be remiss to recognize that the West Side / West End neighborhood is directly affected by the economic markets and major trends in its larger region. It is especially important to identify the major changes in the regional market because it informs to what extent a particular issue is unique to the neighborhood (and therefore may be resolved directly within the neighborhood) and to what extent the issue is much larger, and may require a solution that reaches much further.



THE REGION

For the West Side / West End neighborhood in Bridgeport, Connecticut, regional issues for consideration are those that affect not only the neighborhood and the city, but also affect Connecticut and the greater New England region.

MAJOR REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The major regional considerations for this neighborhood include the following:

- **Connecticut's "Cautiously Optimistic" Economic Market.** The Connecticut Department of Labor announced that it believes in a "cautiously optimistic" economic forecast for Connecticut in its April 2007 *Connecticut Economic Digest*. As examples of generally positive indicators, the unemployment rate is 4.2%, personal income is anticipated to rise 4.7% for the past year, net business formation has increased over the past year, signifying a net increase in the number of businesses registered with the Secretary of State,, Connecticut's labor force increased by 1.2% over the past year, and unemployment rates decreased by 0.2¹⁴
- **Increasing Disparity in Income Gap.** The New England region has experienced the largest increase in the income gap in the country between 1989 and 2004, as reported by the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire. The Institute reported that this difference is caused particularly by the loss of manufacturing employment for low-skilled workers, a greater demand for high-skilled and high-tech employment, and the push of low-skilled jobs elsewhere where the cost of business is lower. Connecticut was among the top five states in the nation to experience this increase in income disparity, and Bridgeport is one of the 20 metropolitan areas with the highest income disparity in the nation. Suggested solutions to close this widening gap are upgrading education for all residents, increasing the opportunity for people to receive technological training, and ensuring economic opportunities with retraining to help those displaced.¹⁵
- **Utility Costs.** Businesses throughout Connecticut feel the impacts of high utility bills, and overhead costs have been cited as one of the

"CL&P and taxes. That's what chips away at our businesses."
--West End Business Owner

¹⁴ <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/misc/cedapr07.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://hr.blr.com/news.aspx?id=75692&source=RSA&effort=4>

major issues for several West Side / West End business owners. During interviews with business owners, one interviewee said “CL&P and taxes. That’s what chips away at our businesses.” Another said, “My major costs of doing business are UI and taxes.” When compared to other states, Connecticut is ranked 47th in its retail price of electricity out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to the United States’ Government Energy Information Administration, and 48th in the nation according to the 2006 Small Business Survival Index.

- Competing in a Global Marketplace.** Companies in the West Side / West End speak openly about the challenges associated with competing in the global marketplace, particularly with the high costs of business in Connecticut and the Northeast. As an indication of this challenge, it is important to note that several major businesses have moved their operations from Connecticut in recent years, citing the high cost of doing business in this state. For example, Bayer moved from West Haven to New Jersey. International Paper moved from Stamford to Memphis, Tennessee. Meadwestvaco Corporation moved from Stamford to Glen Allen, Virginia. Stop ‘n Shop Distribution Center moved from North Haven to Freetown, Massachusetts. Unilever moved from Trumbull, Connecticut to New Jersey. On another level altogether, small businesses may be closing their doors or relocating out of state as well, since according to the 2006 Small Business Survival Index, Connecticut is ranked 45th in the nation for its for state and local property taxes, 47th in the nation for the number of health insurance mandates required for employees, 48th in electric utility costs, and is ranked at the very bottom (51st) for its state gas tax.

Connecticut Rankings in 2006 Small Business Survival Index		
Issue	Rank	Actual / Range from other states
Capital gains tax rates	22	5.000 (lowest: 0.000, highest: 10.300)
Corporate income tax rates	30	7.500 (lowest: 0.000, highest: 9.990)
State and local property taxes	45	4.29 (lowest: 1.33, highest: 5.31)
Number of health insurance mandates	47	2.50 (lowest: 0.65, highest: 3.10)
Electric utility costs (State average revenue per KWH for electric utilities relative to US average)	48	1.67 (lowest: 0.59, highest: 2.42)
Workers’ compensation benefits per \$100 of covered wages	14	0.83 (lowest: 0.36, highest: 3.76)
Crime Rate	12	2.91 (lowest: 2.00, highest: 6.23)
Number of bureaucrats (full-time-equivalent state and local government employees per 100 residents)	15	5.28 (lowest: 4.16, highest: 8.59)
State gas taxes	51	0.450 (lowest: 0.080, highest: 0.450)

Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council’s Small Business Survival Index 2006, http://www.sbecouncil.org/Media/pdf/SBSI_2006.pdf

III. Market Analysis: Local Considerations

The local market analysis is broken into several sections, all of which generate a composite picture upon which to base the recommendations. The sections are: (a) local demographics; (b) local economic indicators; (c) land use;

A. Local Demographic Indicators

Population Size and Density Bridgeport is denser than Fairfield County and the State, with a population density of 8,996 persons per square mile (2005), compared with 1,453 in Fairfield County and 706 in the State. The West Side / West End neighborhood contains an estimated population of 17,451, based on the 2000 Census Tract Data.

Population Growth Bridgeport’s population is growing at a pace close to that of Connecticut and the region overall, with a 0.5% growth rate per year anticipated between 2005 and 2010, compared with a 0.5% growth rate anticipated for Fairfield County and a 0.7% increase anticipated statewide.

Race and Ethnicity Bridgeport is far more diverse than Fairfield County and Connecticut as a whole, and the West Side / West End neighborhood is consistent with the diversity of Bridgeport. Compared with 81% of Connecticut’s population that is White, only 46% of Bridgeport and only 33% of West Side / West End residents are White. The West Side / West End neighborhood has a much higher African American population (35%) than is seen in the state and a high “other” population, which is identified by the 1,187 residents who identified as being of two or more races. The West Side / West End neighborhood contains a high rate of individuals who self-identify as Hispanic, with 42% Hispanic and 58% identifying as non-Hispanic.

Gender The West Side / West End gender breakdown is consistent with county, state, and national breakdowns, with 48.4% men and 51.6% women.

Age The West Side / West End age breakdown is slightly older than the general population of Bridgeport, Fairfield County and the State. Compared with the County and State, the neighborhood has a higher percentage of younger individuals ages 0-24 (at 49%, compared with 33% in the County and State). The neighborhood has a disproportionately small population of individuals ages 65 and older (at 7%, compared with the City, County, and State averages of 12-14%).

Education The West Side / West End neighborhood demonstrates significantly greater difficulty with educational attainment than Bridgeport and the State. While 83% of the State has at least a high school diploma, only 65% of Bridgeport residents and 53% of West Side / West End residents have a high school diploma. In this neighborhood, almost one-fifth of residents over age 25 have less than a ninth grade education (19.2%). An additional one-quarter (27.3%) have some high school education but no diploma. Of the people living in the neighborhood, 225 (2.5%) have a graduate or professional degree.

Types of Employment Of the 5,824 neighborhood residents who are employed, more than one quarter (28%) are working in the service sector, another quarter (25%) are working in sales and office employment, and yet another quarter are working in production, transportation, and material moving (25%). The remaining group, just under a quarter of the population, are split between management and professional employment (15%), construction and maintenance (7.5%), and farming, fishing and forestry (<1%).

Household Income Within the West Side / West End neighborhood, the median household income ranges from \$12,469 to \$34,477, depending on census tract. All census tracts show a median household income that is significantly below the City of Bridgeport (\$51,262 in 2005), Fairfield County (\$72,573) and the State (\$59,761).

Unemployment

While the State boasts an unemployment rate of 4.2%, the estimated rate in Bridgeport is 7.2%, which is fourth highest in the state after Hartford (9.4%), Waterbury (7.4%) and New Britain (7.3%). The Bridgeport workforce is estimated to be approximately 62,000. Currently nearly 58,000 are working and 4,473 are unemployed. (Source: April 2007 DOL).

Figure 1: Race and Ethnicity

Race	WS/WE Tracts		Bridgeport		County		State	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	5761	33%	65924	46%	708206	78%	2858875	81%
Black	6150	35%	40511	28%	88379	10%	318835	9%
Asian	1003	6%	6330	4%	38839	4%	117997	3%
Native Am	120	1%	1032	1%	2792	0%	14298	0%
Other	4417	25%	30140	21%	71047	8%	224275	6%
Total	17451		143937		909263		3534280	

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census. City, County, and State data based on 2005 CT DECD.

Figure 2: Age

Age	WS/WE Tracts		Bridgeport		County		State	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0 to 24 years	8,504	49%	57593	40%	301572	33%	1149329	33%
25 to 64 years	7,748	44%	69501	48%	486733	54%	1901623	54%
65 years & older	1,199	7%	16843	12%	120958	13%	483328	14%
Total	17451		143937		909263		3534280	

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census. City, County, and State data based on 2005 CT DECD.

Figure 3: Employment

Employed Population 16 years and over		5,824
Occupations		
Service		1,605 27.6%
Sales and office		1,455 25.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving		1,449 24.9%
Management, professional and related		864 14.8%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance		437 7.5%
Farming, fishing and forestry		14 <1.0%

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census.

Figure 4: Median Household Income

Median Household Income Level	
Tract 703	\$12,469
Tract 709	\$25,926
Tract 710	\$25,873
Tract 711	\$34,477
Tract 712	\$23,942

* WS/WE data based on 2000 census.

B. Local Economic Climate

Overall, the climate for redevelopment in the West Side / West End is moving in a positive direction.

Looking at the improvement projects that are recently completed, under construction, and proposed is an important indicator of the neighborhood's well-being. The West Side / West End neighborhood has seen more than \$15 million in public and private improvements over the past three years, including the private commitment of more than three companies and the public commitment of new school construction.

Economic Location

One of the greatest economic advantages of the West Side / West End neighborhood is its location. The neighborhood is in immediate proximity to major transportation channels, including I-95, the port, Amtrak and MetroNorth commuter service to New York City. Its proximity to water recreation activities, waterfront parks, and cultural activities in downtown Bridgeport provide a potentially high quality of life for its residents.

Top Employers

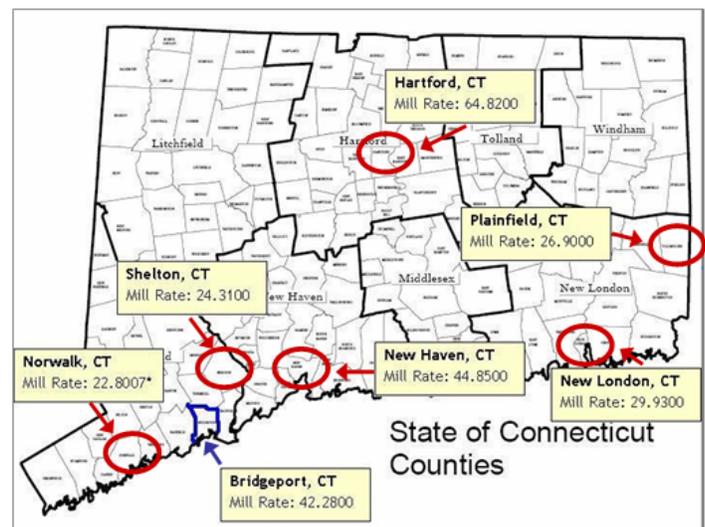
The top local employers in Bridgeport are Bridgeport Hospital, People's Bank, St. Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport Health Care Center, and Sikorsky Aircraft (2006).¹⁶ While none of these top employers are located within in the West Side / West End neighborhood, their proximity to the neighborhood is advantageous, particularly for residents seeking local jobs.

Economic Drivers

Bridgeport's economy is largely driven by the trade, manufacturing, and services sectors. While services constitute 44% of both the firms and the employment, manufacturing constitutes 16% of the employment and trade constitutes 15% of the employment.¹⁷

Challenging Tax Rates

During interviews with local businesses, the high tax rate and the unique rules regarding personal property depreciation were cited as key factors regarding a company's ability to compete and a company's interest in staying in Bridgeport and in this neighborhood. As one interviewee said, "Our mill rate is 42. Theirs is 26. Why wouldn't I go?" The chart below compares Bridgeport's mill rate with those of similar-sized, similar-urban areas along major Connecticut transportation corridors.



* Average of multiple mill rates in Norwalk ranging from 21.4490 to 23.2380.

¹⁶ Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, 2006.

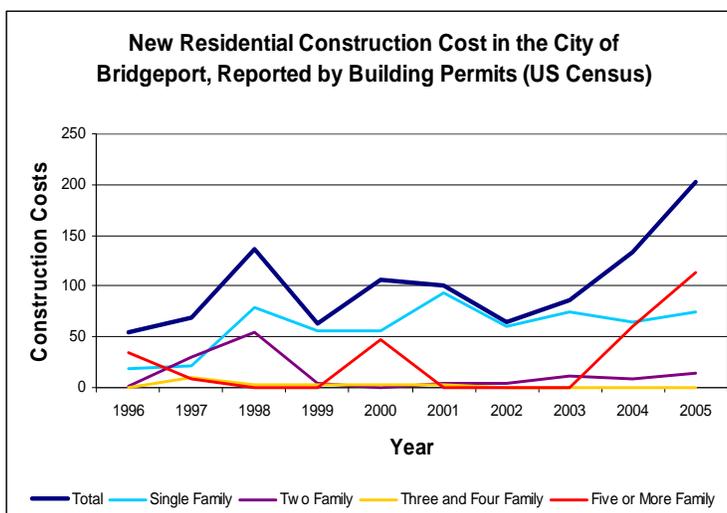
¹⁷ Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, 2006.

Labor Force

With a high school graduation rate in this neighborhood of only 53%, the labor force in the immediate neighborhood is not nearly as strong as it could be. However, there is mixed feedback on the quality of the local labor force. On one hand, businesses in the neighborhood are making a genuine effort to hire locally. One business reported that 75% of its employees are from Bridgeport, another stated that 40% live in Bridgeport, and a third said, "Hiring has not been an issue, we have over half of our employees from Bridgeport." At the same time, the interviews revealed that finding qualified labor is hard for the more skilled professions and that losing the older, more skilled labor will be a very important issue for businesses in the next five years.

Housing Permit Activity.

New residential construction permits in the City of Bridgeport suggest an increase in the investment of residential housing in Bridgeport. Census data shows an increase of 218% in the cost of residential construction in the past five years and an increase of more than 500% in the past 10 years. In 1996, the total construction cost associated with building permits filed in 2006 was \$1,915,070, compared with \$4,095,081 in 2000 and \$13,013,227 in 2005 (see graph). In 2006, Bridgeport registered 25 housing permits. In the first two months of 2007, Bridgeport had already registered 20 housing permits.



Quality of Uses

The West Side / West End has a wide mix of residential, business, nonprofit, and public representation in the neighborhood. However, the quality of many of the commercial uses is lacking, and some low-end uses are over-represented (for example, liquor stores and convenience stores). As one interviewee stated, "The last thing we need is another nail salon or barber shop." The commercial strip malls are of generally poor quality, in need of higher quality tenants and higher quality appearances. The neighborhood would benefit from improvements to its commercial corridors and diversification of its commercial corridors, including specifically filling the uses that are not represented. The neighborhood specifically reports seeing a need for a restaurant where businesses can take clients for lunch and additional banking options (only one bank exists in the neighborhood, on State Street).

Public Investments.

Often, public investments stimulate private investment. The most significant public investment in this neighborhood is the Cesar Batalla High School on State Street.

Private Investments.

Private investments into the neighborhood are a good indicator of the neighborhood's own willingness to invest in their property. There are several new investments that make a statement about the private market's faith in their property. These include:

- AKDO Intertrade built a new 115,000-square-foot facility and showroom at 1501 State St. for its marble, tile, and granite wholesale distributor business. The business employs 50, and represents a \$10-million investment
- ASAP Bedliners has built a new \$1.4-million retail showroom at 435 Howard Ave.
- Carr's Ice Cream is located in a new facility on State Street

- Bead Building on State Street renovation
- Southwest Community Health Center is opening a new facility

Area Investments

Even though some improvements in the area are outside of the specific boundaries of the neighborhood, they will likely have a positive ‘spillover’ effect into the neighborhood.

These area investments include:

- New Walgreens at 1000 Park Avenue
- New Super Stop & Shop at 2145 Fairfield Avenue
- New residential property at 570-578 State Street (20 apartment units, first-floor retail)
- Black Rock Library expansion, an estimated \$3.5 million project
- New Superior Court and Center for Juvenile Matters, located on the corner of Congress Street and Housatonic Avenue, is a \$39.6 million project
- Bijou Square Historic Redevelopment
- Marin-Garfield Fire Station at 950 Boston Avenue, a \$5.5 million project
- Marin-Garfield Park, a \$1.8 million project with new playing fields and a new playground.
- Expanded Wonderland of Ice at Glenwood Park, a \$5.3 million project at 123 Glenwood Avenue (East Side)
- Fairchild-Wheeler 36-hole municipal golf course in Fairfield, CT
- New Public Facilities, Maintenance Garage, and Administrative Building at 990 Housatonic Avenue on the East Side, a \$27.5 Million investment to be started in 2007
- Veteran’s Memorial Park Improvements of the 107 acres in northern Bridgeport, including three athletic fields, hiking trails and nature pathways, estimated at \$5.6 million (in design phase)
- Housatonic Community College planned expansion
- Bridgeport Hospital expansion
- Park City Hospital
- Fairfield Metro Center / Fairfield Cinema

Proposed Projects

Another good indicator of the local economic climate is the projects that are being proposed. Immediately in the neighborhood, at least four projects have specific proposals, including:

- New State Street commercial development for food service establishments at 1163-1197 State Street, including private financing of a \$1.1M project
- Bridgeport Fuel Cell Park (\$60M)
- State Street Sealey Mixed Use Proposal (\$1.5M)
- Housing proposal related to the properties on Cherry Street

Reluctance to Invest

While certain businesses and residents are making investments into the neighborhood, reluctance to make investments is also extremely evident. Many businesses acknowledged this reluctance in their interviews. Businesses widely acknowledge that some of the businesses in the neighborhood do not ‘sit pretty,’ and that it is time to change the rough image and fix up the buildings in the neighborhood. One business said, “We need to improve our image.” Another said, “We need to improve the image of our neighborhood.” Another said, “You are riding along [I-95] and think, ‘Why would anyone get off the highway here?’ ” One business reported that the condition of the neighborhood makes hiring difficult, stating, “I was trying to hire a manger. His wife told him he couldn’t work in a neighborhood that looks like this.” Another business reported that they lost a \$15 million contract with Microsoft because of the condition of the block, unable to convince the company that it would be a secure manufacturing environment. While it is widely recognized that the image of the neighborhood needs to improve, many businesses are not spending the investment to improve their appearance. One business explained, “We’re a smaller business with not a lot of cash and we don’t spend it on the outside.” Another one admitted “We’re not a stellar example of what Bridgeport should look like.” And yet another claimed that, at least, “We’re not the worse one on the block.” This commentary suggests a reluctance to make the property investments, largely because these businesses do not see that the investment will result in increased property values.

“You are riding along [I-95] and think, ‘Why would anyone get off the highway here?’ ”
--West End Business Owner

C. Property Use and Value

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

The City of Bridgeport's Property Tax Data contains identification of the Property Class, which determines the different property types (e.g., commercial, residential land, condominiums). For the purposes of this analysis, the approximate area for the West Side / West End neighborhood was determined and the property listings within those boundaries were analyzed.

NOTE ABOUT PROPERTY CLASSES, ASSESSED VALUE, AND TAX REVENUE

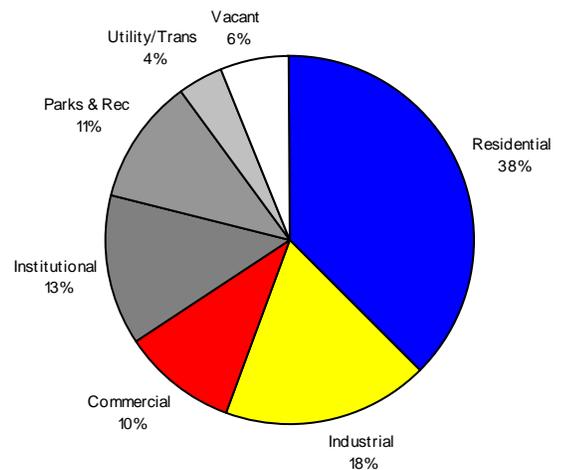
It is important to note that these numbers do not directly translate into tax revenue, as many of the commercial properties may be owned or operated by the State of Connecticut or municipal entities (and therefore do not pay taxes) or are owned and operated by nonprofit organizations (and therefore are exempt). In addition, many exemption, deferral, and PILOT programs exist, which do not allow for direct translation of assessed value to tax income.

LAND USE

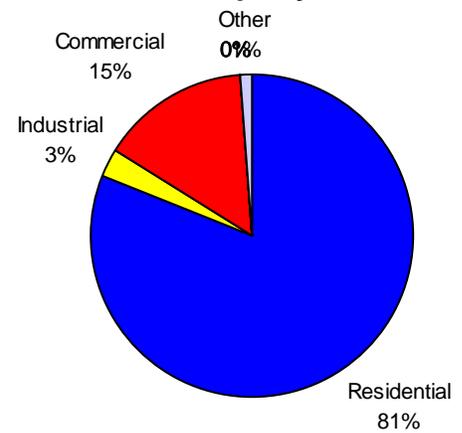
The West Side / West End neighborhood contains nearly every land use zone that exists in Bridgeport, including Residential-A (single family), Residential-B (two-family), Residential-BB (two and three family), Residential C (four + family), Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, Office/Retail Neighborhood, Office/Retail General, and Office/Retail Storefront. The approximate distribution of land uses is as follows:

- Residential – 37%
- Industrial – 18 %
- Institutional – 13%
- Parks and Recreation – 11%
- Commercial – 10%
- Utility/Transportation- 4%
- Vacant – 6%

% of Land Zoned for Each Use



% of Properties in Each Property Class



PROPERTY CLASS

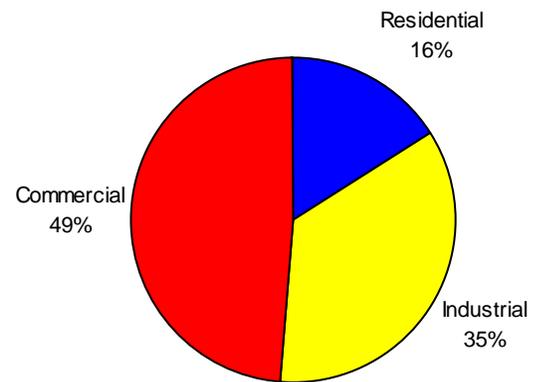
The West Side / West End neighborhood has nearly 7,000 properties. According to the City of Bridgeport property data, approximately 81% of the properties (5,615 properties) in the neighborhood are classified as residential uses, including residences, condominiums, and residential land. Approximately 15% (1,056 properties) are classified as commercial, including commercial condos, commercial apartments, and commercial land. Only 3% (194 properties) are classified as industrial or industrial land in the neighborhood.

REAL ESTATE ASSESSED VALUE

While the property class breakdown shows a primary presence of residential property, an analysis of the assessed value of these properties show that the commercial and industrial properties outweigh the assessed value of the residential properties. The commercial properties constitute 49% of the total assessed value, the industrial properties constitute 35% of the total assessed value, and the residential properties constitute 16% of the assessed value.

In addition, the analysis found the average assessed value per property class. Commercial properties had the highest average assessed value (1,672,474), industrial properties had the second-highest average assessed value (969,404), and residential properties had an average assessed value of 126,671.

% of Real Property Assessed Value in Each Property Class



Property Class Data for the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood

Property Class	# in Class	Total Assessed Value (2006)
Public	25	4,816,026
Com/Res Mixed	34	6,236,103
Commercial	738	846,258,927
Comm Apt	162	127,892,471
Comm Condo	6	9,437,601
Comm Land	116	9,080,657
Condo Options	9	141,080
Industrial	151	323,192,834
Industrial Land	43	1,267,154
Public Utility	7	269,847
Residential	4497	641,899,207
Residential Condo	869	60,800,479
Residential Land	249	8,555,906
Total	6,906	2,039,848,292

Source: City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

Average Assessed Value for Primary Property Classes in the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood

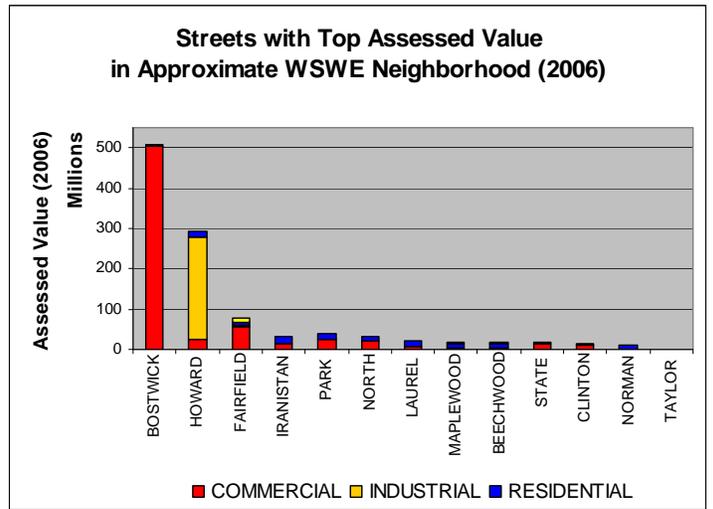
Property Class	Average Assessed Value (2006)
Commercial	1,672,474
Industrial	969,404
Comm/Res Mixed	183,415
Residential	126,671

Source: City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

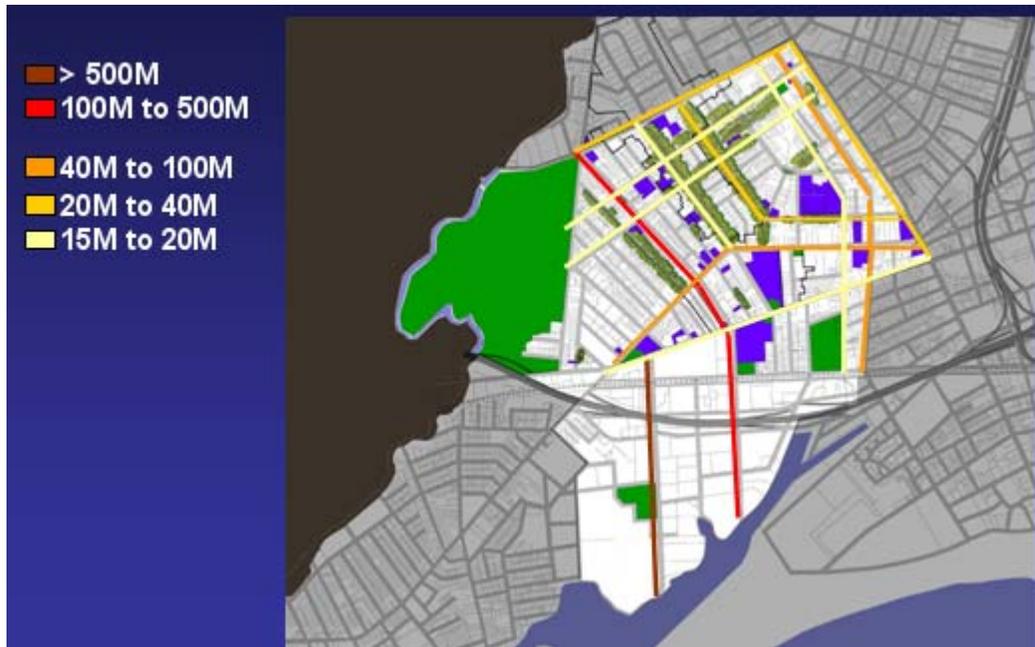
IDENTIFICATION OF STREETS WITH HIGHEST ASSESSED VALUES

The data was assessed to determine the streets with the highest assessed value, and the source of this value (commercial, industrial, or residential). The graph to the right summarizes these findings:

- Bostwick and Howard Avenue contain the two highest assessed values, with a combination of commercial and industrial uses.
- Fairfield, Iranistan, Park, North, State, and Clinton are streets that are primary commercial corridors of value.
- Laurel, Maplewood, Beechwood, and Norman are streets with especially high residential value. The map below identifies these streets within the neighborhood.



The map below gives another visual of the streets in the West Side / West End neighborhood with the highest assessed values.



IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES WITH HIGHEST ASSESSED VALUES

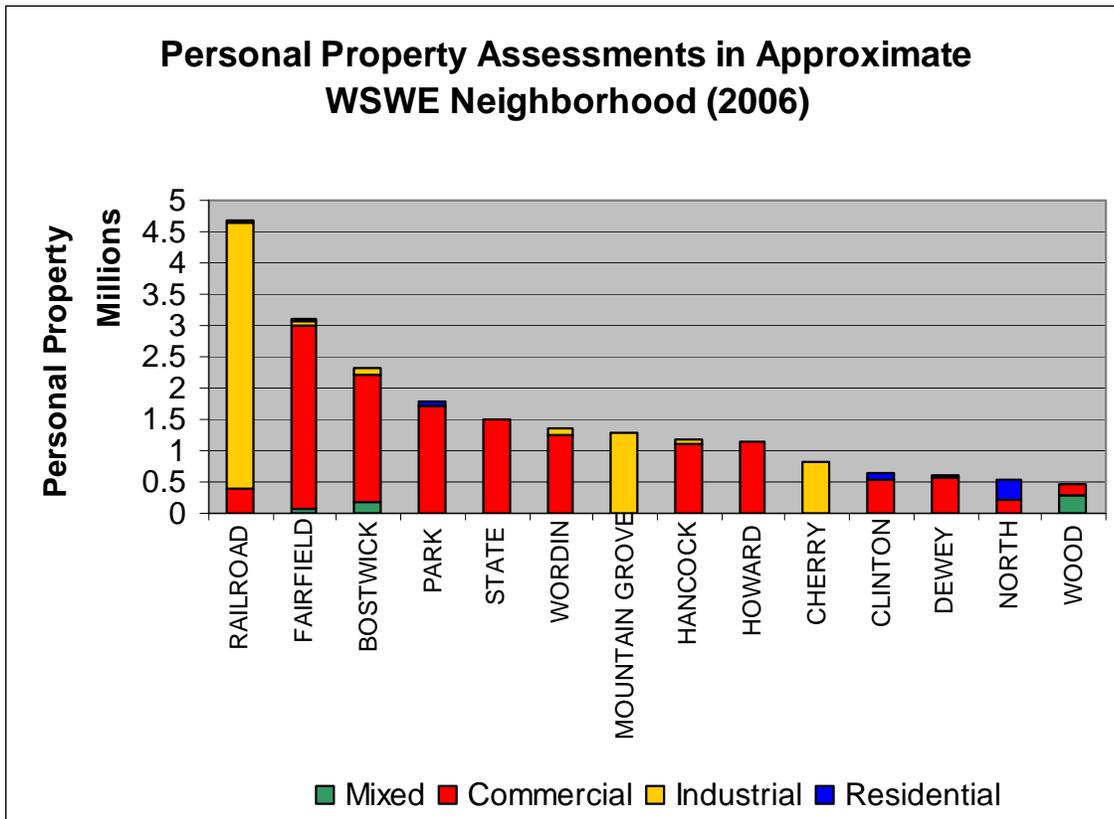
Within the neighborhood, the individual properties with the greatest assessed values were largely held by either municipal entities or nonprofit organizations.

Individual Properties with High Assessed Value in the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood	
Over \$200 million	City of Bridgeport & Municipal Entities Connecticut Resources (95 Howard Ave)
\$15 - \$20 million	Mt. Grove Cemetery Association
\$10 - \$15 million	University of Bridgeport (Iranistan Ave)
\$5 - \$10 million	60 Arlington Realty LLC et al (1001 Fairfield Ave)
\$1 million - \$5 million	Bodine Corporation Bridgeport Garden Apartments, Inc. (2821 Fairfield Ave) Bridgeport Grocery, LLC (1700 Park St) Bridgeport Rotary Club Housing (585 Norman St) Chaves Bakery Family Services Woodfield O&G Industries (260 Bostwick) SGB, LLC (365 Cherry St) St. John Episcopal Church (3025 Fairfield Ave) St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church (625 Beechwood) Yale Street Limited Partnership (1095 Fairfield Ave)

Source: City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

STREETS WITH HIGHEST PERSONAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

The data was assessed to determine the areas which hold the highest assessed value of personal property and the source of this value (commercial, industrial, or residential). The graph below summarizes these findings, showing Railroad Avenue with the highest personal property assessments, followed by Fairfield Avenue, Bostwick, Park, State, Wordin, Mountain Grove, Hancock, Howard, Cherry, Clinton, Dewey, North, and Wood Avenues.



INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES WITH HIGHEST PERSONAL PROPERTY VALUES

Within the neighborhood, the individual properties with the greatest assessed values were largely held by either municipal entities or nonprofit organizations.

Individual Properties with High Assessed Value in the Approximate WSWE Neighborhood	
Over \$1 million	O&G Industries (Multiple Locations) Continental AFA Dispensing Co (Fairfield Avenue) AKDO Intertrade (State Street) Delage Landen Operational (Railroad Avenue)
\$500,000 to \$1 million	Richard Dudgeon, Inc. (Railroad Avenue) Chaves Bakery (State Street) Markal Finishing Company (Bostwick Avenue) Reproduction Services, Inc. (Wordin Avenue) Hubbell, Inc. (State Street) USA Deck (Hancock Avenue)

Source: City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

IV. Findings

FINDING #1. CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Overall, the economic factors affecting Bridgeport and the West Side / West End neighborhood paint a picture of cautious optimism in terms of its economic climate. While the neighborhood is subject to significant challenges (see chart below), some issues are not unique to this neighborhood or to Bridgeport (e.g., rising utility costs) and others are well within their power to be changed. The neighborhood is seeing steady business presence, employment, and strong mixed-use presence, which lends diversification to the economy. In addition, the strong public investments that have been made in the neighborhood are serving as stabilizing factors, and businesses have made significant investments as well. Property remains affordable (and therefore attractive for development) and outsiders are starting to show an interest in making investments in the neighborhood.

Strong Positive Indicators	Real Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong loyalty ▪ Strong business presence ▪ Strong presence of employers ▪ Strong combination of mixed uses ▪ Strong public investments serve as base for increasing property values ▪ Property remains affordable ▪ Proximity to I-95, Train, Port, NYC ▪ Businesses are doing well ▪ Some businesses are making significant investments in new buildings (e.g., AKDO, Chaves) ▪ Outside developers are starting to show interest in investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High taxes (higher than surrounding towns) ▪ Presence of blight ▪ Rising cost of utilities ▪ Security / safety ▪ Shortages of educated and/or skilled labor ▪ Shortages of parking ▪ Outdated infrastructure (sewer, sidewalks) ▪ Low property values lack incentive for owners to improve their properties

FINDING #2. NEIGHBORHOOD RELIES ON DIVERSE GENERATORS OF VALUE

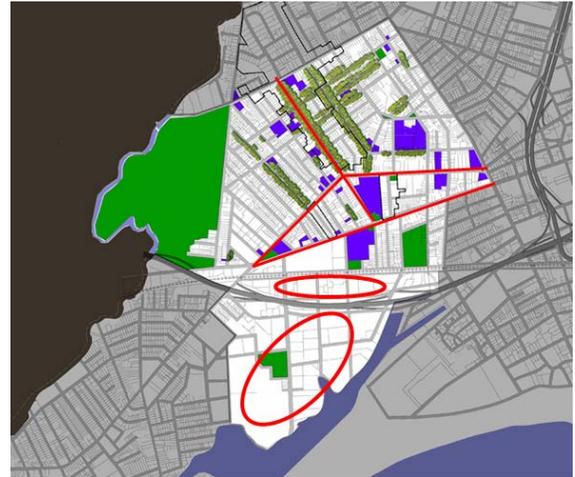
Every city and neighborhood has prime assets that generate value. This report, though, focused on the value generators in the West Side / West End neighborhood. In particular, it finds that there is not one single high value generator in the neighborhood, as you might find with Yale in New Haven or the insurance companies in Hartford. Instead, a wide variety of users contribute value. For example, while Mt. Grove Cemetery Association may not pay taxes because of a nonprofit status, they contribute an excellent physical presence and a premier property that is a stabilizing factor within the neighborhood. Similarly, while Richard Dudgeon, Inc. is not at the top of the list on real estate assessments, the business is near the top of the list for personal property assessments. Similarly, a business such as Label Systems may be a leader in providing jobs to local neighborhood residents. Finally, it further recognized that a variety of land uses is beneficial because it avoids an over-exertion on any particular part of the City's service system (e.g., increased residential uses may place additional demands on public school systems, some commercial uses may increase demands on trash removal system). This report finds that the neighborhood has an unusually diverse group of value generators, including:

- *Property holders*
- *Real estate assessments*
- *Personal property assessments*
- *Jobs for local workers, which in turn provide training, health care, pensions, stability*
- *Services for residents & businesses*
- *Foot traffic and their spillover effects*
- *Attracting new visitors to Bridgeport and the West Side / West End neighborhood*
- *Excellent physical presence*
- *Property remediation*
- *Pride*

FINDING #3. CONCENTRATION IS NEEDED ON MAJOR ECONOMIC CORRIDORS

It is essential for cities and neighborhoods to identify their major economic development corridors, as these then become areas of focus for certain investments, improvements, and concentration in the neighborhood revitalization plan. Based on the analysis of the property and personal property values, the streets and zones have been identified that constitute the neighborhood’s major economic development corridors.

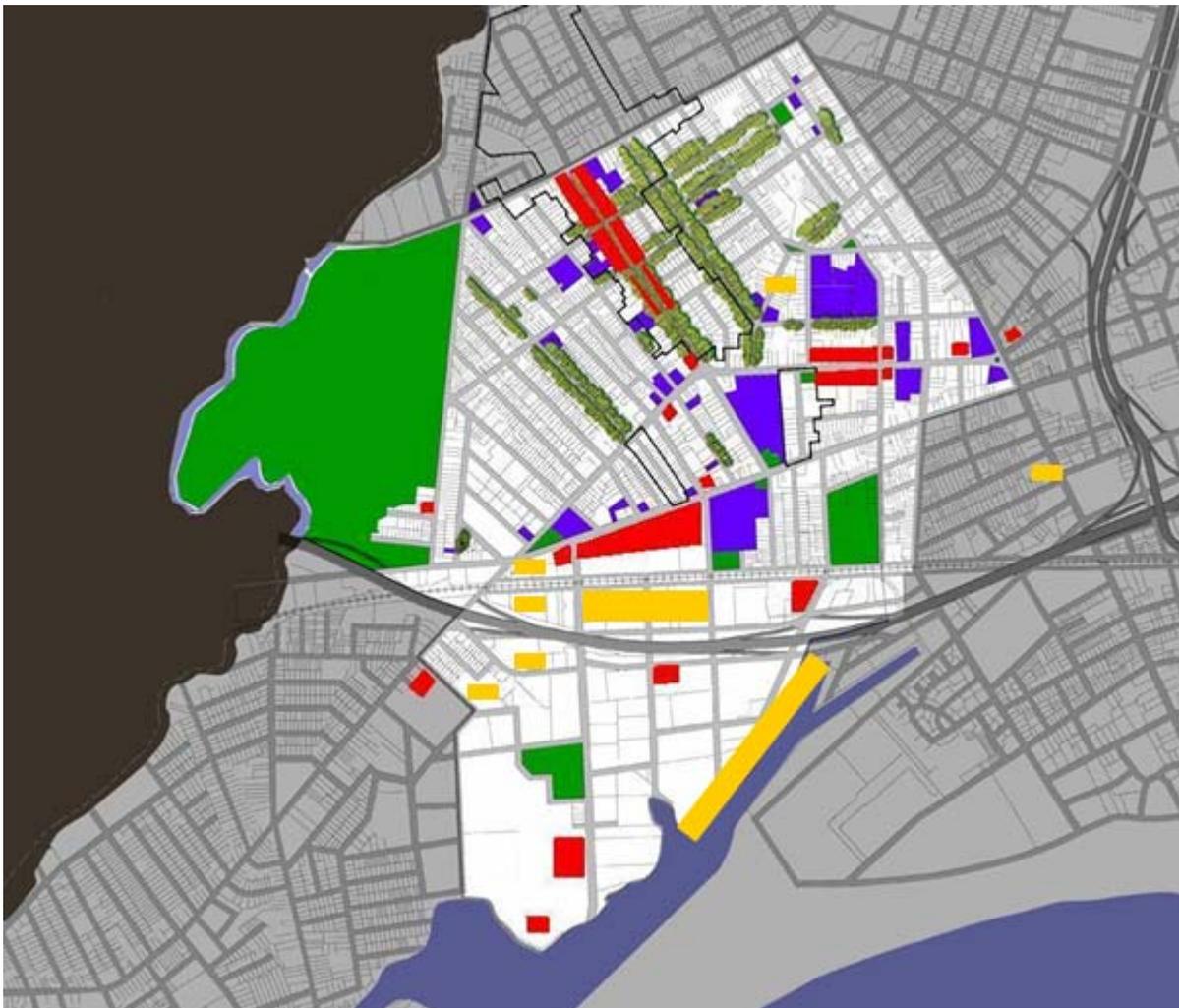
- State Street is a major commercial corridor. On the western end, the large parcels create a prime opportunity for larger uses (e.g., industrial and showroom). On the eastern end, the smaller parcels and proximity to residential provide opportunities for smaller businesses and retail that serves the local population.
- Fairfield Avenue is a major commercial corridor.
- Clinton Avenue is a major commercial corridor for the professional sector of businesses, including legal, accounting, and private practice medical providers.
- The area between Railroad Avenue and I-95 (commonly called “The Smile”) is a major commercial and industrial corridor that is poised to transition the neighborhood between its commercial State Street corridor and its more southern industrial district.
- The industrial district that is south of Interstate 95 is a largely light industrial district with some heavy industrial and commercial uses.
- Secondary economic development corridors include Dewey Avenue, Park Avenue, and Wood Avenue.



FINDING #4. REMOVAL OF BLIGHT IS PARAMOUNT

Blighted properties are those properties that are abandoned, not kept-up, or poorly cared for. They are often marked by litter and trash, broken windows, or graffiti. These properties serve to degrade the character, perception of safety, and willingness of investment into a community. The map below shows blighted properties that have been identified in the West Side / West End neighborhood, and include:

- Cherry Street block
- Hubbell property
- SCG Co. property
- Dudgeon building & Connecticut Light & Power lot
- Burnt building south of I-95
- Foundry site
- Cedar Creek waterfront
- Former Park City Hospital
- Wood Avenue Square



Zared Architecture and The Capstan Group

If targeted, these properties would make a substantial and positive impact on the West Side / West End neighborhood, both internally and to outsiders passing through.

FINDING #5. SPECIFIC SUPPORT IS NEEDED FOR PREMIER PROPERTIES & LINKAGES

Premier properties are critical to identify in a neighborhood because they serve as the anchor for any economic development revitalization plan. Premier properties are those that use high-quality building materials, show meticulous landscaping and maintenance, create the perception of safety, engender a positive impact on adjacent property values, and are overall exemplary. Significant opportunities exist to connect these premier properties together to create a seamless corridor that is well-maintained, creates a continuous perception of safety, ripples down a positive impact on property values, and creates momentum for positive growth from the premier property anchors.



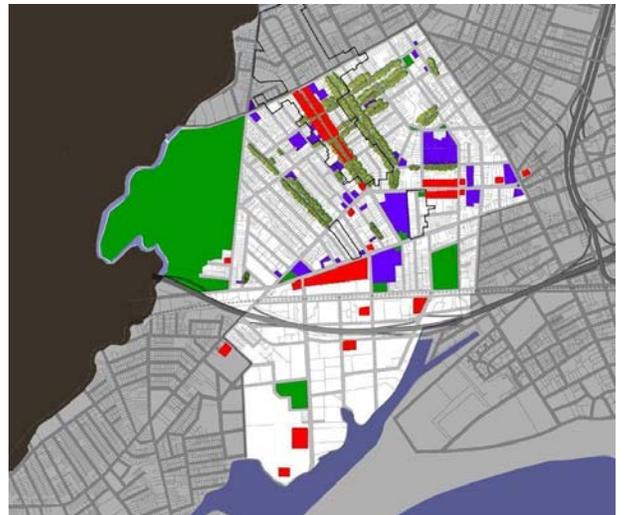
The premier properties are shown in the map below in red. While the graphic is not all-inclusive, it demonstrates the location and massing of these, and visually demonstrates areas that are ripe for linkages.

Priority areas to concentrate economic development to encourage linkages and strengthening the major economic development corridors are identified as follows:

- State Street, particularly on the north side across from the new development at AKDO Intertrade and Chaves Bakery and Batalla School
- Fairfield Avenue, particularly on the eastern portion, solidifying the financial investments recently made there
- Clinton Avenue, between Fairfield and State streets
- Dewey Street, across from the Mt. Grove Cemetery
- Railroad Avenue, particularly on the southern portion of blocks that have already been improved
- Areas around the I-95 ramps

Priority infrastructure to support these premier properties and encourage their ongoing maintenance include:

- Façade improvement grants for target areas
- Incentives for businesses to replace chain-link fences with other security measures that promote the perception of safety
- Encouragement for new business signage
- Sidewalk improvements in areas in which premier properties exist or in which they are being fostered
- Street paving and curbing in areas in which premier properties exist or are being fostered
- Ornamental street lighting (both for ornamental and security purposes)
- Trash receptacles (both for ornamental and clean street purposes)



V. Appendices

UTILITY RATES: RETAIL PRICE OF ELECTRICITY IN 50 STATES AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Rank	State	U.S. Electric Power Industry Average Retail Price of Electricity
1	Kentucky	5.01
2	Idaho	5.12
3	West Virginia	5.15
4	Wyoming	5.16
5	Nebraska	5.87
5	Washington	5.87
7	Indiana	5.88
8	North Dakota	5.92
9	Utah	5.92
10	Missouri	6.13
11	Arkansas	6.30
12	Tennessee	6.31
13	Oregon	6.34
14	Alabama	6.46
15	Kansas	6.55
16	South Dakota	6.60
17	Minnesota	6.61
18	Virginia	6.64
19	Iowa	6.69
20	Montana	6.72
20	South Carolina	6.72
22	Oklahoma	6.85
23	Ohio	7.08
24	North Carolina	7.19
25	Michigan	7.23
26	Georgia	7.43
27	Wisconsin	7.48
28	New Mexico	7.51
29	Mississippi	7.54
30	Colorado	7.64
31	Delaware	7.76
32	Arizona	7.79
33	Louisiana	8.03
34	Maryland	8.13
35	Pennsylvania	8.27
36	Florida	8.76
37	Illinois	8.95
38	Nevada	9.02
39	Texas	9.14
40	Washington D.C.	9.18
41	Maine	10.57
42	New Jersey	10.89
43	Vermont	10.95
44	California	11.63
45	Alaska	11.72
46	Rhode Island	11.97
47	Connecticut	12.06
48	Massachusetts	12.18
49	New Hampshire	12.53
50	New York	13.95
51	Hawaii	18.33

Source: Energy Information Administration, Official Energy Statistics from the U.S. Government, http://www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/electricity/esr/figure7_4.html.

Appendix H: Housing Assessment



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I. Context

PURPOSE

This housing assessment for the West Side / West End neighborhood has been developed as part of the neighborhood's NRZ application to the State of Connecticut. Information herein will inform the final neighborhood revitalization plan specifically with respect to housing and will identify resident issues and suggestions for prioritization of plans to address them.

The West Side / West End neighborhood is one of two communities located on the lower west side of the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut and is the second most densely populated neighborhood in Bridgeport. The West Side / West End neighborhood includes a municipal development area, four historic districts, longtime commercial and residential owners and renters and the cultural and ethnic diversity that has become representative of the City of Bridgeport.

The West Side / West End comprises, in whole or in part, five U.S. Census Tracts : 703, 709, 710, 711 and 712. The neighborhood is bounded by Cedar Creek to the southeast and Norman Avenue and State Street on the east side. Park Avenue provides the northeastern border and North Avenue (Route 1) serves as the northwestern border. Rooster Creek and the Mount Grove Cemetery are at the neighborhood's western border and are Fairfield's town line. Bostwick Avenue forms a southwestern boundary for the neighborhood.

The neighborhood also includes a portion of Bridgeport Aldermanic Districts 130, 131 and 132; Connecticut Senatorial Districts 22 and 23; and Connecticut Assembly Districts 128 through 130. Additionally, as with all of Bridgeport, the neighborhood falls within the 4th United States Congressional District.

INFORMATION SOURCES

The data and input into this report comes from a myriad of sources, including:

- 2000 and 2005 census data
- Input provided during the West Side / West End Stakeholders Meetings
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, January 13, 2007
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, February 10, 2007
- Input provided through a Housing Workshop on Monday, March 26, 2007
- Input provided through a limited number of resident survey responses
- Input provided through a limited number of resident interviews
- Bridgeport Housing Policy Draft
- Bridgeport Draft Master Plan of Conservation and Development
- City of Bridgeport Blighted Property Report by City Scan

BRIDGEPORT HOUSING POLICY

Mayor John Fabrizi has outlined a number of priorities for development in the City of Bridgeport. One of those priorities is the development of a healthy housing market. To that end, a census has been taken to determine market realities, opportunities for development and new and current housing trends.

According to one study, the market in Bridgeport proper is calling for housing for empty-nesters, young professionals and the elderly. Since the onset of the Mayor's plan 164 units of housing have been developed. There are another 565 units under construction and 4,128 on the drawing board. The City expects to turn over 4,857 new or rehabilitated units over the next four or five years.¹⁸ None of the planned residential developments are located in the West Side / West End neighborhood. Adjacent neighborhoods have development plans, though, which could benefit revitalization in the West Side / West End. Three hundred sixty-seven (367) rental and ownership units are planned or completed in the City's South End (that number does not include numbers resulting from renovations to the former Warnaco Factory or the Lofts on Lafayette). Similarly, plans have been completed to develop another 233 units in Black Rock over the next few years. Neither number accounts for the housing units which the City of Bridgeport has an obligation to replace as part of the Father Panik Village and the Pequonnock replacement housing initiatives.

With all this in mind, the following goals have been established as the charge of planners involved in the development of Bridgeport's Housing policy. That policy is meant to:

- 1) Support long-term fiscal stability for Bridgeport;
- 2) Rebuild a solid middle class;
- 3) Encourage diverse neighborhoods with broad citizen participation; and
- 4) Create a variety of housing options to provide affordable housing for a wide range of households, especially those who are already residents of the city.

The City's draft plan of conservation and development outlines ways of achieving those goals. At present they include:

- 1) Encouraging new construction downtown;
- 2) Creating inclusionary zoning requiring 10% of new market-rate units downtown and in PDDs to be affordable housing units;
- 3) Maintaining and upgrading existing housing in the neighborhoods;
- 4) Encouraging adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial buildings for housing in appropriate areas; and
- 5) Creating programs to encourage rehabilitation of private homes by property owners.

Many of these policies and procedures, with good reason, will become foci specifically for the West Side. Others, appropriately, will not.

II. Local Conditions

In addition to those summarized in the previous section, there are other conditions present in the West Side / West End neighborhood which will ultimately determine the success of any plan for improving housing and housing choice.

HOUSING STOCK

As is the case generally with residential properties in Bridgeport, the housing stock in the West Side / West End is old and possesses special maintenance needs. Of the residential units noted, the median year of construction for various housing types is 1940. Over 75% of all residential properties could qualify as historic based on one of four criteria for historic determination. A large number of residential units in the West Side / West End is comprised of one- to six-family structures. There are, as well, larger, multi-unit developments such as the Sycamore Apartments on Maplewood Avenue.

Housing Units

There are approximately 5,356 residential properties in the census tracts making up the West Side / West End. The 2000 census identifies approximately 724 vacant units scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Recently, a blighted property survey was conducted by City-Scan. This survey found that 461 properties in the neighborhood are as marginally at risk, at risk or blighted. Of those 461 properties, 302 are residential, 24 are mixed use, 42 are commercial and 81 are vacant. Of those properties, 48 are in need of major repairs and 315 are in need of basic maintenance. There are 83 vacant lots in the neighborhood.

Looking specifically at residential properties we find that about 6% of the housing stock of the West Side is marginally at risk, at risk or blighted. This represents a number of units the City needs to seriously address, but also represents a significantly lower number of at-risk properties compared to surrounding neighborhoods like the Hollow or East Side.

Occupancy

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of all units in the West Side are renter occupied, leaving 32% owner occupied. This percentage is extremely significant to the viability of this residential neighborhood. The number of owner-occupied properties, which is slightly lower than Bridgeport's average, is skewed some, as it represents all units, not just residential units.

Housing Types

The West Side / West End's housing stock is described as "low-density urban" as it comprises:

- 698 single-family homes;
- 1338 two-family structures;
- 1571 three- or four- family homes;
- 1171 buildings with five to 49 units, and
- 578 buildings with over 50 units.

AFFORDABILITY

The median house value in Bridgeport is \$107,700. The median rent is \$577.

Bridgeport's AMI is \$79,900 for a family of four. Eighty percent (80%) of that income equates to \$59,600. Taking a look specifically at the West Side / West End neighborhood, while it is apparent where the families with the greatest income live, even *they* are not achieving 100% of Bridgeport's AMI. The neighborhood is only minimally comprised of families making the area's median income or more.

- 62% of households earn less than \$50,000 a year.
- 53% of households are renters and 47% are homeowners.
- 40 % of households are rent burdened.
- Earnings in the area are rising at two-thirds the national rate.
- Housing price increases and rent increases are going up faster than increases in Bridgeport incomes.

- Rental housing has low vacancy rates and new home construction is largely beyond the incomes of most residents.

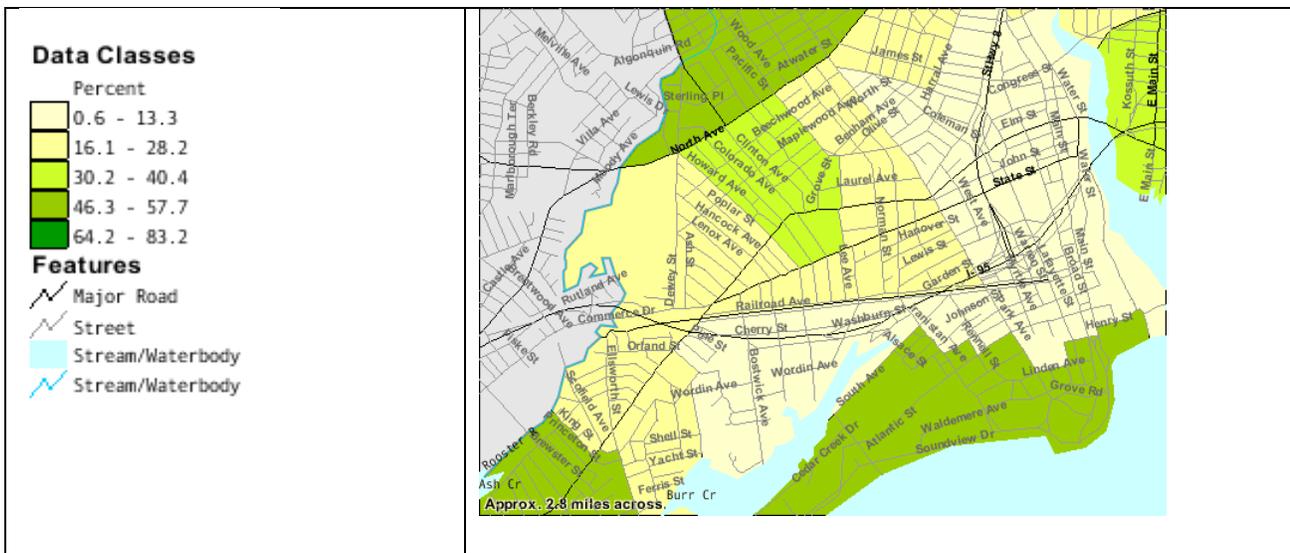
For instance, 30 - 40% of residential properties in the north-central part of the neighborhood (more specifically, Howard, Colorado, Clinton, Laurel and Wood avenues between North Avenue and State Street and Beechwood, and Linwood, Maplewood, Hazelwood, and Elmwood streets bounded by Wood and Howard avenues) are occupied by families at or above the area median income. It is worth noting that at the center of this, the most viable composition of household incomes is the Stratfield Historic District. In the remainder of “residential” neighborhood, only 16-28 % of families make the AMI.

For this reason, it is the goal of the City to maintain 10 to 15% of the housing stock in Bridgeport as affordable housing units.

Based on median housing costs, that family would need to be able to afford \$180,000 for a home or a monthly rent of \$1400 (meaning \$1400 for, at minimum, two-bedroom and at maximum a four bedroom apartment). Consequently, working class and low-income families are finding themselves under-housed or rent or mortgage burdened (paying much more than 30% of their income on housing expenses).

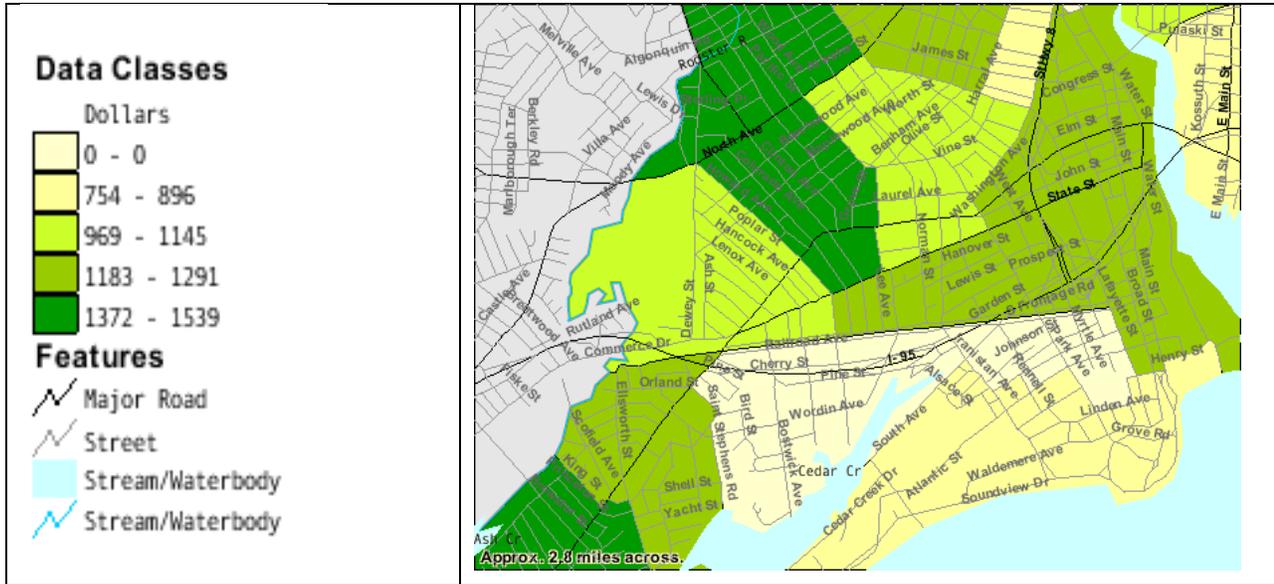
The average family of four in Bridgeport can afford to buy a home worth about \$100,000 or pay a mortgage of about \$770 per month. Income ranges from \$12,469 to \$34,477 in West Side / West End neighborhood (23,473 being the average income). Thus, “affordable” housing for the average West Side / West End family would be \$652 per month (inclusive of rent/mortgage, utilities, insurance and taxes). Most families, however are paying much more than that on housing. This creates a severely volatile residential population.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – WEST SIDE / WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD



When it comes to housing costs in the West Side / West End, we find a similar geographic scenario. Housing costs are highest for residential properties in the north-central part of the neighborhood (Howard, Colorado, Clinton, Laurel and Wood avenues between North Avenue and State Street and Beechwood, Linwood, Maplewood, Hazelwood, and Elmwood streets bounded by Wood and Howard avenues). In this section of the neighborhood, property owners are paying \$1,372 to \$1,539 per month in mortgage payments. What is interesting is that although mortgages in surrounding sections of the neighborhood are appropriately less—as the housing stock is less viable—they are by no means “low.” Mortgage costs are still between \$1,183 and \$1,291 monthly—more than double times what is deemed “affordable” for the population in question.

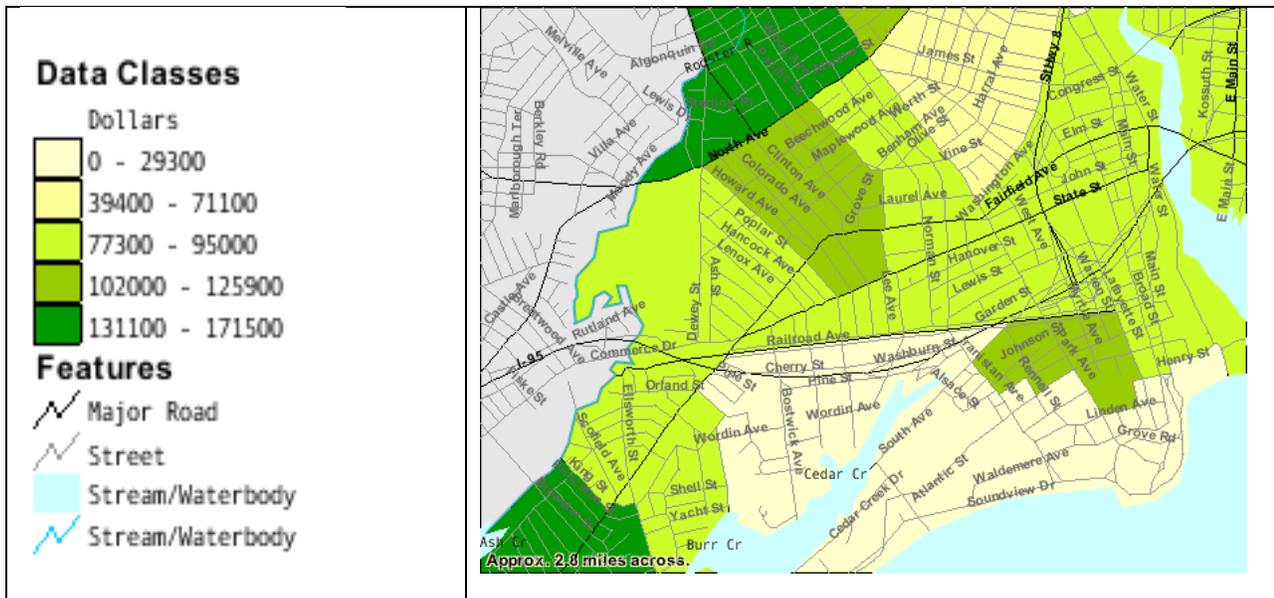
MEDIAN HOUSING COST FOR OWNER W/ MORTGAGE



In that same vein, owner-occupied homes with the highest median value are concentrated in a similar geographic area, as demonstrated below.

The average sale price for a single family house in the West Side / West End was \$189,056 between 2004 and 2006. The average sale price for a multi-family building in the West Side / West End was \$268,431 in the same period.

MEDIAN VALUE OWNER OCCUPIED HOMES – WEST SIDE / WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD



Housing Development

The City of Bridgeport boasts a current development pipeline that includes over 4,800 housing units, 1.2 million square feet of retail space, 293,000 square feet of commercial/industrial space, six schools and one church. Of those 4,800 housing units, not one is projected for development in the West Side. While there is an undercurrent of interest in converting some portion of the West Side / West End's industrial landscape into high-end residential development (particularly on Cherry Street), no other suggestion of significant residential development exists. However, Elias Howe School remains a possible location for

residential or mixed-use development. The building, though, has been identified as a possible location for a new police academy training facility.

The prospect of future significant investment in affordable housing development is even more tenuous. The following represent local community development corporations involved (past or present) in the development of affordable housing in the local neighborhood:

- Mutual Housing Association of Southwestern Connecticut, Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, a local nonprofit development corporation with interest in identifying target development areas in the West Side

Initiatives spearheaded by organizations like these are vital to a comprehensive housing development plan as even moderately priced homes and apartments in the region are out of financial reach for area residents.

Historic Districts

Some of the greatest and most marketable assets of the West Side / West End neighborhood is in its overall historic nature. From its historic districts to sculptural pieces by prominent American artists, the West Side / West End's historic nature is one of its greatest selling points—all of which the community should use to its advantage.

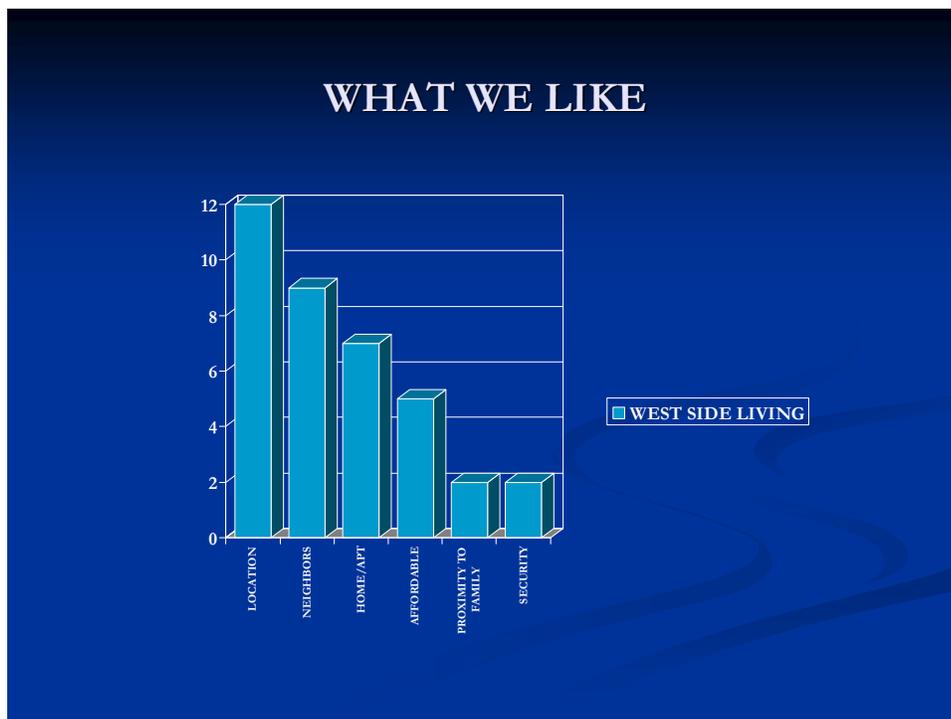
A total of four historic districts exist within the neighborhood. They include the Lindencroft Historic District (Yale Street) in the Northwestern section of the Neighborhood. The Railroad Avenue Historic District in the neighborhood's center is on the National Register of Historic Districts as is the Bassickville Historic District (Bassick Street) in the neighborhood's west side. At the neighborhood's north end is the Stratfield Historic District. Historic Districts outside the neighborhood's boundaries but possibly contributing to its critical mass of viable housing stock is the Division Street Historic District to the east.

III. Contributors to Housing Viability

HOUSING/NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY

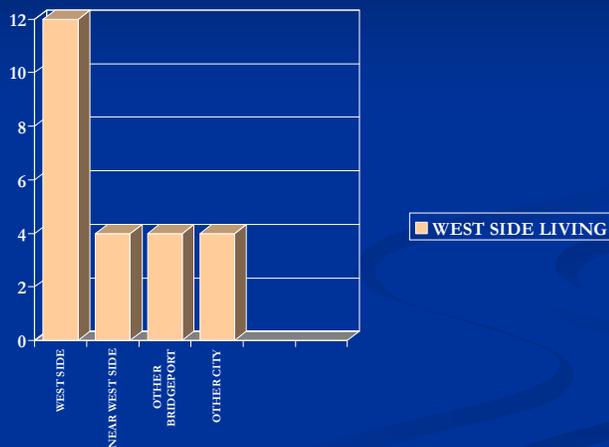
A survey of residents has been distributed and collected at various instances throughout the neighborhood planning process. Generally, residents feel good enough about the West Side/ West End neighborhood to desire to stay. Many residents find the neighborhood to be:

- Peaceful, quiet
- Viable
- Close to Downtown
- Not much blight
- Diverse
- Close to work
- Close to family
- Affordable
- Offer high-quality education



For these reasons, there exists the significant sentiment that the West Side / West End neighborhood has great potential compared to other Bridgeport neighborhoods and that there are significant reasons to stay. About 50% of residents interviewed thought, given a choice, they would remain in the West Side / West End.

HOUSING PREFERENCE



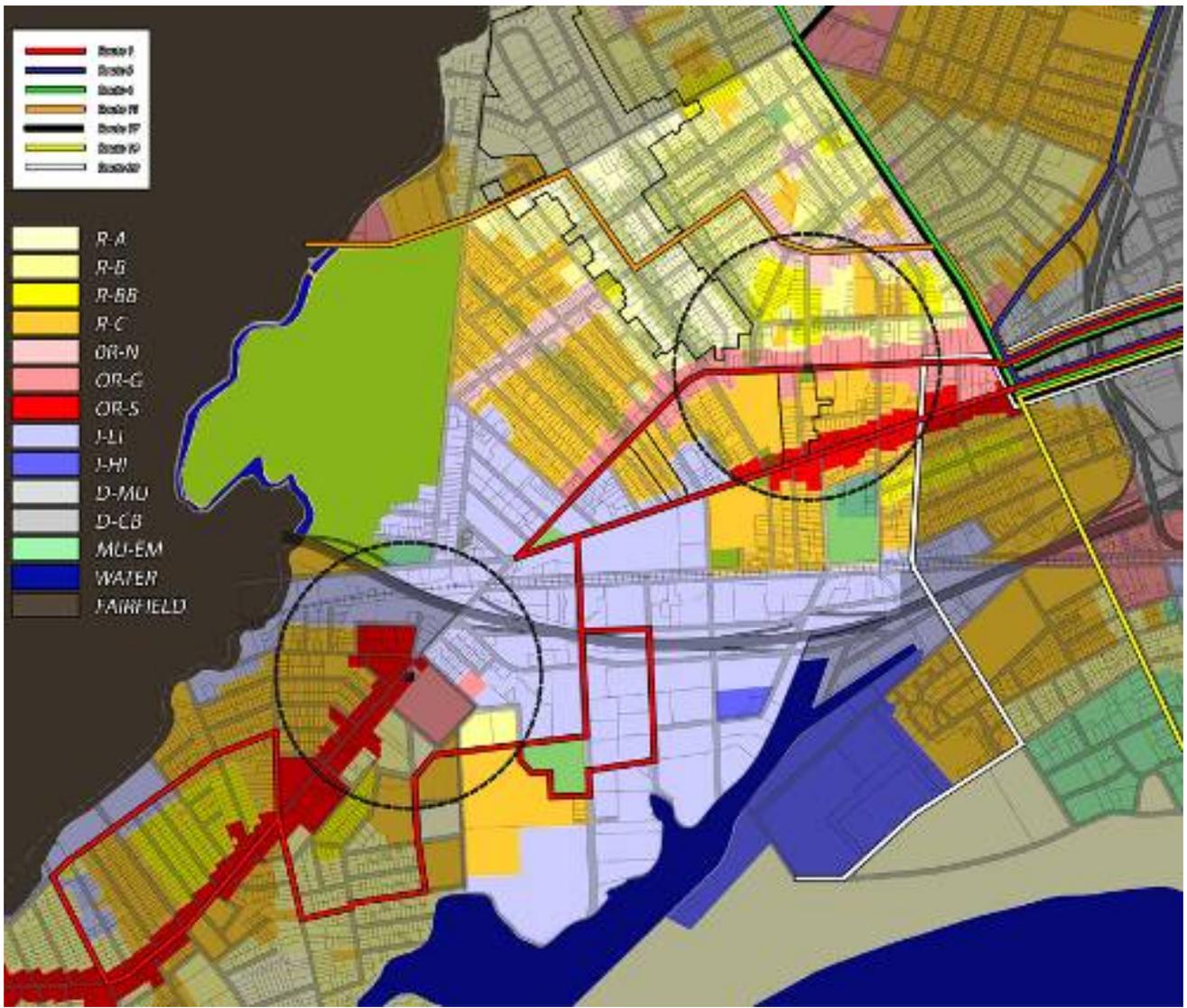
The Planning Team has identified a number of community assets that support long-term viability and sustainability in the neighborhood. Those urban assets include:

- 1) Pedestrian access
- 2) Green space
- 3) Community Anchors

Pedestrian Access

The planners have mapped ¼-mile radii at different points in the neighborhood to determine the ease of access to certain community resources. The ¼-mile radius represents the maximum distance of comfortable pedestrian travel in a given area.

Of course, there need to be conditions which make that travel interesting and pleasant. One quarter-mile in the West side is capable of crossing places of employment at the same time as covering residential living, social services, open space and public transportation, thus suggesting the overall walkability of the neighborhood and easy access to places of interest. It is true, however, that the insufficiency of other neighborhood assets render the proximity of resources incapable of sustaining neighborhood viability.



Green Space

Green space in the West Side / West End, as is depicted in graphic representations such as the map above, is moderately plentiful. However, two problems exist. First, the largest “green” area in the neighborhood is one that is not traditionally used as public open space. While the presence of this open space is a community asset in that it has a positive effect on local air quality and even views, it does not provide an informal public outlet for recreation. Thus an entire quadrant in the West Side does not have easy access to—is not within one quarter-mile of—recreational open space. The second problem has to do with the overall lack of greenery on residential streets. The absence of trees where tree-belts are possible and the narrowness of streets preventing that possibility are conditions that detract from the comfortable walkability of the neighborhood.

Community Anchors

Community anchors are those elements that attract consistent activity, creating sub-centers in a community and eliminating the monotony that tends to come with large-scale tract development.

The West Side neighborhood has an abundance of such anchors. They are churches, schools and community meeting places.

Other conventional neighborhood assets exist in the West Side / West End but might be further enhanced or developed.

Water Access

The value of water access is manifested in the West Side / West End neighborhood differently than would be expected in traditional waterfront communities. The waterfront is indeed an asset but for active industry and not passive recreation (e.g., walking, picnicking).

Lighting

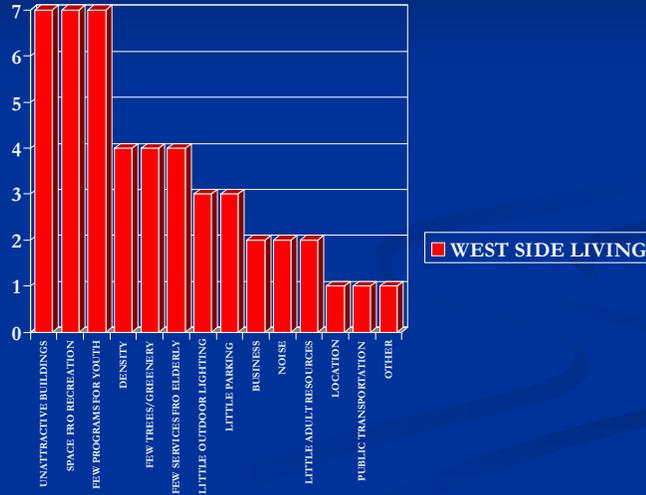
Lighting is another asset that is lacking in certain areas of the neighborhood. Adequate and appropriately placed lighting has the ability to draw pedestrians out at all hours. It makes for generally safer streets. Certain lighting fixtures also create an additional layer to the neighborhood scale that adds to the quality of life.

Destabilizing Indicators

In addition, there are significant and serious issues—“destabilizing” indicators—that contribute to apathy among residents and that can ultimately destroy the neighborhood fabric. Residents surveyed are specifically disappointed with:

- Inactive neighbors
- The cost of property acquisition (especially of historic properties)
- The cost of property maintenance (such as utility bills)
- Sidewalks
- Trash near schools and outside small businesses
- Litter in general
- Quality of street lighting
- General crime level
- Gang violence
- Loitering
- Vandalism
- “Undesirable” businesses
- The lack of Historic District boundary enforcement
- The lack of off-street parking
- Lack of enforcement for zoning violations
- The City’s plan for blight elimination
- Taxes

WHAT WE DISLIKE



Some steps have been taken on the part of the municipality to address some of these issues. All require continued attention and periodic assessment.

ANTI-BLIGHT INITIATIVES



The City of Bridgeport hired City Scan to record blighted and at-risk properties citywide. According to City Scan, there are 28 blighted properties and 83 vacant lots in the West Side / West End neighborhood. Of that number, 22 are residential properties. The same study identifies a total of 299 at-risk buildings. This is confirmed by the map above, developed by the

Planning Team. Four hundred sixty-seven (467) properties in the West Side / West End are blighted, marginally blighted or severely blighted.

The total number of blighted properties in the West Side / West End neighborhood is much lower than that of other residential neighborhoods, allowing for the potential attraction of families with choice into the neighborhood. Also, blighted properties are so scattered throughout the neighborhood so as not to indicate a particular trend in certain areas or on certain streets in the neighborhood. They are, more often than not, due to isolated incidents of abandonment or fire—but they are serious nonetheless. On the other hand, the number of at-risk properties for a neighborhood the size of the West Side / West End is not only high, but indicative of chronic blight in certain areas. Lee Avenue, a single 1/8th-mile block perpendicular and south of State Street, in the center of the neighborhood, had the largest percentage of blighted and at-risk properties in the neighborhood with 13 out of 48, or a full 27%, of all properties listed at at-risk or blighted.

Similar conditions existed in the following locations:

- State Street blocks 1142, 1144 and 1142 (Blocks 1227 and 1151 are comprised of a large vacant developable lot),
- Poplar Street south of Maplewood Avenue,
- Lenox Avenue south of Maplewood Avenue,
- Laurel Avenue parallel to Fairfield Avenue,
- Norman Avenue south of Maplewood Avenue,
- Iranistan Avenue south of Wood Avenue,
- Colorado Avenue south of Maplewood Avenue and
- Dewey Street between Salt Street and State Street

These segments of the overall neighborhood comprise a large portion of the southwest quadrant of the neighborhood and serve as a possible target area for rehabilitation and maintenance programs.

It is also worth noting that the northeast quadrant of the neighborhood has the lowest number of at-risk properties. And closer examination of the neighborhood reveals that the historic districts, except for a few isolated instances, have almost completely evaded the impact of blight and deterioration.



Illegal dumping is a serious problem in the West Side / West End. Not only does it generally detract from neighborhood aesthetics, its psychological effects lead to apathy and divestment. With numerous vacant lots and abandoned lands, directed enforcement will need to be established to deter law-breakers.



Sidewalks were another concern of neighborhood residents. Their deteriorated condition (or absence in some cases) discourage pedestrian traffic and drain any sense of pride or ownership in the neighborhood.



Blighted properties are not the norm in the West Side / West End, but there are enough severely blighted properties and properties at risk for blight that distinct measures should be taken to retrieve properties that are far gone and to prevent further deterioration of less severe cases.

The following is a list of blighted properties identified by City Scan:

980-982	Howard Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
76	Elmwood Place	Blighted building	Residential
50-52	Ash Street	Blighted building	Residential
92	Howard Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
169	Laurel Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
1482-1484	Iranistan Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
161-163	Beechwood Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
90	Edgewood Street	Blighted building	Residential
145-147	Beechwood Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
850-852	State Street	Blighted building	Mixed-use
601	Colorado Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
85	Lee Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
480	Clinton Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
203	Benham Street	Blighted building	Residential
30	Ash Street	Blighted building	Residential
1-7	Buena Way	Blighted building	Residential
75-77	Ash Street	Blighted building	Residential

4-6	Lesbia Street	Blighted building	Other
180	Lenox Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
90	Lee Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
40	Salt Street	Blighted building	Residential
1822-1824	Commerce Drive	Blighted building	Residential
881-887	Hancock Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
1289	Railroad Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
1325	Railroad Avenue	Blighted building	Commercial
125	Lee Avenue	Blighted building	Residential
969	Maplewood Avenue	Blighted building	Residential

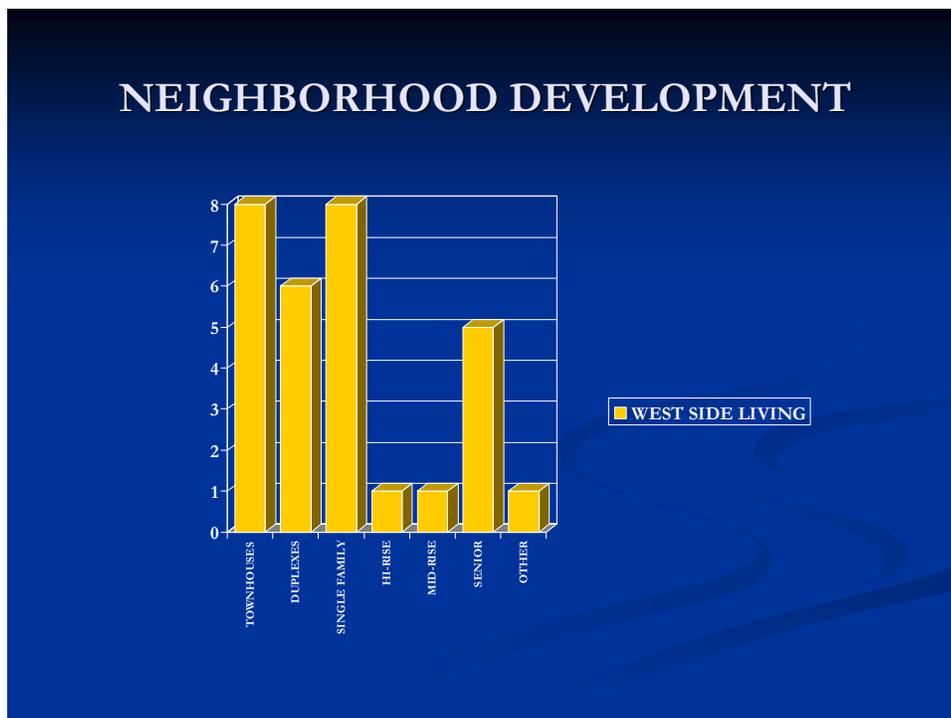
Care for these properties will be essential to neighborhood revitalization.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A sense of security in homes, in cars and on the street is essential to community viability. The City of Bridgeport’s goal of maintaining its working class population while increasing expanding its middle class cannot succeed until that sense of security is prevalent.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Survey results revealed preferences on the part of current residents for neighborhood housing types. Most preferred low-scale, low-density development such as single- and two-family residences. There were also compelling arguments made for the development of senior housing in the neighborhood.



The potential for development of new housing along these lines is restricted by the availability of land in general and constraints on any entity’s ability to assemble parcels for large scale development.

IV. Workgroup Discussion and Community Sentiment

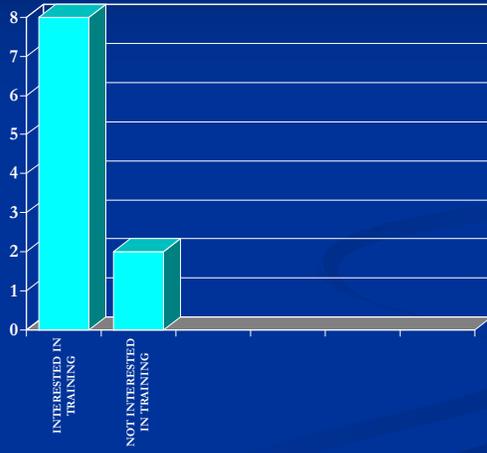
A housing workshop was conducted on March 26, 2007 to provide a forum for discussing the needs of renters, homeowners and developers as they relate to housing quality in the West Side.

Renters

This group identified a number of concerns and needs of the West Side / West End's community of renters:

- **Homeownership Assistance:** Members of this focus group believed that residents who were currently renting required resources to assist them with home ownership, with one caveat. In the experience of the group, so many low- to moderate-income families were either mortgage burdened or running the risk of foreclosure. As a result, it would be important to promote programs that do not unnecessarily burden families. Assistance with condominium purchases was one example raised by the group.
- **Enforcement on Absentee Landlords:** Absenteeism on the part of residential property owners was identified as one cause of blight and neighborhood deterioration. The group felt strongly that special measures to enforce zoning and nuisance laws need to be taken.
- **Property Maintenance Assistance:** In addition to residential rehabilitation programs, other sources for assistance would benefit residential neighborhoods. Those include but are not limited to funding for lead abatement, exterior painting, fencing and landscaping.
- **Energy Assistance:** The high cost of utilities was identified as a cause of foreclosures, deferred maintenance and deterioration.
- **Education:** The focus group believed educating the public as to the availability of funds for property improvements was key to any program's success.
- **On-Site Maintenance:** The group identified specific problems with large-scale residential developments. A requirement for landlords of large apartment complexes to have on-site superintendents would alleviate property deterioration caused by deferred maintenance as well as provide incentives for renters to take responsibility for their personal actions.
- **Parental Participation:** Part of the parental responsibility should manifest itself in oversight of children and youth by parents.
- **Tenant/Landlord Training:** Related to the previous two issues is training for tenants and landlords on each group's responsibilities and ways of maximizing their living situations. Another theme that was introduced was that of training youth to provide property maintenance services. This would serve the dual purpose of youth enrichment and neighborhood beautification.
- **Neighborhood Council:** The group reminisced about the days when neighborhood block watches were present and effective. There was a strong desire to resuscitate such resources when possible.

HOMEBUYER TRAINING



Homeowners

This group identified the following needs of homeowners when considering housing development and policies:

- **Education:** This group felt strongly that while there was great interest among renters around ownership opportunities, those opportunities are not widely publicized. Information about programs for rehabilitation, restoration and other resources should be adequately shared with residents citywide.



Two-thirds of residents surveyed either were interested in home ownership or were already homeowners.

- **Reconciliation of City Records and Enforcement:** One group member noted that there are three family homes which are neighborhood nuisances that appear on land records as two-family homes. City records either need to be updated or enforcement needs to be pursued.
- **Increased Security:** Residents felt strongly that neighborhood patrols would help homeowners feel secure inside and out of their properties. The group discussed the need for a neighborhood watch.
- **Schools:** Schools were noted to have been a long-standing asset to residential communities. The group was in support of opportunities for children to walk to school rather than be bussed.
- **Neighborhood Clean-up:** The group suggested a neighborhood clean-up with local business and government participation to improve morale and investment on the part of owners.
- **Alternative Housing Types:** The group felt strongly that opportunities for homeowners should not exclude the development of condominiums. Condos might provide a more affordable option for first-time buyers.

Developers

The group, which consisted primarily of individuals involved in housing and other types of development brainstormed impediments to effective housing development.

- **Critical Mass:** The group felt strongly that it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide opportunities for housing development because not enough land is available to make the developments economically worthwhile.
- **Zoning requirements:** One member who works for a local affordable housing development corporation described a situation in which a developer was required by zoning to create unusable outdoor space, citing the issue that zoning regulations, unsympathetic to development for the greater good, imposed a hardship on the developer that few nonprofit organizations are able to navigate.
- **Need for Assistance in Assembling Urban Properties:** This issue is related to the issue of critical mass. The group emphasized the lack of public support for creating needed critical mass for affordable housing development. Scattered site development is difficult to fund, harder to develop and harder still to manage. Not-for-profit developers are, however, finding that there may be numerous contiguous properties either for sale or needing enforcement. Developers could use assistance from municipal government (among other entities) to negotiate reasonable sales prices on the open market as well as enforcement of nuisance and other laws to motivate absentee property owners.
- **Code Enforcement:** Again, code enforcement tends to create opportunities for not-for-profit developers seeking to rehabilitate at-risk properties.

After the group's presentation of issues, the larger group offered one additional suggestion that developers of large-scale projects be required to set aside land (as required by zoning or otherwise) for outdoor recreation space to serve children and families in the community.

Finally, one group discussed the impact of neighborhood issues and the practices of renters, homeowners and developers alike on the West Side / West End's established historic districts and the potential for expansion of those districts.

Historic Districts

- **Disclosure of historic designation upon property sale/disposition:** There was concern that the responsibility for property ownership in the West Side's historic districts has not been effectively communicated to new owners.
- **Rehabilitation grants for long-standing residents:** Residents felt strongly that assistance is needed by owners of historic properties for improvements and maintenance. That assistance might come in the form of low-interest loans or grants, but the goal would be to provide incentives for individual investment in property upkeep.
- **Education programs informing residents of resources available to them specifically:** Inasmuch as such programs are made available to historic district residents, they will only be as successful as efforts to market and promote them. Focus group members thought an educational forum such the NRZ workshops might also become the avenue of disclosure of design standards and enforcement.
- **Lead paint remediation assistance:** As is the case with most of Bridgeport's unimproved housing stock and any housing built before 1968, lead paint and other environmental issues plague the West Side / West End neighborhood. Obviously the process for encapsulating or abating lead is expensive. In rental properties, if a child tenant is found to have lead poisoning (regardless of where the condition may have originated) the current place of residence is tested. If dangerous levels of lead are detected, the unit must be vacated and the owner fined until such time as the problem is corrected. In the worst-case scenario, the owner is not only faced with costs associated with remediation, but they have the additional burden of fines and the inability to collect rent. This scenario is usually more than a small-scale property owner (an owner-occupant or owner of 10 or fewer units) can bear.
- **Signage introducing various historic districts:** Creating a sense of community identity and promoting that identity was important to stakeholders. Focus group members thought this might be accomplished through signage as well as the restoration of neighborhood monuments such as the fountains that exist on the east and west ends of the neighborhood.
- **Streetscape improvements:** Residents believed that historic districts required special attention to exterior details, including but not limited to decorative lighting, trees and sidewalks.
- **Boundaries:** A prominent problem with historic districts was raised which suggested that boundaries as they are currently delineated, require in some cases that properties on one side of a street abide by the requirements of the district while properties on the opposite side not have similar restrictions.

- **Target areas:** When it comes to providing incentives related specifically to historic districts, there was the sentiment that incentives should also be available to properties that are contiguous to the historic districts, particularly where the historic district boundaries are within a particular block or run down the center of the street and therefore currently only apply to one side of the street.
- **Clear design standards:** The creation of neighborhood design standards was an over-arching theme in discussions about new development, particularly as it relates to historic districts. There was strong sentiment for restrictions on the use of vinyl siding (which is not currently regulated) in the districts.
- **Marketing opportunities:** Finally, residents were compelled to promote as much as possible the historic character of the West Side.

All four groups agreed on that the following amenities and support programs are necessary:

- Standard trash containers
- Sidewalk or street sweeper/vacuum service
- Flooding controls (e.g. Park Street between Laurel and Vine)

V. Summary

Participants in the housing workshop came up with a composite list of issues to address to improve the overall quality of life in the West Side / West End. That list, melded with other provisions identified during the planning process, suggests that the following should be priorities in the neighborhood's and the City's approach to residential development and sustainability.

- Enforcement (zoning, historic district, nuisance)
- After-school programs for youth
- Improvements in public schools
- Support programs for owners in Historic Districts (façade improvement, tax credit, landscaping)
- Sidewalk repair program
- Improvements to infrastructure (bus lines, lighting, roads etc.)
- Pedestrian crosswalks/speed signs and traffic-calming devices
- Additional street lighting on residential streets
- Residential rehabilitation programs (paint, lead abatement, emergency repair, energy conservation)
- Education programs (around all enforceable ordinances)
- Increased police patrols on residential streets as well as block watches
- Incentives for beautification
- Neighborhood design standards
- Standardized trash removal, bulk trash removal and recycling

VI. Appendix

The data and input into this report comes from a myriad of sources, including:

- 2000 and 2005 census data
- Input provided during the West Side / West End Stakeholders Meetings
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, January 13, 2007
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, February 10, 2007
- Input provided through a Housing Workshop on Monday, March 26, 2007
- Input provided through a limited number of resident survey responses
- Input provided through a limited number of resident interviews
- Input on the draft provided by the Planning Committee on July 10, 2007, August 15, 2007, September 5, 2007, September 25, 2007, October 2, 2007, and October 16, 2007
- Input on the draft provided through a Public Hearing on Thursday, September 20, 2007
- Bridgeport Housing Policy Draft
- Bridgeport Draft Master Plan of Conservation and Development
- City of Bridgeport Blighted Property Report by City-Scan