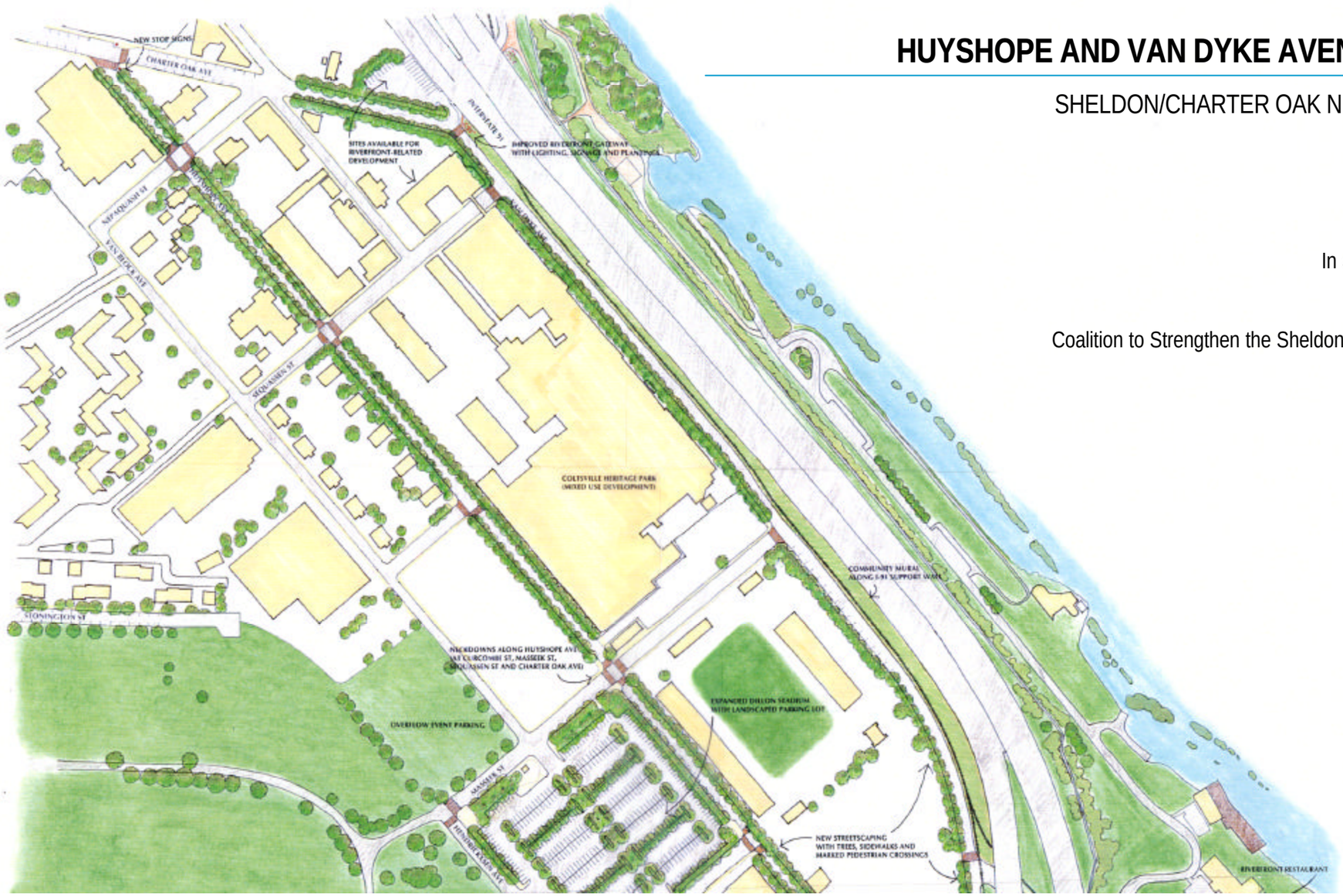

HUYSHOPE AND VAN DYKE AVENUES CORRIDOR STUDY

SHELDON/CHARTER OAK NEIGHBORHOOD, HARTFORD CT

Prepared by
Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

In association with David Mann Associates

For the City of Hartford, and the
Coalition to Strengthen the Sheldon/Charter Oak Neighborhood (CSS/CON)

June 2001

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1.0 STUDY OBJECTIVES

In 1995, the State of Connecticut established guidelines for the formation of Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs), to enable communities to locally engage in the process of planning. As one of the first Hartford neighborhoods to complete a NRZ Strategic Plan, the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood has already identified priorities for neighborhood improvements. However, in order to realize these priorities in the near future, the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood must concentrate resources on defined community initiatives.

The consulting firm of Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc. (BFJ) was retained by the City of Hartford, to help the Coalition to Strengthen the Sheldon/Charter Oak Neighborhood (CSS/CON) identify specific projects for neighborhood investment. These projects have their basis in the neighborhood issues defined in the completed Strategic Plan for the Sheldon/Charter Oak NRZ (2000), and should be considered as a supplement to the existing plan. The following urban design analysis includes four major development initiatives:

- Traffic calming on Huyshope Avenue
- Boulevard concept for Van Dyke Avenue
- Potential Dillon Stadium Expansion
- Riverfront Connections and Developments

The options for each of these projects have been discussed with the CSS/CON board and are supported by estimates of current and projected traffic generation in the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood. The second section of this study presents general cost estimates for the development initiatives, and recommendations for possible funding sources.

This document is an amendment to the CSS/CON NRZ Strategic Plan. Upon approval by the Court of common Council it will be an attachment to the document noted as “Sheldon Charter Oak NRZ, March 8, 2000”, in Section 28-196 of the Hartford Municipal Code. CSS/CON will encourage the City of Hartford to implement the recommendations contained herein and while approval of the Plan by the City of Hartford signifies an agreement in principal to the concepts presented, the City is not pre committed to any specific course of action.

Figure 1
Neighborhood Location within Hartford, CT

2.0 DEVELOPMENT HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Located on the fringe of Downtown Hartford, the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood was once the center of economic prosperity in Hartford. In 1623 it was the site of the original colonial settlement, and later it was the hub of Samuel Colt's industrial arms enterprise. During the Colt Era community activities were focused around a thriving factory complex that included the manufacturing buildings, Armsmear (the Colt home) and worker's housing. Much of this land was later willed to the City of Hartford, and was used to create Colt Park, which opened for public use in 1905, and many of the earlier buildings are recognized Hartford landmarks.

Large tracts of medium density multifamily housing are also a defining feature of the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood. Some of these housing developments, including Dutch Point, are under consideration for physical improvement with an emphasis on mixing incomes and building community. Although these developments are dense and in need of maintenance, the residents have access to Colt Park, an enviable asset in a downtown neighborhood. Other residential options in the neighborhood include multi-unit apartments, condominiums and artists live/work studios.

The neighborhood is supported by a scattering of commercial, retail and office uses along Main Street, Huyshope, Charter Oak and Wethersfield Avenues (Figure 2). Dillon Stadium, has ability to accommodate a variety of sporting events, and is located near the southern end of the Huyshope corridor. With a developer's investment, it could be adapted for several uses, including minor league baseball.

Colt Estates

Coltsville Heritage Park

The active community base is strengthened by several local cultural institutions and improvement organizations, such as the Charter Oak Cultural Center, the Church of the Good Shepherd, Coltsville Heritage Park, and the Hartford Public Library. The proposed Adriaen's Landing project would develop land just north of the Whitehead Highway for a major riverfront development effort to include a convention center and mixture of commercial uses.

CSS/CON established itself as a neighborhood organization in 1982. Earlier this year, CSS/CON completed the NRZ designation process with the approval of its Strategic Plan. In addition, the NRZ distinction enables the neighborhood to benefit from increased governmental flexibility in overcoming recognized barriers to neighborhood development, and potentially provides access to municipal funding when implementing future plans.

Kinsella School playground in Colt Park

Figure 2

Local Context Map showing Land Uses and surrounding neighborhoods

3.0 PREVIOUS PLANNING STUDIES

3.1 Riverfront Recapture

The Riverfront Recapture plan, completed in 1982, presents a unified vision for the future of the Connecticut River as a shared resource of Hartford and East Hartford. By identifying the protected riverfront area as part of a regional park system, this plan was the initial step towards changing the riverfront from an industrial and transportation corridor into a community asset. The Riverfront Recapture plan included four main objectives necessary to realizing the potential of the Hartford/East Hartford riverfront:

- To connect neighborhoods and urban areas to the water's edge, crossing expressway, rail-line and dike barriers;
- To establish riverfront attractions which will expand the region's recreational and educational opportunities;
- To link riverfront activities by means of a continuous linear park, making the entire river's edge available for biking, hiking, picnicking and exploring;
- To restore the riverfront's significance as an important part of the region's economic life (Riverfront Recapture, 1982).

The Riverfront Recapture plan included several initiatives for the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood. In the short term, the priorities for the neighborhood were identified as the construction of a riverfront restaurant, boathouse and launching facility beneath the Charter Oak Bridge (Figure 3), and the development of a new riverfront entry on the Northeast Utilities cable storage site (Figure 4). Streetscaping and decoration were considered crucial to the success of a riverfront gateway to the north of Coltsville, and it was thought that additional parking could be accommodated underneath the highway, if necessary.

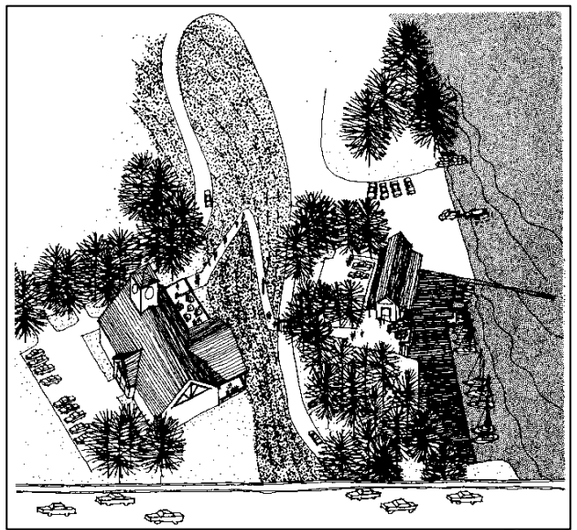


Figure 3
Riverfront Restaurant at Charter Oak Landing
Proposed in Riverfront Recapture, 1982

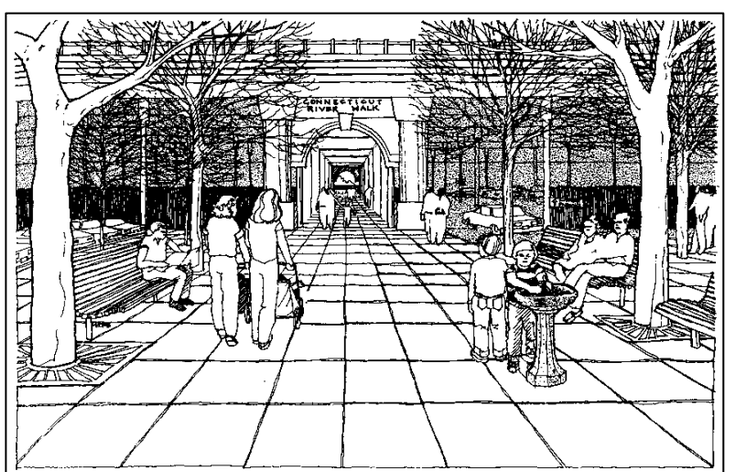


Figure 4
Riverfront Connection at the north end of Van Dyke Avenue
Proposed in Riverfront Recapture, 1982

Long term development plans for the area included proposals for both sides of the dike. Several sites were identified for residential and office development, including Coltsville, the Northeast Utilities parking lot, and the BRS (State) parking lot (owned by Coltsville, on the northwest corner of Huyshope Avenue). Riverfront Recapture also proposed that the City invest in the stability of the community by expanding maintenance efforts aimed at publicly assisted housing. The future renovation of Coltsville and Dillon Stadium were also predicted, along with the resultant increase in required parking spaces. Parking expansion was recommended for the lots directly to the north and west of Dillon Stadium. The long term vision for Riverfront Recapture also stated that attention should be paid to the design of Van Dyke, Huyshope and Charter Oak Avenues, but did not specify streetscaping initiatives.

3.2 Sheldon/Charter Oak NRZ Strategic Plan

The CSS/CON NRZ Strategic Plan "provides a policy direction for public decisions specific to the Sheldon/Charter Oak Neighborhood". The Strategic Plan presents the economic, demographic and physical condition of the neighborhood, and uses this knowledge to describe local challenges and assets. It uses this background material to define goals and strategies for the neighborhood, but stops short of identifying specific project plans. The major strategies include the following:

- Colt Park Initiative
- Traffic and Pedestrian Planning
- Van Dyke Pedestrian Corridor
- Charter Oak Avenue Gateway Park
- Pulaski Mall Renovation
- Wyllys Street Development Zone

Of these, BFJ has outlined specific projects to help realize a portion, or all of, the first three strategies listed above. In particular, this report focuses on a solution for the Van Dyke/Huyshope pedestrian corridors, the traffic and parking issues related to upgrading Dillon Stadium, and local riverfront access.

4.0 TRAFFIC DATA ANALYSIS

The City of Hartford completed traffic counts for the north and south ends of Huyshope Avenue and Van Dyke Avenue between November 13th and 14th, 2000 (Monday-Tuesday). There is a possibility that these counts reflect a slow-down from the Veteran's Day holiday earlier that weekend. Counts were taken hourly for a period of 24 hours, and recorded information about vehicle speed, vehicle type and the interval of time between separate vehicles. Figure 5 shows the relative locations of the traffic counters, and the total number of counts in a 24 hour period in both the north and southbound directions. The data is summarized in the table below.

Table 1 *– Summary of City of Hartford Traffic Data for the Van Dyke/Huyshope Corridor (November 2000)*

Count Location		Total Number of Vehicles per day	85% speed	Number of Trucks per day	Percentage Trucks	Peak Hour Count	Peak Hour
Huyshope N	Both	3448	36 MPH	373	10.82%	304	3:00 PM
	SB	1608		273	16.98%	152	8:00 AM
	NB	1840		100	5.43%	177	3:00 PM
Huyshope S	Both	1015	33 MPH	72	7.09%	106	4:00 PM
	SB	638		45	7.05%	72	4:00 PM
	NB	377		27	7.16%	44	1:00 PM
Van Dyke N	Both	2031	39 MPH	227	11.18%	244	8:00 AM
	SB	707		139	19.66%	74	12:00 PM
	NB	1324		88	6.65%	193	8:00 AM
Van Dyke S	Both	2101	43 MPH	203	9.66%	261	8:00 AM
	SB	710		90	12.68%	72	12:00 PM
	NB	1391		113	8.12%	211	8:00 AM

Van Dyke Avenue on a weekday afternoon

The key findings from this traffic analysis are:

- ***The traffic on Huyshope and Van Dyke Avenues is substantially under capacity***. Overall, the traffic utilizing the neighborhood streets is relatively low. One concern expressed by CSS/CON was the tendency of some drivers to utilize Van Dyke and Huyshope Avenues as southern "short-cuts" into downtown Hartford. While some drivers may be doing this they are relatively few in number. Traffic on both roads is well below the respective capacities of the roads. This indicates that the highway system (I-91, Whitehead Highway) is functioning well enough in peak hour to encourage most drivers to utilize the expressway system. As long as this system operates well, the local roads will continue to serve neighborhood access functions as opposed to being major arteries to downtown. For example, Van Dyke Avenue has the capacity to handle in excess of 1200 vehicles in peak hour, but traffic counts indicate that it currently handles 261 vehicles in the morning peak hour – only a fifth of its capacity.

- ***Van Dyke Avenue is a Through Street***. Traffic primarily moves through the neighborhood along Van Dyke Avenue. This finding is supported by the similar volumes of vehicles counted at the north and south ends of the street.

- ***Huyshope Avenue is a Neighborhood Street with a wider mix of uses***. Huyshope Avenue currently experiences much higher volumes of traffic at the north end of the street – over three times the number of vehicles as the southern end of the street, in the same time period. The increased activity is probably the result of the mix of uses located at the northern end of Huyshope Avenue. Whereas a recycling facility and Dillon Stadium are located south of Masseek Street, the north end of the street supports a warehousing supermarket, residential access, Kinsella School, Coltsville and access to the State Parking Lot. In the future, the southern end of Masseek street may support higher-traffic uses, but for the moment, the primary center of neighborhood vehicular activity is at the north end of Huyshope Avenue.

- ***Speeding is more common on Van Dyke Avenue***. Throughout the City of Hartford the speed limit is 30 MPH, unless otherwise posted. At the south end of Van Dyke Avenue, however, 85% of the vehicles were traveling at or below 43 MPH. Speeds were generally lower but still above the City speed limit at the north end of Van Dyke Avenue, where 85% of the vehicles are traveling below 39 MPH. By making the road appear visually smaller, through the use of trees, street amenities and wider sidewalks. it is possible to encourage drivers to slowdown without substantially decreasing the lane width or limiting the function of Van Dyke Avenue as a through street. On Huyshope Avenue the reverse pattern appears to be true – 85% of the vehicles are traveling below 36MPH at the north end, as compared to only 33 MPH at the south end. This may be the result of people exiting Charter Oak Avenue, but not slowing their speed until they are farther along Huyshope Avenue, or it may be that northbound vehicles increase in speed along Huyshope Avenue. These findings reflect the consultant teams' observation that Van Dyke Avenue serves as a more important artery for through traffic, whereas Huyshope Avenue serves a more distinctly neighborhood function.

- ***Huyshope and Van Dyke Avenues experience different peak traffic hours***. Peak traffic times along Huyshope Avenue appear to be in the early to mid afternoon, with the majority of vehicles leaving the neighborhood (moving north from the northern end and south from the southern end). Van Dyke Avenue experiences a different pattern. Along Van Dyke Avenue the peak traffic time is in the morning, around 8 AM, when most vehicles appear to be moving north, towards downtown Hartford. However, according to these traffic counts, Van Dyke Avenue continues to carry more vehicles than Huyshope Avenue, even during the afternoon hours.

- ***Truck traffic along Huyshope Avenue is strongly weighted to the north end of the street.*** Truck traffic accounts for a larger proportion of vehicles along Van Dyke Avenue, but in absolute numbers, there are more trucks at the north end of Huyshope Avenue than elsewhere along Huyshope or Van Dyke Avenues. Although truck traffic along Van Dyke Avenue appears to be evenly distributed along the length of the street, with roughly 200 trucks per day recorded, the truck traffic on Huyshope Avenue is substantially weighted to the north end of the street. Any proposed traffic calming measures along Huyshope Avenue should take into account the unbalanced distribution of truck traffic.

Truck Traffic on Huyshope Avenue

5.0 TRAFFIC IMPACTS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

In terms of assessing potential traffic impacts on the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood, the most significant proposals under consideration are Capewell Court, Riverfront Recapture, Dillon Stadium, Coltsville, and Adriaen's Landing.

5.1 Capewell Court/Riverfront Recapture

Capewell Court and Riverfront Recapture are two ongoing projects that will marginally affect traffic in the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood. A new, self-contained housing development on the Capewell properties, the Capewell Court development will have relatively little impact on neighborhood traffic, as access is provided off of Wethersfield Avenue.

A small amount of parking for Riverfront recreation should be provided in the neighborhood, as described in Section 6.3.1, but in general, there will be no appreciable increase in vehicular traffic due to the new riverfront recreation sites. However the neighborhood may notice some changes in the amount of pedestrian traffic once physical links to Riverfront have been established.

5.2 Dillon Stadium

The major parking and traffic flow issues inherent in the redevelopment of Dillon Stadium for minor league baseball use are discussed in Sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2. Approximately 1200 local parking spaces can be found to support an expanded stadium, between on-street and surface parking lots. Peak use for a stadium will occur in the evenings and on weekend, and therefore will not be in serious conflict with existing neighborhood uses. During peak hour, most traffic will travel on Huyshope and Van Dyke Avenues to Wawarme or Charter Oak Avenues.

5.3 Coltsville Heritage Park

With new renovations, parking for Coltsville Heritage Park will be almost entirely self-contained. Between on-street resources, and the Coltsville parking lots, there is ample parking for both residents and businesses. Since predicted peak traffic hours differ, Coltsville and Dillon Stadium attendees should be able to share on-street parking spaces. In the future, should the State Parking Lot be relocated, Coltsville would gain over 100 spaces in the private parking area that is now leased to the State of Connecticut.

5.4 Adriaen's Landing

Technical memoranda supporting the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Traffic Distribution Predictions for Adriaen's Landing suggest that it will not have significant adverse impact on neighborhood streets in the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood. Figure 6 shows the proposed site plan of Adriaen's Landing as of early 2000. The development will have excellent access to I-91 via the Whitehead Highway and Grove Street. According to the models presented in the EIS predictions, virtually all of the traffic for Adriaen's Landing will enter or exit the development via the Whitehead Highway, I-91 or I-84. However, the predictions show that the development will add close to 200 cars to I-91, and another 150 cars to the Whitehead Highway during the evening peak hour on a weekday. With these additional vehicles being added to the nearby highways in peak hour, the proper functioning of the interstate system is important to keeping this regional traffic off of local roads.

Table 2 – Traffic and Parking Survey of Pending Development Projects
(modified from CSS/CON Parking Committee, December 1999)

	Capewell Court	**Dillon Stadium**	**Coltsville Heritage Park**	**Riverfront Recapture**	**Adriaen's Landing**
Project					
Type	Housing	Recreational	Mixed Use	Recreational	Mixed Use
Size	105 units	5,000 seats	360,000 sf	N/A	Various
Timetable					
Construction	2001	2000	1999	TBD	2001
Complete	2001	2001	2002	TBD	2003
Operating	2001	2001	2003	TBD	Unknown
Proposed Parking					
Surface	120	1700	1000	250	0
Garage	80	0	0	0	10,000
Total need	200	1700	1000	250	10,000
Available	Unknown	Unknown	896	Unknown	10,000
Traffic					
Trips/day	100	TBD/43 games	TBD	580	TBD
Peak Hours	AM &PM	6PM-10PM Weekend	PM Weekend	12PM-4PM	TBD

6.0 PROPOSALS

BFJ has worked with the CSS/CON board to identify areas for investment and improvement. The concept plan for these improvements is shown below (Figure 6).

- Transforming Huyshope Avenue into a neighborhood street
- Creating a substantial pedestrian realm along Van Dyke Avenue
- Designing additional parking facilities and traffic flow improvements for a potential expansion of Dillon Stadium
- Connecting the neighborhood to Riverfront Recapture at the north end of Van Dyke, and at Charter Oak Landing

Given the current pace of neighborhood investment, this report also discusses several future development options and sites, including future parking options. The proposals outlined in the following sections are supported by the City of Hartford traffic generation data for the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood.

This report presents two options each for Huyshope and Van Dyke Avenues. The first option, requires minimal physical and regulatory changes to achieve the desired outcome. In both cases, implementation of the second option would require an increased resource commitment, but could provide the community with additional benefits – either in terms of traffic calming and expanded parking, or pedestrian amenities.

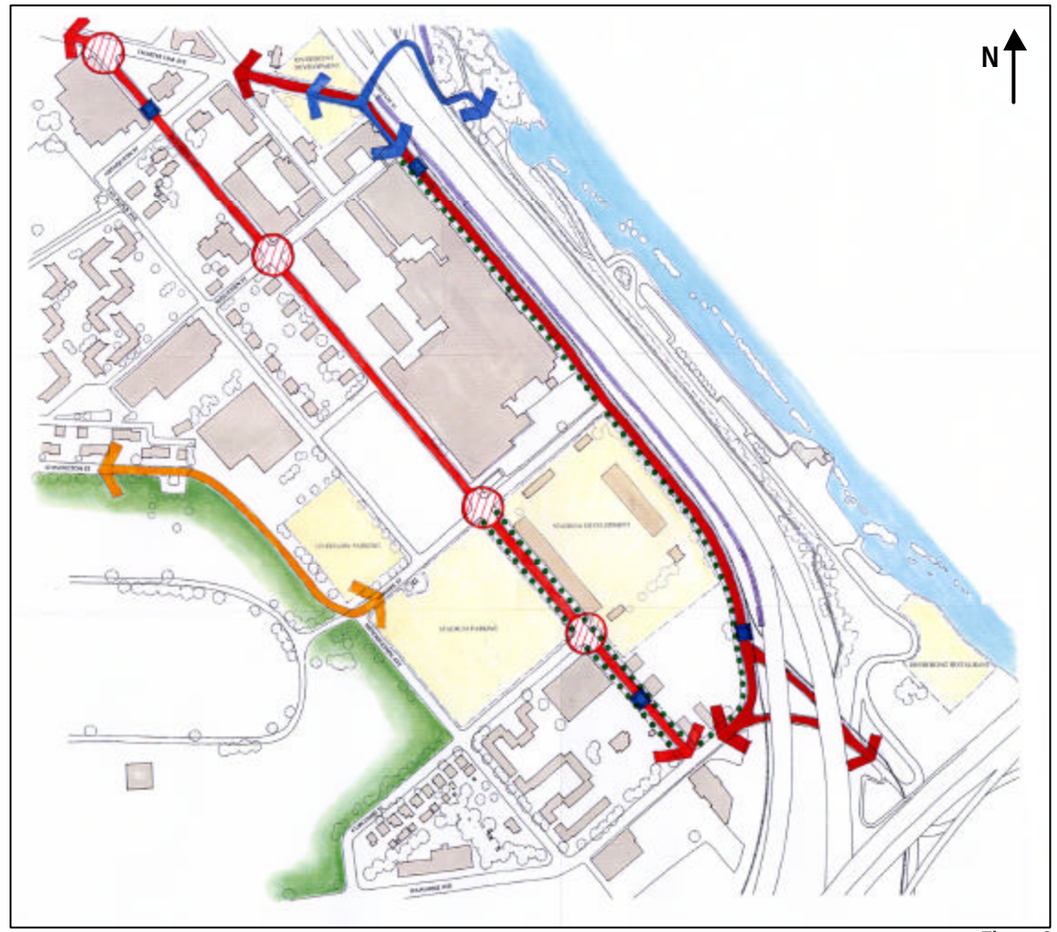


Figure 6
Van Dyke/Huyshope Corridor Concept Plan

6.1 Huyshope Avenue

Huyshope Avenue currently supports much of the commercial and community facilities of the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood, and provides access to most of the nearby housing. The avenue functions as a neighborhood street, but without active uses that face directly on to the street, drivers have a tendency to speed along to Charter Oak or Wawarme Avenues. The primary goal for planning this area, is to reinforce the concept of a street with a pedestrian dynamic.

6.1.1 Option One – Neckdowns and One On-street Parking Lane

There are several traffic-calming strategies that can be used to achieve the physical qualities of a neighborhood street. As illustrated in Figure 6, the proposal includes neckdowns for the corners of Charter Oak Avenue, Sequassen Street, Masseek Street, and Curcombe Street. No neckdown is planned for the corner of Nepaquash Street, as such a strategy would conflict with the trucks entering and exiting Kopplemanns.

Entrance to Kopplemanns, off Nepaquash Street

One key traffic safety issue identified by CSS/CON is the intersection of Charter Oak and Huyshope Avenues. The angle of this "T" shaped intersection, is such that right turns from Charter Oak Avenue onto Huyshope Avenue have a free flow movement. However, taking a left turn from Huyshope Avenue onto Charter Oak Avenue can be a difficult movement for some drivers. In particular, parked cars on the south side of Charter Oak Avenue, east of the intersection with Huyshope Avenue, restrict the visibility of vehicles turning left from Huyshope Avenue onto Charter Oak Avenue. To alleviate this the City could consider neckdowns and stop signs on the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection between Charter Oak and Huyshope Avenues (Figure 8). As a result of this measure, right turns will no longer be allowed off of Huyshope at this intersection. Parking on Charter Oak Avenue should be set back from this intersection to provide unimpaired views of oncoming traffic. Until these traffic calming measures are implemented, and an assessment of their impact has been made, stop signs are not recommended as traffic calming devices for other areas in the neighborhood.

On-street parking is currently permitted only in the evening (7pm to 7am), on the west side of Huyshope Avenue. However, having on-street parking helps to slow through traffic, as drivers become more tentative when the road appears narrower. With Option One, parking should be permitted on the west side of Huyshope Avenue at all times. By lifting the current time-of-day parking regulations, the existing 35.5 ft road would be visually narrowed to just over 24 ft wide. At those dimensions, the existing truck traffic would not be hindered, and no restriping of the road bed would be necessary. None of this additional parking should be metered, but City regulations regarding 3 hour parking limits should be maintained along Huyshope Avenue.

If the proposal for an expanded Dillon Stadium is approved and built, additional parking for games could be provided on the east side of Huyshope Avenue. Without restriping, this additional parking would effectively be located in the northbound traffic lane, and consequently should only be considered for specific high-volume events.

Figure 7
Huyshope Avenue
Neckdown at Masseek Street

Figure 8
Huyshope Avenue
Stop Sign location at Charter Oak Avenue

6.1.2 Option Two - Restriping for Two On-street Parking Lanes

The traffic calming strategies presented in Option One, are taken slightly further with Option Two. In the second option, Huyshope Avenue could be restriped to allow for on-street parking on both sides of the street. With this option, no curbing changes are required. Traffic and parking lane widths are reduced, however, in order to allow for two 10.75 ft traffic lanes and two 7 ft parking lanes. This option would require the approval of the City of Hartford engineers to be certain that the lane widths for vehicle travel and parking are acceptable. Option Two is recommended only if adequate off-street parking cannot be accommodated by future development.

Existing Road on Huyshope Avenue

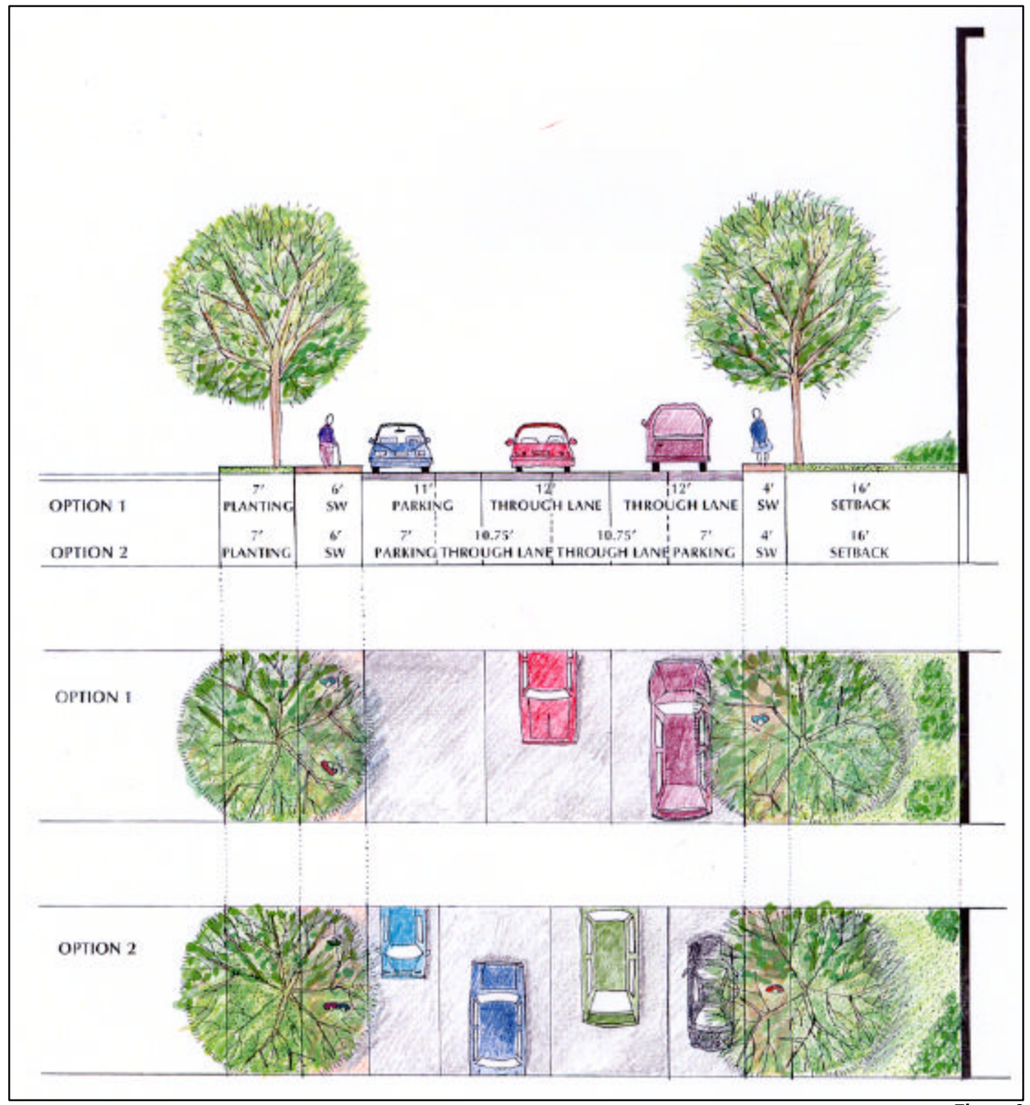


Figure 9
Huyshope Avenue
Cross Section and Plan Details of Options 1 and 2

6.1.3 Pedestrian improvements

The pedestrian realm throughout the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood is in need of serious consideration. The neckdowns proposed in Option One will create new places for pedestrian amenities, and will facilitate structured pedestrian crossings at major intersections along Huyshope Avenue. Both options should also incorporate the image of Huyshope Avenue as a tree-lined street, with rows of trees along both the east and west sidewalks. These trees will buffer pedestrians from the large scale of buildings like Coltsville, from the traffic along Huyshope, and from climatic effects.

Huyshope Avenue
South of Masseek Street

Huyshope Avenue
South of Curcombe Street

Existing Trees and Sidewalk on Huyshope Avenue

Connecting the disparate pieces is crucial when creating a pedestrian circulation system. As it exists, several links in the pedestrian circulation system for this portion of the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood are either missing or in need of repair. One such area is the strip of Huyshope between Masseek Street and Wawarme Avenue, where the eastern sidewalk is absent and the western sidewalk is in disrepair. Although this stretch of sidewalk is particularly important given the future development options for Dillon Stadium, additional pedestrian amenities and connections are necessary throughout, for a physically cohesive neighborhood. Attention should be paid to a planned sidewalk on the east side of Huyshope Avenue, next to Dillon Stadium, and this strip should be connected along Wawarme to the proposed pedestrian realm on Van Dyke Avenue. Constructing a new sidewalk in this area should not be an outrageous expense, as existing buildings have been built to the setback, and there are no major trees on this section of the avenue. The illustrated plan indicates locations for pedestrian crossings, many of which will coincide with neckdowns that reduce the crossing distance.

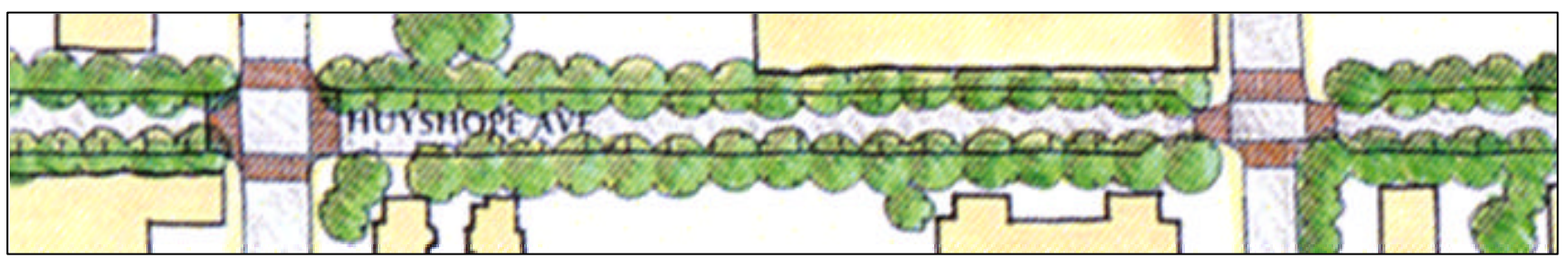


Figure 10
Huyshope Avenue
Option 2 Plan Detai

6.2 Van Dyke Avenue

Van Dyke Avenue is a connector between downtown Hartford (via Charter Oak Avenue) and the south meadows (via Wawarme Avenue and Airport/Reserve Road). Van Dyke Avenue separates Coltsville Heritage Park from Interstate-91, which runs along the Connecticut River. Due to the location at the eastern edge of the neighborhood, and the few active uses that front on to the street, Van Dyke Avenue has become the primary street for vehicular traffic through the neighborhood. Traffic data and observations suggest that most of the traffic on Van Dyke Avenue continues through the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood, moving through to downtown or south Hartford. A similar pattern is true of pedestrian traffic, as well, with occasional pedestrians, joggers and cyclists using Van Dyke Avenue as an access route between downtown and Charter Oak Landing.

Although Van Dyke Avenue could be modified to support significant pedestrian amenities or vehicle parking, the existing uses, fronting buildings and the one-sided design of the avenue suggest that smaller scale changes may be more productive. The following two options could be completed as consecutive phases, or independently. In either case, the traffic and parking lanes are not narrowed beyond the current regulations for the City of Hartford, and the pedestrian realm is considerably improved on the western edge of Van Dyke Avenue. With a "boulevard" concept along the western side, Van Dyke Avenue will maintain the characteristics of a through street, while providing an appreciable pedestrian environment and buffer. In constructing a pedestrian realm it is important to create a neighborhood supplement to Huyshope Avenue, that complements the natural appeal of the nearby Riverfront Recapture projects. This can be achieved in many ways, including the use of planters, pedestrian lighting, banners and newly planted street trees.

6.2.1 Option 1 – Pedestrian Sidewalk

As it currently exists, Van Dyke Avenue has a 6 ft sidewalk on the western side, one lane of on-street parking and two traffic lanes with a curb-to-curb distance of 38 ft. Although the sidewalk itself is quite generous, it is squashed between an unfriendly chain-link fence around Coltsville, telephone poles, streetlights and on-street parking. To the pedestrian, the sidewalk appears to be an afterthought – so much so that many of the joggers that frequent Van Dyke Avenue prefer to run on the street itself. By replacing the existing fencing with a more appealing alternative, and moving the fencing towards the building by 1 ft, the appearance of the sidewalk could be dramatically improved with relatively little expense.

The first option that BFJ considered for Van Dyke Avenue is to move the curb on the western side of the road into the existing street bed by an additional 4 ft. This will create enough space to have a green edge with planted trees between the curb and the sidewalk. With this option, enough room remains to have a 10 ft parallel parking lane along the western side of Van Dyke Avenue, and two 12 ft travel lanes. This option meets all American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) road standards.

Lunchtime jogger on the east side of Van Dyke Avenue

6.2.2 Option 2 – Shared Path

Another option for the same street would be to move the curb 7 feet into the road bed. With this additional space, there would be enough room to include both a green edge along the western side of Van Dyke Avenue, and a large enough pedestrian zone for a shared use path for cyclists, joggers and pedestrians. A path width of 8-12 ft satisfies AASHTO standards for a two-way shared use path. For this specific case, it is justifiable to use a smaller dimension because bicycle and pedestrian use is expected to be low and maintenance uses will not be in conflict with the path on a regular basis. With an extended sidewalk, the western edge of Van Dyke Avenue would also be large enough to hold stalls and carts for flea markets and local artisan sales in good weather. Even though Van Dyke Avenue has potential as a pedestrian friendly street, may be unwise to divert resources towards creating a third pedestrian zone in such proximity to Huyshope Avenue and the Riverfront Recapture projects. By extending the sidewalks to create a multi-use path, Van Dyke Avenue can accommodate needed neighborhood uses, such as safe areas for commuter cycling and artisan exhibition space, without competing with the local character of Huyshope Avenue.

On-street parking is still recommended for the western side of Van Dyke Avenue, but in this case the parking lane width will be reduced to 8 ft. Hopefully a slight reduction in the curb-to-curb distance (without decreased travel lane widths) will encourage drivers to decrease their speeds, as the on-street parking and tree-lined buffer will create the illusion that the road is narrower than it is today. As in the first option, through traffic lanes remain 12 ft wide.

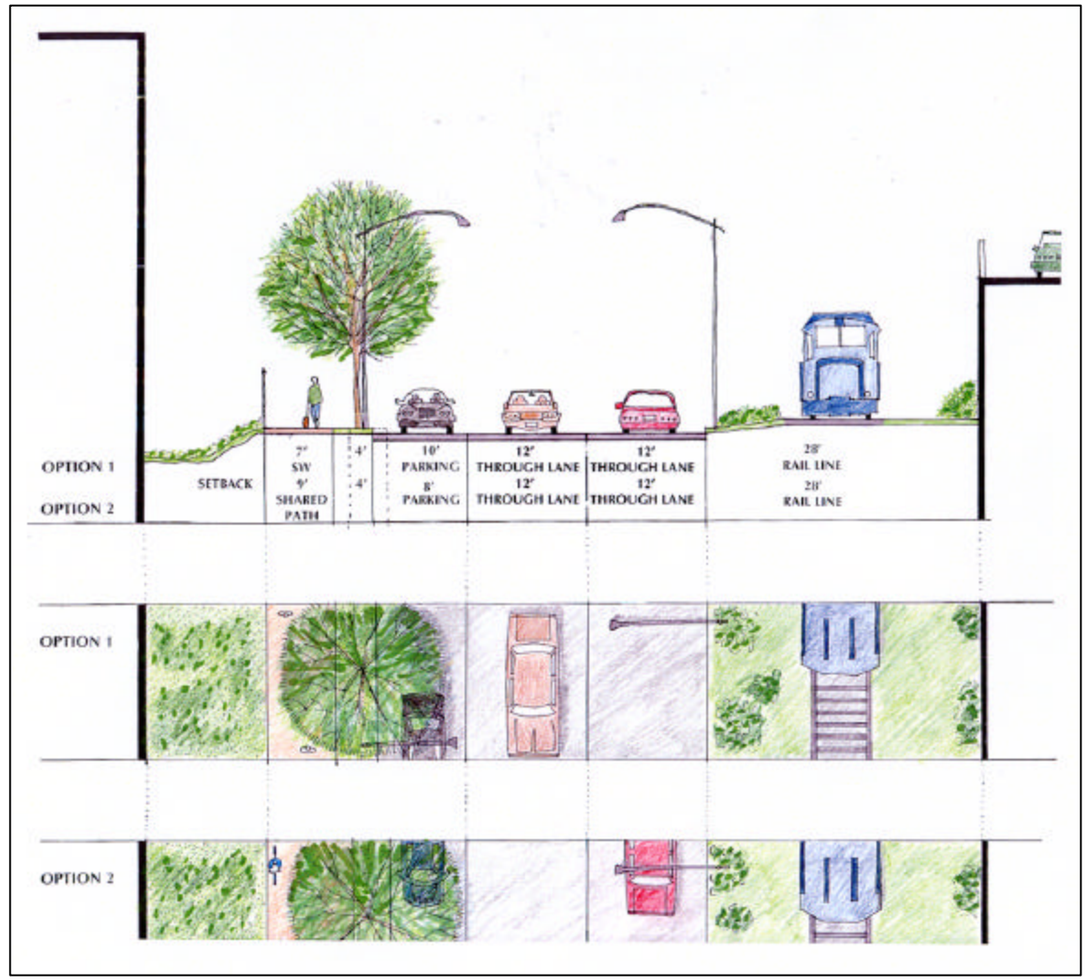


Figure 11
Van Dyke Avenue
Cross Section and Plan Detail of Options 1 and 2

6.2.3 Other Improvements

Beyond the reinvestment efforts for the existing pedestrian realm along Van Dyke Avenue, there are several other areas of concern. A few of these other opportunities are described below and shown on the concept plan.

- The existing chain-link fence that encloses the Coltsville Heritage Park should be replaced with an equally-functional, but more aesthetic alternative, such as wrought-iron style fencing. Even such a simple change as replacing the existing fencing will produce a huge perceptual improvement in the pedestrian experience of Van Dyke Avenue.

- Unfortunately, the few pedestrian amenities that exist along Van Dyke Avenue stop at Masseek Street. The existing sidewalk should be extended from Masseek Street to Wawarme Avenue, and any treatments (such as the options presented above) that are applied to Van Dyke Avenue north of Masseek Street should be continued along the sidewalk extension.

- A following section discusses the merits of a connection, under I-91, between the north and south ends of Van Dyke Avenue and the Connecticut riverfront. Due to the "through street" character of Van Dyke Avenue, pedestrian crossings are not suggested with the same frequency as recommended for Huyshope Avenue. However, if successful connections are to be made between the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood and the newly restored riverfront, marked crossings are required for the north and south ends of Van Dyke Avenue.

Coltsville Fencing along Van Dyke Avenue

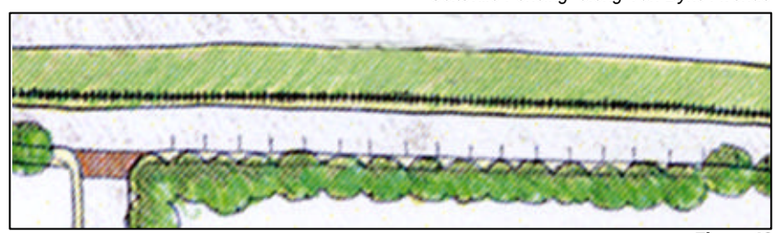


Figure 12
Van Dyke Avenue
Plan Detail for Option 2, with sidewalk south of Masseek Street

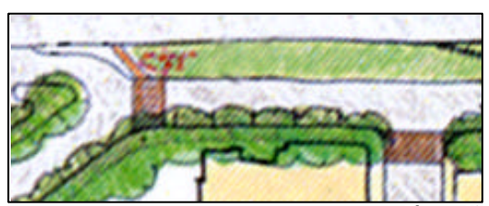
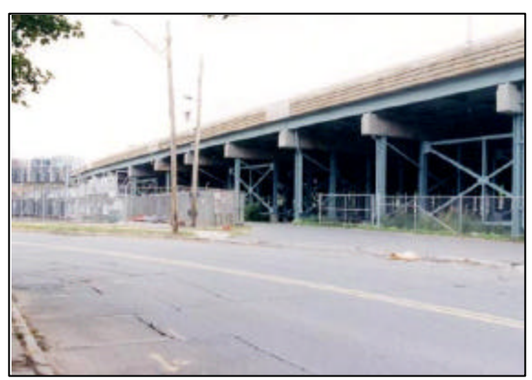


Figure 13
Van Dyke Avenue
Proposed Northern Pedestrian Crossings



Northern Crossing of Van Dyke Avenue

- CSS/CON has repeatedly mentioned the plans for a mural along the eastern edge of Van Dyke Avenue (on the retaining wall that supports I-91). It is the consultant's opinion that although plans for Van Dyke Avenue should include a community mural on this site, direct pedestrian access to the eastern edge of Van Dyke Avenue could be problematic and dangerous. Sidewalks or shared use pathways should all be weighted to the western edge. Direct pedestrian access to the mural could be safely provided either along the dike at the north end of Van Dyke Avenue, or the approach to Charter Oak Landing at the south end of Van Dyke Avenue, where the pedestrian connections are adjacent to the mural and there is sufficient separation between the rail line and the mural wall.

Van Dyke Avenue
Existing Support Wall for I-91

Van Dyke Avenue
Mural Concept along I-91

Van Dyke Avenue
Mural Concept along I-91

6.3 Potential Stadium Development

After meetings with potential stadium developers (Flyball, Inc.) and discussions with members of the CSS/CON parking committee and the City of Hartford Planning Division, it appears that there are several contentious issues surrounding the redevelopment of Dillon Stadium. These issues range from indecision on whether Dillon Stadium is the right location for a minor league baseball team to searching the neighborhood for the required number of available parking spaces (Table 3).

6.3.1 Parking Issues

Table 3 lists the requirements and availability of parking spaces for an expanded Dillon Stadium. All of the available spaces listed below are illustrated on the final neighborhood plan.

The NRZ Plan for the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood identifies Colt Park East land as a future green space to be added to the existing Colt Park. With the possibility of stadium development on the adjacent block, however, this land has become a perfect site for a future surface parking facility, to be managed by the stadium developer. Although a viable surface parking facility would likely have to be paved to reduce maintenance costs, it is possible to design the parking lot to have tree-lined medians and edges, so that from a distance the parking lot appears to be continuous with Colt Park. A new parking lot with natural plantings, designed to move pedestrians towards the stadium entrances and marked crossings, could hold roughly 530 cars (Figure 14). Without the catalyst of stadium development, only half of this paved parking area could be constructed, with the side closest to Colt Park remaining green. This parking lot should be viewed as a flexible-use area, which could support other neighborhood events, like a farmers market. The heavily landscaped plan should set a standard of design for the rest of the neighborhood parking areas to follow.

Another 190 spaces in an overflow lot just north of Masseek Street (currently used primarily by Kinsella School), could be permitted during game time only. This parking area should also be tree-lined, but should remain turf instead of concrete, as an occasional use does not warrant paving designated park land.

Existing Conditions of Colt Park East Land
Site of Proposed Green Parking Lot for Dillon Stadium

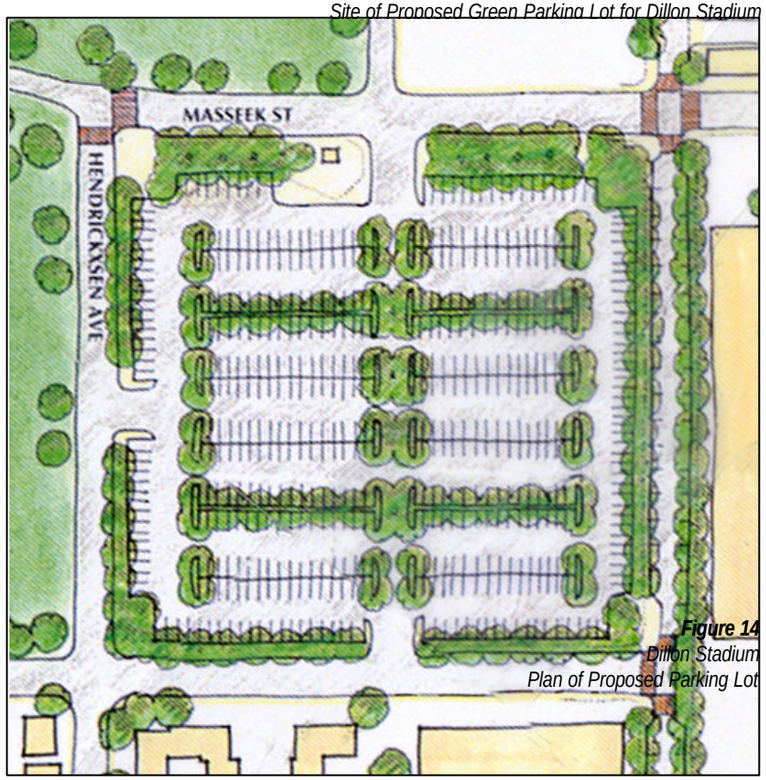


Figure 14
Dillon Stadium
Plan of Proposed Parking Lot

Scattered throughout the neighborhood, there are several underutilized parking resources which could be combined with the existing stadium parking with the assistance of a shuttle bus or trolley service. In an effort to minimize additional surface parking, other existing resources could contribute to stadium parking when simultaneous events are not scheduled (peak stadium use is expected to occur on evenings and weekends). Parking resources like those for Kinsella School and the State/Coltsville lot generally operate at different times than the peak use hours for the new Dillon Stadium. In the event that the State Parking Lot could be relocated to another nearby site, the lot that the State rents from Coltsville could become shared parking for Coltsville residents and businesses, and stadium event attendees.

Parking for Dillon Stadium VIPs and staff could probably be designed into the stadium property itself. Some sites, such as the Batch Plant and other Huyshope Avenue properties are in disrepair, and could be asked to share their parking resources. Generally, this approach is recommended over building entirely new surface parking facilities, as the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood already has extensive surface parking facilities that are only used intermittently. In addition, there is virtually unlimited on street parking available on Wawarme Avenue, Locust Street and other South Meadows streets.

The Northeast Utilities Parking Lot is the largest undeveloped parcel of land in the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood. Located at the north end of Van Dyke Avenue, the Northeast Utilities site is a promising site for Riverfront related development. Although the existing parking lot could not contribute to stadium parking without a shuttle bus or trolley system in place, the southern 20 feet of the Northeast Utilities site (currently a storage facility for transformers) is a promising site for Riverfront parking, with the potential to expand further. Parking is not the only option for this site, but a portion of the lot is a logical place to encourage a smaller, green parking area (as illustrated on the final plan).

Table 3 *– Parking Requirements and Availability for Dillon Stadium Development (est. 350sf/space)*

Requirement for Stadium Use	**Number of Parking Spaces**
City of Hartford	1250
Stadium Developers	1700
Available for Stadium Use	
Proposed Stadium Parking Lot	533
Proposed Overflow Lot	190 (estimated)
On-Street Parking	
Stonington Street	154 (estimated)
Huyshope Avenue, Option 1	99
Huyshope Avenue, Option 2 (Option 1 with 98 additional game-time parking spaces)	197
Van Dyke Avenue	88
Subtotal Available	*1162 (1050 south of Sequassen St, West of Hendrickxsen Ave)*
Potential Resources for Stadium Use (CSS/CON Traffic and Parking Committee, 2000)	
Kinsella School	85
BRS (State)/Coltsville Lot	200
Northeast Utilities Lot	350 (with shuttle)
Batch Plant (Huyshope Ave)	55
Newgate Oil (Huyshope Ave)	65
Construction Co. (Huyshope Ave)	155
Miller's Junk Yard (Huyshope Ave)	160
Northeast Utilities (Proposed Riverfront Parking)	20
Bulkeley High School (Wethersfield Ave)	675 (estimated, with shuttle)
Sub-total Resources	*1660 (740 without shuttle)*

6.3.2 Traffic Flow

The Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood currently experiences more than adequate levels of service on all local streets. In order to maintain these standards during Dillon Stadium events, though, temporary traffic control measures may need to be implemented:

- *Entrance restrictions for new stadium parking* - Although four parking lot entrances are possible for the stadium parking lot on Colt Park East, three entrances would be sufficient for the capacity and use pattern, with the logical entrance closure being along Huyshope Avenue. Periodic entrance closures are also an option, including the possibility of using only one entrance gate, but creating one-way exits and roads to correspond with the exiting of the stadium. With that option, Curcombe and Masseek Streets between Hendrickxsen and Huyshope Avenues would become one-way eastbound.

- *Restricted Use Roads* - Although future street closures remain a possibility, any recommendations for street closures would be premature until the stadium use is fully defined. Temporary closure of nearby streets, such as Masseek Street between Huyshope and Van Dyke Avenues, may be useful if many community events are held at Dillon Stadium.

6.4 Riverfront Connections And Development

Now that the Hartford Riverfront Recapture Project is underway, it would be a missed opportunity if CSS/CON did not make every effort to participate in the natural revitalization efforts. The riverfront has always been a feature of the neighborhood, and as a local stakeholder, CSS/CON should advocate for improved riverfront access. A complete riverfront loop faces only a couple of obstacles, including the overflow conduit opposite Coltsville, a narrow passageway at the pumping station (pedestrian flow could be diverted across a pier; bulkhead supports are already in place) and the Park River Outflow. Consequently, this report recommends locations for pedestrian connections from the neighborhood to the riverfront, and local development sites for riverfront related enterprises. CSS/CON should attempt to find funding sources for this construction as part of the ongoing riverfront initiatives in Hartford.

6.4.1 Van Dyke Gateway

As originally outlined in the Riverfront Recapture report (BFHK, 1982), a riverfront connection at Sequassen Street is a feasible option. A connection at the north end of Van Dyke Avenue would cross under the supports for I-91 and over the rail line, running parallel to the existing service road. For this path to be implemented as shown in Figure 16, the concrete baffles that surround the tracks would have to be torn down, and reasonable precautions would have to be taken to ensure the safety of pedestrians using the at-grade crossings. However, given the intermittent train service, conflicts are unlikely. On the eastern side of I-91, this pedestrian link could follow an existing trail over the dike and connect with the completed path leading towards Charter Oak Landing (Figure 18).

In addition, given the community support for the Van Dyke Avenue mural, this initiative could continue along the dike and under the highway at both the north end of the neighborhood and at Charter Oak Landing (Figure 19).

Pumping Station on the Connecticut River

Existing Service Road under I-91

Existing Trail on the East side of the Dike

Existing Trail on the West side of the Dike

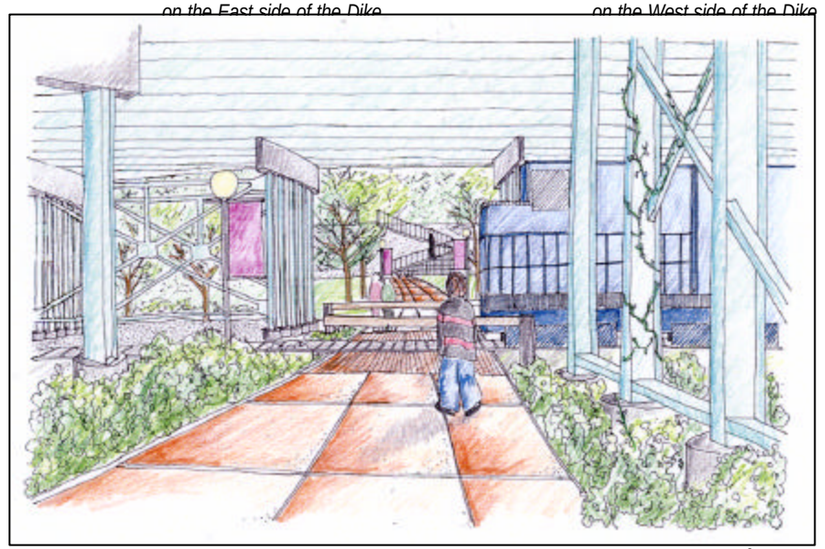


Figure 15
Sketch of Proposed Riverfront Connection

6.4.2 Charter Oak Landing

The existing connection between Charter Oak Landing and the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood is marginal. This connection should be improved with sidewalks that extend along Van Dyke and Wawarme Avenues, and continue under the highway, as shown in the illustrated plan. As discussed in Section 5.2 above, on-street parking should also extend along both avenues, so that people can walk to from their vehicles to events at Charter Oak Landing. Additional lighting should also be provided, in keeping with neighborhood streetscaping efforts, to improve the aesthetics and safety of the underpass. If possible, the lighting standards, fixtures and street amenities that are being used as part of Riverfront Recapture should be extended through these connections and into the neighborhood streets. This will aid in highlighting the physical proximity of the riverfront, and create a comfortable path from the riverfront walk into the neighborhood.

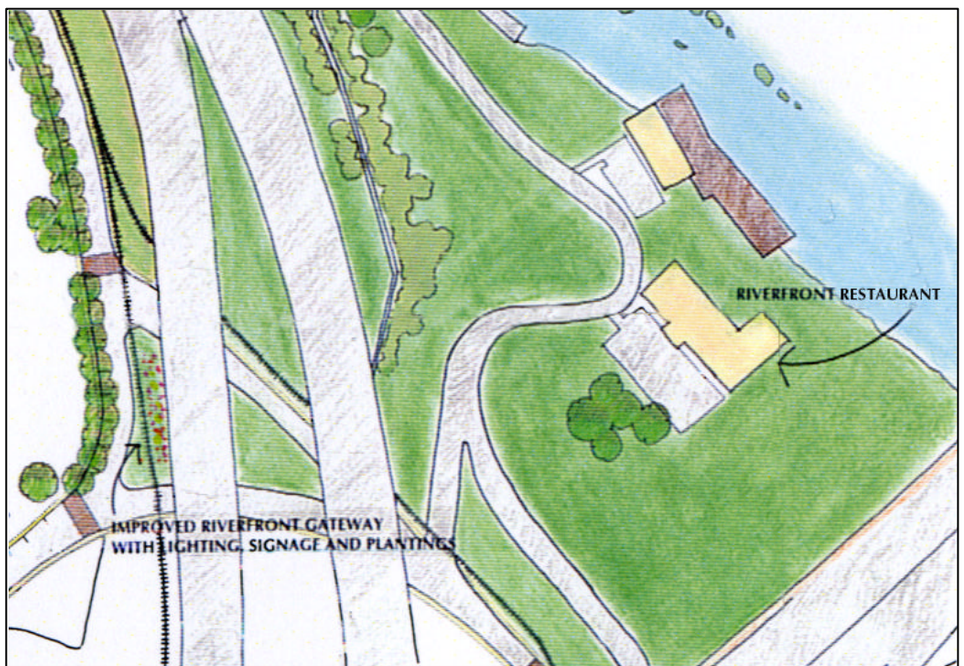


Figure 17
Plan Detail of Southern Connection to Riverfront

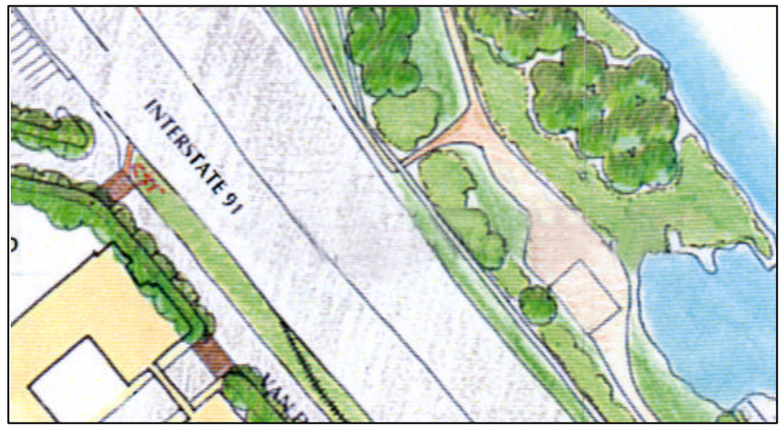


Figure 16
Plan Detail of Northern Connection to Riverfront

Existing Connection to Charter Oak Landing

6.4.3 Future Development Options

Several sites on the edges of the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood would profit from riverfront related development. Ideas for three of these sites are outlined below:

- *Restaurant Site* – The Riverfront Recapture report identified a site at the edge of the neighborhood as a possible riverfront-related commercial site. This remains a viable option for neighborhood development, and is once again identified as a future initiative for CSS/CON (Figure 3).

- *Trolley Line* – Although this idea has been revisited frequently in recent years, it is worth mentioning again, given the proposals for revitalizing the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood. The rail line along Van Dyke Avenue could alternately be used as a trolley or streetcar line. This could allow people to view the mural, or to access the neighborhood and riverfront without private transportation. As a trolley, it would primarily service the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood on event days or for tourism, possibly to connect outlying parking sites to Dillon Stadium or the riverfront. To increase ridership, this trolley could also run along the tracks connecting the neighborhood to Downtown Hartford.

- *BRS (State) Lot and Northeast Utilities* – These sites are mentioned above as potential parking sites for riverfront or stadium development. Another option would be to leave them for parking as an interim use, but allow the opportunity to develop them further when the neighborhood needs other services. With the redevelopment of Coltsville, future riverfront connections and the new stadium development, these two sites would be ideal for related commercial or residential development. Other sites which could also be considered for similar development include many of the lots south of Curcombe and Dillon Stadium, between Hendrickxsen and Van Dyke Avenues.

Figure 18
Proposed Plan for the Sheldon/Charter Oak Neighborhood

7.0 COST ESTIMATES

The two tables on the following pages list the preliminary cost estimates for the recommendations made in this report. The estimates are unit costs meant to give "order of magnitude" estimates. Detailed cost estimates will need to be developed after the NRZ chooses specific development options and detailed designs are developed. The preliminary cost estimates presented were developed by BFJ after conversations with City of Hartford engineers.

Table 4 shows the assumptions made for each of the unit costs. Table 5 provides an overall estimate for each proposal. An additional 25% of the construction costs should be added to the estimates below to cover soft costs (detailed design). The overall costs of the Phase I proposals can be summarized as follows:

- Huyshope Ave. improvements: $440,000
- Van Dyke Avenue improvements: $150,000
- Dillon Stadium Parking: $315,000
- Riverfront Connections/Parking: $135,000

8.0 APPROVALS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Major funding for implementing the recommendations of this report could come from both public and private sources. Public monies include the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which is the major federal financial source for transportation projects. This federal funding can now be used not only for roadway improvements but also for bicycle and pedestrian systems. Traffic calming recommendations can also be funded through the Surface Transportation Program (STP) monies. These federal monies are controlled by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG). It is a competitive process and CSS/CON will need to present specific applications to CRCOG.

A second major federal program is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), administered through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). CDBG monies may be used for infrastructure improvements, such as streetscape plans, in areas that are income qualified. CSSCON would need to apply through the City of Hartford for this funding source.

Finally a significant component of the recommendations contained in this report relates to the Riverfront area. Riverfront Recapture Inc. has an excellent track record of raising private money and matching it with public contributions from the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and the State of Connecticut. CSSCON should establish implementation priorities relating to the riverfront through discussions with Riverfront Recapture Inc.

Table 4 *–Estimated Costs for Proposed Improvements*

Amenity	**Distance or Amount (approximate)**	**Cost per unit (approximate)**	**Estimated Cost**
Crosswalk striping	920 feet	$5/linear ft	$4,600
New sidewalk south of Masseek St.			
Huyshope Ave, west side	1090 feet	$25/linear ft	$27,250
Huyshope Ave, east side	530 feet		$13,250
Van Dyke Ave	975 feet		$24,375
New curbing			
Van Dyke Ave	2500 feet	$30/linear ft	$75,000
		($35/linear ft with new pavers)	($87,500)
Restriping of traffic lanes			
Huyshope Ave	3150 feet	$5/linear ft	$15,750
Neckdowns			
Huyshope Ave	12 neckdowns	$15,000/neckdown	$180,000
Charter Oak Ave	1 neckdown		$15,000
Stop Signs			
At the intersection of Charter Oak and Huyshope Avenues	2 stop signs	$1000/stop sign	$2,000
New Parking Lots			
Dillon Stadium	536 spaces	$4000/space	$214,000
Riverfront (NE Utilities)	20 spaces		$80,000
North Riverfront Crossing			
Under highway (including the cost of taking down existing wall)	210 feet	$100/linear ft	$21,000
Upgrade path to Riverfront	300 feet		$30,000
New Trees			
Dillon Stadium Parking	68 trees in center 66 trees along perimeter	$750/tree for 3”caliper trees	$51,000 $49,500
Van Dyke Ave south of Masseek St	24 trees		$18,000
Van Dyke Ave north of Masseek St	41 trees		$30,750
Huyshope	200 trees		$150,000
South Riverfront Crossing			
Sidewalk	120 feet	$25/linear ft	$3,000

***Table 5** – Estimated Costs for Complete Proposals*

Proposal	Amenities	Total Estimated Cost
Riverfront Connections	▪ 1 striped crosswalk ▪ Upgraded sidewalks and paths under highway	$54,150 (does not include the cost of lighting and signage)
Huyshope Avenue (Option I)	▪ 13 neckdowns ▪ 200 trees ▪ 2 stop signs at Charter Oak Ave ▪ 18 striped crosswalks ▪ Extended east and west sidewalks to Wawarme Ave	$440,100
Huyshope Avenue (Option II – Same as option I with restriped traffic lanes)	▪ 13 neckdowns ▪ 200 trees ▪ 2 stop signs at Charter Oak Ave ▪ 18 striped crosswalks ▪ Extended east and west sidewalks to Wawarme Ave ▪ Restriped traffic lanes for on-street parking on both sides	$455,850
Van Dyke Avenue (Option I)	▪ Extended west sidewalk to Wawarme Ave ▪ 65 trees ▪ 5 striped crosswalks ▪ New curbing (4 ft)	$149,275
Van Dyke Avenue (Option II – Same as Option 1 with a multi-use path)	▪ New curbing extended to include a paved, multiuse path (7ft) ▪ Extended west sidewalk to Wawarme Ave ▪ 65 trees	$161,775
Stadium Parking Lot	▪ 536 parking spaces ▪ Landscaped with trees and medians	$314,900
Riverfront Parking Lot on NE Utilities site	▪ 20 parking spaces	$80,000

APPENDIX: Stonington Street Extension Options

The connection of Stonington Street to Hendrickxsen Avenue, via the perimeter of Colt Park, is an option that should be given consideration in conjunction with future development proposals for the neighborhood. Some of the advantages and disadvantages to this connection are described below, followed by a few examples of other projects where similar street connections have been made or proposed. It is estimated that Stonington Street connection, consisting of 900ft of new road ($600/linear ft), would cost approximately $540,000. This project may be eligible for federal funding though the Hope VI and TEA-21 programs. The approximate route for the proposed extension is shown in Figure A3.

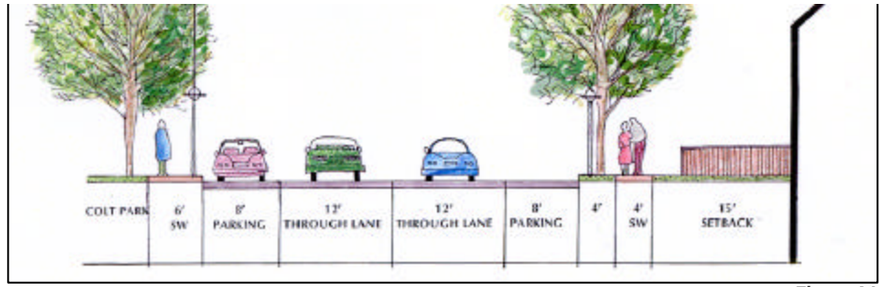


Figure A1
Stonington Street
Cross Section of extended street

Advantages

- *Reconnecting the Neighborhood* – At present, the homes along Curcombe Street, Hendrickxsen, Wawarme and southern Huyshope Avenues are somewhat isolated from the rest of Hartford. Connecting Stonington Street to the neighborhood better integrates the area to the rest of the City.

- *Service and Emergency Access* – A reconnected street gives multiple access points to the neighborhood which can increase accessibility by service and emergency vehicles.

- *Park Access/Safety* – The reconnection of Stonington Street creates a ring road around Colt Park. This increases the visibility of park activities, an approach taken with Goodwin Park, and improves park access for the community. This boulevard would physically connect the Dutch Point residences to the rest of the neighborhood, and would create an alternative pedestrian link between Wethersfield Avenue and the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood.

- *Consistency with Principles of New Urbanism* – The neo-traditional or new urbanist approach to the neighborhood seeks to reconnect and open up the neighborhood with traditional streets and sidewalks. This approach is consistent with current federal Hope VI public housing programs and with TEA-21 funding.

Disadvantages

- *Separates Kinsella School from Colt Park* – An extension of Stonington Street would separate Kinsella School from Colt Park. In the event that the street is eventually connected this problem can be mitigated by creating a neckdown an pedestrian crosswalk.

- *Increased traffic on Stonington Street* – Stonington Street has relatively little traffic and is operating well below the capacity of the street. Nevertheless, opening the street will slightly increase traffic.

- *Potential for increased speeds* – Creating a through street could lead to slightly increased speeds, if traffic calming measures are not implemented simultaneously. Two appropriate traffic calming techniques for this type of street would be neckdowns, as recommended new Kinsella School, and speed humps.

- *Signalized intersection at Stonington Street and Wethersfield Avenue* – Subject to a City warrant study, the intersection of Stonington Street and Wethersfield Avenue would probably have to be signalized in the future if this extension were to be completed.

Street Extension Examples

- *Imperial Ave Connector, Westport CT* – The drawing below illustrates a proposed connector road between downtown Westport's Library area and an existing commuter parking lot (part of which is a proposed sire for a new YMCA).

- *Rivington Street Connector, Baruch Houses NYC* – The Rivington Street Connector is a plan by the New York City Housing Authority to reconnect old neighborhood streets through Baruch houses.

- *Dock Street Connector, Stamford CT* – This connector road has been proposed by the City of Stamford for the area just south of I-95. It's purpose is to keep east-west traffic near I-95, and out of the south end neighborhoods.

- *Jackson Street Connector, Waterbury, CT* – The Naugatuck Valley Development corporation is requesting consultant services to develop a Conceptual Development Strategy and Municipal Development Plan (MDP) regarding a proposed connector road to link Thomaston Avenue to Jackson Street in Waterbury, CT. The new Jackson Street connector would bisect an aging and partially vacant industrial district , the Freight Street Redevelopment Area, just west of the City's downtown. It is envisaged that the new connector will help to revitalize the area.

- *Bronx River Road Connector, Soundview Houses NYC* – At Soundview Houses in the South Bronx, the New York City Housing Authority is discussing the reconnection of a "mapped" but unpaved street. This will provide a ring road around the existing Soundview Park, provide housing sires for new townhomes, and reconnect an existing neighborhood southeast of the development. The concept is very similar to the option for Stonington Street.

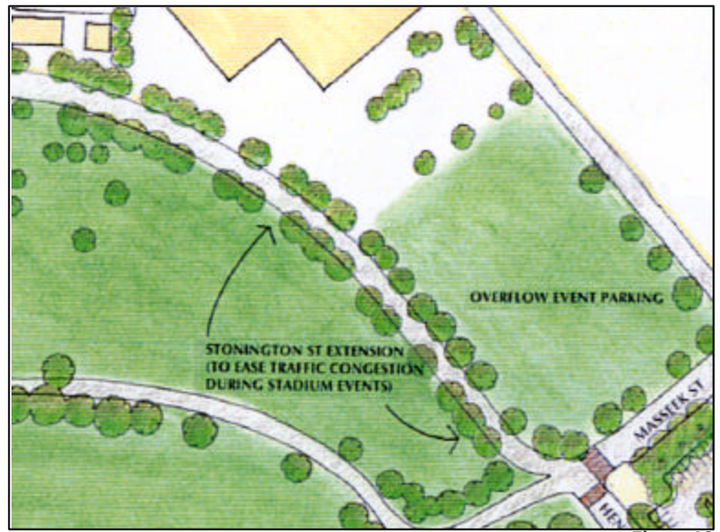


Figure A2
Stonington Street
Plan detail of extended street

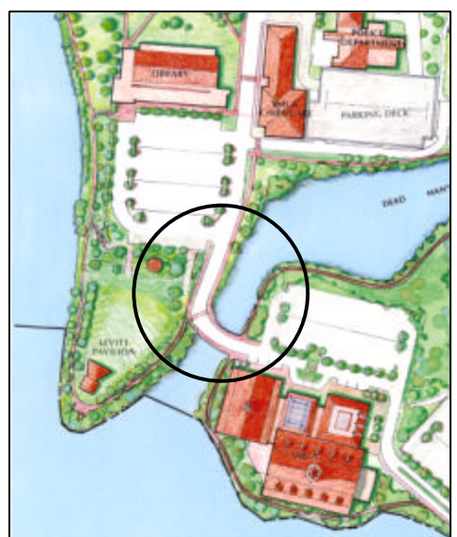


Figure A3
Plan detail of imperial Avenue Connector
Westport, CT

Figure A4
Plan detail of Rivington Street Connector
Baruch Houses, NYC

Figure A3
Proposed Plan for the Sheldon/Charter Oak Neighborhood, including an extension of Stonington Street

HUYSHOPE AND VAN DYKE AVENUES CORRIDOR STUDY

SHELDON/CHARTER OAK NEIGHBORHOOD
HARTFORD, CT

JUNE 2001

Acknowledgements:

James Sequin, Chief Planner, City of Hartford

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