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STUDY OF THE COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION OF THE PARK STREET CORRIDOR

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STUDY OF THE COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION
OF THE PARK STREET CORRIDOR

By:

ELLEN M. FELDMAN

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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IN

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RESEARCH PROJECT
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Chapter I: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The revitalization of the older commercial corridors of Northeastern urban neighborhoods has been a topic of concern to municipalities since the late 1950's. The implicit assumption underlying the concept of commercial revitalization is that areas targeted for renewal were formerly prosperous, viable commercial areas which have experienced decline and deterioration. This would also imply that pending revitalization, such commercial corridors have the potential to become viable once again.

Several factors are associated with the decline of urban neighborhood commercial centers. The loss of factories, around which the older urban economies functioned, has led to the out-migration of financially stable blue-collar workers to the suburbs. The concurrent in-migration of lower income, minority residents into these same neighborhoods has changed the economic stability of many areas, such that commercial entities have often followed their clientele to the suburbs.

Another factor associated with the commercial decline of urban neighborhoods is the changing physical and structural needs of commercial entities. Specifically, the increased availability of the automobile has led to a demand for parking that many older areas cannot easily accommodate. In addition, the "mall syndrome" has had its effect on the desirability of free standing retail entities which are situated in the urban neighborhoods. Many of the

buildings which once housed both residential and commercial units have been partially or totally abandoned, leaving substandard housing units above vacant storefronts.

The lowered value of the properties, due to vacancy and deterioration, is a contributive factor to the absence of structural renovation which is apparent in many older mixed-use properties. Tied closely to this is a high rate of tax delinquency and an instability of tenure to existing businesses, many of whom occupy buildings which are prone to frequent property transfers.

All of the problems associated with a commercial area in need of revitalization are present in the Frog Hollow Neighborhood, located in the central portion of Hartford, Connecticut. This neighborhood was once a stable blue-collar residential area whose residents were dependent upon nearby machine and tool industries for their livelihood. Between 1890-1920, the growth of factories in the area was accompanied by a corresponding growth in housing. Comparatively speaking among Hartford neighborhoods, Frog Hollow was very prosperous. This relative affluence within the area led to the construction of high quality residential, commercial and industrial buildings, most of which provide a solid building stock in the 1980's.¹

It was during this boom of urban industry that the Park Street commercial corridor grew as a complementary center to the factory sites. Most of the factory employees lived within walking distance of both work and Park Street,

and the corridor became the commercial heart of the neighborhood.

During the 1950's a sharp decline in Frog Hollow's industrial base occurred. As was mentioned earlier, the industrial desertion of urban areas was accompanied by an exodus of factory workers to the suburbs. By 1960 most of the factories had closed and serious deterioration of Park Street and the surrounding residential areas could be seen.

The remaining population was less affluent than its predecessors. As a result of the weakened buying power of neighborhood residents, a deterioration of the quality and variety of merchandise offered along the commercial strip occurred.

During the period between 1970-1980, the Hispanic population of the city of Hartford grew by 16,000 (roughly 134%). A large proportion of this predominantly Puerto Rican population settled in Frog Hollow, tripling the local Hispanic population.² As a result of generally low educational, technical and economic characteristics, the increase in population did not alleviate the problems of economic instability which had been worsening in the neighborhood since the 1960's.

Following this in-migration, several Hispanic-owned businesses began to spring up along Park Street. These shops catered to the large Hispanic population through the sale of specialty foods and low-priced clothing. Most merchants were unable to purchase their stores and therefore had to rent their commercial space. This tenure

arrangement has led to an instability in the economic base because of the frequent resale of the buildings in which the businesses are located. Many of the storefronts along Park Street are vacant, lending an atmosphere of disinvestment to the entire commercial corridor. The efforts of the merchants to obtain commercial success along Park Street have met with mixed results, as much of this success seems to be tied directly to property ownership and stable tenure.³

According to a recent report by the Hartford Planning Department⁴ there may well be a resurgence of outside interest in Park Street. This centrally located urban commercial strip is immediately accessible to several large institutions as well as State and Municipal buildings. It is immediately clear that an extension of the traditional market area indicates a high degree of uncaptured income. Although much of the commercial and housing stock is in need of modernization, the structural soundness of the buildings has not been overlooked.

What then are the goals and strategies of the current revitalization efforts along Park Street? Who will carry out the programs needed for this effort and what financing mechanisms can be utilized to ensure the perpetuation of this renewed interest in the growth of the neighborhood? What role will neighborhood merchant's association and the residents of Frog Hollow have in shaping the redevelopment of their primary shopping area? And finally, what mix of

commercial entities and amenities is needed to draw upon the broader market while still responding to the needs of the immediate population?

This Research Project will address each of the above-mentioned questions through a dual-focused analysis of the commercial revitalization of Park Street. The first section is divided into chapters, "Profile" and "Current Efforts". The "Profile" chapter will discuss in greater detail the demographic, economic, social and institutional conditions which exist along Park Street, in Frog Hollow, and in the areas surrounding the neighborhood.

The "Current Efforts" chapter will address the particular programs, projects and organizations which are working to change the economic, social and commercial characteristics of Frog Hollow and of the Park Street corridor. Federal, State, and local neighborhood efforts will be discussed in relation to the overall revitalization plans. A specific discussion of the various community organizations which are involved with the revitalization programs mentioned above will also be included.

The second section consists of two chapters: "The Neighborhood Assistance Act" and "The Application of the NAA as a Revitalization Tool for Frog Hollow". The first of these will discuss the Neighborhood Assistance Act, Public Act no. 82-469. This Act is a recent (1982) piece of statewide legislation which creates tax incentives for businesses, for the investment in neighborhood

mechanics of the Act, in terms of program and organization eligibility, the role of the municipality, the role of the corporation, and the dates attached to the cycle of funding will be presented in order to form a framework for the following chapter.

Finally, the "Applications" chapter will analyze the suitability of the NAA as a funding strategy for Park Street. In particular, this chapter will address the types of programs and organizations which are eligible to utilize funding from this Act, as well as the administrative tasks attached to use of these monies.

The outcome of this effort should provide, for organizations which work in Frog Hollow, a clear picture of the types of programs which are eligible for NAA funding. It will also be clear that there are several synchronized components involved in the successful utilization of this funding tool.

Chapter I Endnotes

1. City of Hartford Planning Department, "Frog Hollow Area Plan," July 1983, p. 9.
2. Ibid., Tables section, "Population by Race, 1970-1980".
3. Ibid., p. 13.
4. Ibid.

Chapter II: PROFILE

A three-tiered demographic, social and economic profile is offered in this chapter in order to provide a framework for further discussion about potential problems and solutions in the study area. The profile will highlight demographic and economic information specific to the study. This will provide the reader with a clear understanding of the characteristics of the residents (consumers), the physical configuration of the commercial strip and the Frog Hollow neighborhood, and the nature of the surrounding market area.

The profile is divided into three sections. The first section provides pertinent demographic, economic and social data describing the resident population of Frog Hollow neighborhood. The presentation illustrates the poor economic status of the resident population in terms of income, education levels and employment participation rates. Included in this section is a discussion of the housing characteristics. The goal of this part of the profile is not only to emphasize the low standard of living of neighborhood residents but is also presented to stimulate thought as to how the revitalization efforts of Park Street should be channelled in order to ameliorate the current situation.

The second section will focus on the Park Street commercial corridor, located between Washington Street and Broad Street. Information pertaining to types of existing

structures, available retail space, types of establishments and shopping habits of patrons will be presented. Included in this section will be a discussion of problems which exist along the corridor in terms of visual characteristics, crime, abandonment and tax delinquent structures.

The purpose of this discussion is to highlight problems which exist along the specific segment of Park Street which this research project addresses. The profile will also include an explanation of the three separate commercial nodes which exist on Park Street and the relative role which each plays in the maintenance of a Hispanic merchant community.

The final section of this profile will discuss the surrounding market area which can be drawn upon to provide potential patronsto Park Street commercial establishments. This section serves to emphasize the availability of this proximate market and discusses unfavorable developments which are occurring which threaten the economic well-being of this unstable commercial corridor.

A. Neighborhood Profile¹

The population of Frog Hollow in 1970 was 11,510 and 10,122 in 1980, representing a loss of 1,388 or 12.1 percent of its residents. This total also represented 7.4 percent of the population of the City of Hartford.

Of the current population, 46.9% are white, 46.9% Hispanic, 3.2% Black and 3.0% other. The most dramatic demographic change in Frog Hollow from 1970 to 1980 has been the increased number of Hispanic residents. While the total population for the city of Hartford rose 133.6% between 1970-1980, the number of Hispanics in Frog Hollow rose by 332.1% over the same time span. These figures may be somewhat deceptive in that the 1980 census was the first to distinguish Hispanics as a separate category. The fact remains, however, that Hispanics currently comprise 46.9% of the Frog Hollow population; a figure which represents 17% of the 27,898 Hispanics of the city of Hartford.

In 1980, of the 3,557 households in the neighborhood, 46.2% had female heads of household. Females comprised 53.6% of the total neighborhood population (city-wide 53.2) and the median age was 27.7 for women and 24.4 for males.

Between 1970 and 1980, the number of families living below the poverty level increased by 178%. According to the 1980 Census, thirty-seven of the 2,386 families were living below the poverty level.² Although the median income rose in Frog Hollow by 13.2% in the ten year period, the median family income rose by 54.1 percent city-wide.

In terms of education, 19.2% of those residents 25 years or older had completed four years of high school in 1980. Only 7.7% of Frog Hollow residents had completed four years of college.

The overall labor force participation rate for Frog Hollow was 53.0% in 1980 (71.3% for men and 39% for women), with an unemployment rate of 9.2 (9.7% for men, 1.3% for women). "Of the 6,945 persons 16 years or older who were potential labor force participants, 3,364 or 47% were not in the labor force."³ It is clear that Frog Hollow has low labor force participation rates and high unemployment.

This statistical information provides a basis for discussion about prevalent problems in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. It is immediately clear that the residents are primarily poor and largely unemployed; a situation which is exacerbated by a language barrier. The low participation rate of individuals in the labor force and the resultant poverty-level incomes has its repercussions in the housing characteristics of the neighborhood as well.

The housing stock in Frog Hollow is in generally poor condition. Although the structures are well-built, most have not received substantial modernization or renovation since the 1950's. Five percent of all housing units are not equipped with plumbing for their exclusive use,⁴ and code violations are the rule, not the exception.

Tenure information on housing units in Frog Hollow for 1980 indicates that 87.9% of all units were rented, compared to a city-wide average of 76.9%. The 1980 vacancy

rate for Frog Hollow was 8.8%; a figure which seems high until one realizes that the prolonged vacancy of the units was largely due to inhabitability. Between 1970 and 1980, Frog Hollow lost 6.5% of its total housing units.

The value of this information is in the effect which it should have on the formulation of revitalization efforts for the commercial corridor of Frog Hollow. The provision of employment for neighborhood residents in commercial establishments increases the amount of money which they can invest in upgrading the quality of their property.

Priority should clearly be placed on the provision of jobs for neighborhood residents as well as training for those approaching employment age. It would follow that a rise in the median incomes of residents would strengthen their potential buying power, thus increasing the likelihood of economic prosperity of Park Street commercial establishments.

Job training programs must be reflective of a needs assessment of industries in the Capitol region, and should be matched with the education and skills levels of the resident population.

Before discussing the conditions which exist along the Park Street corridor it is necessary to reiterate a point alluded to earlier. The Park Street corridor is the only Hispanic retail center in the City of Hartford. Any plans to revitalize the Park Street corridor cannot overlook the role which it plays in providing for the shopping and

housing needs of the immediate low-income population. Displacement of local residents in the name of revitalization is unacceptable, and all proposals should benefit first the immediate community and then consider benefits to outside interests.

B. Park Street Profile

The Park Street corridor, defined in this project as the portion bordered by Washington Street to the east and Broad Street to the west, is the "commercial heart" of Frog Hollow.⁴ There are currently at least 70 commercial entities which exist either along or adjacent to the strip, along the side streets.

A study was conducted in 1981-82 of the commercial revitalization opportunities for Park Street.⁵ The study was carried out by a team of researchers whose observations reflected an analysis of the problems and opportunities for Park Street revitalization. Four areas of consideration were researched; 1) demonstrable economic conditions and data, 2) visual/physical characteristics, 3) local perceptions and images, and 4) social and organizational circumstances and opportunities. The following is a summary of findings, which help to illustrate the primary concerns of this Project. In addition, land-use characteristics, tax delinquency, vacancy rates, and ownership will be discussed. The combination of the above factors should present a clear picture of the conditions which are supportive of, or work against, the goals of upgrading the image of Park Street and increasing the frequency of trips to the commercial strip by outside shoppers.

1. Economic Conditions and Data

An analysis of current supply and demand for retail

space revealed that the total potential commercial area space for Park Street, including the properties fronting Washington Street is greatly in excess of that which the current neighborhood economy can support. This calculation exceeds the focus of this Project as it includes all of Park Street, from the easternmost end at Main Street to the westernmost end at Zion Street.

The section of Park Street between Main and Washington is considered the "gateway" to the Hispanic commercial area. This area, South Green, is bordered to the east by newly gentrified townhouses and is the segment of Park Street which contains a large number of marginal businesses. South Green is prime for speculation due to its proximity to the central business district and to Hartford Hospital, a large institution which buys a great deal of property for offices. It is the concern of the Hispanic community that this section of Park Street, which has a substantial number of low-income housing units, will be bought up by developers for conversion to upper-income residences. However, many major improvements have been made towards the goal of stabilizing the housing in this area for low-income residents (See Chapter III).

The far end of Park Street, which runs from Broad to Zion on the west, is heavily Hispanic. Several of the neighborhood organizations are located in storefronts along this section of the strip, which is within the concentrated housing area of Frog Hollow (See Map I).

The focus of this study is on the section of Park

Street between Washington and Broad, an area which is also under a great deal of development pressure. It is bordered to the east by government office buildings and the construction site of a new superior courthouse, (see Map III). The expected completion of this courthouse has already led to a number of conversions of proximate buildings to law offices. However, the point is made that shopping patterns differ greatly between the two adjacent shopping segments, such that each can be considered as separately functioning units (see Table I).

The total amount of available commercial space on Park Street (excluding vacant lots and surface frontage parking) is approximately 350,000 square feet. The potential trade area of approximately 18,000 households or 48,000 people (based on aggregation of the four neighborhood census tracts) has an aggregate income of almost \$55 million. The total retail expenditure generated from the residents within the trade area was approximately 24.4 million in 1979. If every available dollar within the primary area (see Map II) were spent on Park Street, the trade area could only support 235,000 square feet of commercial space. It was suggested that an additional 10% to 20% of total space be added for better utilization of eating and drinking establishments within the corridor. The conclusion is that there is an excess of 70,000 to 90,000 square feet of existing commercial space compared to the capacity of the area to sustain those enterprises.⁶

This analysis of the primary market area which focuses exclusively on the income potential of the residents of Frog Hollow, is an example of the need to broaden the consumer market for Park Street. According to a spokesperson for the local merchant's association, the total amount of available commercial space is too valuable to convert to other uses. The market analysis⁷ suggests the contraction of commercial space and conversion of excess space to other uses. The merchant's association views this suggestion as unacceptable because it translates into a permanent loss of scarce retail space for Hispanic merchants.

The Washington to Broad Street strip serves as a different type of shopping area than do the upper and lower sections of Park Street. The Connecticut Bank and Trust Company, which is located on the corner of Park and Washington Streets and the Northeast Savings Bank are two of the primary commercial establishments located in this section of Park Street. A full 23% of patrons surveyed in June of 1982⁸ were on Park Street for banking purposes. Sixteen percent were shopping and an equal number were in this section of Park Street to work. Ten percent were patronizing the service entities in this section of Park Street. The information must be compared with the data collected for the Broad to Zion section to obtain a clear explanation for the apparent lack of patronage to the upper section of Park Street. The primary draw of the Washington to Broad strip comes from the banks. Only 16% of patrons

who participated in the patron survey were in this section of the strip to do shopping. A full 25% of the patrons surveyed were employed in that area (see Table I). It becomes immediately clear that the majority of patrons shop and do their banking in the Broad to Zion section (area #3) due to the concentration of retail entities which are located in this sector.⁹

An examination of Land Use Patterns (See Map #I) for the Broad to Washington strip indicates vacant buildings which vary in size and ownership. The vacant buildings which are not institutional are located primarily in the upper section of the strip, in close proximity to Washington Street and almost directly across from the site of the new superior court building.

The exact amount of tax delinquency on these buildings is private information. However, according to the spokesperson for the local merchants association, this problem is not as expansive as it might first seem. The degree of tax delinquency among owners of these properties is not critical. More problematic is the lack of investment on the part of some absentee landlords into the buildings which remain vacant. The fact that the Superior Courthouse is under construction and that the area is being encroached upon from all directions by surrounding institutions, has placed those vacant buildings in a prime location for speculative owners.

The problem of vacant buildings is secondary to the

issue of non-ownership of commercial space by local merchants. Roughly 75% of all merchants on Park Street rent their stores. The insecurity of tenure among merchants as well as many recent examples of displacement contributes greatly to the economic instability of the commercial corridor. There is a high rate of turnover, mainly as a result of small business failure. In 1977, as many as 50% of the firms on Park Street reported yearly sales of less than \$100,000 dollars.

Ownership of buildings by the merchants would help to stabilize the retail and service core by alleviating problems associated with landlord absenteeism such as disinvestment and tax delinquency.

In addition, many of the structures located along this section are mixed use, residential/commercial buildings. In general, the housing units available above these commercial entities are substandard and are in need of major modernization and renovation. As the housing situation is "a constant battle to fill the gap between the loss of and need for low-income units",¹⁰ the need for these renovations becomes that much more crucial. Local ownership of these buildings, combined with assistance from outside sources could upgrade the housing standards along Park Street and improve the overall quality and safety of the structures.

2. Visual/Physical Characteristics

The problems of littered streets, graffiti and boarded up buildings are negative visual characteristics of Park Street. The fact that there are so many vacant buildings escalates outside perception that this is an area which is undesirable to frequent.

The high levels of unemployment and a lack of adequate recreational or job training facilities results in a large number of indigent individuals who "hang around" on the sidewalks in front of Park Street establishments. Street gang related vandalism and graffiti, which is found almost exclusively on Hispanic-owner businesses, also serves as a negative visual impression to patrons. There is however an obvious presence of police activity along the Park Street corridor which is an attempt to lessen vagrancy and vandalism.

Positive characteristics which are unique to Park Street are related to both physical and social qualities. The geographic shallowness of the corridor lends to the perception that this is a vibrant, productive area where the traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian is heavy.

The strip is also a definable area, bordered by Washington Street, a major artery. There are a number of commercial establishments which are oriented to the needs of the immediate Hispanic population. These stores offer a wide variety of cultural and ethnic items and reflect a desire to maintain a strong neighborhood identity.

One hears Spanish spoken as frequently as English on

Park Street. This is a positive aspect of this area because it differs so greatly from the homogeneous atmosphere of the downtown commercial establishments. The variation among the different Spanish speaking cultures of the proprietors of this strip's commercial establishments has resulted in a richness in the quantity of ethnic/cultural products.

3. Perception and Image

A series of patron surveys¹¹ were carried out in an attempt to discover people's attitudes and perceptions about Park Street. Of the respondents, 25% felt that crime and vandalism were the major problems along Park Street. There is the perception that gang related fights and drug trafficking occur on a regular basis in this area.

Seventeen percent of the respondents complained of traffic-related problems and 14% of the parking situation. At present there is a demand and shortage of on-street parking. Other problems cited were trash and dirty conditions (4%), lack of variety in merchandise (9%) and high prices(8%).

Suggestions for improvements focused on improvement to existing buildings (36%), general clean up (12%), an increase in police activity (10%), and an increase in the number and variety of businesses (8%).

The survey also was given to the merchants along Park Street. All merchants felt that crime had a major negative

impact on their walk-in trade and felt that police protection was inadequate.

Gangs are a reality along Park Street. Although the non-Hispanic merchants felt that gang-related incidents comprised the majority of the crime, Hispanic merchants were more ambivalent about denouncing the positive aspects of the gang presence. These included "protection" of Hispanic owned and operated businesses and some cooperation with local authorities in reducing violence and drug-related incidences. Regardless of merchants' perceptions, the intersection of Park and Broad has a reputation of being occupied by local gangs; a reputation that would most assuredly discourage non-neighborhood consumers from frequenting this area of the corridor.

The survey of merchants also indicated that a portion of their market comes from residents outside the primary market area, and that it was desirable to attract a non-Hispanic trade. The majority of their competition comes from other establishments along Park Street, 50% of which can be categorized as convenience stores; 54% of those convenience operations are food and drink establishments. Almost all merchants felt that a comprehensive and affordable revitalization strategy was necessary.

4. Social and Organizational Circumstances and Opportunities

There are a proliferation of community groups and organizations which work directly with the merchants and residents of Frog Hollow. Each of these organizations has its own funding and projects, although several work cooperatively to form joint ventures for revitalization efforts.

The problems of duplication of efforts and political territoriality are less prevalent than would be expected as all the organizations are involved in programs in such a small geographical area. As will become increasingly clear in Chapter III, the variety and quantity of serious problems which must be dealt with in the Frog Hollow neighborhood by all organizations reduces overlapping of services.

It is important to the future of the revitalization of Park Street that some form of coalition be established between organizations so that a comprehensive and uniform strategy may be developed. A partnership has developed among neighborhood organizations such as S.A.M.A., Hart, La Casa de Puerto Rico and Broad Park Development Corporation. There is currently a Commercial Revitalization Committee, and it is expected that this group will assume the lead in planning the revitalization strategies for the future.

C. The Surrounding Area

The potential market area for Park Street, as shown in Map III branches out to encompass a good portion of the Downtown trade, all of the Capitol area, the State office buildings, Trinity College, Hartford Hospital, the Institute of Living and St. Francis Hospital; a radius of approximately 1.5 miles in all directions.

Three important institutions function in the immediate vicinity of Park Street: Trinity College, Hartford Hospital and the Institute of Living. These institutions had a combined estimated economic impact of 49.2 million dollars on the city of Hartford in 1981.¹² They employed 5,973 individuals, the majority of whom lived outside the city and paid a total of \$27,000,000 to those employees. In addition to the reinvestment of employee salaries into the Hartford economy, a great deal of potential capture exists among those individuals in attendance at Trinity College or those visiting patients in the hospitals. As seen in the last column of Table II there were an estimated 200,412 individuals served by these institutions, representing a substantial mobil clientele for merchants of Park Street.

The area along Washington Street, on the eastern anchor of Park Street, is the most immediately accessible target for capture of new patrons. Included in the composition of this surrounding area are State office buildings, the old Superior Court house (which is actually part of Frog Hollow), the construction site of the new

court house, several privately owned office buildings, the State Capitol and the State Library (see Map III).

Hartford Hospital and Trinity College pose a potential threat to the stability of housing for those residents who live in close proximity to these institutions. Both own substantial amounts of property in the neighborhood and have the financial power to buy out marginal land-owners. However, key staff at each of the institutions have a commitment to improving the overall quality of life in the neighborhood without displacement of residents. This is evidenced through direct involvement of these individuals in neighborhood organizations and the hiring of neighborhood residents for open job positions.

As was mentioned earlier, the expected completion of the new Superior Court House has led speculative interest in Park Street property. The volume of potential patrons added to the current uncaptured market share, should encourage merchants to think about capturing that economic sector.

This is not to say that the neighborhood shopping center should be sacrificed in exchange for the commercial entities which cater to an upper-income clientele. Rather, an upgrading of current visual and physical characteristics which exist along the strip as well as the addition of new commercial entities is called for. In this way the neighborhood stores still serve the immediate population but are also able to appeal to a larger market. The

patrons who work in these buildings could become a steady, middle to upper-income clientele, provided the area was perceived of as safe, convenient and affordable. The Park Street commercial strip is within easy walking distance of all above-mentioned institutions, and there are safe pedestrian crossing areas. According to the previously mentioned study, "Park Street is ideally situated to attract that base (Washington Street Office workers) in increasing numbers"¹³

Summary

Frog Hollow suffers from many of the ills associated with older urban neighborhoods. Its resident population is largely unemployed and poorly educated. A lack of safe, affordable housing has resulted in a low standard of living which has a direct effect upon the economic stability of the Park Street commercial strip.

It would follow that an improvement in overall living conditions of the residents would have a positive impact on the volume of sales taken in by Park Street merchants. These improvements would be realized in the form of new employment, job training, improved housing and the provision of day care facilities. This list is not exhaustive but addresses some of the crucial needs of the neighborhood.

The commercial strip between Washington and Broad is beset with problems of disinvestment. Buildings which are left vacant or underutilized are a drain on the stability of the commercial core. It is important to note that the upper section near Washington Street is the area from which new patrons would ostensibly enter the neighborhood. There are a number of vacant buildings in this area, such that the first impression to an outsider is one of abandonment.

The Hispanic merchants, however, have become increasingly aware of the importance of an organized, comprehensive approach to the revitalization of the commercial core. Many efforts have been made to improve the physical characteristics of Park Street and festivals

have been held to bring outsiders into the neighborhood, to experience the richness of the combined Hispanic cultures.

There is much which has been done and a great deal which is currently underway. The maintenance of the Park Street character as a Hispanic shopping center in a Hispanic neighborhood is foremost in terms of priorities, and the benefits of prosperity on this street should benefit the entire Hispanic community as well.

Regionally, the economic prosperity strength of Park Street is also critical. Although some argue that Hartford's central business district receives an inordinate amount of development attention and city monies, it also returns a great deal in taxes to the city. This money can then be reinvested into the city's neighborhoods. Likewise, the neighborhoods which show a profit and generate taxes have a greater chance of receiving that reinvestment from the city of Hartford. In addition, the overall improvement of Frog Hollow, in terms of economics, housing, income and social problems, would also increase its chances for industrial location into the area, thus providing employment for local residents.

Many organizations, community groups, and development corporations exist solely to reach the goal of revitalization of Frog Hollow's commercial, housing and economic conditions. It is through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization which addresses

each of the problematic areas, that Park Street will be more appealing to the larger potential market.

Chapter II Endnotes

1. National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, "Park Street Commercial Revitalization Opportunities", Washington, D.C., 1983, p. 8.
2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Decennial Census Neighborhood Statistics Program: Geographic Definition of Neighborhoods for Hartford, Conn. (109).
3. City of Hartford Planning Department, "Frog Hollow Area Plan", Hartford, CT., 1983., p. 3.
4. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Neighborhood Statistics Program.
5. National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, "Park Street Commercial Revitalization Opportunities", p. 2.
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 10.
9. Ibid., p. 17.
10. La Casa de Puerto Rico, Hartford, CT, interview with staff member, March, 1984.
11. National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, "Park Street Commercial Revitalization Opportunities", p. 10.
12. Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, "SINA Employee Housing Program", Hartford, 1983.
13. National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, "Park Street Commercial Revitalization Opportunities", p. 33.

Chapter III: CURRENT EFFORTS

"The commercial revitalization of Park Street cannot be separated from the revitalization of housing or from the provision of jobs for neighborhood residents." As is evident from the "Profile" chapter, the social, economic and commercial problems which exist in Frog Hollow are extensive. High unemployment rates coupled with poor housing conditions result in a generally poor resident population, whose education levels are low and whose combined buying power is weak.

The Park Street commercial entities are largely in need of renovations due to landlord disinvestment and non-ownership on the part of local merchants. The patrons of the surrounding market area are not attracted to Park Street in large numbers. This can be attributed to the poor local image and outside perceptions of high crime rates and gang presence.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight current efforts which are being carried out by neighborhood organizations and community groups. The programs discussed will be those which address the goals of revitalization outlined below.

There are at least nine organizations and community groups which work in the areas of housing, education, health and social services, and commercial development/revitalization of the Frog Hollow neighborhood. Many confine their activities to the lower portion of Park Street, between Main Street and Washington Street, which is

the South Green neighborhood. Others work particularly on specific issues which relate to the redevelopment of the Park Street corridor (see Table III).

The role which one agency plays cannot be measured against the rest since all address issues differently. Agencies may serve as community organizers; assuming strong leadership roles and encouraging residents in self organization. Other agencies offer support in terms of critical issues through representation of their constituency to the Legislature and city officials. Spin-off community development corporations function to provide services to their constituency in the form of physical changes to the neighborhood environment. However, it is indeed possible to consider the types of programs which are carried out by each participating agency in order to both assess the comprehensiveness of the efforts and to identify additional areas of concern.

This chapter will first present a generic discussion of neighborhood revitalization and then will focus on its application to the Frog Hollow neighborhood and the Park Street corridor. This will help to define revitalization in terms of the substantive goals it addresses and the types of general activities which can be carried out in terms of objectives. The goals to be discussed are 1) the improvement of housing conditions, 2) the improvement of economic/income and social conditions of residents, and 3) commercial revitalization and strengthening of the

commercial core.

Each of the above-mentioned areas (housing, social/economic and commercial) are the components of a goals hierarchy analysis for Frog Hollow (see Table III). Within this framework, an exploration of goals, objectives and strategies which pertain to these areas was carried out. The analysis resulted in the following section, which explains both the goals of the neighborhood and the strategies used to carry them out. For each of these three areas, discussion of particular organizations and their programmatic efforts in Frog Hollow will ensue. This will serve to illustrate the comprehensive effort which is active in the neighborhood.

Emphasis will be placed on the informal partnership which has been formed between S.A.M.A., Hart/Vecinos Unidos, La Casa de Puerto Rico and the Broad Park Development Corporation. This cooperative effort between the four Frog Hollow lead agencies signals an increased recognition of the need for the combination of talents in reaching a common goal; the commercial revitalization of Park Street.

A review of the plan for Il Mercado, an innovative component of the revitalization of Park Street which is currently in the planning phases will be included. This represents one of the future directions planned by neighborhood organizations for the commercial revitalization of Frog Hollow (see Appendix A)

Before turning attention to specific problems and

current programmatic solutions, it is necessary to state some basic assumptions. The first assumption is that local ownership of buildings (both commercial and mixed-use residential) will lead to substantial property improvements. This assertion is presented as the alternative to the current situation; vacancy and absentee owner disinvestment in viable commercial and mixed-use properties.

The other major assumption is that residential and commercial uses along Park Street produce a living environment which is preferable to a single use district. This is linked directly to the basic tenet that a reduction in the total number of neighborhood low-income housing units is unacceptable. Because of the limited supply of housing units, all efforts to preserve and upgrade currently available stock is necessary.

The commercial revitalization of Park Street cannot be considered in a vacuum. As is evident from the preceding chapter, the economic and social conditions of the entire neighborhood have a direct effect on the financial stability of the commercial core. This, in turn, has an impact on the tax base of the city of Hartford.

Housing

One of the most critical problems facing the residents of Frog Hollow is the lack of safe, standard and affordable housing. Although the stock is structurally sound, due to

the initial investment made by homebuilders, the interiors are in substantial need of rehabilitation and modernization. The poorer resident population does not have the capital needed to carry out major renovations of the housing stock.

A goal in terms of housing is to provide safe, low and moderate-income units to the residents of Frog Hollow. Various steps can be taken to improve the present housing crisis such as substantial rehabilitation of substandard units, new construction, early intervention in the upgrading of deteriorating buildings, resident self-advocacy, and the promotion of home ownership. These strategies are utilized to meet specific objectives which pertain to increasing the number of housing units available, per year, for neighborhood residents.

Specific organizations which deal with low-income housing are Hart/Vecinos Unidos, Broad Park Development Corporation, La Casa de Puerto Rico, S.I.N.A., TAINO, and South Green Community in Action (see Table III). Each of these organizations addresses housing in a different manner.

Hart and the South Green group are neighborhood advocacy groups. The core staff of these organizations encourage tenants to self-organize around issues such as displacement and landlord/tenant disputes. Both groups have been instrumental in efforts to retain housing in the neighborhoods, much of which was prime for speculation. Issues such as fair rent and rat control are also

addressed.

La Casa de Puerto Rico is also an advocacy group, but their focus is on policy and the creation of legislation which works in favor of the neighborhood residents. An example of proposed legislation is a bill that would target tax deferrals to new housing developments which include a certain percentage of low-income units. The goal of this legislation is to close the gap between the demand and supply, by giving developers a tax incentive for construction of low and moderate-income housing.

La Casa works in conjunction with numerous community agencies throughout the State of Connecticut. These groups lobby to prevent the displacement of Hispanic residents, which results from the conversion and redevelopment of low-income housing to upper-income condominiums. The goal is to stabilize the housing situation for Hispanics through the maintenance and upgrading of present stock as well as the construction of new housing for low-income residents.

La Casa has worked directly with TAINO, a spinoff community development corporation, and with South Green Community in Action to develop 120 new units of housing in the South Green neighborhood. These were financed through private and public means, including Section 8 New Construction, Urban Homesteading, Section 235 condominiums and a partnership with the Hartford Housing Authority. There is the knowledge among staff of La Casa, however, that although the development of these units represents a

gain for local residents, it does not substantially ameliorate the serious housing shortage of low-income units in Hartford.

Broad Park Development Corporation is a real estate development entity with a 501(c)(3) designation, located on Park Street. The corporation has done much of the housing rehabilitation in the immediate area surrounding the commercial corridor. It too works directly with leaders of the Hispanic community to improve housing conditions and arranges sophisticated real estate packages which combine local and private dollars to finance construction. A great deal of their work has involved upgrading of the mixed-use buildings on Park Street.

Finally, the Southside Institutions-Neighborhood Alliance, Inc. (S.I.N.A.) is an organization which involves Frog Hollow's three major institutions: Hartford Hospital, Institute of Living, and Trinity College. This organization runs an employee housing program which makes low interest rehabilitation and mortgage loans available to full-time employees. These loans are targeted for the renovation and purchase of properties located within a specific geographic area. The funding for this program comes from a \$500,000 revolving loan fund, established by the Traveler's Insurance Company. The purpose of this program is to upgrade the housing stock in the area surrounding the three institutions. It also functions to induce workers to reside and pay taxes in an area proximate to their work place.

All of the organizations and community groups mentioned work directly to address the housing situation in Frog Hollow. Their mutual goal is to upgrade the present housing stock through the use of federal, local and private funds. The realization by most agencies that the availability of federal funds fluctuates both programmatically and in terms of volume, has resulted in a financing of housing which is reflective of those changes. Some new housing is built with Section 8 funds while others are Urban Homesteading projects or corporate loan sponsored developments.

The proliferation of agencies which work towards improving housing conditions in Frog Hollow must struggle to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for safe, standard and affordable housing units. Their efforts have substantially improved conditions for local residents and the emphasis on self-advocacy has made residents more aware of their rights as tenants.

The Park Street commercial strip has a number of mixed-use residential/commercial buildings (see Map I). The apartments located above the storefronts are in generally poor condition and contribute to the negative appearance of the strip. The rehabilitation of this housing is important both to the supply of housing stock in the immediate area and to the overall revitalization of the commercial strip. As was suggested earlier, ownership of these units by local merchants who operate the commercial

establishments below would most probably lead to improvement in the quality of the housing.

A revolving loan fund which is targeted at the purchase and total renovation of these mixed-use structures has been suggested. Some tax incentives already exist for weatherization improvements, but other programs could be arranged which would reward owners for improvements to these low-income housing units. The potential payback to the City comes about in the increased valuation of the buildings, resulting in taxable, revenue-producing properties and a reduction in tax delinquencies.

The housing renovation is also necessary to the success of Park Street's revitalization in terms of the positive aspects of having a residential/commercial mix along the corridor. Aside from the provision of low-income housing units, a stable resident population would help to foster a 24-hour type of environment: one that does not "roll up the sidewalks" at 5:00 pm. The presence of a large resident population would do much to decrease the perceptions of the dangerous nature of the area.

Park Street becomes deserted in the evenings; an aspect that currently induces fear among residents and outsiders alike. Most stores are closed and there is a problem with vagrancy and graffiti. Consequently, the stabilization of the housing above the commercial entities could do much to alleviate these problems. The use of block watches and an increase in the presence of police along the strip and would contribute much to this effort.

Economic/Social Conditions

The goal of improving the economic status of residents is tied directly to the improvement of the housing situation and the commercial revitalization of the Park Street area. The high unemployment rate among Frog Hollow residents has an effect on Park Street revitalization for several reasons. The low-income residents are unable to financially support the current retail core. This inability is based on the high percentage of income spent on rents which averaged \$203/month in 1980¹ and a lack of cash for non-essential expenses. It is logical to assume that an increase in the median income of the average neighborhood household (currently \$10,030)² would be directly correlated with an increase in spending on non-essential items purchased in establishments along Park Street.

Most of the neighborhood groups and formal organizations are involved in the economic/social segment of the total revitalization strategy. There are as many variations in the strategies used by these organizations as there are problems to be dealt with.

All contractual work which involves the use of large amounts of federal funding for rehabilitation and renovation has a built-in resident hiring requirement. These on the job training programs teach the employees construction skills and take them, at least temporarily, out of the unemployment cycle. The skills which they learn are transferable to the outside job market. Residents are

also hired through neighborhood contractors, for work on their projects. This is helpful to employees because, in addition to providing them with an income, the work takes them out of the immediate neighborhood and forces them to work in a non-Spanish speaking environment.

Other forms of employment training are offered through the city's traditional job training programs. It is the expressed desire of several community agencies that a job training center be located in the neighborhood, to offer technical and clerical training programs. Although this may seem to contradict the goal of employing residents in the larger job market, the participants would be less reluctant to enroll in a neighborhood program because they would not have to first overcome the language barrier encountered in the enrollment process; a problem which is prevalent among both skilled and unskilled, unemployed residents.

The language barrier, which is largely a result of the insularity of the unemployed within their community, is a major obstacle to successful placement of even skilled individuals. In 1980, 64% of those persons 18 or older spoke a language other than English in the home. Of these persons, 1,131 or 17% acknowledged that they spoke English not well, or not at all.³ Programs in English as a Second Language and GED High School Equivalency classes are available, but are not always successful in regard to preparation of an individual for daily interaction in a

non-Spanish speaking environment.

The cultural ties of the Hispanic community with its native language are evident in its strong insistence on bilingual education. Among cohorts between the ages of 5-17, in 1980, seventy-eight percent of a total of 2561 individuals spoke a language other than English at home (60% of those spoke Spanish). Of that number, 24.5% spoke English not well or not at all.⁴ La Casa de Puerto Rico constantly monitors the adequacy of the bilingual education programs in the schools. The importance in this type of learning is the effect which it has on the eventual capacity of students to be literate in English and Spanish, as opposed to functionally illiterate in both. These types of programs have a direct effect on the ultimate ability of Hispanic youth to secure and maintain a working status in the mainstream society.

This also relates directly to the employability of these youth in their community. If, for example, the large market area which was previously mentioned responds to the revitalized commercial area in the nature of increased patronage, employees of commercial establishments will be required to communicate with them in English.

An objective which relates to the improvement of economic status of the residents is that of increasing employment of residents to at least 10% of the local working population. There are many establishments in the neighborhood which employ ten or more persons,⁵ and a concerted effort should be made to encourage local

employers to hire and train neighborhood residents. The three local institutions can also play a larger part in the hiring of residents through their affirmative action programs. It is possible that within the proposed training center, an individual could serve as a job placement counselor, matching skills of residents with job openings in the community at large.

Additional Needs

Many social programs are carried out in Frog Hollow which address the needs of the elderly, youth and families. These programs are well established and deal with a myriad of areas such as health, family counseling and recreation. The funding for these programs, which are run by the San Juan Center, the Spanish American Center, the Hispanic Health Council and the Hispanic Family Institute, comes from the United Way, the Hartford Foundation, CBDG funds and various state and federal programs.

The aggregation of services of all above-mentioned agencies does much to alleviate housing, social and economic problems. However, two areas which need a greater commitment of funds are youth recreation and day care. These needs relate directly to the goal of improving social and economic conditions of residents, because of their impact on the levels of gang-related crimes and delinquent activity as well as labor participation rates of women in the neighborhood. The recreational facilities available to

youths in Frog Hollow are very limited. The neighborhood park in South Green is available, but this is not in close proximity to the western section of Park Street. As a result, the sizeable young population (1,930 or 19% of the total)⁶ between the ages of 10-19 are often found hanging around on Park Street. The frequent appearance of graffiti on storefront facades is largely a result of a lack of recreational diversion for the youths. According to one neighborhood leader, the kids "aren't bad, they're just bored. If they had somewhere to go, there would be less graffiti."⁷

Day care is another area of concern in terms of meeting the service needs of the immediate population. The percentage of single parent female heads of household (46.2% in 1980)⁸ combined with the high percentage of female non-participation in the labor force (60.2%)⁹ indicates that women are not leaving the home to work in large numbers. One of the reasons behind this non-participation is a lack of adequate day care facilities. Even if a woman is trained for employment and is able to secure a position, she still has to be concerned with finding safe, affordable child care. The median income among Hispanic families was \$6,288 in 1980,¹⁰ so there is an obvious demand for the provision of facilities which would then allow women to participate to a greater extent in the workforce. However, single parents are unlikely to seek job training in the absence of secure day care for their children.

It is apparent from this discussion that the needs of residents in Frog Hollow, in terms of the provision of programs to increase income/social service levels, are great. Neighborhood organizations do as much as is possible with limited resources and volunteerism is solicited to fill many of the gaps in services. There is a need, however, for the construction of job training and day care facilities. In addition, these facilities would require staffing and a commitment of funding from various sources for ongoing success.

Commercial

Finally, the commercial revitalization of the Park Street corridor has as its goal an upgrading and expansion of the present commercial core, to create a productive commercial environment. Although the thrust of this section has dealt with neighborhood strategies which address housing, income and social services, there is a direct correlation between the eventual success of the commercial corridor and the relative prosperity of the neighborhood residents.

A "productive" commercial environment is based upon a financially stable core of retail establishments, a wide variety in types of merchandise and a mix of types of businesses. Financial stability of the establishments is based on their income streams and security of tenure. High income streams would be an indication of large volumes of

business and low overhead costs paid out in rent, taxes, salaries and insurance.

A mix in the types of business as well as a variation in merchandise available is somewhat present along Park Street.¹¹ The merchandising orientation of most establishments is geared to the needs of the immediate, largely Hispanic population.

There are many strategies which can be used to upgrade the commercial core, with the objective in mind of stabilizing marginal businesses and attracting new establishments. These strategies include: structural improvement of existing space through renovation of dilapidated storefronts, a reduction in tax delinquency, promotion of and assistance in the financing of local ownership and a reduction in crime/improvement of the image of the commercial core.

The central organization which works to carry out these types of activities is the Spanish American Merchant's Association (S.A.M.A.). Working in conjunction with the Hartford Chamber of Commerce and local agencies, residents and the private sector, S.A.M.A. seeks to "improve the physical conditions and enhance the area's image in the Park Street corridor."¹² This agency oversees activities such as the facade improvement program, which removes graffiti, and also organizes the annual Park Street Festival. This festival, which attracted 20,000 persons in 1983, was successful in bringing outsiders to Park Street, to share in the cultural activities and foods offered by

the diverse members of the neighborhood. These events not only helped to raise money for other uses, but also served to lessen negative perceptions of the neighborhood held by the community at large.

S.A.M.A. works directly with merchants, assisting them with the procurement of loans for the purchase of their commercial properties. The financing of these loans has come primarily from local (C.B.T. and Northest Savings) banks which are obligated to offer a certain percentage of below market loans to residents and commercial entities under the Community Reinvestment Act. Through pressure put on local banks from organizations such as HART/Vecinos Unidos, most of the merchants have ben able to finance their mortgages at two to three points below the prime interest rate. The banks have a vested interest in the prosperity of the neighborhood, not only because of the loan repayments, but also because of their location within the Park Street corridor. In addition to bank loans, some Small Business Administration loans have been obtained. In general, however, it has been unnecessary to tap this funding source due to the availability of low-interest, local financing.

The Hartford Economic Development Corporation (HEDCO) has also been instrumental in providing mortgage loans to small businesses of up to \$40,000 per establishment. The goal of this corporation is to make leverage money available to businesses, to entice new entrepreneurs into

the Hartford areas as well as to maintain the current economic base.

The local merchants are increasingly more aware of the positive aspects of ownership but still face a major block; the vacant buildings and commercial entities owned by absentee, speculative landlords. Even the desire to purchase buildings, backed by financial assistance, cannot ensure that the owner will be willing to sell. S.A.M.A. is active in trying to persuade the city to pursue tax delinquent landlords, to force them either to pay the taxes or to sell the buildings. In addition, a program of more stringent code enforcement would force absentee owners to either upgrade their properties or sell. However, the case is moot in instances where the buildings meet code standards and are not tax delinquent, but are being held out in hopes of increased valuation, due to general improvements along the corridor.

Another aspect of the revitalization process which is at the heart of many economic and social problems is the need to reduce vagrancy, graffiti and gang presence along the commercial corridor. S.A.M.A., in cooperation with other neighborhood organizations, has encouraged street watches and youth gang programs. These programs are necessary because they serve to alleviate much of the neighborhood's poor public image through a reduction in the number of vagrant individuals present along the strip. A more aggressive effort to dissuade vagrancy and delinquency which involves the city police department is necessary. It

is only through positive changes that an attraction of the larger market area will be possible.

A Partnership

Four of the principle neighborhood organizations have joined forces to promote a comprehensive revitalization of the commercial core. These organizations are S.A.M.A., Broad Park Development Corporation, La Casa de Puerto Rico, and HART/Vecinos Unidos. Through the combination of talent among the individuals involved in these organizations, the partnership has strength in the coordination of merchants, proven liaison capacity with financial institutions, a sophistication in real estate development procedures, knowledge of local, state, federal and private financial aid sources, and a strong citizen involvement component.

In addition to the technical skills exhibited by the individuals, their combined political influence is substantial. Their formal and informal involvement in neighborhood affairs places them in the category of "neighborhood leadership".

The focus of this group's attention is on the development proposal for Il Mercado, (see Appendix I) a central Hispanic marketplace. Il Mercado is conceived of as a cultural and ethnic marketplace for Park Street which would consist of stores and restaurants, offering typical foods and clothing of the various Spanish-speaking cultures of Frog Hollow.

Modeled after the Ibor City marketplace in Tampa, Florida, Il Mercado would provide an anchor for Park Street, rich in its offering of cultural items which would be affordable to residents and the larger market alike.

This market is targeted for the section of Park Street west of the study area, but would have a substantial impact on the entire commercial strip. These impacts would be realized in the forms of increased traffic volumes, larger percentages of patrons from the market area and the overall improvement of the commercial area's image. In addition, the construction phases of the project as well as the employees needed to work in the marketplace would provide a substantial number of permanent and temporary jobs for neighborhood residents.

In regard to the goals of neighborhood and commercial revitalization, El Mercado will address social, economic and commercial goals. The marketplace could increase positive perceptions of the neighborhood to the larger market and expand the commercial base, thus benefitting the city and the localized economy.

The economic benefits to be gained through this development are substantial. The organizations are currently involved in the planning stages of this project, carrying out investigations of possible funding sources, financial packages and zoning requirements. The input of each agency is crucial to the process, to ensure that the project reflects the needs of the residents of Frog Hollow, the merchants, the City of Hartford and the remainder of the city's Hispanic community.

Administrative Strengths

In areas which range from housing subsidy and day care to job training and economic development, there is a shortage of funds. As was pointed out earlier, a neighborhood day care center, a job training center and a youth recreational facility are all needed in Frog Hollow. The construction of the facilities alone represents a large financial commitment, most of which cannot be raised locally. The development of a combined facility, such as a multi-service center, is an option which could also be responsive to the neighborhood's needs. But again, where will the funds come from? Traditional sources such as CDBG, city funds, the United Way and private foundations cannot be expected to completely provide the substantial amount of financial assistance needed.

The emphasis of the current administration on the use of public/private partnerships, to fill gaps in needs, is an area which should be further investigated. Potential partnerships could be formed between the business community and the four lead agencies in Frog Hollow; S.A.M.A., Hart/Vecinos Unidos, La Casa de Puerto Rico and Broad Park Development Corporation. Each of these agencies are focused on different aspects of the revitalization process and have different capacities in terms of program administration (see Table III). The monies that agencies such as Hart/Vecinos Unidos La Casa de Puerto Rico and S.A.M.A. receive are not used to administer programs, but are used to support the ongoing efforts of the agencies

staffs.

The advocacy role of Hart and La Casa, absent programmatic funding, leaves them financially weak. The inference is not to be misconstrued. These agencies present a formidable advocacy force for the neighborhood, but they currently lack the financial strength to administer programs.

S.A.M.A. has more relative financial strength. It receives money from its membership to oversee programs such as the Park Street Festival. However, it also has no funding specifically tagged for program administration.

Broad Park Development Corporation has the greatest relative administrative capacity; it receives funds for its own administration and is involved in profitable real estate development. The level of sophistication of its dealings requires strong administrative capability.

All of these agencies are 501(c)(3) tax exempt. As such, these non-profit agencies are eligible recipients of federal, state and local public funding.

This chapter has addressed the number of ongoing and potential solutions to the distressed economic, social and commercial conditions prevalent in Frog Hollow. The organizations and community groups involved in the administration of day-to-day as well as long term planning of Frog Hollow's development do a great deal to address the needs of the community and represent a strong support network for neighborhood residents. The combined political

Chapter III Endnotes

1. City of Hartford Planning Department, "Frog Hollow Area Plan" (Hartford 1983) Tables section.
2. Ibid.
3. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Decennial Census Neighborhood Statistics Program: Geographic Definition of Neighborhoods for Hartford, Conn. (109).
4. Ibid.
5. Hartford Planning Department, "Frog Hollow Area Plan", Appendix B.
6. U.S. Census, Neighborhood Statistics Program: Hartford.
7. Spanish American Merchant's Association, Hartford, Connecticut, interview with Executive Director, March 1984.
8. Hartford Planning Department, "Frog Hollow Area Plan", Tables section.
9. Ibid.
10. U.S. Census, Neighborhood Statistics Program: Hartford.
11. Hartford Planning Department, "Frog Hollow Area Plan", Appendix B.
12. Spanish American Merchant's Association, Second Annual Banquet Publication (Hartford, CT, 1984), p. 5.

Chapter IV: THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT

In July of 1982 the Connecticut State Legislature passed final approval of Public Act 82-469; the Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA). This enabling legislation established a "neighborhood assistance tax credit program for business firms investing in qualified programs which assist neighborhoods"¹

This chapter will serve to explain the nature of the NAA in terms of its legislative intent, its strengths, weaknesses and performance record to date, and its potential as a neighborhood revitalization tool.

The first section of this chapter will focus on the unique characteristics of the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program in terms of its public/private thrust and its attempt to address specific neighborhood problems throughout the state. The programs which deal with housing, economic and social needs of Connecticut's older neighborhoods, and that are specifically funded under this Act, will be presented.

An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of this program will follow. This portion will highlight the ways in which the NAA serves as an incentive or disincentive to involvement on the parts of both the public and private sectors.

Finally, an assessment of the "success" of the program in terms of its record of funding programs for neighborhoods in Hartford will be presented. The assessment will consider types and amounts of credit

allocated to organizations compared to the number and amount of proposals submitted for Fiscal Year 83-84. Explanations of reasons for the underutilization of the NAA in Hartford will be suggested as a way to illustrate opportunities for an increase in local involvement in this innovative neighborhood assistance program.

Eligible Activities

The Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act is a unique and innovative funding tool which assists in strengthening the economic and social viability of neighborhoods throughout the state. Simply, this program creates an incentive for businesses to invest in neighborhood assistance activities by awarding tax credits for donations in amounts of up to \$100,000 per business.² This is not a grant-in-aid program. The funds received by non-profit agencies under this Act are the investments of businesses throughout the state, in exchange for tax credits.

The funding cycle mechanics of the Neighborhood Assistance Act (see Figure I) indicates the involvement of four types of entities; eligible, participating organizations,³ the localities within which they are located,⁴ private business entities⁵ and the State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.⁶ Public/private partnerships are fostered, using state government as an intermediary; the Department of Revenue

Services is responsible for the regulation of the types of programs eligible for funding, the percentage of tax credits awarded for each program, and the program review/audit process for allocated funds. The role of each of the entities involved in the funding cycle (see Appendix B) reveals a necessary synchronization of activities such that the goal of funding programs and awarding tax credits is achieved.

Neighborhood Assistance is defined by P.A. 82-469 as "the furnishing of financial assistance, labor, material or technical advice to aid in the physical improvement or rehabilitation of all or any parts of a neighborhood."⁷ This definition of neighborhood assistance provides for a broad range of eligible activities which can be funded in the name of neighborhood revitalization. Its goal in targeting tax credits to fund neighborhood programs is to gain and create new employment for low-income residents,⁸ improve housing and weatherization conditions, reduce crime, and to provide community assistance programs to neighborhoods throughout Connecticut.

For each type of activity mentioned above, the Act specifies a particular percentage of tax credit to be assigned, thus putting a legislative emphasis on certain types of programs. The tax credits awarded to businesses in terms of the percent of the total donations depend upon the type of program and the target population into which a business decides to invest its money. There are different credits attached to each category of program such that a

maximum of 30% is given for investment in day care facilities, 70% credit is given for investment in energy conservation, employment and job training programs, and 50% tax credit is given for the remainder of qualifying programs.

Proposals which solicit funds for energy conservation, job training and education are allocated a 70% tax credit. The legislative emphasis on these programs can be explained according to the following rationale. Much of the low-income housing in older neighborhoods is improperly insulated, thus raising costs for home heating. As fuel assistance programs are cost-prohibitive and ever-increasing for the state of Connecticut, it is logical to place an emphasis on energy conservation programs such as insulation and weatherstripping. In addition to conserving fuel, weatherization also increases the value of a neighborhood's property.

The emphasis on job training and education in terms of tax credit allocations reflects a statewide concern over low labor participation and education levels among the poorer populations of the urban areas. In addition to increasing skills levels through the funding of programs, the potential also exists to foster valuable public/private linkages. The training received by individuals through the public agencies could be linked to eventual employment by the private businesses.

A fifty-percent tax credit is given to businesses

which invest in community assistance, crime prevention and housing programs. Although the legislation allocated less relative credit to these programs, there is still an emphasis placed on structural renovation and modernization of buildings and neighborhood facilities as well as crime reduction programs. The structural emphasis is a reflection of the crucial need for neighborhood revitalization throughout the state. It is important to keep in mind that neighborhood assistance can be provided in the form of materials, labor, and technical assistance as well as strictly monetary donations. The technical assistance dimension could be applied to the funding of planning functions such as the development of U.D.A.G. proposals. The physical renovation of buildings also has the potential to provide jobs for the immediate population through on-the-job construction training.

The lesser emphasis on day care is treated under a special section of the Act.⁹ The reasoning behind the assignment of only 30% credit to day care facilities is that while the other programs, in general, directly benefit the residents, provision of neighborhood day care facilities also benefits local business. This is because employees of these businesses could utilize the services of the facility as well as the residents.

The section of the Act which allows for joint investment¹⁰ of two businesses in one program could ostensibly result in near full subsidy of a day care facility, provided the credit allocation were higher. The

Legislature clearly intended¹¹ that the public/private balance of responsibility be taken up by businesses for the provision of day care for employees, even when those employees are low-income.

It is evident that regardless of the tax credit assigned, the plethora of programs funded under the Act are aimed at upgrading social and economic conditions of neighborhoods throughout the state of Connecticut.

Unique Characteristics/Strengths of the NAA

What sets this Act apart from other attempts to solicit private dollars is that it gives something in return to participating businesses; tax credits. Private sector entities are not philanthropic institutions. Operating for their own self interest, they are generally concerned with profitability more than social consciousness. This Act provides business with several incentives which compound the initial appeal of the idea of tax credits. These are the strengths of the Act in the eyes of the business community.

As was mentioned earlier, businesses may become joint investors in the programs. The leeway given to businesses permits them to invest in a variety of programs, for different sums of money, gaining different tax credits.

In addition to the choice of programs, a business has the option to commit funds to a program over an extended period of time, or on a year-to-year basis. The tax credits not used in the year a proposal is funded may be

carried forward or backwards for up to five years. The business has the option of applying tax credits to tax returns in the following years until the full credit has been allocated.

One other strength of the Act, in regard to businesses, is that the donations do not need to be made by large corporations. Small businesses can invest in these programs, receive tax credits and gain public recognition for reinvestment into their neighborhoods.

Public agencies are supportive of this Act, for not only does it serve as an incentive to businesses to donate money, but also to become more aware of and involved in the immediate neighborhoods where they are located. Direct contact between agencies and businesses results in a great number of subsequent agreements by businesses to invest in those programs. It is therefore clear that agencies which have a bargaining tool can approach local businesses and encourage participation in local programs. Of course, this requires a certain level of knowledge on the part of agency representatives of those aspects of investment, besides altruism, which will appeal to the business community.

A provision of the Act states that businesses must donate in percentage amounts above the last year's figures and commensurate with the percent of total tax credits allocated. Although this stipulation requires that an additional increment of funds be invested, the actual amount spent is the new amount of the donation minus the amount given in tax credits. The actual amount spent can

actually remain constant because the additional increment is credited to the above-line tax figures of the business.

EXAMPLE:

DONATION FOR FY 1981 - previous to NAA	\$100,000.
DONATION FOR FY 1982 - using NAA for day care	
Must be at least 30% above previous year	\$130,000.
FOR TAX PURPOSES, DONATION EQUALS	\$130,000.
Minus NAA Credit	- <u>30,000.</u>
	\$100,000.

This works to the benefit of those agencies which have received private funding as well as those who are first-time recipients. In either case, the real dollars given to the agency increase but the businesses are not harmed financially since their real dollar investment may remain equal to that of the previous year.

The section of the Act¹² which allows for extended time funding works to the advantage of agencies which can secure these commitments. Because many public organizations are programmatically tied to discretionary funding, the ability to secure a two or three-year financial commitment from a private source is a welcome change. Security in funding stature frees organizations from the fear of a loss of financial support, thus encouraging long-range planning for their programs.

The NAA encourages strong public/private involvement

by leaving the responsibility of soliciting funds to the community organizations. These organizations are given the option to actively encourage private funding of their programs through NAA proposals. This requires that the organizations are very familiar with the facets of the Act which appeal to businesses and are capable of lobbying for their own programs.

The strengths of the Neighborhood Assistance Act in terms of the neighborhoods it benefits are related to the wide variety of revitalization goals for which it provides a funding mechanism. Target programs which range from day care to weatherization are a reflection of the Legislature's awareness of the multiplicity of problems in older neighborhoods, including the problems of the elderly and handicapped.

Through the direct involvement between local business and organizations, residents and entrepreneurs may develop a greater sense of shared responsibility in the prosperity of their neighborhoods. Local knowledge of the entrepreneurs' willingness to make these types of investments could also have a positive impact on consumer patterns and a reduction in incidences of vandalism and graffiti.

Weaknesses of the NAA

There are also some weaknesses in the NAA, most of which are based on the incompatibility of the dates of the funding cycle with those of the federal fiscal year (see Figure I).

The Neighborhood Assistance Act, which began the tax credit program, was passed on January 1, 1982 and approved by the Connecticut House on June 1, 1982. Tax credits were deemed applicable for any program which began in any fiscal year after January 1, 1982.¹³

October 1982 marked the beginning of FY 1982-83. the due date for agency proposal submission to DRS was September first; just three months after the final approval of the Act. During this short time, municipalities had to arrange public hearings and submit a list of approved programs to DRS.

There were difficulties involved in assembling a municipal government public hearing during the summer months, such as vacationing council persons and low citizen attendance. Many municipalities in the State became aware of the program at such a late date that they could not possibly assemble a public hearing in time to meet the deadline for proposal submission on September 7. Nineteen municipalities were able to hold hearings and submit proposals to DRS for FY 1982-83, most of which were larger urban or suburban communities which had the resources and political networking ability to respond quickly.

The agencies which submitted funding requests were also required to act under pressure in the development of program proposals. In general the larger agencies, such as the Hartford Department of Education, were better able to react quickly. These agencies had the capacity to assign

staff solely to the task of proposal completion.

Once the Department of Revenue Services received the proposals and published the list, it became the responsibility of the organizations to solicit business' donations. This also proved difficult because the funding cycle required that businesses commit funds from their 82-83 budget, most of which had been set prior to October of 1982. In addition to this requirement, there was (and is) a time lag of up to two months between the business' commitment to invest (Dec. 1) and the final approval of tax credits from DRS. It could then ostensibly have been February 1 of 1983 before businesses were assured of tax credits for donations which had not been written into their '82 budgets.

The total contributions under the NAA for FY 1982-83 were \$558,000, which represented an allotment of \$216,000 in tax credits to 78 businesses. Contributions went to sixteen of the nineteen participating towns.¹⁴

It is evident that the approval of the NAA was not in synchronization with facilitating utilization of the program. The short notice given to municipalities and businesses about the opportunities available under the Act was the principle cause of the under-utilization of this tax credit program in its initial year.

Comparison: FY 1982-83, FY 1983-84

In contrast to the response to the NAA program in FY 1982-83, there was a full allocation of NAA tax credits for

FY 1983-84. One million dollars in tax credits were given to businesses, representing \$1,810,000 dollars of investment in neighborhood assistance programs. Fifty-three towns submitted proposals and 43 received sponsorship. In addition, nine business sponsors were placed on a waiting list and will be called upon in the event of a default on the part of other committed businesses.

The difference in the relative success of each program year can be attributed to several causes. The negative result of enacting the program mid-cycle, as discussed above, was the major fault of the initial year's program. The most important difference in success, however, can be attributed to the public's awareness of the Act and of businesses' cognizance of the advantages to be had under this type of charitable giving. These advantages were seen to be in the tax credits, the potential for joint or partial investment, the credit carry-over provision and in the increased positive visibility of businesses within their localities.

The Department of Revenue Services actively promoted the Act through the use of press releases to state and local media, visits to agencies and communities, and individual mailings to municipalities. The listing of available programs, which lists proposals by town and gives brief program summaries and indicates tax credits awarded, was completed prior to October 1. All eligible

businesses¹⁵ were sent a letter prior to that date notifying them of the existence of this tax credit program and informing them as to the availability of program listing booklets. Many more businesses and municipalities participated in the program in FY 1983-84 as a result of this public awareness program and new businesses were brought into the arena of public giving as a direct result of the incentive of tax credits.

The NAA in Hartford

In FY 1983-84, the city of Hartford received a total of \$208,592.82 in donations from area businesses through the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit program. For these investments \$120,796.10 were allocated in tax credits, representing roughly 12% of the total tax credits given statewide for that year.

The 16 agencies funded in Hartford rarely received the full amount requested, due to the ability of business to make partial investments in a number of programs. Total requests for those 16 agencies equaled \$9,098,975 compared to the amount received, \$208,592 (or 2.3%), through investments.

It is clear that the NAA cannot be expected to close large gaps between supply and demand for Hartford's program funding. As can be seen in Table IV the ratio of programs seeking funding to those gaining funding is high and the amounts contributed by businesses does not match the need. No thirty-percent credit programs were funded, thus

indicating a need to focus on those proposals which gain greater amounts of credits.

How then can the NAA be used to fund programs in Hartford, given its overall limited credit allocations and the performance record of Hartford businesses? The agencies who will submit proposals for the upcoming NAA cycle must think well in advance of possible businesses to approach for funding. They must be on top of the application process because allocations are awarded on a first come, first serve basis.

These two requirements are indicative of the need for agencies to more actively pursue funding for their programs, forcing them to become very involved in public/private partnerships.

The Neighborhood Assistance Act can be utilized to address the need for funding of programs in the various neighborhoods of Hartford. It is necessary, however to first identify the nature of the programs to be proposed, the administrative agencies and the potential sponsors.

"Success" of the NAA

Success of the Neighborhood Assistance Act can be defined in a variety of ways; as an innovative revitalization funding mechanism, as a comprehensive, statewide tool for increasing support to revitalization-related programs, as a mechanism which works to alleviate some of the problems, without the pretense of attempting to

be comprehensive and specifically, as a revitalization tool for Hartford.

In terms of its status as an innovative tool for neighborhood revitalization, the NAA is the third of its kind to receive passage nationally. This Act is highly appropriate in a state such as Connecticut, which has a lion's share of insurance and banking industries. The corporate social giving sections of these corporations recognize the advisability of utilizing this funding mechanism and have been some of the first to invest in social programs under this Act. The capacity to invest a greater amount and receive tax credits to balance out the actual donation is appealing. In addition, the full amount of the donation can be reported in below-line tax deductions for charitable giving.

The result of the tax advantages of investment have, indeed, raised the numbers of programs funded by the private sector. The financial commitment to NAA proposals for FY 1983-84 represents a gain to forty-three Connecticut municipalities of \$1,810,000. This does not necessarily mean that new programs were begun by community organizations, but that in most cases the funding helped to bridge gaps caused by federal cutbacks in aid to cities and towns.

The Neighborhood Assistance Act is not a mechanism which provides unlimited tax credits to businesses. There is a one million dollar ceiling per year on tax credits allocated, thus limiting the number of proposals which may

be funded. The result of this limit is that each year, as public awareness of this program increases, there will be a much lower ratio of proposals submitted to proposals funded. The competition for funds may become so fierce as to discourage agencies and businesses from participation.

Agencies may come to believe that the effort expended in terms of staff time and resources is not worth the trouble, given the unlikelihood of funding. Businesses may likewise be unwilling to leave funds in limbo for two months while awaiting approval from DRS.

One option would be to limit the number of proposals submitted by agencies in municipalities, thus cutting competition but increasing the responsibilities of the municipalities in terms of selection. Another would be to expand the ceiling to an amount greater than one million dollars in tax credits. With this increase, a greater number of programs could be funded by businesses throughout the State.

It is clear from this discussion that the Neighborhood Assistance Act is an innovative, but limited tool to be used in an overall revitalization strategy. The programs and populations to which its funds are targeted benefit from whatever increases in funding they are able to receive. The businesses benefit from tax credit allocations and flexibility in their investments.

The record of the NAA in Hartford has been relatively weak, indicating that few businesses are involved in the

program. One of Frog Hollow's indirect sponsors, the Hartford Economic Development Corporation, has received funding (see Table IV) but no neighborhood groups have been NAA fund recipients to date.

The needs in Frog Hollow in terms of housing, social and economic conditions are great. The NAA can be used to fill programmatic funding gaps, but it is first necessary to identify the programs, agencies and sponsors to be involved; such is the purpose of the following chapter.

It is necessary to reiterate that the existence of the Neighborhood Assistance Act made \$1,810,000 available to state neighborhood assistance programs and has stimulated public/private partnerships in 43 cities and towns. In light of both of these respects the NAA is clearly a necessary revitalization tool for the state of Connecticut.

Chapter IV Endnotes

1. State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Services, "Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credits Corporation Business Tax", Bulletin #12, July 14, 1982.
2. State of Connecticut Substitute House Bill No. 5478, Public Act No. 82-469, "An Act Concerning Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance", Sec. 2. (f).
3. Ibid., Sec. 2.(h).
4. Ibid., Sec. 2.(f).
5. Ibid., Sec. 2.(c).
6. Ibid., Sec. 3. - Sec. 6.
7. Ibid., Sec. 1(g).
8. Ibid., Sec. 5.(New).
9. Ibid., Sec. 4.(New).
10. Ibid., Sec. 2.(e).
11. Ibid., Sec. 4(New).
12. Ibid., Sec. 2(d).
13. Ibid., Sec. 11.
14. State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Services, Newsletter.
15. P.A. No. 82-469, Sec. 2(c).

Chapter V APPLICATION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT
AS A REVITALIZATION STRATEGY FOR PARK STREET

Chapter V illustrates ways in which the Neighborhood Assistance Act can be utilized to fund programs whose goal is the commercial revitalization of Park Street. By building upon the previous chapters, the following information sets out practical applications of the NAA which are specific to commercial revitalization goals for Park Street. Although the NAA has limitations, it funds the types of programs needed in Frog Hollow. This Chapter recommends the active pursuit of funding through the NAA to the neighborhood agencies, because of the potential partnerships to be made with the private sector.

The administrative capacity to carry out programs, as discussed in Chapter III, is present among the lead agencies of the community. The present programmatic limitations of these agencies are based primarily on funding scarcity rather than a lack of administrative skill.

A comprehensive approach to the amelioration of Frog Hollow's social, economic, and housing problems has been advocated since commercial revitalization cannot occur in a vacuum. It has also been pointed out that improvement to or further deterioration of the stability of the immediate neighborhood will have direct effects on the prosperity of

Park Street, its commercial core.

The NAA can be utilized by local agencies to partially fund many of the programs needed by neighborhood residents. To discuss the exhaustive possibilities for applications of NAA funds on a neighborhood basis is, however, beyond the intended scope of this final chapter. Rather, the potential applications of the NAA for programs particular to the commercial corridor will be presented. The discussion may then serve as a model, to illustrate the variety of applications on a neighborhood wide basis.

The requirements of the Neighborhood Assistance Act in terms of target populations, program eligibility, administrative agency eligibility and particularly important aspects of the application process will be highlighted. This reiteration will serve to set the framework within which the potential programmatic solutions to prevalent problems can be discussed.

The outcome of this presentation will illustrate various ways in which the NAA can be utilized to find programs associated with Park Street's revitalization. The suggestions will only scratch the surface of possible proposal directions, in recognition of the fact that the local agencies can best design appropriate programs to meet the needs of their constituents groups.

Specific agencies will be recognized as potential administrators of programs which are funded through the NAA mechanism. The focus is directed to the four lead agencies

mentioned throughout this Research Project.

Finally, conclusions will be offered which reinforce the project's assessment that the NAA is not only an innovative public/private funding mechanism, but specifically one which can be utilized for the revitalization of the Park Street commercial corridor and administered by local organizations.

The Neighborhood Assistance Act in Review

Before discussing particular applications of the NAA to Park Street commercial revitalization programs, it is helpful to reiterate some of the eligibility criteria. The following information will establish a framework within which programmatic efforts can be explored.

The types of programs eligible for NAA funding are: community services, crime prevention, employment and job training, day care, energy conservation and neighborhood assistance. The funds directed at these programs can be realized in the form of monetary donations, materials, labor or technical assistance.

The Act requires that at least seventy-five percent of the target population for any proposal should have an income not in excess of 150% of the poverty level.¹ Funds may also be used for improvements to land or properties owned by charitable corporations, foundations and trusts.²

The neighborhood organizations which administer NAA funds must either have an Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, be Title VII community development corporations, or be incorporated as charitable corporations or trusts.³ The proposals of neighborhood organizations are invested in by area businesses; nearly all are eligible participants.

Within this framework of criteria it is immediately apparent that a multiplicity of potential programs for Park Street would be eligible funding recipients. The predominantly low-income resident population falls well

within the criteria for target client groups, and this population is in need of many of the types of programs funded by this Act.

The four lead neighborhood organizations, S.A.M.A., La Casa de Puerto Rico, Broad Park Development Corporation and HART/Vecinos Unidos, all have an Internal Revenue 501(c)(3) status. This tax exemption makes each agency an eligible NAA administering neighborhood organization. As was discussed earlier, each agency has different administrative capacities; each have successfully developed monitoring and advocacy leadership roles, but HART and La Casa lack programmatic funds to carry out their own programs.

Prevalent Problems and Potential Solutions

The major problem areas which relate directly to Park Street's commercial revitalization are crime, housing/mixed use, vacant residential buildings, unemployment and commercial establishment non-ownership/structural needs. For each of these problem areas, the following section identifies potential solutions (see Table V). Rather than attempt to be all inclusive, the intent of these suggestions is to illustrate the ways in which NAA funds can be used in different substantive areas by several community agencies.

Crime/Negative Image/Vagrancy.

The problem of crime, or the perception of gang-related activity, was cited by many patrons⁴ as the primary negative characteristic of Park Street. Vagrancy and graffiti are indeed major problems along the commercial corridor. Much of the vagrancy is related directly to high unemployment rates, low labor participation rates and a lack of recreational facilities and programs.

Two potential solutions to the problems of graffiti and vandalism are neighborhood block watches and a merchant's crime watch. In each instance, involvement and cooperation of the local police would be imperative.

The administering neighborhood organization(s) could either be S.A.M.A. or HART/Vecinos Unidos, and another function would be to carry out crime deterrence activities, in conjunction with the Hartford Police Department. The agencies would be responsible for developing proposals, overseeing their progression through the funding cycle, approaching businesses for investments and ultimately for the administration of the programs. It would be expected that S.A.M.A. would work with merchants and HART with the neighborhood residents.

Housing/Non-ownership/Vacancy.

The housing problem found in the Park Street corridor is based on the need to upgrade or substantially rehabilitate mixed-use residential entities. Many of the buildings are not in compliance with safety codes, much of

which is a result of speculative absentee landlords.

Programs which focus on upgrading the housing units should be geared towards bringing the apartments into code compliance. This might involve electrical, plumbing, weatherization and structural rehabilitation efforts.

There are at least two types of programs which can be funded through NAA proposals to address the housing rehabilitation needs. The first involves an increase in public awareness of tenant rights; HART/Vecinos Unidos is a public advocacy agency which currently performs this service. This agency could, however, obtain NAA funds to increase the current level of activities or to promote a new program geared specifically to the Park Street corridor. This would be funded under the Community Services category of the NAA.

The second type of programmatic approach would be the actual rehabilitation of the substandard units. Broad Park Development Corporation could apply for funds to either carry out the rehabilitation efforts or for the planning and architectural phases of the redevelopment process. Keeping in mind that investments can consist of materials and technical assistance, Broad Park could apply for technical assistance in terms of contractors' estimates and the structural development costs for the rehabilitations. Once again, both agencies (HART and Broad Park) would be responsible for overseeing the administrative components of proposals and would deal in programs particular to their

organization goals, with their client groups.

Employment/Unemployment/Lack of Training.

The high levels of unemployment among neighborhood residents has been cited as a partial reason for vagrancy and gang-related crimes. Another adverse effect of unemployment, in terms of the retail corridor, is the decreased potential buying power of the residents on the non-essential types of goods sold by local merchants.

Two areas which were identified in Chapter III and which currently do not exist programmatically among neighborhood organizations are day care and job training programs. Various neighborhood leaders have spoken about the lack of programs in these areas and the need to construct facilities to house these services.

The construction of these facilities and the eventual administration of programs can be broken out into stages. First, physical planning of the facility(ies) could be carried out by Broad Park Development Corporation. The NAA is not to be considered as a mechanism for full funding of this development, as a result of maximum tax credit allocations of \$100,000 per business. In order to provide full NAA funding for such facilities, an agglomeration of businesses would have to be tapped. However, funds could be raised to carry out the planning phases and perhaps for site preparation.

The financing of the actual construction would require a sophisticated development package, including the levy of

a variety of funding sources. Broad Park Development Corporation has the technical expertise to handle this type of package. It would be possible to obtain NAA monies from a variety of businesses, to be used as leverage for additional funds. The allocated tax credits would come under the neighborhood assistance category, thus giving businesses a 50% return on their investments.

The eventual staffing of job training or day care facilities would not be taken up by the neighborhood organizations. However, NAA monies could be used to obtain technical assistance for the purchase of equipment, staff training and the ongoing funding of training and employment programs. One of the lead agencies, probably La Casa de Puerto Rico, could oversee the administration of funds to ensure a smoother start-up for the new facility. The new job training/day care facility would receive a 501(c)(3) tax exemption, making it an eligible recipient of NAA funds. This facility would probably be located on a side street, off the main Park Street corridor. By locating on the strip a loss of prime commercial space, to an entity whose revenue producing capacity would be marginal, would occur. In addition, the parking demands of such a facility would put a strain on the current limited supply. Regardless of location, however, the need for this type of facility and its potential positive impact upon the economic and social conditions of Frog Hollow residents is substantial.

Commercial/Non-ownership/Rehabilitation.

The prevalent problems associated with the instability of the Park Street corridor are non-ownership of commercial entities and the poor physical condition of many of the buildings. Limited parking, unvaried merchandising and the lack of an anchor are other problems which have been discussed in relation to Park Street's difficulty in attracting a larger market.

The most important potential solution to these problems begins with ownership by the local merchants, of the buildings in which their commercial establishments are located. Two types of revolving loan funds are suggested; one which would finance below prime mortgages, and another to provide subsequent property improvement loans, also at below prime rates. These funds would be administered through S.A.M.A., but would require close involvement with local banks as well.

The combined goal of creating these revolving loan programs is to improve tenure stability among merchants and upgrade the physical conditions of the buildings. This will improve overall physical appearances along the commercial corridor.

Until now, the businesses which might invest in NAA proposals have not been identified. However, it is here that the potential involvement of Aetna Life and Casualty in the Park Street commercial revitalization effort can be particularly pertinent. Aetna's home office is located in close proximity to Park Street and the corporation is

involved with the Frog Hollow community through its Corporate Social Responsibility office. Aetna has not, as yet, become involved in utilization of the Neighborhood Assistance Act.

The start-up funding necessary for the formation of the above-mentioned revolving loan programs is substantial. Aetna most probably has the financial capacity to make this type of investment and to receive a Neighborhood Assistance Act 50% tax credit as an added bonus for the corporation. In addition, the potential payback to Aetna Life and Casualty can also be realized in an improved surrounding neighborhood for its home office and an easily accessible shopping area for its workers.

The lack of a commercial anchor on Park Street is a contributive factor to its inability to draw upon the larger market area. The potential exists, however, for the development of Il Mercado, to be located slightly west of the Washington to Broad section of Park Street. This central Hispanic marketplace, (see Appendix A) would provide an anchor for Park Street as well as permanent and temporary (construction) employment, and an improvement of the presently perceived conditions of disinvestment.

The Neighborhood Assistance Act can be utilized to fund a variety of the phases of this development. Any site clearance or physical improvements to the existing proposed site can be funded with a 50% tax credit under the Neighborhood Assistance section of the Act. Technical

assistance in preparing grant proposals for federal funding such as an Urban Development Action Grant can also be funded through this mechanism.

Both temporary and permanent employment to neighborhood residents will be a consequence of the development. On-the-job training would be provided by constructors, under the minority hiring requirement which is tied to the use of federal funds.

Neighborhood Assistance Act funds could be used to hold workshops on merchandising and display for incoming merchants. The workshops, which could be organized by S.A.M.A. would be funded under the community assistance section of the Act and would be assigned a 50% tax credit.

The partnership of S.A.M.A., HART/Vecinos Unidos, La Casa de Puerto Rico and Broad Park Development Corporation could work together to develop NAA proposals for Il Mercado. As in all other instances, the agencies would be responsible for overseeing the progress of the proposal, through-the funding cycle, contacting and pursuing corporate investors and administering NAA funds.

Summary

It is evident from the preceding examples that there are definite applications for NAA funds to Park Street commercial revitalization programs. The programmatic suggestions have identified some of the many potential program directions, but the applicability of the mechanism is clear.

The types of programs which were funded in Fiscal year 1983-84, as discussed in Chapter IV, were those which gave businesses the greatest return on their investments (e.g., those to which fifty or seventy-percent tax credits were assigned). All programs suggested in this chapter, with the exception of the day care facility, are eligible recipients of NAA funding and are assigned the higher levels of tax credits.

The focus of this chapter has also been on linking local organizations to potential programs. This emphasis on local administration of neighborhood programs is based on the belief that these agencies are most aware of, and responsive to, the needs of the Frog Hollow residents. The agencies have a stake in the stabilization and growth of the commercial corridor, as a result of its impact on their constituencies and on the livelihood of the neighborhood as a whole.

The probability that the above-mentioned proposals would be funded through NAA monies, assuming that all administrative steps of the funding cycle are followed, is very promising. The primary factors which seem to lead to

success are timely submission of proposals and early business investment commitments. The competition for these funds has increased as both organizations and business have become more aware of the profitability of these types of donations. The one million dollar State ceiling on allocations serves to limit allocations of tax credits; a fact which has a definite effect on competitiveness as well.

The actual impact of Neighborhood Assistance Act funded programs, on the Park Street revitalization effort, cannot be assessed until implemented. The local agencies must make the commitment to conscientiously pursue this funding source and to lobby for the investment of funds from the private sector and to evaluate its impact once it is utilized. The ultimate responsibility for the pursuit of these monies lies with neighborhood organizations.

The benefits to be realized, in addition to the funding of programs, can be seen in the increased involvement of private sector business with their local communities. Investment in neighborhood programs which result in tax credit allocations appeals to businesses. By utilizing this mechanism, businesses can fulfill their goals of social responsibility and can receive a reward for their investments.

The public/private partnerships formed through the NAA provide the impetus for ongoing private involvement in local communities. This involvement has the potential to

blossom into a significant commitment to the goal of upgrading the neighborhoods in which the investing business are located.

Commercial revitalization of Park Street is a multi-faceted goal and involves a variety of needs which must be addressed. Through the coordination and combination of expertise of the four local lead agencies, the Park Street revitalization is being pursued. The businesses which can be approached for funding can range from the smaller local businesses to the city's large banking and insurance industries, and existing connections between the public and private sectors can be expanded, using the NAA as an incentive for investment. The potential for successful utilization of this funding mechanism is dependent upon identification of appropriate neighborhood uses by the lead agencies and the subsequent commitment of the local agencies to pursuit of this avenue of funding. Given a strong commitment, the NAA can be a powerful funding source for the Park Street revitalization effort.

Conclusions

The intent of this Research Project has been to analyze the Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act in terms of its applicability to the particular revitalization efforts which are being carried out for the Park Street commercial corridor in the capital city of Hartford.

An analysis has been presented of pertinent social, economic, demographic and physical characteristics of the commercial corridor, the Frog Hollow neighborhood and the surrounding market area. The results indicated that a predominantly poor, minority, non-English speaking population resides in Frog Hollow; a factor which has a concurrent negative impact upon the success of business entities located in the neighborhood's commercial center.

Neighborhood goals which address current revitalization needs were identified as an upgrading of the housing stock, the provision of employment and job training, and improvement of the physical characteristics of the commercial corridor. No one solution exists to ameliorate all of the pressing neighborhood problems. Rather, a combination of efforts which recognize the interdependence among all these factors was advocated.

The discussion of current programmatic efforts being carried out by neighborhood agencies provided information about the types of organizations which function in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. Four lead agencies, S.A.M.A., HART/Vecinos Unidos, La Casa de Puerto Rico and Broad Park Development Corporation, were identified as the primary

providers of advocacy and leadership for the large Hispanic community. The role of each agency, in terms of its client group, its substantive area of focus and its programmatic efforts was presented in order to emphasize the organizational strengths of the local agencies. In addition, this chapter served to identify additional program areas, (e.g., day care and job training) where funds could be used to improve or create the delivery of services to neighborhood residents.

The discussion in Chapter IV shifted focus to an analysis of the Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act. The Act was shown to be innovative, in terms of its encouragement of public private partnerships and its return to investors of tax credits for investment in neighborhood assistance programs.

The NAA was shown to provide flexibility to investors, allowing for partial investment in several programs, joint investment with other businesses, and an option to make long-term financial commitments.

In terms of the positive aspects of the NAA to eligible neighborhood organizations, the Act was shown to provide a bartering tool for leveraging funds from the private sector. The ability to present tax credits to businesses in return for investments gives neighborhood agencies a useful tradeable incentive with which to approach businesses.

An analysis of the funding history of the NAA showed a

slow start-up in the first year. The full one million dollars in tax credits were not allocated in the first year, but it was shown that this was largely due to the timing on the funding cycle. The second year of funding showed a 100% allocation of NAA tax credits. This successful allocation was a reflection of increased publicity of the potential gains to be realized from utilization of this innovative funding mechanism.

An analysis of the utilization of the NAA in Hartford for Fiscal Year 1983-84 showed that eight businesses donated roughly \$208,000 dollars to sixteen agencies in the city. This figure translated into roughly \$120,000 dollars in tax credits, or 12.07% of the total statewide allocations.

None of the programs funded in Hartford for FY 1983-84 were proposed by agencies in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. In fact, one agency (the San Juan Center) which deals with the Hispanic community did apply in that year, but did not receive funding from local businesses.

Chapter V has shown how the NAA can be utilized by the four lead agencies in Frog Hollow to fund the revitalization efforts for the Park Street commercial corridor. Programmatic approaches which address the areas of housing, employment, crime and commercial revitalization were suggested as examples of applications of the Neighborhood Assistance Act for Park Street agencies.

The emphasis of the final chapter on the applications of the Act for Park Street proved that the NAA is indeed an

appropriate and potentially useful mechanism to be utilized in gaining funding for revitalization efforts. The benefits of this tool come about not only in the form of financial program support, but also in the partnerships formed between public agencies and private sector businesses.

The neighborhoods throughout the State of Connecticut which take advantage of this Act directly involve local businesses in the welfare of their communities. Increased involvement of the private sector in local affairs can have a positive effect on the overall well-being of those communities because of increased awareness on the part of both public and private sectors of the mutual desire for a productive living and working environment.

This Research Project has shown that the Neighborhood Assistance Act is an innovative funding mechanism which can be successfully applied to fund Park Street's commercial revitalization efforts. The relative commitment of local agencies to utilization of the NAA and the willingness of the local private sector to invest in the future of this viable commercial corridor, will determine the eventual success of the applications of the Neighborhood Assistance Act for Park Street revitalization.

Chapter V Endnotes

1. State of Connecticut Substitute House Bill No. 5478, Public Act No. 82-469, Sec. 5. (New).
2. Ibid., Sec. 2. (New).
3. Ibid.

TABLES

TABLE I: PURPOSE OF TRIP TO PARK*

	<u>Shopping</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Bank</u>	<u>Personal Service</u>	<u>Professional Service</u>	<u>Eat Drink</u>	<u>Other No Answer</u>
#1	15	25	2	17	18	2	21
#2	16	16	23	4	6	6	29
#3	43	13	27	6	5	3	3
Total	25	18	17	9	10	4	17

#1 = Main to Washington (South Green)

#2 = Washington to Broad

#3 = Broad to Zion

Source: National Center for Urban Affairs, "Park Street Revitalization Opportunities", Washington, D.C., 1983: Patron Survey.

* Numbers are in percent

TABLE II: ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS ON HARTFORD
1981 STATISTICS

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Operating Budget</u>	<u>Employee Work Force</u>	<u>Employees Residing in Hartford</u>	<u>Dollars Paid To Hartford Residents Employed by Institutions</u>	<u>Dollars Spent for Services in Hartford</u>	<u>Number of Students and Patients Served</u>
Hartford Hospital	\$126,000,000	4,500	1,406	\$20,100,000	\$13,000,000	196,600*
Institute of Living	27,000,000	1,030	386	4,300,000	4,000,000	1,800
Trinity College	20,000,000	443	145	2,600,000	5,200,000	2,012
TOTALS	\$173,000,000	5,973	1,937	\$27,000,000	\$22,200,000	200,412

Economic Impact on Hartford — \$49.2 million

\$27 million paid to Hartford residents
\$22.2 million paid to Hartford suppliers

*Inpatient — 35,600; Outpatient — 82,000; Emergency Room — 75,000.

Source: Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance information pamphlet, 1982

TABLE III: CURRENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES OF PARK STREET ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION	ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING	PROGRAM FUNDING	BROAD GOAL	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	CONSTITUENCY	CLIENT GROUP	COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ROLE
Hispanic Merchant's Association	C.D.B.G. Chamber of Commerce	Membership Fees, C.B.T. B.E.D.Co.	Commercial Revitalization & Stabilization	Upgrade Facades Promote ownership Merchant awareness of opportunities	Facade Improvement Program Park Street Festival Liaison between banks and merchants for purchase of buildings	Merchants & Community at large	Merchants	Leadership/Support
NT/ Vecinos do	Private	No Programs	Community self-advocacy Housing, employment & social service issues	Safe housing Reduce displacement Increase citizen involvement in issues	Advocacy/ self-organizing around resident issues	Neighborhood Residents	Neighborhood Residents	Leadership/support
Porto	United Way Dept. of Education	No Programs	Housing Education & Social Issues	Ensure legislative fairness to Hispanic community Reduce displacement Encourage helpful legislation (zoning/education)	Monitors bilingual education programs Lobbies for fair legislation Coordinates activities with statewide Hispanic organizations	Hispanic Community	Department of Education Hartford Housing Authority	Leadership in Education and Housing Issues
Development Corporation	United Way Hartford Foundation	State Private Local Federal	Housing & Commercial real estate development	Upgrade existing stock through substantial rehabilitation New Construction	Early Intervention Section 8 Substantial Rehabilitation Section 235 Condos Purchase and redevelopment of buildings	Hispanic Community	Owners of buildings under construction	Support/spin-off
Outside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.	Private	Private	Housing/ Home ownership	Increase employee ownership of local properties	Employee Low-Interest Revolving Loan Mortgage Program	Employees of the three Institutions	Traveler's	Support
NO			Housing & commercial real estate development	Increase low-income housing stock New construction	Section 8 Substantial Rehabilitation Section 8 New Construction Several other Partnership rehabilitations	Hispanic Community	Owners and Renters of Buildings	Support/Spin-off
South Green Community in			Housing	Reduce Displacement Limit condo conversion Increase low-income units	Advocacy/ South Green neighborhood organization	Hispanic Community	South Green Neighborhood Residents	Leadership

TABLE IV : THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT IN HARTFORD, 1983-84

AGENCY	PROGRAMS PROPOSED						AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT RECEIVED	INVESTOR	TAX CREDIT
	COMMUNITY SERVICES	CRIME PREVENTION	CARE	DAY ASSISTANCE	TRAINING NEIGHBORHOOD	JOB				
Plan B, Inc.	1						\$ 5,000			
Hartford Police Department		2					67,000	\$ 318.12	Strike Back Against Crime	50%
City of Hartford, Department of Social Services			7				597,435			
New Dawn Pre-School Education Center			1				10,000			
Opportunity Industrial Center of America					2		65,000	25,000	Traveler's	70%
Southend Community Services					1	1	120,000			
Community Health Services						1	140,000	9,000	S.N.E.T.	70%
Capitol Housing Corp.				1			4,750,000	2,500	Hartford Steam and Boiler	50%
Hartford Easter Seals					1		36,600			
Hill Center, Inc.					1		90,000			
Hartford Health Dept.					1		10,000			
Work Bank, Inc.					1		100,000	10,000 10,000	Coleco Data Mail, Inc.	70%
Board of Education					1		95,613	10,000	CT National Bank	50%
Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce					5		802,000	9,500	S.N.E.T.	50%

AGENCY	PROGRAMS PROPOSED							AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT RECEIVED	INVESTOR	TAX CREDIT
	ENERGY CONSERVATION	JOB TRAINING	NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE	DAY CARE	CRIME PREVENTION	COMMUNITY SERVICES					
Hartford Community Mental Health Center								\$ 60,000			
Asylum Hill, Inc.								226,800	\$400	C. B. T.	50%
Hartford Chamber of Commerce School/Business Collaborative Special Projects								16,500			
Women in Crisis, Inc.								28,000			
Hartford Public Schools								829,000	90,000	Traveler's	50%
Charter Oak Terrace/Rice Heights Health Center, Inc								20,500	1,500	C. B. T.	50%
Hartford Region YWCA						2		222,000			
Neighborhood Legal Services								30,000			
Legal Aid Society of Hartford County, Inc.								255,000			
OPUS, Inc./Arts & the Aging								13,800			
Hartford Health Department								55,000			
Hartford Division on Aging			2					54,044	2,497 2,327	Traveler's	50%
Artists Collective, Inc.				1	1			139,422			
Hartford Interval House								27,000	2,000	C. B. T.	50%
West Indian Foundation								12,000	50	C. B. T.	50%
Public Housing Residents Going Places								25,000			

TABLE IV: THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT IN HARTFORD, 1983-84

AGENCY	PROGRAMS PROPOSED							AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT RECEIVED	INVESTOR	TAX CREDIT
	COMMUNITY SERVICES	CRIME PREVENTION	CARE	DAY ASSISTANCE	TRAINING NEIGHBORHOOD	JOB	ENERGY CONSERVATION				
Mac Construction School						1		\$ 48,872			
Employment Training Admin.						5		1,030,000	\$25,000	Traveler's	70%
Barry Sq. Community Services						1		50,000			
Easter Seals Rehab Center						1		12,000			
Greater Hartford Business Development Corp.					3			600,000			
Greater Hartford Small Business Development Corp.					1			1,055,000			
Hartford Economic Development Corp.					1			80,000	6,000	C.B.T.	50%
Chamber of Commerce Local Initiatives Support Group					1			800,000	2,500	Hartford Steam and Boiler	50%
Upper Albany Merchants Association					4			190,000			
Hartford Coalition for Emergency Shelters, Inc.					1			200,000			
TOTALS 40 agencies	44	3	10	14	26	2		\$10,288,085	\$ 208, 592.82	8 investors	

TABLE IVa: NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT, 1983-84; Summary Sheet

INVESTOR	AMOUNT INVESTED	TAX CREDIT	TOTAL CREDIT ALLOCATED
tford Steam and ler	\$2,500	50%	\$1,500
	2,500	50%	1,500
necticut Bank Trust (C,B,T,)	1,500	50%	750
	2,000	50%	1,000
	50	50%	25
	6,000	50%	3,000
	400	50%	200
a Mail, Inc.	10,000	70%	7,000
thern New England ephone (S.N.E.T.)	9,500	50%	4,750
	9,500	50%	4,750
veler's Insurance pany	90,000	50%	45,000
	25,000	70%	18,750
	25,000	70%	18,750
	2,497	50%	1,248
	2,327	50%	1,164
ike Back Against me	127.28	50%	63.64
	190.92	50%	95.46
necticut National ik	10,000	50%	5,000
.eco	10,000	70%	7,000
TOTALS	<u>\$208,592.20</u>		<u>\$120,796.10*</u>

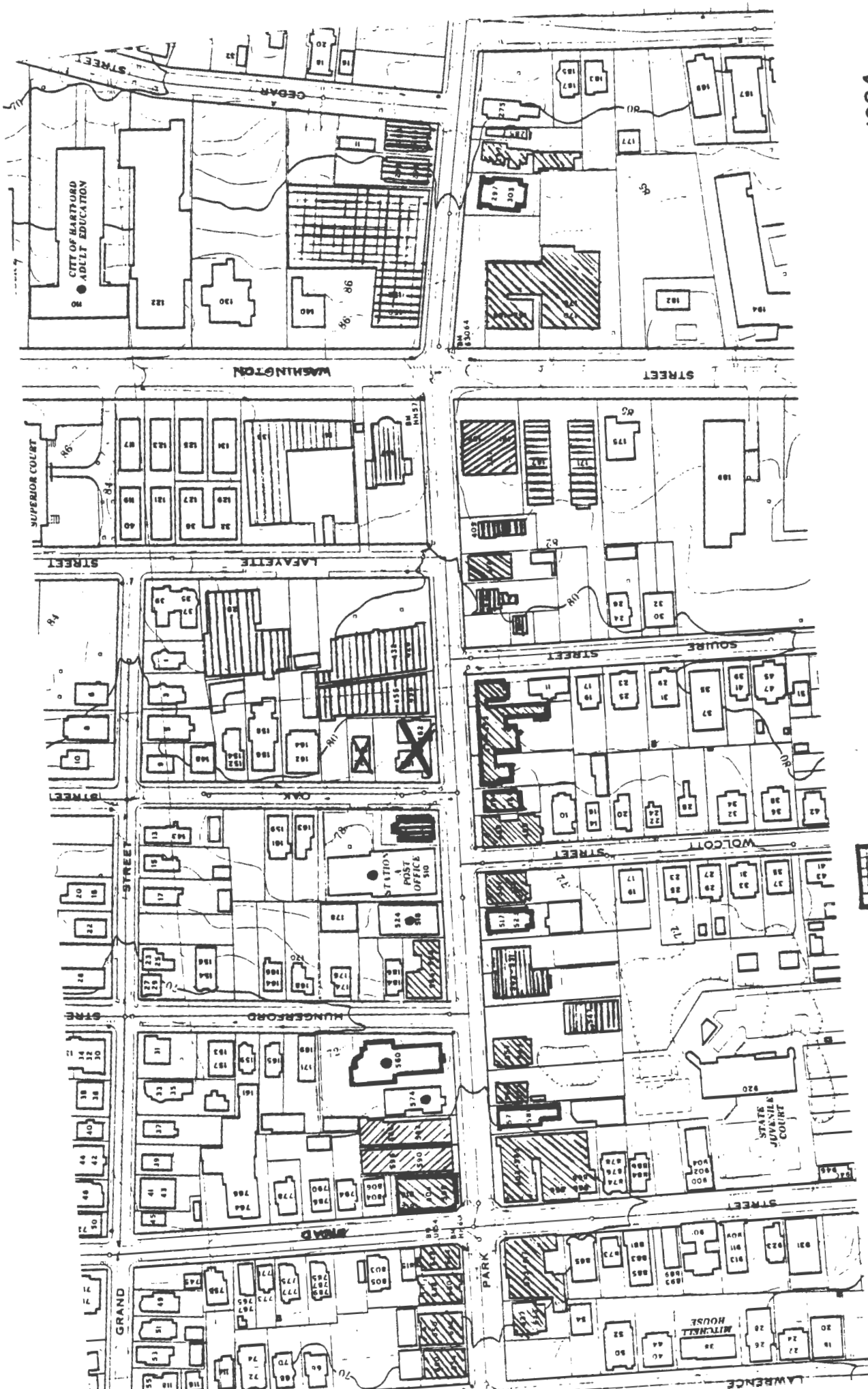
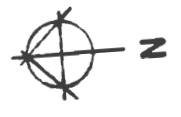
This figure represents 12.07% of the total statewide allocations for FY 1983-84

Source: Department of Revenue Services, Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act, Attachment G

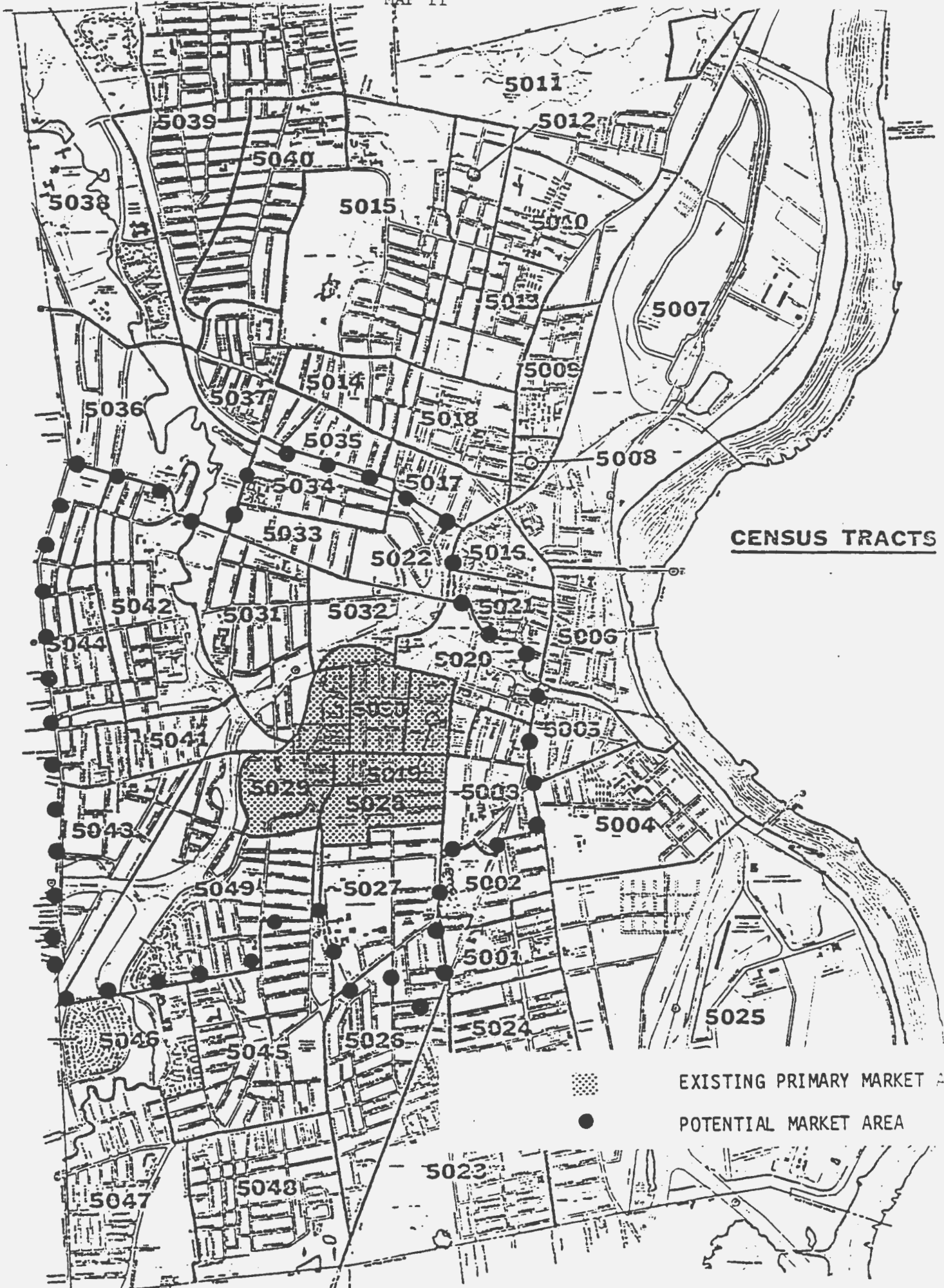
SUBSTANTIVE AREAS	PREVALENT PROBLEMS	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS	NAA ELIGIBLE CATEGORY (Y/N)	POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY
HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Abandoned mixed-use structures *Substandard, rented units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Substantial rehabilitation of existing units *Code compliance/weatherization *Increased tenant awareness of rights and landlord responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y: Neighborhood Assistance Y: Neighborhood Assistance Y: Community Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad Park Development Corporation (B.P.D.C.) HART/Vecinos Unidos
CRIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Vandalism & Graffiti *Vagrancy *Drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Neighborhood Block Watches *Youth/Gang Recreational Programs *Merchant's Crime Watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y: Crime Prevention Y: Community Services Y: Crime Prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HART/Vecinos Unidos La Casa de Puerto Rico/San Juan Center Spanish American Merchant's Association/Htfd Police
EMPLOYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Low labor participation rates/unemployment *Lack of adequate day care facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Job training center *facility construction *Program administration *Day Care facility *Construction *Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y: Neighborhood Asst. Y: Job Training Y: Job Training/Emp. Y: Neighborhood Asst. Y: Community Services Y: Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.P.D.C. NEW STAFF AGENCY B.P.D.C. NEW STAFF AGENCY
COMMERCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Non-ownership *Poor physical condition of buildings *Limited merchandising/marketing capacity *Limited Parking *Poor image *No anchor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Revolving mortgage loan fund for merchants *Revolving renovation loan program *Community clean-up *Merchants workshops on merchandising and display *Creation of new parking in vacant lots *Greater numbers of festivals and activities *Il Mercado *planning *site clearance *leverage monies *marketing strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y: Neighborhood Asst. Y: Neighborhood Asst. Y: Community Services Y: Community Services Y: Neighborhood Asst. Y: Community Services Y: Neighborhood Asst. Y: " " Y: " " Y: " " Y: " " 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S.A.M.A. S.A.M.A. HART/Vecinos Unidos S.A.M.A. B.P.D.C. S.A.M.A. B.P.D.C. B.P.D.C. B.P.D.C. S.A.M.A.

MAPS AND FIGURES

Park Street Land Use - 1984



-  Office
-  Institutional
-  Vacant
-  Demolished
-  Residential
-  Mixed/Residential
-  Mixed/Other
-  Commercial



CENSUS TRACTS





EXISTING PRIMARY MARKET AREA

POTENTIAL MARKET AREA



Potential Market Area/ Surrounding Uses

KEY

-  Park Street Commercial Corridor
-  Existing Market Area
-  Potential Market Area
-  Significant Institutions and Places of Employment

APPENDICES

28 July 1983

APPENDIX A

PARK STREET PROGRAM



Targets:

1. To halt erosion of street retailing and strengthen current merchant presence:
 - o Promotion
 - o Street Renovation
2. To outline interim uses for physical vacancies as a means of emphasizing visual continuity and pedestrian activity:
 - o Babcock Street Farmers Market now fills void and provides street visibility: i.e. banners.
3. To preserve community merchant presence and ownership yet, create opportunities to broaden appeal to a larger market.
4. Develop a theme tailored to the community's point of view -- promoted to capture the flavor of the street and also expand the retail mix currently available.
5. To pursue the creation of two distinct street anchor areas -- targeted zones of development which will provide commercial focus and cultural identity and become the central areas for future growth and street infill.

Concept:

Park Street Anchors

Based on current retailing, density of building stock and community interest, the areas of lower Park Street between Hudson and Main Streets, and the blocks flanking Broad Street between Wolcott and Affleck Streets are the logical anchor areas:

- o Affleck Street west, while possessing viable retailers, has a distinct residential presence amplified by the street setback of St. Ann's Church, the north side apartment dwellings from Zion Street to Park Terrace, and the future impact of the Zion Hill Housing Project.
- o An active node of service retail between Washington Street and Squire Street exists on the south side, but the remainder of street to Wolcott is marginal: empty lots, institutional and warehouse uses.
- o Washington Street east to Hudson Street has active retailing (strongest between Wadsworth and Hudson), however, residences, lot vacancies and commercial business interrupt the street at several points and do not provide sufficient density or focus.

Anchor A: Il Mercado, The Park Street Festival Marketplace.

The north side of Broad Street to Babcock Street and Lawrence Street to Affleck on the south side currently represent the strongest concentration of retail on Park Street.

Il Mercado, a permanent festival marketplace, can be developed from these modes, with the following elements:

- o Lyric Theatre: Hemisfare International Mall.
- o Babcock Street Lot vacancy: Il Mercado - Community Marketplace
- o Northeast Savings Block: Fashion Bazaar.

The Hemisfare:

- o A central market for Latin American food and gifts the Hemisfare features items from the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Il Mercado:

Building upon the presence of the Farmers Market Il Mercado can be a permanent facility for changing merchandise.

- o A pavilion structure constructed to give a sense of place for an open air market. It offers a Mid-Day Market with fruits and vegetables with limited amounts of gift and craft merchandise to the noon-time population each day.
- o The opportunities for an expanded Saturday Market for a larger audience of Hartford residents, permitting a concentration of retail foods, including larger selections of local farm produce.
- o A Park Street version of the Nassau Straw Market created within the pavilion structure, offering handcrafted goods with emphasis on useful products for the home.
- o A Sunday Bazaar accommodated both inside and outside the Pavilion with a flea market, including antiques and the works of local artists.

All of these uses enjoy a positive relationship with current retailers within the proposed anchor area. They also draw across income lines, addressing professional downtown workers, visitors to the city, and area residents.

Il Mercado carries certain logistic responsibilities for delivery and trash removal. It will also produce an active and vibrant public space setting.

The Fashion Bazaar:

Concentrating apparel merchandise in compatible contrast to the informal retailing of Il Mercado and mini-mall experience of Hemisfare.

Anchor B - The Hispanic Center

Hudson Street east to Main Street.

- o Community service, cultural not-for-profit and small businesses concentrated in a zone which is in a sense the "frontdoor" of the street.

28 July 1983

PARK STREET PROGRAM

Page 3

- o Professional presence can create a symbol of purpose in response to fears of encroaching non-community development.
- o Non-office uses focus on restaurants and cafes in concentration to draw patronage from institutional sources: i.e. Hartford Hospital, Washington Street Government and Main Street downtown.
- o Retail uses include services for office workers.

Interim/Long Range Uses

- o Jitney line from Babcock to Hudson Street allowing residents and visitors a convenient shuttle to food and merchandise shops.
- o Visual continuity and face improvement of Street. Facade and plantings from Babcock to Main Streets.
- o Interim vendor uses can build from a mini park placed on the corner of Washington and Park Streets, vending shacks and merchandise at lunchtime.
- o On-site parking facilities located behind street improvements to service retail anchor areas.
- o Future development of retail zones: residential retail and services between Washington and Hudson, Babcock and Zion. Possible resurgence of furniture, dealers between Washington and Hungerford into zone of antiques.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE SERVICES

Guidelines for CT Neighborhood Assistance Act

Before August 31 The organization must send an application of its program to a local government for approval. The application must include:

- the amount of money needed,
- the time period the project would cover,
- a description of the project,
- the population to be served.

The local government must hold a public hearing and approve all the requested programs prior to submission to the State Department of Revenue Services (DRS).

September 1 Deadline for the local government to submit its list of approved programs to the DRS.

October 1 Deadline for the DRS to review each project and compile and publish a list of accepted municipal programs. Published booklets are made available to businesses statewide.

December 1 Deadline for businesses to file letters of intent to sponsor a program with the DRS. The letter must indicate the following:

- program to be sponsored,
- amount to be contributed,
- town under which the program is included.

Although the deadline is December 1, credits are granted as the letters are received.

The DRS then refers the business proposal to the organization handling the program for the organization's approval/disapproval. The organization has 30 days from when the DRS first notified them to give their approval/disapproval and refer the information back to DRS.

The DRS has 60 days from the organization's notification to DRS of the business' approval to either approve or disapprove the business' tax application and notify the business.

APPENDIX C

Substitute House Bill No. 5478

PUBLIC ACT NO. 82-469

AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) As used in this act, the following terms have the following meanings:

(a) "Business firm" means any business entity authorized to do business in the state and subject to the corporation business tax imposed under chapter 208 of the general statutes or to the unincorporated business tax imposed under sections 2 to 21, inclusive, of public act 81-255, or any insurance company, hospital or medical services corporation subject to the insurance companies, hospital and medical services corporations tax imposed under chapter 207 of the general statutes, or any air carrier subject to the air carriers tax imposed under chapter 209 of the general statutes, or any railroad company subject to the railroad companies tax imposed under chapter 210 of the general statutes, or any express, telegraph, telephone, cable, car or community antenna television company subject to the express, telegraph, telephone, cable, car and community antenna television companies tax imposed under chapter 211 of the general statutes, or any utility company subject to the utility companies tax imposed under chapter 212 of the general statutes, or any public service company subject to the public service companies tax imposed under chapter 212a of the general statutes.

(b) "Community services" means any type of counseling and advice, emergency assistance or medical care furnished to individuals or groups in the state.

(c) "Crime prevention" means any activity which aids in the reduction of crime in the state.

(d) "Education" means any type of scholastic instruction or scholarship assistance to an individual who resides in the state that enables the individual to prepare for better opportunities.

(e) "Job training" means any type of instruction to an individual who resides in the state that enables the individual to acquire vocational skills to become employable or seek a higher grade of employment.

(f) "Neighborhood" means any specific geographic area, urban, interurban, suburban, or

Substitute House Bill No. 5478

pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section. The commissioner shall give appropriate notice of the publishing of such list to business firms within the state and shall print sufficient quantities of such list to facilitate its distribution to business firms upon their request.

(c) Any business firm which desires to engage in any of the activities or programs approved by any municipality pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and listed pursuant to subsection (b) of this section may apply to the commissioner of revenue services for a tax credit in an amount as provided in sections 3, 4 or 5 of this act. The proposal for such credit shall set forth the program to be conducted, the neighborhood area to be invested in and the plans for implementing the program. Such proposals shall be submitted to the commissioner on or before December 1, 1982, and on or before before December first of each succeeding year. The commissioner shall refer the proposal to the agency designated by the municipality to oversee implementation of the program pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, and such agency shall, within thirty days of the date of referral, approve or disapprove the proposal. Failure of such agency to respond within thirty days of the date of referral shall be deemed to constitute approval of such proposal. Following such referral and approval or disapproval, such proposals shall be approved or disapproved by the commissioner within sixty days of their submission to the commissioner based on the compliance of such proposal with the provisions of this act, municipal agency approval or disapproval, regulations adopted pursuant to this act and on the basis of tax credits remaining in the annual allotment provided in this act for the year or years involved. The commissioner shall approve proposals in the order in which they are received in his office after approval by the municipal agency affected by such proposal. If, in the opinion of the commissioner of revenue services and the municipality or municipalities affected, a business firm's investment can, for the purposes of this act, be made through contributions to a neighborhood organization as defined in subsection (h) of section 1 of this act, tax credits may be allowed in amounts as provided in sections 3, 4 or 5 of this act. If the commissioner of revenue services approves the

Substitute House Bill No. 5478

for charitable purposes and for the support of programs which would be eligible for assistance pursuant to this act by such business firm was increased in the year for which such credit is sought from the amount expended in the year immediately preceding the year for which such credit is sought by at least the amount of such credit.

Sec. 3. (NEW) The commissioner of revenue services shall grant a credit against any tax due under the provisions of sections 2 to 21, inclusive, of public act 81-255 or chapters 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212 or 212a of the general statutes in an amount not to exceed fifty per cent of the total amount invested during the taxable year by the business firm in programs operated or created pursuant to proposals approved pursuant to section 2 of this act; provided that a tax credit not to exceed thirty per cent may be allowed for investment in certain day care projects as provided in section 4 of this act, and provided further that a tax credit not to exceed seventy per cent may be allowed for investment in certain energy conservation and employment and training projects as provided in section 5 of this act.

Sec. 4. (NEW) The commissioner of revenue services shall grant a credit against any tax due under the provisions of sections 2 to 21, inclusive, of public act 81-255 or chapters 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212 or 212a of the general statutes in an amount not to exceed thirty per cent of the total amount invested during the taxable year by the business firm in programs operated or created pursuant to proposals approved pursuant to section 2 of this act for planning, site preparation, construction, renovation or acquisition of facilities for purposes of establishing a child day care facility to be used primarily by the children of such business firm's employees and equipment installed for such facility, including kitchen appliances, to the extent that such equipment or appliances are necessary in the use of such facility for purposes of child day care, provided: (1) Such facility is operated under the authority of a license issued by the commissioner of health services in accordance with sections 19-43b to 19-43l, inclusive, of the general statutes, (2) such facility is operated without profit by such business firm related to any charges imposed for the use of such facility for purposes of child day

Substitute House Bill No. 5478

disapprove a proposal pursuant to the provisions of section 2 of this act shall be in writing, and, if he approves the proposal, he shall state the maximum credit allowable to the business firm. A copy of such decision shall be attached to the tax return of the business firm upon which the tax credit granted pursuant to this act is claimed.

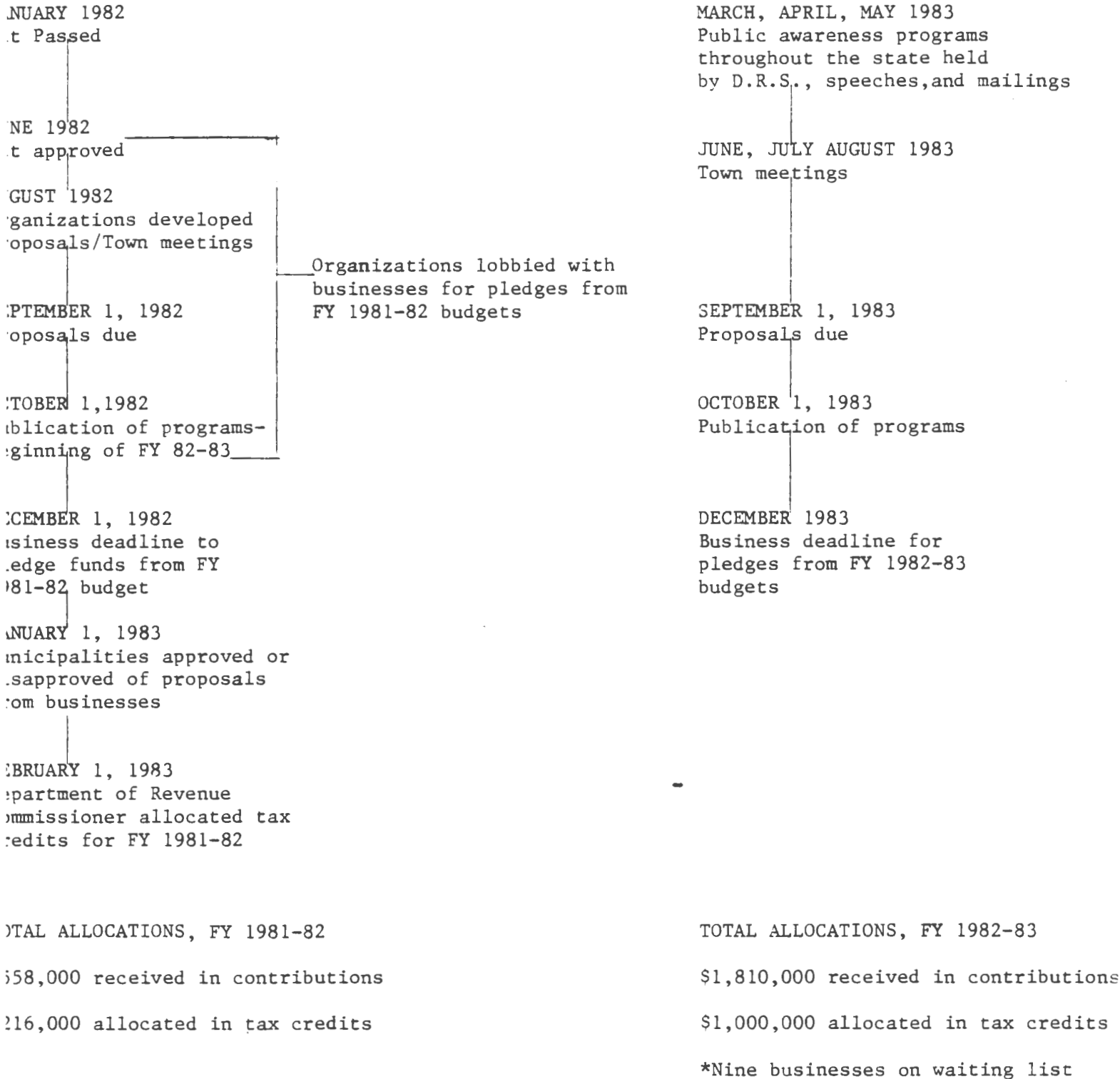
Sec. 7. (NEW) The state auditors shall do a post-project audit for each proposal for which the commissioner grants a tax credit under the provisions of this act, to insure that expenditures are made in accordance with the terms of the proposal.

Sec. 8. (NEW) The commissioner of revenue services, in consultation with the secretary of the office of policy and management shall adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 of the general statutes to implement the provisions of this act by September 1, 1982.

Sec. 9. Section 1 of public act 81-100 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

There shall be allowed a credit for any taxpayer against the tax imposed under chapters 208, 211 or 212 of the general statutes for any income year, in an amount equal to twenty-five per cent of total expenditures paid or incurred by such taxpayer in such income year for planning, site preparation, construction, renovation or acquisition of facilities for purposes of establishing a child day care facility to be used primarily by the children of such taxpayer's employees and equipment installed for permanent use within or immediately adjacent to such facility, including kitchen appliances, to the extent that such equipment or appliances are necessary in the use of such facility for purposes of child day care, provided (1) such facility is operated under the authority of a license issued by the commissioner of health services in accordance with sections 19-43b to 19-43l, inclusive, of the general statutes, (2) such facility is operated without profit by such taxpayer related to any charges imposed for the use of such facility for purposes of child day care and (3) the amount of tax credit allowed any taxpayer under the provisions of this section for any income year may not exceed ten thousand dollars. If two or more taxpayers share in the cost of establishing such a facility for the children of their employees, each such taxpayer

FIGURE 1: THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT FUNDING CYCLE



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