

8. South End Plan

As discussed within this report and in previous strategic planning documents prepared for the South End, a primary issue for area residents is to strengthen the best qualities of the existing environment. Several overall goals will help to drive the strengthening of the neighborhood. Within each goal, a number of strategies are highlighted to achieve the overall objective of neighborhood improvement. Specific projects have not been identified in order to allow the NRZ Committee to determine immediate actions as issues change.

The opportunities to strengthen the neighborhood are highlighted below. The NRZ Committee will work to execute the following Goals and Strategies:

COMMUNITY BUILDING STRATEGIES

The South End neighborhood has a variety of attractive elements that will help to retain its stability. For example, the housing stock is in relatively good condition, compared to other parts of the City, Franklin Avenue continues to be a regional draw for consumers desiring quality restaurants and the industrial areas are largely occupied. These features should be preserved and enhanced where possible. Maintaining high quality public safety is important for the neighborhood. The NRZ expects that improvements to public safety will create a presence in the South End. It is also important to address the needs of the elderly population who remain in the neighborhood.

Goal: Advantageously build the community from within.

Strategies:

- Enhance property security and police protection.
- Support Hartford's Community Court.
- Monitor the Metzner Center expansion and potential Goodwin Park pool enclosure capital projects to their completion.
- Advocate for the creation of a multi-purpose community center in the South End; any closing of a school building in the South End should be considered for this re-use.
- Support in-home services for the elderly through South End Community Services.
- Expand infant and toddler day care services.
- Open schools for community activities during non-school hours.
- Make organizational linkages with other groups, such as Parent/Teacher Organizations, South End Community Services, South End Neighborhood Action Project, South Meadows Problem Solving Committee, etc.

- Monitor quality of life issues in the South End, such as access to health care, emergency medical response, library services, community policing, etc. to ensure that the NRZ area is adequately covered and served.
- Initiate a process for the NRZ to be informed regarding all development issues and City actions in the South End.

Goal: Address public safety concerns.

Strategies:

- Work to maintain a safe environment in public facilities and neighborhood parks (Goodwin and Columbus parks).
- Support improvements to public safety initiatives in the South End.
- Advocate to retain community services officer(s) in the South End.
- Support Community Court programs that benefit the neighborhood.

RESIDENTIAL STRATEGIES

The most important issue for the South End Neighborhood is to eliminate vacant and boarded up buildings. Such blight reduces the passion that residents hold for their neighborhood. A proactive effort should be undertaken to provide property owners with home and building improvement program information. A quick process to identify and condemn unsafe buildings is also encouraged. The strategies listed below focus on reducing deteriorated conditions to strengthen the neighborhood's heritage. It is also important for the neighborhood to retain the senior population living in the area, with appropriate accommodations and support services.

Goal: Improve the residential quality of the neighborhood.

Strategies:

- Increase home ownership rates.
- Identify and demolish derelict buildings.
- Advocate the development of senior housing/assisted living in the South End at the following potential sites: 815 Wethersfield Avenue, 163 Preston Street, or 536 Wethersfield Avenue. There is also the potential for creating a larger development site by combining the proposed Senior Center site at 990 Wethersfield Avenue with the adjacent vacant property at 1000 Wethersfield Avenue, for a assisted living senior housing complex.
- Work to make creative use of vacant lots for private open spaces and off street parking to assist in lowering residential density.

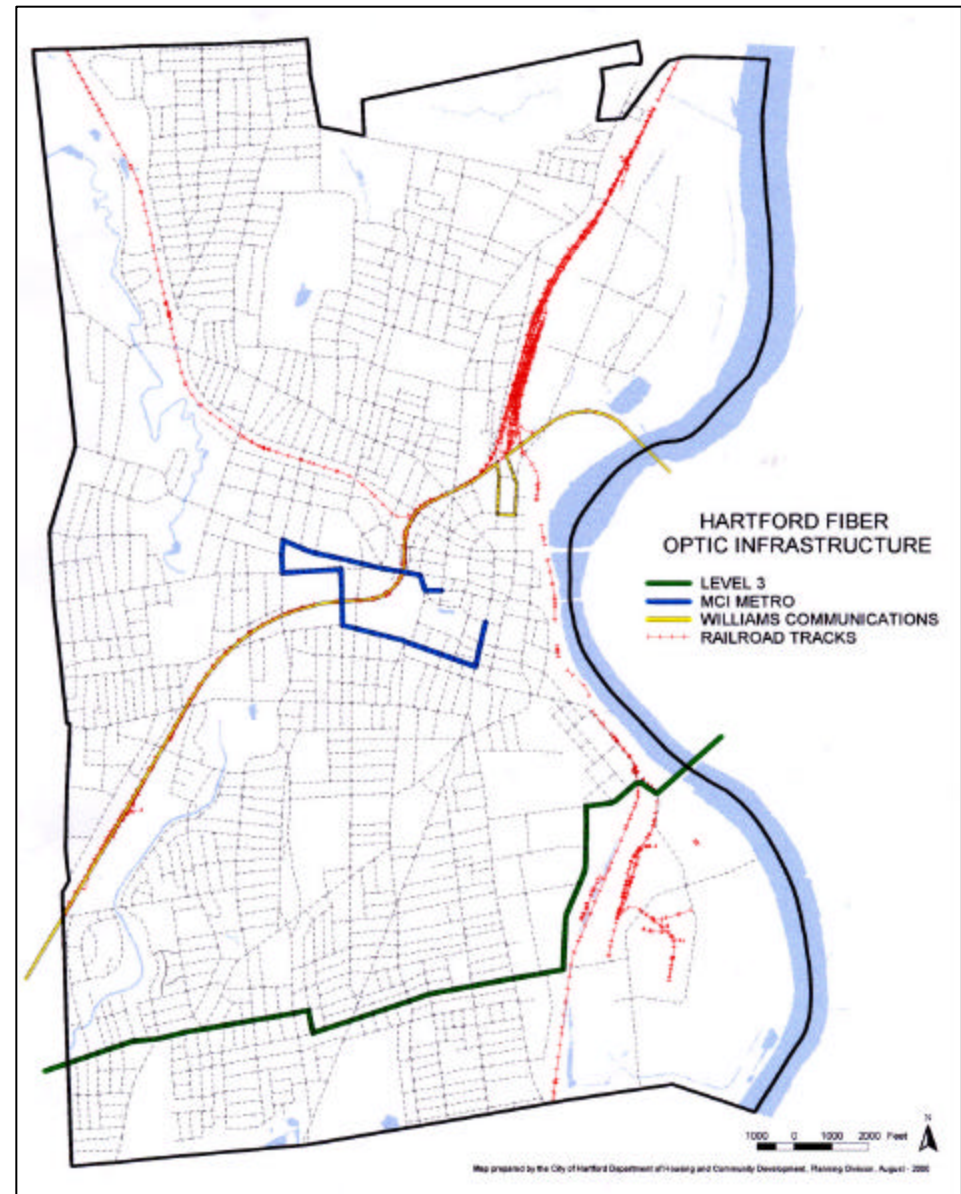
ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The two main business areas in the South End - Franklin Avenue and Wethersfield Avenue - can be strengthened. Safety and street improvements should be undertaken to provide a positive image of the unique qualities for each economic area. The strategies listed below are envisioned to assist with retaining business in the neighborhood and attracting new economic activity. In order to remain viable, the neighborhood must sustain economic development opportunities. This should go hand in hand with ensuring available industrial lands are capable of accepting new development. In addition, a fiber optic telecommunications line traverses the neighborhood, running through Locust Street and along Airport Road and Brown Street, which may help attract new industries.

Goal: Improve appearance and function of the commercial areas to attract and retain users to the area.

Strategies:

- Improve sidewalk conditions and consistency along Franklin Avenue and Wethersfield Avenue.
- Restrict parking on private land in front of commercial buildings to reduce car-pedestrian conflict.
- Provide more off-street parking to reduce perception of lack of parking on Franklin Avenue.
- Construct intersection curb bump-outs at key intersections (i.e. Franklin Avenue/South Street, Franklin Avenue/Brown Street).
- Replace telephone poles with more consistent pole/light combination.



- Promote Franklin Avenue retail/restaurant atmosphere.
- Target the site at 606 Wethersfield Avenue for potential future commercial/industrial redevelopment if there is an opportunity to do so.
- Support the façade improvement program.

Goal: Ensure economic opportunities in the industrial areas of the neighborhood are available

Strategies:

- Support jobs programs at South End Community Services.
- Work with the Human Relations Commission to link Hartford residents with jobs in public works construction projects; and with training opportunities.
- Work with the Workforce Development Agency and encourage residents to participate in its programs and opportunities.
- Improve streets to conform to typical Industrial Park standards, helping to attract high quality industrial activity.
- Work to retain industrial properties that are large enough to accommodate modern-day industrial development needs.
- Support the assemblage of large commercial and industrial parcels of land for new, expanded or relocating businesses.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Lands that are located in industrial areas need to be evaluated for environmental remediation to ensure that they are capable of accepting new development. Properties that have sustained land uses that would require environmental clean-up in other business and commercial areas of the neighborhood should be targeted for remediation as necessary.

Goal: Clean up sites that pose environmental problems for development opportunities.

Strategies:

- Identify environmental sites needing clean-up, and assist in developing clean-up programs for these sites with federal funds and owner cooperation.
- Identify vacant Brownfield properties for remediation and prepare for redevelopment.
- Form liaisons with public agencies that sponsor clean-up programs, and participate in initiatives that would benefit sites in the South End.

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

Linkages within the South End, and to neighborhoods and areas beyond, are important for continued viability of commercial establishments. A balance between adequate parking, connectivity, and aesthetics within the South End must be considered in relation to transportation patterns.

Goal: Provide appropriate parking and transportation links throughout the South End Neighborhood.

Strategies:

- Explore the development of commuter parking in the South Meadows, or at the State Dept. of Corrections parking lot on Franklin Ave. (just over the town line in Wethersfield).
- Use State Department of Corrections parking lot for a commuting lot during special events.
- Develop a shuttle to link Franklin Avenue to other areas of the City.
- Advocate east-west bus routes in the South End.