

FINAL

**Asylum Hill Strategic Plan
2022 - 2031**

**Adopted by
The Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association on March 7, 2022.**



Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association

COMMUNITY NEWS

March 15, 2022

Board Members;

Jackie McKinney
Chairperson

Nancy Rion
Secretary

Louisa Barton
Duguay

Treasurer

Janice Castle

Mayor's Office

Sarah Adanti

Georges Annan-
Kingsley

Wayne Benjamin

Domenic Ciavarro

Natalia Crispin

Esther Gonzalez-
Torres

Ken Johnson

Lynn Johnson

Marian Leist

Elender Mathis

Michelle McFarland

Jeanine McMahan

Maxine Nugent

Paul O'Mara

Barbara Robbins

Executive Director

David MacDonald

To Asylum Hill Neighbors and Stakeholders,

The creation of our neighborhood strategic plan is one of the most important responsibilities and privileges that the State of Connecticut confers on Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs). In Asylum Hill, the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association (AHNA) serves as our neighborhood's NRZ. At the end of 2020, the AHNA Board of Directors determined it would engage in a comprehensive and inclusive planning process in 2021 to update the neighborhood's strategic plan.

We are deeply grateful to the 74 citizens who participated in eight task forces, including its dedicated chairs, for preparing the recommendations included in this plan. They were joined by dozens of other neighbors and stakeholders in Asylum Hill who participated in several community conversations held to review and comment on those recommendations.

We are especially thankful to The Hartford, a corporate partner like no other. Not only did The Hartford conduct a neighborhood survey in 2020 that gave impetus to our strategic planning process, it then provided financial and in-kind support to develop, communicate and help implement the plan.

Broadly speaking, the goals of the planning process were to:

- Understand where we've been to help us determine where we want to go
- Identify key goals and priority projects for 2022 – 2031
- Foster participation and deeper support from AHNA's stakeholders
- Organize groups and new partnerships to oversee/implement the plan

One year after the process began, we can confidently say that these goals have been achieved. Our neighborhood knows where it wants to go and how best to get there. We have also engaged more partners and have involved our members more meaningfully. And, even as we await State review and City approval of the plan, AHNA has been mobilizing its members and partners to act on immediate priorities.

Of course, as Anatole France once reminded us: *We must not only act, but also **dream**; Not only plan, but also **believe**.*

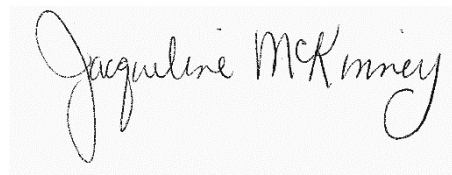
Throughout this process, a powerful vision emerged of what the Asylum Hill neighborhood could become. We are imagining that:

Asylum Hill will become a model urban neighborhood:

- *That is green and clean, with a large tree canopy, abundant gardens and a healthy Park River peacefully flowing along its western edge*
- *Where everyone can live, walk and bike safely.*
- *Where historic housing is preserved, and affordable housing is available to all income groups*
- *Where art, culture and history of our diverse population is celebrated*
- *Where businesses, small and large, thrive and hire neighbors to fill jobs*
- *Where fellow citizens, non-profit groups, faith communities, corporations, schools and government agencies work collaboratively and effectively to create opportunities for every Asylum Hill resident to be all that they can be*

We firmly believe our dream is possible and are deeply committed to realizing our vision for Asylum Hill. Ten years from now, when we look back on our progress, one measure of success will be how positive we feel about Asylum Hill. We also know, however, that ***our growing belief in ourselves will likely be the cause of our success, not just the result.***

With faith in our neighbors, stakeholders and collective future,



Jackie McKinney
Chair, AHNA



David MacDonald
Executive Director, AHNA



Ted Carroll
Chair, Strategic Planning Steering Committee

To assist with one or more of the efforts outlined in our plan, please reach out to David MacDonald at exdir@asylumhill.org

Table of Contents

Map of Asylum Hill	6
History of Asylum Hill	7
Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association (AHNA) History	8
Neighborhood Characteristics	10
Results from The Hartford’s 2020 Survey of Asylum Hill Residents and Stakeholders	11
Strategic Planning Process	13
Economic Development Task Force	18
Goal 1: Encourage and Support “Cornerstone” Development Projects	18
Goal 2: Remediate and Redevelop the Neighborhood’s “Brownfields”	19
Goal 3: Support the Growth of New and Existing Businesses	19
Goal 4: Promote and Support Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to Spur Development, encourage Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and Innovation	20
Employment Task Force	22
Goal 1: Publicize Job Opportunities in Asylum Hill and Elsewhere in the City	22
Goal 2: Increase Effective Marketing and Coordination of Existing Resources That Can Address Transportation, Affordable Childcare, Mental Health, Language and Other Barriers to Employment	22
Goal 3: Ensure the Availability of Additional Services Needed by Residents to Overcome Barriers to Training and Employment Opportunities.....	23
Goal 4: Research and Develop Other Strategies to Foster Employment	23
Environmental and Green Initiatives Task Force	25
Goal 1: Expand Our Native Tree Canopy to 30% of Asylum Hill	25
Goal 2: Maintain and Develop Additional Asylum Hill Pollinator Gardens.....	25
Goal 3: Conserve and Revitalize the North Branch of the Park River	26
Goal 4: Plan and Implement Bike Paths and Traffic Calming Areas in Asylum Hill	26
Goal 5: Develop a Program to Collect Residents’ Food Scraps and Turn Them into Compost	26
Goal 6: Encourage Energy Efficiency and Solarization in Asylum Hill Homes, Schools, Businesses and Places of Worship	27
Housing and Historic Preservation Task Force.....	29
Goal 1: Increase Homeownership Opportunities	29
Goal 2: Remediate and Eliminate Blight	30
Goal 3: Encourage Transit-Oriented Development.....	31
Goal 4: Promote Historic Preservation and Discourage Demolition	31
Human Services Task Force.....	33
Goal 1: Ensure That Existing Services Are Well Coordinated, Better Known and More Accessible	33
Goal 2: Ensure the Availability of Additional Services Needed by Residents to Address Their Social, Economic and Health Needs	33

Public Safety and Quality of Life Task Force	35
Goal 1: Create a Safer Haven for Families and Children at Sigourney Square Park	35
Goal 2: Address Speeding, Noise and Other Quality of Life Issues.....	36
Goal 3: Reduce Automobile Break-ins and Other Larcenies	37
Goal 4: Reduce Drug Trafficking and Gun Violence	37
Goal 5: Identify, Prepare and Recruit More Hartford Residents to Become Candidates for the Police Department.....	38
Youth Services.....	39
Goal 1: Join the Human Services Task Force in Facilitating Additional Collaboration Between AHNA and Groups Serving Asylum Hill Youth and Their Parent Advocates.....	39
Goal 2: Encourage, Train and Support Volunteers Who Can Support West Middle, Hartford Public and Classical Magnet Schools.....	39
Goal 3: Ensure Teens to Have Access to Technology	39
Goal 4: Work Collaboratively to Address Other Youth Service Needs.....	39

Map of Asylum Hill



History of Asylum Hill

Asylum Hill can best be understood as the neighborhood of the 19th century. Its name comes from the establishment of the American School for the Deaf in 1820, which was originally known as “the Connecticut Asylum at Hartford for the Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons” on what was then called Lords Hill. It was the first of its kind in America, and, for a century, it remained on Asylum Avenue where The Hartford Insurance Group is now headquartered. The location of Union Depot in 1843, the site where Union Station is today, encouraged development west from downtown Hartford. Thriving industries, grand churches and lavish homes were built in Asylum Hill as Hartford became one of the country’s most prosperous cities. Machine shops, like Pratt & Whitney, started in Asylum Hill. Of the seven dedicated churches in Asylum Hill, five were built before the beginning of the 20th century. The two most famous homes in Asylum Hill, that of Sam Clemens (Mark Twain) and Harriet Beecher Stowe, are two of the most magnificent and lavish homes built in the latter half of the 19th century. Many others did not survive and a few that did are no longer homes, though they are a reminder of the grandeur of that time.

Insurance companies began to move to Asylum Hill in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The two that remain, The Hartford and CVS-Aetna are only two of the many that at one time called Asylum Hill their home. Several grand office buildings, such as Saint Francis Hospital’s 1000 Asylum Avenue building and The Classical Magnet School on Woodland Street, began their life as insurance companies.

Many of the apartment buildings that account for most of the residential housing in Asylum Hill came about in the post-war boom period of growth for the insurance companies. As technological advancement replaced the need for typists and file clerks, and a rising middle class began moving to the nearby suburbs, many of the apartments aged in place and decreased in value. Today, Asylum Hill finds itself ripe with opportunities and challenges. With nearly 25% of Asylum Hill’s population being foreign-born, the name given to this one square mile neighborhood, that of asylum and refuge, continues to describe the opportunities for the many immigrants and refugees who continue to come here from all over the world. Indeed, one of the purposes of our neighborhood strategic plan is to create opportunities and to inspire hope for both current and future residents of Asylum Hill.

Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association (AHNA) History

AHNA began as the Asylum Hill Problem Solving Committee in 1995 with funding from a Justice Department grant to Hartford. They met monthly and discussed topics important to the neighborhood. In 1997, the State statute allowing for Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZ) to be created by residents and stakeholders came to the organization's attention and they elected to make all of Asylum Hill an NRZ. The name was changed to Asylum Hill Problem Solving Revitalization Association. The effort at the time gradually moved from only addressing individual "problems" toward more strategic efforts to preventing problems. Several partnerships came about that allowed AHPSRA to take on larger issues and neighborhood concerns. These collaborations included:

- Partnership with CT Civil Liberties Union to sue the CT Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) over excessive funding of low-income tax credit development in Asylum Hill
- Establishment of the Asylum Hill Boys & Girls Club Development Committee in 2000. Several members of Asylum Hill Congregational Church met monthly, bringing in members and partners until 2004 when the club was opened.
- Formation of the Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) in 2003, after several years of deliberation by senior managers at The Hartford, and other large corporations to address blight and homeownership. Their first undertaking was the successful moving of the "Victorian Lady," an historic brick home on the Aetna campus slated for demolition, to a vacant lot on Ashley Street in 2004. Since then, they have created more than 20 homeownership opportunities in Asylum Hill.
- Discussions regarding a busway from New Britain to Hartford beginning in 2001, partnership with the Hub of Hartford organization to support the Busway and, after becoming AHNA, unsuccessfully opposing the closing of Flower Street

The AHNA 2009 Strategic Plan, with extensive assistance from Aetna, was completed in December of that year and subsequently adopted by Hartford City Council and the State of CT. Since then, the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association has:

- Worked with the City of Hartford to bring about the revision of the zoning code in 2015 that became effective in 2016.
- Continued to support both NINA, Habitat for Humanity and CIL to create homeownership opportunities by converting blighted properties.
- Completed streetscape improvements to Farmington Ave, partially completed to Marshall Street in 2016 and received State funding to complete to Sigourney Street going forward.
- Collaborated with Hartford Public Library to create the Welcoming Committee to assist immigrants and refugees with resettlement in Asylum Hill.
- Collaborated with Hartford Public Schools during the relocation of West Middle School (WMS) Students to Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School and the subsequent renovations to the WMS buildings.

- Created Vest Pocket Gardens on Ashley St in 2012 with Hartford Blooms and NINA
- Partnered with The Hartford to accomplish the demolition of the Capitol West Building.
- Worked with the Hartford Parking Authority to establish a Residential Parking Permit program in 2014.

The AHNA members of today are excited and proud to build on the accomplishments of the last 25 years as one of Connecticut's first NRZs. In part because of the inclusive and collaborative process used in this strategic planning process, AHNA is more ready than ever to tackle the neighborhoods vexing challenges, seize on its abundant opportunities and realize its highest aspirations. In the pages that follow, AHNA lays out its plans for doing so.

Neighborhood Characteristics¹

In the twelve years between the 2009 Strategic Plan and 2021, much has changed in Asylum Hill. The population is younger, more likely to be foreign-born and less likely to be poor. And while the home ownership rate has improved, the number of households paying too much for housing also increased.

Overall, the number of residents dropped by 5% or 525 people. The ethnic makeup of the population has also changed. The percentage of African-Americans has decreased from 50% to 48%, Hispanics have decreased from 29% to 27% and “other” ethnicities rose from 7% to 13%. The White non-Hispanic portion of the population decreased slightly from 14% to 13%. More than 24% of Asylum Hill’s residents are foreign-born, an increase from 20% in 2009.

The number of youth under age 18 living in Asylum Hill increased from 19% in 2016 to 21% in 2020. Income has increased and poverty decreased in Asylum Hill from 2009 to 2021. The percentage of households living in poverty fell from 40% to 28%. This is in line with the Hartford rate of 27%. The percentage of children living in poverty decreased from 49% to 35%, lower than the 40% rate for Hartford. Although poverty is decreasing, there are too many families struggling to maintain their housing. In Asylum Hill, 51% of residents are cost-burdened households, paying more than 30% of their income toward housing costs. Employment levels in Asylum Hill have remained steady since 2009, from 58% in 2009 to about 59% in 2020.

Asylum Hill’s housing stock is predominantly rental. However, from 2009 to 2021, the homeownership rate increased from 8% to 13%. Of the 5,291 housing units in Asylum Hill, only 353 or 13% are one-to-four-unit buildings. The neighborhood has an extensive stock of Victorian homes, but most housing units (70%) were built after 1950 and consist of many apartment buildings with 60% of all housing units in in buildings with 20 or more units.

The Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association serves approximately 10,000 residents, three large employers, 20 or more small businesses, 50 or more non-profits and 20 churches. Nearly 90% of Asylum Hill residents live in rental apartments. Many of those residents are part of single parent, female-headed households with incomes at or near federal poverty levels. This neighborhood has been identified by LISC (the Local Initiatives Support Corporation) as having a higher poverty rate (40%) and lower incomes than the city with current unemployment between 15-20%. More than 25% are also foreign born, and many of those are recent immigrants or refugees. Asylum Hill residents speak more than 70 languages. In response to their needs, AHNA partnered in 2012 with Hartford Public Library to develop a Welcoming Committee to help integrate the many foreign born and English Language Learners into the community.

¹ Demographic data on Asylum hill was obtained from the 2020 DataHaven Neighborhood Profiles at <https://www.ctdatahaven.org/data-dashboard>.

Results from The Hartford's 2020 Survey of Asylum Hill Residents and Stakeholders

To mark the 100th anniversary of The Hartford in Asylum Hill, The Hartford surveyed individuals and non-profits in Asylum Hill. Between August and September 2020, The Hartford worked to identify the areas of most need. Based on these findings, the company plans to increase its focus on programs that promote job readiness, housing stability and greater safety in Asylum Hill with current partners such as The Village for Families and Children, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut and Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA). The Hartford will also partner with the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association and support the development of our strategic plan to improve quality of life in the neighborhood.

Survey results show that 68% of community members feel that quality of life in the neighborhood is slightly better or the same over the past five years due to:

- Increased community involvement of residents
- Improved physical conditions of some areas
- Greater support and collaboration among non-profits.

However, the neighborhood remains concerned about:

- Employment/job resources (55%)
- Housing/homelessness resources (52%)
- Crime/safety resources (51%)

The survey also reveals that COVID-19 magnified many issues already facing the Asylum Hill neighborhood. The areas impacted the most due to the pandemic include:

- Job loss/reduction of hours (33%)
- Strained assistance programs (19%)
- Education issues/lack of tech for virtual learnings (17%)

In terms of what the Asylum Hill community needs most right now, respondents want:

- Improved public safety: 18% (with another 6% wanting to see an improvement in the police department's relationship to the community)
- More employment and job resources: 18%
- Efforts to address housing and homelessness: 10% (with another 10% wanting to see more resources to address hunger) *Note: those who visit/work in AH identified this issue somewhat more often than residents*

Looking ahead 5 to 10 years:

- 33% would like to see more economic development and/or lower unemployment rate, a view held slightly more often by residents
- 30% want to feel a greater sense of safety, a view held slightly more often by visitors/workers

- Many fewer (about 10%) thought that such issues as more market rate housing, better access to food and improved education outcomes should be the main priorities

A study of the recent Census data and of The Hartford's survey results were critical sources of data that inspired the vision and goals that guided the neighborhood strategic planning process.

Strategic Planning Process

At a retreat in January 2021, the AHNA board of directors reviewed the progress made in the neighborhood in the years since it last adopted its strategic plan in 2009. It also discussed the findings of The Hartford's 2020 survey of neighborhood residents and stakeholders. Informed by these discussions, the board agreed on eight areas of focus for its strategic plan and commissioned a Steering Committee chaired by neighborhood resident Ted Carroll to oversee the planning process.

Over a six-month period, the Steering Committee formed eight task forces to address the following topics:

- Art and Culture
- Economic Development
- Employment
- Environmental and Green Initiatives
- Housing and Historic Preservation
- Human Services
- Public Safety
- Youth and Education

These eight Task Forces drew upon the participation of 74 residents, stakeholders and policy leaders to form their recommendations. Each group paid particular attention to the priorities established by the City of Hartford in its 10-year plan adopted in 2020. The Steering Committee endorsed the goals, strategies and actions proposed by each of the eight task forces. While the plan is broken into the eight different sections represented by the task forces, the Steering Committee recognizes the inextricable ties between the goals and actions of one section with those listed in another section. We cannot work on human service needs, for example, without addressing the employment and economic development needs of the neighborhood. As AHNA develops its annual work plan, these connections will be acknowledged and efforts will be made to have its various committees exchange information and join forces as needed.

The Steering Committee shared these recommendations with 60 residents and stakeholders at AHNA's monthly membership meeting on October 4, 2021. The updated draft was then discussed with 40 other Asylum Hill leaders at its annual fundraiser/recognition breakfast on November 18, 2021. Subsequently, the Steering Committee submitted its final draft to the AHNA board on December 7, 2021. Having made additional changes, the board approved the proposal plan for a public hearing that took place on January 10, 2022. Based on feedback from that hearing as well as from the City's neighborhood planning consultant (FHI Studio) and State officials, final changes were made to plan and presented to the membership for approval on March 7, 2022

In addition to the 74 Task Force members who formulated the plan's initial recommendations, scores of other residents and stakeholders reviewed and commented on the proposed plan over the last six-months of this year-long process. While this plan has a 10-year horizon, the AHNA board will review it annually and update it every two years. Following adoption of Hartford's next 10-year plan, AHNA will initiate its next comprehensive strategic planning process.

Arts and Culture Task Force

Chair: Jackie McKinney

Members:

Amy Labossiere	Tao Labossier	Gary Jacobs	A. Hufnagel
Carolyn Austin	C.Walker	Cynthia Bulaong	Jason Weiner
Georges Annan-Kingsly			

Vision: To create more vitality in Asylum Hill by supporting its artists and by celebrating the neighborhood’s diverse cultures and rich history.

Oversight Group: AHNA’s Arts and Culture Committee, a new group to be formed

Goal 1: Promote Asylum Hill as a Destination for Those Who Enjoy Art, Culture and History

The Asylum Hill neighborhood includes the Mark Twain House and the Harriett Beecher Stowe House at one end, artists’ homes and studios at the other end and creative venues such as the 224 EcoSpace in between. By promoting itself as an arts and culture corridor, the neighborhood could attract more visitors and businesses and instill more pride in its residents.

Actions:

- Develop a marketing campaign to brand Asylum Hill as an Arts and Culture corridor
- Organize a Farmington Avenue festival to highlight its art, culture and history
- Promote special art, music, dance, literary and cultural events happening in Asylum Hill
- Advocate to extend the free Dash shuttle to Nook Farm

Resources/Partnerships: Interactive maps can lay out all the art centers, murals, and creative spaces in the neighborhood. CT Public, Hartford News, AHNA newsletter, Greater Hartford Arts Council; Connecticut Creative Places: <https://connecticutcreativeplaces.org>

Goal 2: Provide Opportunities to Showcase the Neighborhood’s Art and Artists

Asylum Hill has many artists living here. This includes ArtSpace Hartford, which is an apartment complex that has combined living and studio space in each apartment. Gallery space is abundant throughout the neighborhood and there are numerous opportunities to display visual art. Artspace, The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, The Mark Twain House & Museum, 224 Ecospace and The Town and Country Club all have formal gallery spaces. There is also opportunity to display art in Asylum Hill’s churches and schools.

Actions:

- Create an AHAAA! (Asylum Hill Artists of All Ages) exhibit as part of the larger Farmington Avenue Festival or as a stand-alone event, the first occurring in 2023.
- Explore greater use of theater, dance and exhibit space at HartBeat Ensemble, The Mark Twain House & Museum, the 224 Ecospace, CT Public, Town & Country Club and area churches
- Support efforts to have more art in the neighborhood including more murals, art in the windows of vacant commercial property, art on electrical or utility boxes, bus shelters, crosswalks or statues to celebrate the diversity of today's Asylum Hill
- Ensure that the new train station being proposed will display original signature pieces from local artists
- Collaborate with the Stowe Center's plan for an outdoor installation that would be accessible to the community

Resources/Partnerships:

The Mark Twain House & Museum, The Harriet Beecher Stowe House, The 224 Ecospace, CT Public, Town & Country Club, AHCC, Immanuel Congregational, Trinity Episcopal, The Cathedral and other area churches

hARTford Love - <https://www.hartfordct.gov/Government/Departments/Mayors-Office/Mayor-Initiatives/LoveHartford/Artproject>

Strategic Partnership Grants: https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Arts-and-Culture/Funding_Opportunities/Strategic-Partnerships

New England Foundation for the Arts: <https://www.nefa.org/>

CT Artist Fellowship Program: https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Arts-and-Culture/Funding_Opportunities/Artist-Fellowship-Program

Arts Administration Fellowship: https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Arts-and-Culture/Professional_Development/Elizabeth-Mahaffey-Arts-Admin

CT Gov Cultural District Designation: https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Arts-and-Culture/Programs_Services/Cultural-Districts

Goal 3: Celebrate the History of Asylum Hill

Asylum Hill was one of the first neighborhoods to develop when the city outgrew its "downtown" space. It started with farming and Victorian housing began to be built after the Civil War. Mark Twain came to Hartford to see his publisher, fell in love with the neighborhood and built his home here. Harriet Beecher Stowe also built her retirement home on Forest Street.

Actions:

- Explore feasibility of obtaining a Cultural Place or Historic District designation for Farmington Avenue, inclusive of the Comet Diner, the CVS-Aetna building, Nook Farm, etc.
- Highlight history, architecture and other unique neighborhood aspects on walking, biking and bus tours

Resources/Partnerships:

- Collaborate with the historic properties and work with the City, Hartford Preservation Alliance and the state to begin the process of getting historic designation
- Integrate existing walking tours for the neighborhood into new and existing events
- CT Gov Cultural District Designation: https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Arts-and-Culture/Programs_Services/Cultural-Districts
- Preservation Connecticut: <https://preservationct.org/local-districts>
- Opportunities for passive engagement through QR codes or guided virtual walks.
- Create engagement through the use of creative hashtags that encourage people to visit the historic sites; “Asylum Hill Passport” stamps

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

- First Annual AHA! event is created in conjunction with DominGO! Hartford
- New murals are painted
- Track number of local artists involved in art and cultural events
- Track number of attendees at events
- Dash Shuttle extended to Nook Farm

Economic Development Task Force

Chair: Wayne Benjamin

Members:

Wildaliz Bermudez	Domonic Ciavarro	Julio Concepcion	Sandy Fry
Glenn Davis	Frank Hagaman	Kim Hawkins	David Hopkins
Darlene Johnson	Ken Johnson	Nick Lebron	David MacDonald
Jackie Mckinney	Patrick McMahon	Bernice Michel	Paul O'Mara
Lynn Pike DiSanto	Jordon Polon		

Vision: To revitalize the Farmington Avenue commercial corridor, transform empty buildings and brownfield sites, and support several “cornerstone” projects that will enhance the economic health of Asylum Hill’s businesses and residents.

Goal 1: Encourage and Support “Cornerstone” Development Projects

To retain businesses and attract visitors and new residents, Asylum Hill must eliminate blighted, vacant and abandoned properties and transform them into productive and aesthetically pleasing assets.

Actions:

- Address Farmington Avenue’s vacant retail spaces and physical appearance by encouraging pop-up stores, tree plantings, crosswalk improvements, the reduction of both littering and loitering, and the final phase of streetscape improvements
- Preserve and retain cultural assets and other key institutions
- Support the remediation, funding and restoration of the Aetna Diner
- Support the redevelopment of 85 Sigourney Street and encourage retail uses on the street level
- Provide input and support to the Saint Francis Hospital Master Plan
- Advocate for funding

Resources/Partnerships:

Major employers, small businesses, capable and responsive developers, elected officials from City, State and Federal governments, The Farmington Avenue Alliance (FAA), The Hartford Business Improvement District (HBID), CT Main Street, The City’s Department of Development Services (DDS), The State’s Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Community Renewal Team, the arts community and funding from the federal government

ARPA 2021: Sec. 6002. Funding for pollution and disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reconnecting Communities - IJJA 2022 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BIL-Factsheet-Local-Competitive-Funding.pdf>

Goal 2: Remediate and Redevelop the Neighborhood’s “Brownfields”

Most of Asylum Hill is already developed, but we could redevelop some strategic parcels if remediation measures are taken to eliminate site contamination. If we made such sites clean and “shovel-ready,” the neighborhood could attract development that produces jobs and property taxes while reducing environmental health risks.

Actions:

- Prioritize and maintain a list of contaminated sites for eventual redevelopment
- Develop a schedule for assessment, clean-up and remediation
- Advocate for funding of priority projects

Resources/Partnerships:

City COH/DSS, State DECD, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), AHNA’s Environmental and Green Initiatives Committee, Love Your Block, Community Renewal Team, Sustainability CT and numerous volunteers

State Department of Environmental Protection offers Abandoned Brownfield Cleanup Program, the Brownfields Remediation and Revitalization Program, the Municipal Brownfield Liability Relief Program

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency offers the EPA Brownfield Remediation Program - <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

Goal 3: Support the Growth of New and Existing Businesses

No urban neighborhood is complete without a thriving small business sector. However, small businesses on Farmington Avenue and elsewhere in Asylum Hill face many challenges. We can help meet those challenges through a coordinated and expanded set of technical and financial services. By stabilizing and growing existing businesses and by attracting and incubating new ones, the neighborhood could be a source of new jobs and important services.

Actions:

- Identify and promote resources that area businesses can tap into for planning, training and financial capital

- Connect new businesses, universities/colleges and entrepreneurs with mentors, business formation training and potential investors
- Advocate for more financial and technical assistance as needed

Resources/Partnerships:

City’s Department of Development Services, HEDCO (Hartford Economic Development Commission), Liberty Bank, Webster Bank, University of Hartford, the Hartford Chamber of Commerce, the Hartford Business Improvement District (HBID), reSET, the 224 EcoSpace, the Small Business Administration, Senior Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Hart-Lift (American Rescue Plan Act 2021): <https://www.hartfordchamberct.com/hart-lift/>

ARPA 2021: Sec. 3301. State Small Business Credit Initiative. <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/small-business-programs/state-small-business-credit-initiative-ssbci>

Goal 4: Promote and Support Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to Spur Development, encourage Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and Innovation

When neighborhood leaders, major employers and government officials agree on what is needed to spur economic and community development, they can work together to enact big changes. Over the next several years, major investments in land and infrastructure are being contemplated for I-84, Union Station, large brownfield tracts and 85 Sigourney Street, among others. By working together, neighborhood residents and leaders from the public and private sectors have an opportunity to leverage those investments in ways that can produce profound, lasting and healthy changes to Asylum Hill.

Action:

Create and sustain a consortium of community, business and government leaders that will meet at least twice a year to explore current issues, future trends and proposed major infrastructure projects affecting Asylum Hill. Current projects include the I-84 Project, the rebuild of Union Station and the Saint Francis/Trinity Health Master Plan as they evolve from concept to design and construction.

Resources/Partnerships:

In-kind support and participation from neighborhood leaders and from officials of The Hartford, CVS-Aetna, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, utility companies (e.g. Eversource, Comcast/ Xfinity, T-Mobile) and Local, State and Federal government.

Opportunities to expand PPPs into the realm of housing production, especially affordable housing – state programs such as NJHFMA and AIHC that are partnering and collaborating with hospitals

Both the Hartford Line rail service and the CTfastrak busway corridors serve the Asylum Hill neighborhood. Redevelopment opportunities that take advantage of these services to minimize the need for private vehicles for employment or other trips can improve the livability of the neighborhood and open travel options for residents who do not own private vehicles

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

The following developments will occur with participation and support from neighborhood residents and stakeholders:

- Redevelopment of 85 Sigourney Street for housing and commercial use
- Begin rehabilitation of Aetna Diner
- Assessment of all brownfield sites in the area
- Complete the design for the Farmington Avenue streetscape
- Redesign of I-84
- Reconstruction of Union Station
- Saint Francis/Trinity Health expansion plans

Employment Task Force

Chair: Yvonne Mathews

Vision: Residents of Asylum Hill will have ready access to resources that will lead to meaningful and sustainable employment.

Oversight Group:

AHNA will organize an Asylum Hill Non-Profit Leadership Council to oversee and promote human services. This Council will work closely with the Working Cities Challenge supported by the United Way to address employment needs.

Goal 1: Publicize Job Opportunities in Asylum Hill and Elsewhere in the City

As transportation is a major barrier, particularly for jobs outside the city of Hartford, Asylum Hill residents and those who serve them need to know about available jobs inside the city. Providing such information would also assist local employers seeking qualified and diverse applicants.

Action:

- Encourage all employers in Asylum Hill to participate in the Capital Workforce Partners job listings and to hire local residents whenever possible
- Promote and conduct an annual job fair in partnership with others

Resources/Partnerships:

Capital Workforce Partners, United Way of Connecticut's 211 Navigator tool, Connecticut State Department of Labor

Goal 2: Increase Effective Marketing and Coordination of Existing Resources That Can Address Transportation, Affordable Childcare, Mental Health, Language and Other Barriers to Employment

Youth and young adults, and those agencies that serve them, are not sufficiently aware of current job training programs and support services.

Actions:

- Create and maintain an on-line directory of programs and services which schools, HR professionals, non-profit agencies and individuals can access for up-to-date information
- Use social media and other tools to drive those seeking job training and support services to the established website

- Organize and promote a pilot Workforce Resource Fair to help connect residents to jobs and careers as well as to job training and employment support services.

Goal 3: Ensure the Availability of Additional Services Needed by Residents to Overcome Barriers to Training and Employment Opportunities

Even with greater awareness and better coordination of existing services, there may be need for additional supports to meet the employment and job training needs of Asylum Hill residents.

Actions:

- Survey employers and service providers to determine where there are insufficient resources to meet the job and job training needs of applicants
- Share survey findings with employers, schools and service providers so that they may focus their resources more effectively
- Advocate for more government support of proven services that meet residents' job and job training needs

Resources/Partnerships:

CT CareerConnect Workforce Training Grants: <https://portal.ct.gov/careerconnect/Workforce-Training-Programs>

Goal 4: Research and Develop Other Strategies to Foster Employment

Ensuring that Asylum Hill residents can gain meaningful employment is key to solving a myriad of other issues. Recognizing that needs are many and varied, more focus on strategies for solving this issue will be a priority.

Actions:

- Create more internships, particularly ones that offer stipends, for youth 18 and under
- Expand the number of case managers and volunteer mentors who can guide those seeking training and employment opportunities
- Create career pathways for those interested in law enforcement and other public service careers

Resources/Partnership:

The following is a partial list of the groups that will be invited to participate in the Asylum Hill Nonprofit Leadership Council:

Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Grace Lutheran Church, Immanuel Congregational Church, Trinity Episcopal Church, The Village for Children and Families, Boys and Girls Club of Hartford, ConnectiKids, OPP (Our Piece of the Pie), Organized Parents Make a Difference, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Wheeler Clinic, Asylum Hill Family Center, Salvation Army, Chrysalis, Youth Challenge, Loaves and Fishes, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, YWCA, HARC, Urban League, United Way, Hands on Hartford, Community Renewal Team; Hartford Student Internship Program, Capital Workforce Partners

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

- Formation and sustainability of Asylum Hill Nonprofit Leadership Council
- Directory of services created, maintained and publicized
- Listing of neighborhood jobs updated regularly
- Identification of “navigators” to assist job seekers
- At least one annual job fair

Environmental and Green Initiatives Task Force

Chair: Lynn Johnson

Members:

Mike McGarry	Jack Hale	Bernie Michel	Mary Pelletier
David McDonald	Kimberly Stoner	Shubhada Kambli	Sandy Fry
Leticia Colon	Barbara Robbins	Michael Barr	Michael Looney
Louisa Barton Duguay	Patrick Doyle		

Vision: Asylum Hill be known as a model urban green community and become a more beautifully sustainable place to live, work and visit.

Oversight Group: AHNA’s Green Committee

Goal 1: Expand Our Native Tree Canopy to 30% of Asylum Hill

Be in alignment with the national “30 by 30” plan, aiming to conserve 30% of our land, “restoring America the beautiful.”

Actions:

- Conduct a tree assessment – 2021-2022
- Develop a plan for replenishing tree canopy -- 2022
- Begin implementation of plan -- 2023

Resources/Partnerships:

Knox staff, tree counters, Park Watershed, dedicated funding at each stage and partnership with local developers

Goal 2: Maintain and Develop Additional Asylum Hill Pollinator Gardens

Increase the number of organic gardens in Asylum Hill to protect threatened pollinators.

Actions:

- Maintain current pollinator gardens and add additional gardens
- Publish articles and educational materials to name current pollinator gardens and to promote more
- Establish and maintain Asylum Hill on the Northeast Pollinator Pathway

Resources/Partnerships:

Park Watershed, Grants from Love Your Block and from Sustainability CT, numerous volunteers

Goal 3: Conserve and Revitalize the North Branch of the Park River

Restore the North Branch of the Park River to health, in alignment with the national "America the Beautiful" 30 x 30 plan.

Actions:

- Ask the City of Hartford to formally acknowledge and commit to preserve the riparian corridor of the north branch of the Park River.
- Designate the riparian corridor of the Park Watershed within Hartford as the Park Watershed and Wildlife Refuge.
- Support the updating of the North Branch Park River Watershed Management Plan.
- Remove invasive species
- Complete tree count and assessment
- Implement runoff and flood control measures

Resources/Partnerships:

Parkwatershed.org., North Central Conservation District, Trust for Public Land, Knox Inc., Hartford Flood Commission, and Classical Magnet School, DPW, Ct Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), support from property owners, funding from private and public sources, multiple volunteers

Goal 4: Plan and Implement Bike Paths and Traffic Calming Areas in Asylum Hill

Reduce carbon pollution and increase recreational opportunities.

Action:

Work with the City of Hartford Planning Department, the Department of Public Works and City engineers to develop plans, secure funding and implement measures to facilitate safer bike travel and safer driving

Goal 5: Develop a Program to Collect Residents' Food Scraps and Turn Them into Compost

By taking organic material out of the waste stream, we incinerate less trash, thus saving the City money. At the same time, this material can be converted to compost for gardens in Asylum Hill.

Actions:

- Continue to operate composting equipment at Niles Street Garden as a demonstration project
- Develop and disseminate educational materials on composting
- Establish a program to collect and compost food scraps that is available for all Asylum Hill residents
- Partner with area schools for volunteer and after-school programs that highlight rain gardens, composting, urban farming and other green initiatives

Resources/Partnerships:

Funding from Thrivent Financial, Love Your Block and the City, working agreements with Blue Earth and the City, participation from numerous volunteers, homeowners and building managers

Goal 6: Encourage Energy Efficiency and Solarization in Asylum Hill Homes, Schools, Businesses and Places of Worship

Address the need to reduce carbon pollution in Asylum Hill

Actions:

- Hold annual “Green Energy Fair” in the Fall in Sigourney Park
- Encourage energy audits on local buildings
- Encourage use of solar energy and heat pumps in all AH buildings
- Establish electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in Asylum Hill

Resources/Partnerships:

Technical assistance from Energy Efficiencies Solutions, Inc., People’s Actions for Clean Energy, Earth Forward, Eversource and the City of Hartford, Office of Sustainability, Funding from Thrivent Financial, government energy conservation and clean energy programs, numerous homeowners and building managers willing to participate.

IJIA - Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities:

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities>

CT State Energy Program: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Business-and-Financial-Assistance/Grants-Financial-Assistance/State-Energy-Program>

CT Weatherization Assistance Program: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Business-and-Financial-Assistance/Grants-Financial-Assistance/Weatherization-Assistance-Program>

The U.S. Infrastructure & Jobs Act is allocating funds for EV infrastructure in communities like Asylum Hill

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

- Completion of tree assessment
- Increase in number of pollinator gardens
- Creation of a wildlife refuge along the north branch of the Park River
- Expansion of food composting sites
- Annual Green Energy Fair providing instructional materials to promote energy efficiency and solarization
- Inclusion of green concepts in new development plans

Housing and Historic Preservation Task Force

Chair: Ken Johnson

Members:

Wayne Benjamin
Jonathan Clark
David Corrigan
Gus Espinoza

Frank Hagaman
David MacDonald
Yvonne Matthews
Jackie McKinney

Bernie Michel
Michael Perez

Vision: Asylum Hill is an attractive and affordable neighborhood of choice that provides exceptional ownership and rental opportunities for people of all incomes. Asylum Hill is nationally recognized as one of the best places in America to purchase an affordable historic home.

Oversight Group: Continuation of Housing and Historic Preservation Task Force and, when capacity permits, a permanent AHNA Committee

Goal 1: Increase Homeownership Opportunities

Studies have shown that increasing home ownership can simultaneously stabilize a neighborhood and generate wealth for the homeowner. Due to the nature of the current housing stock, home ownership in Asylum Hill is only about 10%. However, Asylum Hill has a wealth of historic homes from the Victorian era that can be utilized to increase the supply of home ownership. By recapturing these historic properties for home ownership, particularly in highly visible areas such as major transportation corridors, there is an opportunity to stimulate demand for more home ownership in the neighborhood.

According to the City of Hartford's 2019 Affordable Housing Study, 25% of Asylum Hill's rentals are subsidized units. Of those, 61% of Asylum Hill's income-restricted housing are deed restricted. AHNA supports a balance of available home-ownership opportunities along with a fair number of income-restricted rental housing projects throughout the Asylum Hill area of Hartford. AHNA may oppose any future new developments for income-restricted housing that reduce or prevent more home ownership, until balance is achieved.

Actions:

- Identify potential development sites for homeownership, particularly along highly visible transportation corridors such as Farmington Avenue, Asylum Avenue, Hawthorn Street and Ashley Street
- Work with government officials and funders to encourage the development of market-rate, owner-occupied homes that are available to families of all incomes
- Partner with organizations that prepare neighborhood residents for homeownership

- Proactively share AHNA housing priorities with elected and appointed officials and work with them to ensure AHNA is a required part of project approval process
- Advocate for public policy and public resources that support the restoration of Asylum Hill's historic housing stock as owner-occupied homes
- Advocate for closing loopholes in municipal tax code that allow absentee landlords to pose as owner-occupants to claim lower tax rates

Resources/Partnerships:

Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) staff, Mutual Housing, City staff and elected officials, and Asylum Hill residents on AHNA and to be recruited to AHNA

CHFA's single-family loan program

Small Multifamily CDFI Loan Pool through the Hartford Community Loan Fund

ARPA 2021: Funds for housing counseling. The legislation provides \$100 million, to be administered by NeighborWorks, for grants to housing counseling providers to provide services to households facing housing instability.

Homeowner Assistance Fund, ARPA 2021:

https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Main/documents/Factsheet_Housing_Provisions_American_Rescue_Plan_Act-2021.pdf

Goal 2: Remediate and Eliminate Blight

Eliminating blight through rehabilitation of properties removes potential sources of crime, raises the overall quality of life in the neighborhood and provides greater opportunities to build wealth among Asylum Hill residents.

Actions:

- Identify deteriorated, dilapidated and blighted structures and create updatable catalogue
- Work with municipal officials and the Hartford Land Bank to ensure anti-blight ordinance is effectively enforced and that foreclosed properties are returned to use as owner-occupied homes
- Work with municipal officials to ensure publicly funded housing continues to meet City of Hartford housing quality standards
- Link older homeowners and others struggling to maintain their property with Rebuilding Together and other groups that can lend assistance

Resources/Partnerships:

NINA staff, City Housing Dept., Rebuilding Together and Hartford Land Bank

Goal 3: Encourage Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development can reduce traffic and congestion, promote Asylum Hill as a livable, as well as workable, place and lead to the eventual conversion of surface parking lots to a higher, more productive use.

Actions:

- Identify potential development sites along major transportation corridors such as Farmington Avenue, Asylum Avenue, Hawthorn Street and Ashley Street
- Consider compatibility of establishing Transit Oriented Development Overlay districts in Asylum Hill with their associated density and other zoning requirements
- Work with neighborhood institutions to assess post-pandemic parking needs and to invest in potential development projects at retired surface parking lots
- Include walkability as an element of transit-oriented development projects

Resources/Partnerships Required:

Area businesses and churches with excess surface parking lots, AHNA Economic Development Committee

LISC's Predevelopment Loan Program: <https://www.lisc.org/hartford/our-work/connecticut-tod-fund/>

Rebuilding American Infrastructure Sustainably and Equitably (RAISE) Grants: <https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants>

Goal 4: Promote Historic Preservation and Discourage Demolition

Asylum Hill is blessed with a wealth of historic architecture that sets it apart from other neighborhoods. Promoting the preservation of these unique assets can make the neighborhood more marketable as well as serve as a source of pride for its residents. Demolition is an environmentally unsound strategy, and preventing demolition is ultimately a green strategy that can reduce the need for landfills.

Actions:

- Work with government officials and funders to promote historic preservation and adaptive re-use of vacant or blighted buildings
- Work with Hartford Preservation Alliance to expand the Asylum Hill historic district that can provide financial incentives for restoring historic properties
- Develop material and tours that promote the value of historic preservation
- Identify means to include energy efficiency as an element of historic preservation

Resources/Partnerships:

NINA staff, Hartford Preservation Alliance, government officials and funders

CT Historic Restoration Fund Grants (HRF): https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Historic-Preservation/02_Review_Funding_Opportunities/Grant-Opportunities/Historic-Restoration-Fund-Grants

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

- Increase number of blighted sites converted to home ownership
- Working with the city, increase the number of blighted-property owners contacted
- Number of development proposals submitted to and reviewed by Committee

Human Services Task Force

Chair: Esther Gonzales-Torres

Vision: Residents of Asylum Hill will have access to the services needed to help themselves and their families become all they can be.

Oversight Group:

AHNA will organize an Asylum Hill Non-Profit Leadership Council to oversee and promote human services.

Goal 1: Ensure That Existing Services Are Well Coordinated, Better Known and More Accessible

Asylum Hill has a wide range of agencies that are serving the multiple needs of our residents. However, more must be done to ensure that our residents know about these services and that such services are properly linked and efficiently delivered.

Actions:

- Continue, expand and give more support to the consortium of agencies already meeting on a regular basis
- Survey Asylum Hill service providers to determine what services currently exist
- Create and maintain an online directory of programs and services that schools, HR professionals, non-profit agencies and individuals can access for up-to-date information
- Use social media and other tools to drive those seeking support services to the established website
- Establish and publicize locations where residents can meet with professional staff and/or mentors and where they can use telephones and computers to connect with service providers, job opportunities, court appointments, etc.

Resources/Partnerships:

ARPA Childcare Stabilization Grants (Flexible Funding), \$179M for CT :

<https://www.childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan-database>

ARPA Childcare and Development Fund: <https://www.childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan-database>

Goal 2: Ensure the Availability of Additional Services Needed by Residents to Address Their Social, Economic and Health Needs

Even with greater awareness and better coordination of existing services, there may be need for additional supports to meet the needs of current and future Asylum Hill residents.

Actions:

- Survey service providers to determine where there are insufficient resources to meet the needs of those they serve
- Share survey findings with schools, service providers and funders so that they may focus their resources more effectively
- Advocate for more government support of proven services that meet residents' social, health and economic needs
- Care for caregivers by advocating for more support and professional development opportunities for those on the front-line

Resources/Partnership:

The following is a partial list of the groups that will be invited to participate in the Asylum Hill Nonprofit Leadership Council:

Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Grace Lutheran Church, Immanuel Congregational Church, Trinity Episcopal Church, The Village for Children and Families, Boys and Girls Club of Hartford, ConnectiKids, OPP (Our Piece of the Pie), Organized Parents Make a Difference, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Wheeler Clinic, Asylum Hill Family Center, Salvation Army, Chrysalis Center, Youth Challenge, Loaves and Fishes, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, YWCA, HARC, Urban League, United Way, Hands on Hartford and Community Renewal Team

ARPA 2021: Sec. 2001. Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.

<https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/>

ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Fund; \$88.5M for Hartford:

<https://www.childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan-database>

Efforts will be made to secure the services of a UConn School of Social Work student to help organize and support this group.

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

- Formation and sustainability of Asylum Hill Nonprofit Leadership Council
- Directory of services created, maintained and publicized
- At least one additional site created for personal contact with those needing services; e.g., phones, computers

Public Safety and Quality of Life Task Force

Chair: Janine McMahan

Members:

Maxine Nugent	Jackie McKinney	Capt. Powell
Lt. Rose O'Shea	Ofc. Cid Palmieri	Paul O'Mara
Louisa Barton-Duguay	Lynn Johnson	Andrew Woods
David Corrigan	Ashley Tucker	Dean Jones
Alexis Dwyer	David MacDonald	Natalia Crispin
Bernie Michel	Ted Carroll	

Vision: To create, in reality and in perception, a safe, pedestrian-friendly and inviting neighborhood for all who live, work and visit the Asylum Hill neighborhood.

Oversight Group: AHNA's Public Safety and Quality of Life Task Force

Goal 1: Create a Safer Haven for Families and Children at Sigourney Square Park

Sigourney Square Park is one of the few open spaces in our densely built neighborhood. However, as one of our parent leaders noted, there are usually few children utilizing the playground. Another parent leader expressed concerns about bringing children to a place where there is much litter and where idle men are often drinking.

Actions:

- Re-establish a Friends of Sigourney Square Park Group to initiate and support security measures, clean-ups and family-friendly activities
- Connect with local artists and school art programs to create interactive play and art installations in the park
- Have a presence on the City Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) to help guide City resources and attention to park needs
- Examine and build on recommendations from parent leaders
- Arrange with Hartford Police Department (HPD) for extra security when events take place
- Work with HPD, Department of Public Works and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) trained consultants to determine environmental design changes (lighting, fencing, benches, trash receptacles) to create a more welcoming and safer space
- Approach area churches about holding regular services at the park

Resources/Partnerships:

HPD, DPW, CPTED, Youth Challenge, Asylum Hill Family Center, AHNA's Environmental and Green Initiatives Committee, AHNA's Youth Task Force, NINA, PRAC, area churches and scores of volunteers

Goal 2: Address Speeding, Noise and Other Quality of Life Issues

When asked about the concerns they have about living in Asylum Hill, residents often cite quality of life issues such as noise from firecrackers, speeding cars, litter and more. To make Asylum Hill more livable for its current residents and more attractive to its future ones, these issues must be addressed.

Actions:

- HPD to deploy officers trained in addressing the issues of people who are homeless, speeding, noise and other important quality of life issues
- Work with Knox, the Hartford Business Improvement District (HBID), the Environmental and Green Initiative Committee and volunteers on regular cleanup and beautification projects
- Work with State legislature to enact "red light" cameras to address traffic violations
- Establish periodic DUI check points on Farmington and Asylum Avenues
- Work with City Department of Public Works (DPW) to determine location of additional speed humps and other traffic calming measures
- Deploy drones as needed to curb misuse of ATVs
- Designate an off-site area for ATV use
- Add and adjust speed limit signs where appropriate
- Set up speed monitor trailer in strategic locations
- Encourage City to evaluate safety of rental scooters
- Work with Community Court to identify judicially appropriate actions
- Consider establishing neighborhood watch groups in selected locations
- Educate public about the need to provide HPD with specific information (date, time, location) when violations occur

Resources/Partnerships:

HPD, DPW, Hartford Community Court, Knox, volunteers from area businesses, churches and schools

Roads for All - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - May 2022

Recently passed law allowing Local Traffic Authorities to set their own speed limits through an application and study process: [Guidance on Establishing Speed Limits in The State of Connecticut](#).

Goal 3: Reduce Automobile Break-ins and Other Larcenies

Automobile break-ins and other larcenies are the biggest contributors to the recent increases in crime in Asylum Hill, constituting more than 35% of overall crime from 2019 to 2021.

Actions:

- Identify Sigourney Street between Asylum and Farmington Avenues as well as additional “hot spots” for further deployment of Neighborhood Watch and/or temporary cameras
- Investigate the reactivation and possible replication of surveillance program previously established on South Marshall
- Encourage homeowners to connect their “Ring cameras” to HPD
- Educate public about the need to remove valuables and other items from cars, park in driveways whenever possible and use 311 to call in problems like malfunctioning streetlights

Resources/Partnerships:

HPD, homeowners and other neighborhood residents, funding for additional cameras

Goal 4: Reduce Drug Trafficking and Gun Violence

While murders are among the lowest in the city, the number of assaults and other crimes against people (more than 100 a year in 2020 and 2019) is unacceptably high. Much of the crime can be traced back to the sale of illegal drugs and the misuse of substances.

Actions:

- Monitor ideas for reform and be prepared to work with local front-line groups to advocate for blended solutions to address this issue – that is, both more law enforcement and more prevention programs for youth
- As an ally to those on the front line, advocate for more policy and funding support of those engaged in violence and substance use prevention efforts
- Ensure training for youth on how to respond to conflict in non-violent ways
- Encourage residents to report suspected drug trafficking to the HPD
- Encourage Section 8 and other landlords to refer tenants struggling with substance use to appropriate social services

Resources/Partnerships:

Hartford Police Department, Compass Youth Collaborative, Hartford Communities That Care, local schools, Governors Prevention Partnership

Goal 5: Identify, Prepare and Recruit More Hartford Residents to Become Candidates for the Police Department

Hartford struggles to hire a police force that reflects the racial and social background of its citizens. Of late, the number of interested and qualified applicants to fill job openings has diminished further still.

Actions:

- Link with ALICE Challenge - Working Cities Collaboration
- Identify people who are unemployed or under-employed who can get training and certification to get employed quickly
- Strengthen and promote Police Explorers, cadet program and Police Athletic League
- Encourage City to offer competitive salary and benefit packages
- Work with POSTC (Police Officers Standards and Training Council) to update requirements that would enable the creation of a larger pool of potential candidates
- Explore partnership between HPD, Hartford Public High School and CREC to pilot effort to introduce public safety careers in Hartford

Resources/Partnerships:

Side By Side: Police and Youth program: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-JJYD/Just-Start/Just-START-Side-By-Side>

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

- Incidence of violent crime reduced by 20%
- Formation of at least one neighborhood watch group
- Improved perceptions of Asylum Hill as reported in future neighborhood surveys
- Increase in number of children and families using Sigourney Square Park

Youth Services

Chair: Michelle McFarland

Vision: Asylum Hill will be known as a place where diverse youth residents are leaders in improving the quality of life in their neighborhood and are empowered to organize their own neighborhood improvement projects.

Goal 1: Join the Human Services Task Force in Facilitating Additional Collaboration Between AHNA and Groups Serving Asylum Hill Youth and Their Parent Advocates

Actions:

- Review and build on Hartford Public School survey of current programs and services
- Consider showcasing agencies and services at Sigourney Square Park or at another convenient location

Goal 2: Encourage, Train and Support Volunteers Who Can Support West Middle, Hartford Public and Classical Magnet Schools

Actions:

- Encourage parents and guardians to join PTOs and School Governance Councils
- Encourage area businesses and nonprofit groups to offer internships and job shadowing opportunities
- Encourage area employees, college students, church members and others to serve as tutors, coaches and resource people

Goal 3: Ensure Teens to Have Access to Technology

Action: Encourage teens to access video, audio, and print resources. The recording studio located in You Media is a major teen magnet.

Goal 4: Work Collaboratively to Address Other Youth Service Needs

Asylum Hill has several youth-serving agencies that have the capacity to address the needs of youth and these agencies have the desire to work with one another

Actions:

- Work with Compass Youth Collaborative to teach youth how to use peaceful approaches for responding to conflict
- Work with Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) to identify youth and mentors for Youth Service Corps
- Work with the Working Cities Challenge to create employment and internship opportunities for youth
- Work with Leadership Greater Hartford, Toastmasters and other groups to provide opportunities, including the formation of a Youth Leadership Council, to practice advocacy, public speaking and leadership
- Join the Public Safety Task Force in encouraging youth to become Police Explorers and/or to Join the PAL to create a pool of future law enforcement candidates
- Join the Public Safety Task Force in creating a safe-haven for families and children at Sigourney Square Park

Resources/Partnerships:

AHNA will collaborate with the following agencies and businesses to connect Asylum Hill youth and their parents with advocacy, leadership and employment opportunities.

Our Piece of the Pie	H.Y.P.E.
Blues Hills Civic Association	West Middle School
The Boys and Girls Club	Classical Magnet School
University of Hartford	Hartford Public Library
ConnectiKids	CVS-Aetna
Capital Community College	The Hartford
OPMAD	Saint Francis Hospital
Wheeler Clinic	AFCAMP
Toastmasters	Leadership Greater Hartford
The Village for Families and Children	Compass Youth Collaborative
Hartford Public High School	Asylum Hill Family Center

Side By Side: Police and Youth program: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-JJYD/Just-Start/Just-START-Side-By-Side>

Priority Outcomes/Measurable Results

- Published inventory of services available to youth
- Increase in the number of children and families using Sigourney Square Park
- Increase in the number of volunteers serving kids in schools and non-profit groups
- Increase in the number of Asylum Hill youth enrolled in youth leadership development programs