

Building a Commercial Neighborhood District Revitalization Program

For New Haven, CT



Report written by:

Kent Burns, Burns Consulting

John Simone, Connecticut Main Street Center

May 2014

Contents

Project Overview.....	3
Why the Main Street Approach?.....	4
What the consultants heard, learned and observed.....	6
Dixwell Avenue	7
Congress Avenue.....	8
Whalley Avenue.....	9
Grand Avenue.....	10
Recommendations.....	11
Stage One – Organizational Development.....	11
State Two – Neighborhood/District Organization & Small Successes	15
Stage Three – Build systems to strengthen infrastructure, vision and the overall business plan for each neighborhood or district.....	16
Stage Four – Institutionalize the program and process.....	16
Summary	17

Attachments

Connecticut Main Street Center Program Description	19
Sample Vision & Mission Statement	23
Sample Action Plan.....	24

Cover Photos

Clockwise from top: Seats are ready for patrons at Manjares Restaurant & Fine Pastries on Whalley Avenue – *Photo Credit: Manjares Restaurant & Fine Pastries.* Spectators gather in front of Christ Chapel Church, Dixwell Avenue – *Photo credit: Freddie Fixer Parade, Inc.* A community garden in downtown New Haven – *Photo Credit: The New Haven Land Trust.*

Project Overview

In March 2014, the City of New Haven, through the Mayor's office and the Economic Development Corporation of New Haven, contracted the Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) to:

Assist in determining the feasibility of implementing a neighborhood commercial district revitalization program that would bring together the City, neighborhood leaders and stakeholders, and key institutions in a dynamic partnership capable of leading, building and sustaining an ongoing and integrated program.

To help make this determination, it was important for the consultants to visit a representative sampling of neighborhood commercial districts, walking each district and meeting with local stakeholders. While observations on each neighborhood are included below, it was outside this scope of work to provide any assessment of these districts.

The City identified the following four commercial neighborhood districts to be visited by the consultants: Grand Avenue, Whalley Avenue, Congress Avenue and Dixwell Avenue. It should be noted that while these were the only neighborhoods visited due to the amount of time available, it is not to imply that participation in a city wide revitalization program would be limited to only these four neighborhoods. Any commercial neighborhood district that is willing to organize and meet established criteria would be welcome to participate in the future.

The City also convened a Mayor's Coordinating Task Force, which included people from each of the four neighborhoods as well as city staff to reach out to neighborhood stakeholders to arrange "community conversations" and interviews. The task force did an excellent job in:

- Identifying neighborhood stakeholders that the consultants should meet with;
- Securing locations for and scheduling interviews and meetings with those stakeholders;
- Arranging for larger community conversations in each neighborhood;
- Coordinating all press-related needs; and
- Gathering background information and arranging for tours for the consulting team.

John Simone, President & CEO of the Connecticut Main Street Center, and Kent Burnes of Burnes Consulting spent a week in these four districts meeting with businesses, residents, associations, institutions and others with a "stake" in each neighborhood. During the week, meetings and interviews were held with City staff, non-profit agencies and others interested in the welfare of these neighborhoods or the City of New Haven as a whole. In all, the consultants spoke to and met with over 300 people.

It is the belief of the consultant team that the City of New Haven and its neighborhood stakeholders can launch a commercial district neighborhood revitalization initiative. This report provides the recommended steps that will need to be implemented to make such an initiative a reality.

Why the Main Street Approach?

All the recommendations that follow in this report are based on the assumption that the neighborhood revitalization program that is set up will follow the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to downtown and commercial neighborhood revitalization.

While the benefits of healthy commercial neighborhoods are numerous, reviving deteriorated or underutilized downtowns or commercial neighborhood districts is a complex, time consuming, resource-intensive process. The Main Street Approach provides the process based on these four points:

- *Organization - Restoring the civic value of your district*, by building consensus and cooperation among groups that play a role.
- *Promotion - Restoring the social value of your district* through branding (creating a positive image of your district), retail promotions, and special events.
- *Design - Restoring the physical value of your district*, through both new and rehabilitation construction and through the design of public spaces that will attract more people to walk and gather on a regular basis.
- *Economic Restructuring - Restoring the economic value of your district*, by diversifying it with an appropriate mix of current and new businesses suitable for the given marketplace.

The Connecticut Main Street Center, which utilizes the above Four Point Approach as fundamental to all of its work, also embraces and promotes the following values:

- Encouraging civic engagement;
- Place-making, preservation of historic buildings and places, and enlivening of the public realm;
- Main Streets that thrive with a mix of uses, incomes and cultures; and
- Responsible policies integrating land use, housing, transportation and energy.

The Main Street Approach is a proven national model that has been successful in over 40 states and 1,800 communities. It was pioneered over 30 years ago by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and led to the establishment of the National Main Street Center which to this day leads and convenes the national Main Street network.

This approach is based on developing a comprehensive management program for a given district. Just like any mall has a highly functioning management staff in place, a downtown or commercial neighborhood district needs its own type of management function to convene all the stakeholders to work together towards a shared vision for the future. In other words, while **what** you want to do to revitalize your district is important, **how** you will manage and accomplish this is where you have to start. This report is focused on the "how."

However, it is also important to take a moment to recognize **why** revitalizing New Haven's commercial neighborhood districts is so important. Besides improving the quality of life

for all New Haven residents, in today's challenging fiscal climate municipalities like New Haven need to grow, but to grow sustainably. This means finding ways to increase the tax base and reduce costs. Compact densely developed areas like New Haven's commercial neighborhood districts can generate more revenue and save money. According to a report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the infrastructure costs to service compact, dense development is 32% to 47% less than for lower density suburban development (Ford 2009).

A study commissioned by the downtown business improvement district in Asheville, NC (Minicozzi 2012) compared a local big box development to their downtown. The findings are impressive:

Return on Investment Comparison		
Downtown Development vs. Big Box		
Asheville, North Carolina		
	Big Box	Downtown
Property taxes/acre	\$6,500	\$365,000
Retail sales tax/acre	\$47,500	\$83,600
Jobs/acre	5.9	73.7
Residents/acre	0	90

While New Haven's commercial neighborhoods may not be as dense as downtown Asheville, a similar analysis of the per acre yield for a revitalized district in New Haven compared to a big box would most likely still show a much greater per acre return for the commercial neighborhood districts.

Below are two studies conducted by a national downtown economist showing both the potential return for every new apartment occupied in a district and, conversely, the "cost" of vacant store fronts:

More Downtown Housing = Increased Spending Downtown
A study completed for Main Street Iowa by economist Donovan Rypkema calculated that every new unit of downtown housing spent \$20,000-\$39,000 in the downtown annually.
Vacant First Floor Space = Negative Downtown Revenue
Conversely, vacant first floor commercial space has a tremendous negative impact on the community. Mr. Rypkema calculated a vacant storefront with a modest \$250,000 in lost annual sales costs the community over \$222,000 annually in terms of lost rents, property and sales tax, and utilities, supplies, services and salaries not paid (Rypkema 2012).

What the consultants heard, learned and observed.

The initial four days in New Haven were spent meeting with residents, City leaders, City staff, business leaders, business and neighborhood associations, key institutions and others in each of the aforementioned districts / neighborhoods. As indicated at the beginning of this report, while it was important for the consultants to visit these neighborhoods, the scope of this work did not include providing an assessment of these neighborhoods. Rather, this study is intended to help New Haven determine how they can launch a commercial neighborhood revitalization initiative with the expertise and resources to build sustainable and effective revitalization programs in as many districts as possible.

The consultants heard the following common themes that applied to each district and to the **City as a whole**:

- This is about New Haven's future as a city of vital and interconnected neighborhoods; no one area should be an island.
- There is an overall need for more approaches to making the City clean, safe and friendly.
- There is a need to build or rebuild the public / private partnerships and do a better job of engaging anchor institutions and businesses.
- There are a lot of good resources in the City but there is a need for enhanced communication and cataloguing of these resources so people can know how to access them.
 - Maximize and focus these resources.
 - Streamline the process for working with the private sector.
- Community policing is working and police want to be at the table for the design stage of development projects to ensure the projects are designed to maximize safety.
- There is recognition that while the City has invested in all of these neighborhoods, there is also the belief that the efforts were scattered and not as focused as they could be, thus diluting the impact.
- The Community Management Teams, Livable Communities Initiative, Economic Development Corporation of New Haven, Town Green Special Services District and Westville Village Renaissance Alliance are all great resources.
- Everyone recognizes the world-class educational and medical anchors in New Haven, but feel that more help is needed to engage these partners in a mutually beneficial way.
- Local neighborhood champions need to be identified to be the bridge to City Hall.



Dixwell Avenue

Dixwell Avenue

Dixwell Avenue is steeped in rich history, especially as it relates to the African American community. The passion to revitalize this area was apparent as this district turned out the largest community conversation for lunch – over 77 people from the district attended. The evening meeting was also very well attended. The overriding comments and concerns were:

- There is a feeling that a window of opportunity has opened with the new administration.
- People feel disenfranchised.
- There is a sense among residents that they lost their community and local businesses; need to be the keepers of their community and take back responsibility for their neighborhood.
- Need to find better ways to communicate amongst themselves.
- They are a gateway to the city but do not look like it.
- The community's youth must be engaged.
- There is a need for a community and senior center.
- Address safety and empty buildings first – this is not an inviting place.
- The deterioration of the Plaza and the Q-house are holding the district back.
- The library is a source of pride and needs to be expanded.
- Residential revitalization and more senior housing are needed.
- There's no plan for Dixwell Avenue and the area; local residents want a plan.
- Need to build mutually supportive partnerships with City Hall and Yale University.
 - Sense that things have been done to us, not with us.



Congress Avenue

Congress Avenue

The participants in these meetings do not see their neighborhood as ever becoming a major shopping area. The residents believe they live in a family-oriented residential district that can include shops and services that serve them as well as employees of Yale-New Haven and Yale University that are expanding into their district. The most common comments were:

- An artist's loft does exist in the area and there are several artists living in the area – how can residents engage them more?
- This is a family-oriented community.
- Need to better understand how to use the expansion of Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale to the community's advantage while offering them a benefit for expansion i.e. housing and dining opportunities for workers.
- Residents feel they have no voice; they want to provide input.
 - There is a need for residents to be more galvanized and invited to participate at the planning table.
 - Some people felt the term "management team" was off-putting – it implies being managed vs. being a place the welcomes people and input.
- More beautification projects; i.e. trash cans at bus shelters, are needed.
- Assistance for facade improvements – start with a simple coat of paint.
- More lighting to eliminate the perception of danger.
- There's an opportunity for a win / win with Yale and Yale-New Haven Hospital
 - More employee lunch options.
 - More housing options for employees.
- The local churches are important partners too.
- There's nothing for area youth to do; is it possible to start with a community garden and a basketball court?



Whalley Avenue

Whalley Avenue

This is a busy commercial district that boasts over 30,000 cars per day moving through the district. The Whalley Avenue Special Services District (SSD) has been in place for over 30 years. It provides a basic budget to employ a director and implement primarily beautification projects. The participants in the Whalley Avenue SSD provided valuable input into the present condition of their district. Their comments included:

- Stakeholders felt the need to at least double the size of the SSD budget.
- Car-oriented commercial district with over 30,000 cars per day.
- Gateway to Yale and downtown sandwiched between Westville and Broadway.
- There is an active Special Services District Board and full time executive director.
 - Opportunity to grow the volunteer base and engage the community more.
 - Opportunity to leverage and double the present \$100,000 budget.
- Criminal activity is a challenge
 - 24-hour convenience stores can attract the wrong kind of activity.
- If they can't do clean, safe and friendly, the rest is a moot point.
- Anchor businesses – Stop and Shop, Edge of the Woods, Popeye's.
- Minore's Market and Distributorship is a major employer.
- Lack of diverse businesses.
- More pedestrian friendly streetscapes including clear and safe crosswalks.
- St. Luke's and Dwight Development Corporation are doing some good development work.



Grand Avenue

Grand Avenue

Grand Avenue historically was, and continues to be, the immigrant gateway to New Haven. The waterfront and strong adjacent residential neighborhoods make this a unique destination. There is a Special Services District in place that collects about \$24,000 per year and is focused on cleaning and beautification. In meetings with the Grand Avenue stakeholders they clearly expressed:

- There is a rich and diverse history which could possibly be incorporated into a museum in the district honoring the waves of immigrants who have come through here.
- There is an active SSD with a board of directors but with limited funds activities are limited.
 - Opportunity to grow and leverage this assessment over time.
- Robust residential neighborhood association (Chatham Square) with annual planning retreats and a large and active group of volunteers.
- Strong adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Neighbor Works doing mixed-use development, the same as on Congress Avenue.
- Spanish American Merchants Association is in the district.
- River and park are great assets.
- C Town and the bakery are anchor businesses and major employers.
- Strong school redevelopment opportunity initiated by the neighborhood.
- Low vacancy, but some businesses should not be there, or there are too many of the same type with not enough variety to create a magnet.
 - Local residents are out shopping.
 - Businesses need training in visual merchandising and food presentation in restaurants.
- Traffic and parking concerns.
- Public alcohol consumption is a problem as is some nighttime activity.

Recommendations

Create the New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center

- ✓ **The time is right** for the City of New Haven, under the leadership of Mayor Toni Harp and in conjunction with the appropriate partners and stakeholders in the neighborhood districts, to develop the New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center to provide technical assistance and resources for developing programs in neighborhood commercial districts.
- ✓ **The New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center should be a standalone city program** that works closely with all City departments as well as private sector partners.
- ✓ **To establish a robust and sustainable program a resource team needs to be engaged** to help develop a structure and process, as well as train the City of New Haven and appropriate partners in all the components required to both launch the New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center and to provide training to stakeholders in the neighborhood districts.

Stage One – Organizational Development (ongoing)

15 onsite days over a 45-60-day period (“onsite days” here and below refer to the number of days the resource team will be working in New Haven)

Stage One launches what is an ongoing process to sustain the health and life of the New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center (NHNRC). Important components must continually be improved, new partnerships built and old ones refined. The primary focus of Stage One is to establish and operate the program focused on:

- Organizational Structure and Development
- One-on-One Training
- Relationship Building
- Resource and Partnership Development
- Building Trust

CMSC knows and has worked with some of the nation’s best revitalization professionals that have a strong track record of assisting communities in implementing Main Street programs. CMSC is available to help New Haven engage the most appropriate team to launch the New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center. Below are specific examples of how the team can work with NHNRC and the neighborhood districts. The final scope of work, team members, and time on the ground must be developed cooperatively by the City, NHNRC and the consultants.

The first five recommended steps are:

1. Create a Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force within City Hall. Every successful revitalization effort is streamlined from the private sector through to the public sector. The New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force would be composed of department heads or their designated staff. There should be participation from economic development, public works, planning and zoning, the fire department, the police department, parks and recreation, community services, traffic and parking, Livable Communities Initiative, district manager coordinator, arts culture and tourism and the NHNRC director(s).

The entire task force needs to meet at least quarterly. Between these meetings appropriate members of the task force should meet on a case-by-case basis to ensure appropriate city support and resources are being integrated on projects requiring multi-department involvement. The City has many programs and resources that benefit neighborhood districts. However, these resources are not always readily apparent to potential users. This task force can work on organizing, integrating and promoting all of the resources and assistance that is available.

Having an internal team in City Hall to keep all related departments informed and coordinated about various projects in the neighborhoods and, at the same time streamlining communication and stronger intradepartmental working relationships, will lead to a more transparent, easily understood and streamlined process for those wanting to invest in New Haven.

The task force's role will include:

- Attending Main Street training sessions.
- Along with NHNRC staff, visiting other city wide Main Street programs to learn best practices on how they operate and where their resources come from.
- Meet on a regular basis as discussed above.
- With NHNRC staff, help develop ongoing partnerships with other entities.

There should be a training component for the City task force. While not as intense as it will be for the NHNRC staff, it needs to cover:

- Overview of the Main Street Approach
- The responsibilities of NHNRC
- City's role in a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization initiative.

The resource team should also work with city staff to ensure:

- Codes are clear and enforceable.
- New codes are being considered if applicable.
- There are no roadblocks that may be inhibiting mixed-use or infill development.
- There is coordinated and swift review of redevelopment or infill projects.
- There are appropriate resources in place and being enforced to address blighted conditions.

2. Transform the proposed Elm City Business Development Service Center (BDSC) into the New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center (NHNRC).

This transformation can take place within the parameters of the currently proposed staff and budget structure for the BDSC and can quadruple the impact this new center will have. The BDSC is a sound concept and certainly needed, but it only represents one of the four points of the Main Street Approach (increasing economic value). By adding the three other points (which will increase the civic, social and physical values of participating neighborhoods) the NHNRC will provide far greater value and return on investment. The resource team that needs to be engaged should play an instrumental role in the development of the structure and processes for the new NHNRC.

Two positions within the existing BDSC budget should be realigned to serve as directors. One director would largely be responsible for the building of the capacity of the organization through partnerships with other organizations, external communication, partnership identification and the attraction of revenue and resources for project implementation as well as networking with stakeholders in the pilot project areas.

The second director would be largely responsible for identifying and implementing projects that will increase the social and physical value for the project areas. Initially small projects will be the building blocks for establishing a foundation from which larger more complex projects can develop. This person will work with the community participants to identify projects in each area that can include improving trash collection, beautification projects, and engaging partners in such activities as neighborhood gardens, BBQ cook-offs (or other events that are produced by and for the community), or vacant lot clean-ups. This person would also promote better visual techniques for the commercial areas, be it façade treatments, visual displays or working with code enforcement to clean up abandoned signs and other blighted areas.

Both of the directors will have to work closely together, be cross-trained, and go through intensive one-on-one training for each component of the Main Street Approach. These two directors will be the backbone of the New Haven Neighborhood Revitalization Center.

While this report is recommending the BDSC is transformed into the NHNRC, the original BDSC programs still need to be developed including the loan program as well as providing training for small businesses. Training programs for small businesses can be provided by entities such as the CT Small Business Development Center, SCORE, Yale, and other partners in the immediate area but will have to be organized and coordinated by the NHNRC's small business coordinator.

The loan fund portion of the program can be handled in several different ways including models that rely on existing banks and partners to carry the administration of the loans freeing up staff to provide one-on-one assistance or coordinate the training and technical assistance side of the economic component.

A loan program that focuses on micro loans of \$2,500 to \$25,000 could have a significant impact on the business community.

The following areas are important preliminary steps:

- Define the appropriate structure and resources to launch and sustain the NHNRC.
- Define the roles and responsibilities for all staff to be housed within, or connected to, the NHNRC.
- Help identify, recruit and train staff to deliver the appropriate scope of technical assistance from internal staff and/or external resources.
- Training on translating and tailoring the Main Street Approach to local needs and conditions.
- Identify and recruit partners.
- Review and realign budget to gain better impact through the Main Street Approach.
- Assist in determining a cost-effective but adequate location to house the NHNRC.

It is strongly recommended that both directors go to the National Main Street Conference this May in Detroit. This conference provides an excellent and timely opportunity for the directors to learn firsthand about Main Street from a host of national experts and practitioners and to network with many “Main Streeters” including representatives from other citywide Main Street programs. A representative from CT Main Street Center would be happy to make introductions and suggest the most relevant workshops to attend.

3. Customized Staff Training.

Provide customized, in-depth training for the two NHNRC directors and other staff. This training should include:

- The history and theory of the Main Street Approach
- One-on-one training for each of the four points of Main Street: Organization (increasing the civic value), Promotion (increasing the social value), Design (increasing the physical value) and Economic Development (increasing the economic value)
- How to organize neighborhoods and commercial districts around the Main Street Approach
- Mission and vision development
- Goal and project identification
- Work-plan development
- Matching partners to work plans
- Volunteer recruitment and management
- Marketing and outreach
- Small business technical assistance
- Structure of loan pools and micro loan programs

4. The City joins the Connecticut Main Street Center. Members are eligible for customized technical assistance, ongoing support and competitive grant opportunities. Attached is a document that provides the benefits offered to members.

5. Join the National Main Street Center as a Coordinating Program. This can happen once the new program is firmly established.

Stage Two – Neighborhood / District Organization & Small Successes

15 onsite days over a 45-day period (4 to 12 months)

Stage Two is all about working together to build sufficient local leadership and capacity to create and implement plans for each of the four points of Main Street. The NHNRC staff will begin the process of organizing the pilot project areas around the Main Street Approach. The NHNRC staff will implement the tools they learned in the one-on-one training as well as build consensus and organize the neighborhood / business district stakeholders to implement the four point approach to revitalization. This would include the completion of a two-year plan for two of the pilot project areas using the assistance of the resource team as the primary facilitators. Once the staff has worked with the resource team in a real-life environment, they will be expected to complete two-year plans with the other two pilot neighborhoods on their own. Staff will be trained in providing the following technical assistance:

- All the components needed to launch a commercial neighborhood district revitalization program (this is not a cookie cutter formula – the initiatives will most likely be quite different in terms of their organization, priorities and activities in each district).
- Community engagement - bringing neighborhood stakeholders together.
- Leadership development.
- Build appropriate partnerships – include the Community Management Teams as a resource for dissemination of information.
- Address local concerns, gain consensus and a shared vision.
- Identify goals for the next 18 - 24 months.
- Identify projects that will support the goals in each of the four component areas.
- Demonstrate change – identify projects that can be implemented quickly. These will be small projects in the beginning. Below is one example, for each component, of projects that could be completed in any of the neighborhoods:
 - Organization – A neighborhood newsletter.
 - Promotion – Side walk sale or neighborhood clean-up and BBQ.
 - Design – New gateway signs for each district.
 - Economic – Restaurant training / visual display training.
- Develop work-plans for each project
 - Identify needed steps and resources
 - Identify volunteers and partners
 - Implement the project

Stage Three - Build Systems to strengthen infrastructure, vision and the overall business plan for each neighborhood or district.

4 onsite days per resource visit (12 – 24 months)

Resource Team visits. Upon completion of Stages One and Two training, a member or members of the resource team should make a 6-month and 12-month return visit to review how NHNRC is progressing regarding its work plans and to:

- Ensure the tools of Main Street are being used effectively and efficiently
- Assist with any crucial project development
- Meet with the City Task Force for input and suggestions
- Meet with neighborhood / business associations for input
- Make recommendations for changes where needed
- Supply additional technical assistance if needed

Stage Four – Institutionalize the program and process (ongoing)

Stage Four is critical to the long-term success of any umbrella program. As the program evolves, invite the resource team back to provide objective input and feedback on how the NHNRC is evolving. The all-important goal is to create a sustainable NHNRC with stable and sufficient funding, effective and strategic partnerships and vibrant commercial neighborhood districts that will ultimately institutionalize the program within the City. The following components should be reviewed to measure progress and determine further work to be done:

- Stable Funding that leverages the City's own investment
 - Fees for services – parking revenues, other
- Diversified Revenue Streams
 - Property development and management
 - Event income
 - Special Services District
 - Opportunity for fundraising events
- Maturation of district and management programs
 - Districts are clean, safe and friendly places to live, work, learn and visit
 - Growing residential population
 - Growing businesses are attracting new, compatible businesses that are collectively serving a growing market share
- Institutional partners
 - Partnerships have created a “win-win” scenario where districts and partners mutually benefit
 - Employees attracted to working and living nearby
 - Employee investment funds keep/attract people in the district
 - Ready local employment pool for growing businesses/institutions
- Private re-investment, redevelopment and infill
 - Plans have public support, are community driven

- Vacant buildings are being adaptively re-used, vacant lots provide opportunities for successful infill development or community gathering places
- Private investment is being attracted to the districts
- Community development opportunities are emerging/being implemented
- Annual planning retreat
 - Ensures that program is on track
 - Plans developed for next 18 months

Summary

The need for managed revitalization programs with sufficient capacity in these respective districts is evident. In all of the meetings and public forums the consultants consistently heard that citizens are willing to help but they do not know how or where to start. The public meetings validated that many of the same issues are common to each area. It is apparent that there is the need for a NHNRC that can provide advocacy, technical assistance, training, coordination, resources and implementation strategies for New Haven's commercial neighborhood districts.

To be able to sustain this initiative, the NHNRC cannot be a "do it for them" organization but rather it needs to be a "teach them how to do it" organization which lends support, influence, technical assistance and financial assistance where and when it is necessary. The NHNRC also provides the framework for maintaining and coordinating communication and partnerships to sustain the rigorous job of community revitalization.

As is with any of these kinds of programs, and especially when launching the first city wide program in Connecticut, training for all of those involved is a must. Training and technical assistance is available and the Connecticut Main Street Center can work with the City of New Haven to identify a team of "best practitioners" in the business today.

As members of both the Connecticut and National Main Street Centers, New Haven should take advantage of the training and networking opportunities available to members. Networking, communicating and implementation on the local level will keep the program successful in the citizen's hearts; using the Four Point Approach to revitalization is the way to get there.

Creating the NHNRC provides the citizens of New Haven with a forum to come together and forge a shared vision that they are jointly and passionately committed to. Declaring and committing to a vision for what you want your district to become is the essential first step. As a local pastor said in one of the community meetings with the consultants:

"Where there is no vision the people perish."

Proverbs 29:18

Over the course of the week in New Haven, over 300 people shared their vision for the future with the authors of this report. These stakeholders are passionate about their neighborhoods – about what needs to be fixed and what are the assets they can build upon. This passion needs to be channeled and backed with resources and training to provide the City of New Haven guidance for moving forward together.

ATTACHMENTS



Connecticut Main Street Center Program Description

At Connecticut Main Street Center we help inspire great Connecticut downtowns, Main Street by Main Street. We serve as the champion and leading resource for vibrant and sustainable Main

Streets as foundations for healthy communities. We bring historic downtowns throughout Connecticut back to life by strengthening our downtowns and village centers. At the local level, we share our expertise and give people the tools to create powerful partnerships and vibrant communities. At the state level, we are the voice for programs and policies that advance the Main Street way of life in Connecticut.

CT Main Street Center offers programs and services in response to the needs of communities across the state by:

- Providing technical expertise, resources and support so that local coalitions can revitalize their main street districts. The approach is comprehensive, incremental and action-oriented.
- Engaging in and encouraging advocacy among its member communities and other partners to address relevant public policy issues;
- Being a one-stop resource for communities engaging in mixed use / mixed income town center development.

CT Main Street Center follows a proven national model called the Main Street Four Point Approach to Downtown Revitalization™, successful in 46 states and 1,800 communities, which addresses the restoration of each of these values, simultaneously:

- *Organization - Restoring the civic value of downtown*, by building consensus and cooperation among groups that play a role in the downtown.
- *Promotion - Restoring the social value of downtown*, through branding (creating a positive image of downtown), retail promotions, and special events.
- *Design - Restoring the physical value of downtown*, through both new and rehabilitation construction and through the design of public spaces that will attract more people to walk and gather on a regular basis.
- *Economic Restructuring - Restoring the economic value of downtown*, by diversifying it with an appropriate mix of current and new businesses suitable for the given marketplace.

We are guided by our Core Values:

- Encouraging civic engagement;
- Place-making, preservation of historic buildings and places, and enlivening of the public realm;
- Main Streets that thrive with a mix of uses, incomes and cultures; and
- Responsible policies integrating land use, housing, transportation and energy.

Education & Training

CT Main Street Center established the Downtown Revitalization Institute to provide advanced training in the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to Downtown Revitalization. Whether you're an elected official, professional staff, or a Main Street volunteer, education and training are important components in any successful main street revitalization program. You can find the training and networking you're looking for right here!

Each quarter CT Main Street Center's Downtown Revitalization Institute presents a different workshop which addresses pertinent issues. These workshops are presented by experts in the subject and the workshop format includes working sessions and time for participant questions and exchange. Networking with others interested in downtown revitalization and development is a valuable component of the workshops, and networking meals are provided to encourage informal dialogue.

Resources & Technical Assistance

CT Main Street Center is the statewide resource for technical assistance to Connecticut downtowns. We provide training and support using the expertise of our board, our partners and national consultants. Some of the fee-based assistance we offer includes:

- Capacity Building: partnership development, funding strategies, engaging community
- Urban Design & Placemaking: vision & master planning, Complete Streets, façade improvement, design guidelines
- Downtown Economic Development: small business improvement & attraction, mixed-use redevelopment strategies, market analysis
- Marketing, Branding & Promotion: image development, promoting the district

Public Policy & Advocacy

CT Main Street Center is an active participant in public decisions that affect our communities. Working with our partners, we analyze problems, seek solutions, collaborate for positive change, and advocate for Connecticut's historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

The Main Street Approach is consistent with the State of Connecticut's Growth Management Principles:

- Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure;
- Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs;
- Concentrate development around transportation nodes to support the viability of transportation options;
- Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources;
- Protect and ensure the integrity of environment assets; and
- Promote integrated planning across all levels of government.

Benefits of Membership

- 1) Advocacy / Public Policy: CT Main Street Center advocates on behalf of Connecticut's historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts for downtown-friendly policies and procedures
- 2) Member discounts at our quarterly Downtown Revitalization Institute statewide educational workshops
- 3) Additional educational and networking events:
 - Quarterly Main Street Executive Meetings for Designated Main Street Management Programs
 - Regional educational programs for all members, featuring a Speaker's Bureau of experts
 - Regional member networking events encouraging peer networking and information sharing
 - Annual CT Main Street Awards Gala in June
- 4) Promotion of local Main Streets, their programs, initiatives, events and activities, via traditional and social media:
 - CMSC's Downtown Update monthly e-newsletter, with a distribution of over 5,000 to a statewide audience that includes state and local officials
 - CT Main Street Center Facebook page, posting local downtown news, events, etc.
 - Success Stories and Best Practices, taken from the CT Main Street Annual Awards of Excellence
 - Member alerts and on-going communication regarding topical issues and pertinent information

- 5) Eligibility for CMSC's annual Preservation of Place grant program: technical assistance grant program for preservation and revitalization initiatives
- 6) Eligibility for CMSC's annual Awards of Excellence program: statewide recognition for outstanding projects and partnerships
- 7) Consideration for state resources, funding and programs:
 - State of CT's Main Street Investment Fund
 - CMSC's Come Home to Downtown Pilot Program, mixed-use real estate planning
- 8) Discounted rates to topic specific technical assistance (see menu of member services)
- 9) Access to onsite and telephone consultation by CT Main Street Center staff

Sample Vision & Mission Statement

Westville Village Renaissance Alliance

Westville Village Renaissance Alliance

Vision Statement

At the base of majestic West Rock, Westville Village is an inviting historic neighborhood center within the City of New Haven. Nestled between active parks and greenways, this walkable, sustainable community blends the best of small town living with a dynamic urban setting. Westville Village is a vibrant social, cultural and economic hub where residents and visitors of all ages live, learn, work, create, dine, shop and play.

Mission Statement

The Westville Village Renaissance Alliance's mission is to partner with local businesses, property owners, residents, and public and private institutions to foster and sustain economic development, cultural vitality, and community engagement in Westville Village and the surrounding neighborhoods, while emphasizing historic preservation and placemaking.

Sample Action Plan

Westville Village Renaissance Alliance

WVRA Action Plan				
Goals	Organization	Design	Economic Restructuring	Promotion
1) Position WVRA as the advocate and manager of Westville Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch membership campaign ▪ June fundraising event ▪ Develop a Speakers Bureau to attract partner orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photo inventory of physical challenges ▪ Collaborate on West River clean-up event ▪ Engage DOT & City on crosswalk issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ID all vacancies-work with prop owners to discuss ▪ Host Commercial Realtor Open House ▪ Survey shoppers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop WVRA brand, logo, tagline, website, etc. ▪ "Shop" workplan around to engage potential partners
2) Enhance and promote the image to attract & engage residents, visitors and new businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop master database of members, volunteers, merchants ▪ Public Master Plan Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve parking signage (temp), while working on Master Plan ▪ Work with City Seed to improve access to Farmers' Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With merchants, develop themed events ▪ Initiate shared parking dialogue with prop owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish weekly email blasts to promote activities & events ▪ Detailed workplans for each event (Rock-to-Rock, ArtWalk, Westville Weds, etc.)
3) Engage/assist existing businesses; identify opportunities for them to expand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage nonprofit stakeholders in the district (faith-based, senior housing, CT Cntr for Children, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey merchants on customer needs (parking, walkability) ▪ Work with merchants on maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host bi-monthly merchant open houses ▪ Survey merchants re: small business needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With ER committee, develop campaign to market Westville Village to potential businesses
4) Foster an attractive, vibrant and pedestrian friendly urban village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fund development strategy for walkability research/concept plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage DOT, CT Transit, ped, bike, transit improvements ▪ ID / implement short-term improvements to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage with City re: availability of façade improvement stimulus \$\$ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish Retail Advisory Committee ▪ Build customer database for the Village