

JOHNSON-STEWART COMMUNITY CENTER

DEVELOPED BY SHELDON OAK CENTRAL

NORTHEAST REVITALIZATION PLAN 2023-2027

Prepared by
Sheldon Oak
with support from
Local Initiatives Support Corporation



SHELDON OAK
A Non-Profit Housing Development Corporation

LLSC
CONNECTICUT



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT¹

WHAT IS A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT?

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

WHY DO WE RECOGNIZE THE LAND?

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol.

WHOSE LAND ARE WE ON?

In Hartford, we are on the traditional territory of the Sicaog/Suakiog, Tunxis, Wangunks, and Poquonook.²

Funding for the creation of these plans provided in part by Nutmeg Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, and U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.



Sponsor

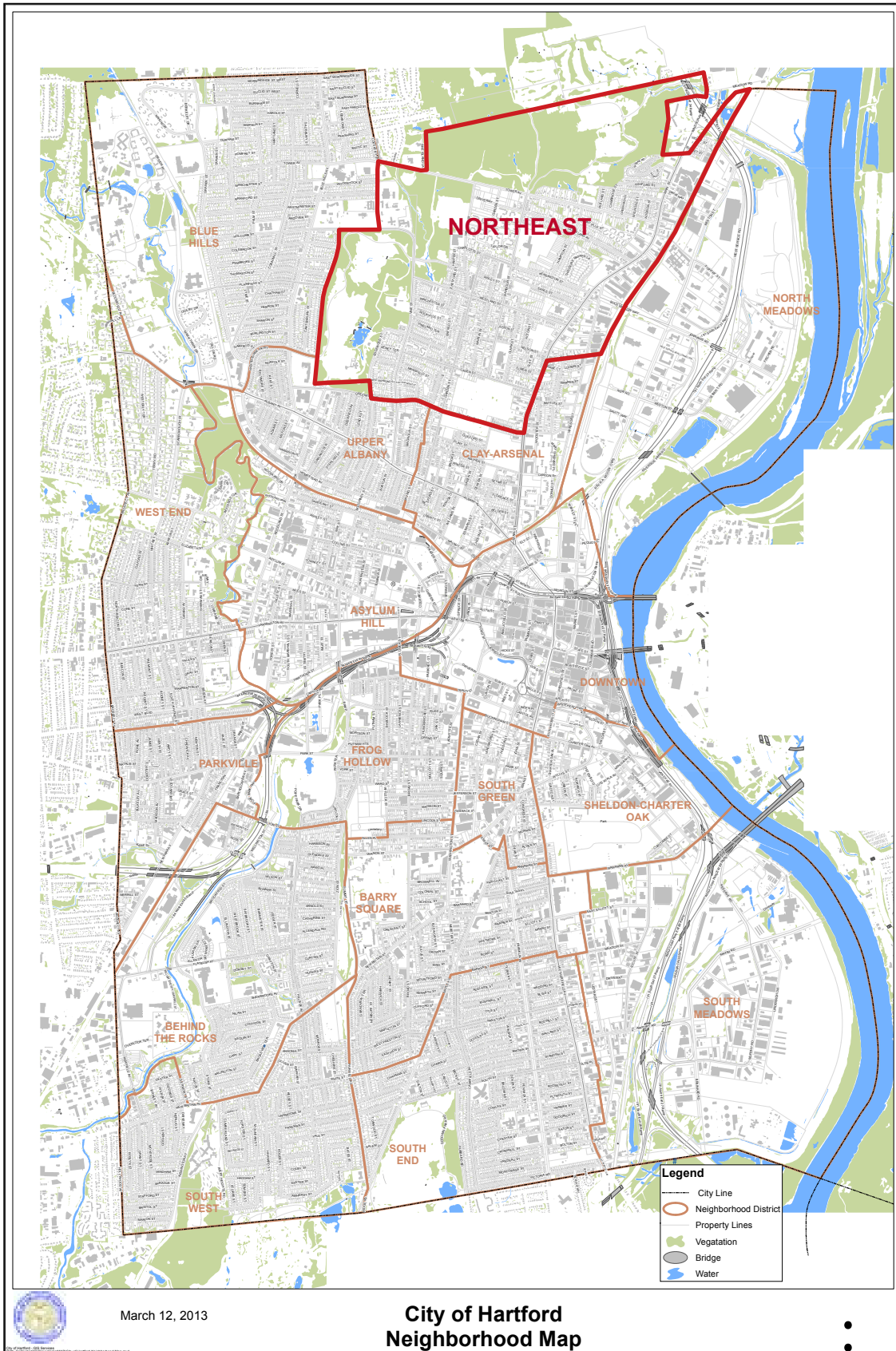


1 Adapted from [Know The Land Territories Campaign | LSPIRG](#)

2 [Territory Acknowledgement | Native Land Digital](#)



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SUMMARY

This neighborhood plan outlines Sheldon Oak Central's (SOC) intentions for the Northeast neighborhood of Hartford, specifically the target area bounded by Capen, Garden, Westland and Barbour Streets, for the next five years. SOC is a city-wide community development corporation that works to revitalize neighborhoods primarily through housing development, as well as community building initiatives. In the next five years, SOC plans to expand its property development efforts in the neighborhood and develop a robust community engagement strategy.



"I'm looking forward to watching this building be repaired. Maybe I'll live here someday." – ISAIAH, Sheldon Oak Intern

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION



We are committed to the sustainability of our projects through our network of community centers and the development of commercial real estate necessary for community economic growth. We are proud to have completed over 800 units of decent, community-supported development in the City of Hartford and surrounding communities.

A: INTRODUCTION

Sheldon Oak Central, Inc. (SOC) is a successful Community Development Corporation (CDC) that began in the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood and currently works in three Hartford neighborhoods. SOC has a 50-year-plus history of developing affordable housing and homeownership opportunities in Hartford. As there is not a dedicated CDC in the challenged Northeast neighborhood, SOC has increasingly focused its efforts in this community. SOC currently owns 78 units in the Northeast neighborhood, with plans to develop more in the near future.

The document describes a plan to partner with the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) to implement a comprehensive community improvement initiative over the next five years. Physical attributes of the neighborhood will be addressed as well as the quality of life of residents. The goal is to create a livable community of choice where neighbors know and support each other, resulting in a community where each resident has the support needed to reach their full potential in a safe nurturing environment.



"The Community Center is a second home." – RAYVON, Sheldon Oak Intern

Sheldon Oak Central, Inc.

Sheldon Oak Central, Inc. (SOC) is a not-for-profit community development corporation that has developed 800 units of rental housing and 44 single family homes in Hartford. SOC is committed to the sustainability of its projects through its network of community centers and the development of the complementary commercial real estate necessary for community economic growth.

SOC was founded in 1968 by a group of churches to redress the loss of housing that was a by-product of so-called slum clearance and urban renewal. SOC's founding project was Sheldon Oak Cooperative, Connecticut's first low-income cooperative. It was created as an ownership opportunity for low-income families who were living in sub-standard housing and/or displaced by the development of Constitution Plaza.

After completing Sheldon Oak Cooperative, SOC spent much of the next twenty years concentrating on the development and management of small-scale moderate rental projects in Hartford's Northeast neighborhood.

Beginning in the mid 1990's, SOC returned to its roots in the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood to focus on comprehensive community development. Between 1993 and 1996 SOC acquired and revitalized Martin Luther King Apartments and Twin Acres, two distressed, semi-abandoned housing projects on the periphery of a dilapidated and gang-ridden Hartford Housing Authority property, Dutch Point. On Wyllys and Lisbon Streets, SOC partnered with another non-profit, the Corporation for Independent Living, to demolish an entire city block of blighted buildings and replace it with a community of three- and four-bedroom townhouse apartments.

In 1998, SOC acquired Sheldon Oak Cooperative, which by then was facing foreclosure, and worked with the co-op association to convince HUD to provide financing to rehabilitate the property.



"We have to be better to make everything better. If we want to make change we have to change ourselves." – JOSÉ QUIÑONES, Northeast Community Engagement Director



In 1999, the SOC Board of Directors decided to re-focus on the neighborhoods north of downtown. The shift was also spurred by encouragement from the City of Hartford, as there is no equivalent CDC in the neighborhood. In the Northeast neighborhood, SOC consolidated and restructured the financing of the small properties it had developed in the 1980's, creating Northeast Hartford Affordable Housing (NHAH), a seven-building, 68-unit scattered site development of small apartment buildings and townhouses.

In 2003, SOC and a for-profit partner acquired and secured over \$25 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs) to revitalize the failing 269-unit SANA Apartments. The partnership later acquired and re-developed the 4.3-acre parcel adjacent to SANA. This lot, which had been vacant and blighted for nearly forty years, became a mixed-income 57-family apartment complex known as North End Gateway, completed in 2008. SOC sold its partnership interest in SANA but maintains ownership of North End Gateway.

In 2011, a group consisting of lenders and stakeholders in the Horace Bushnell Apartments (HBA), a collection of nine contiguous three-story brick buildings, approached SOC and asked if it would acquire and redevelop the property. SOC financed a major redevelopment and returned all nine buildings to productive use, offering 74 amenity-rich affordable apartments for families and seniors of a mix of incomes in a complex now known as 4-40 Vine Street Housing. The buildings re-opened in early 2015. In 2018, SOC acquired and stabilized a failing 15-unit cooperative at 39-49 Vine Street, known as Rehoboth Place II.

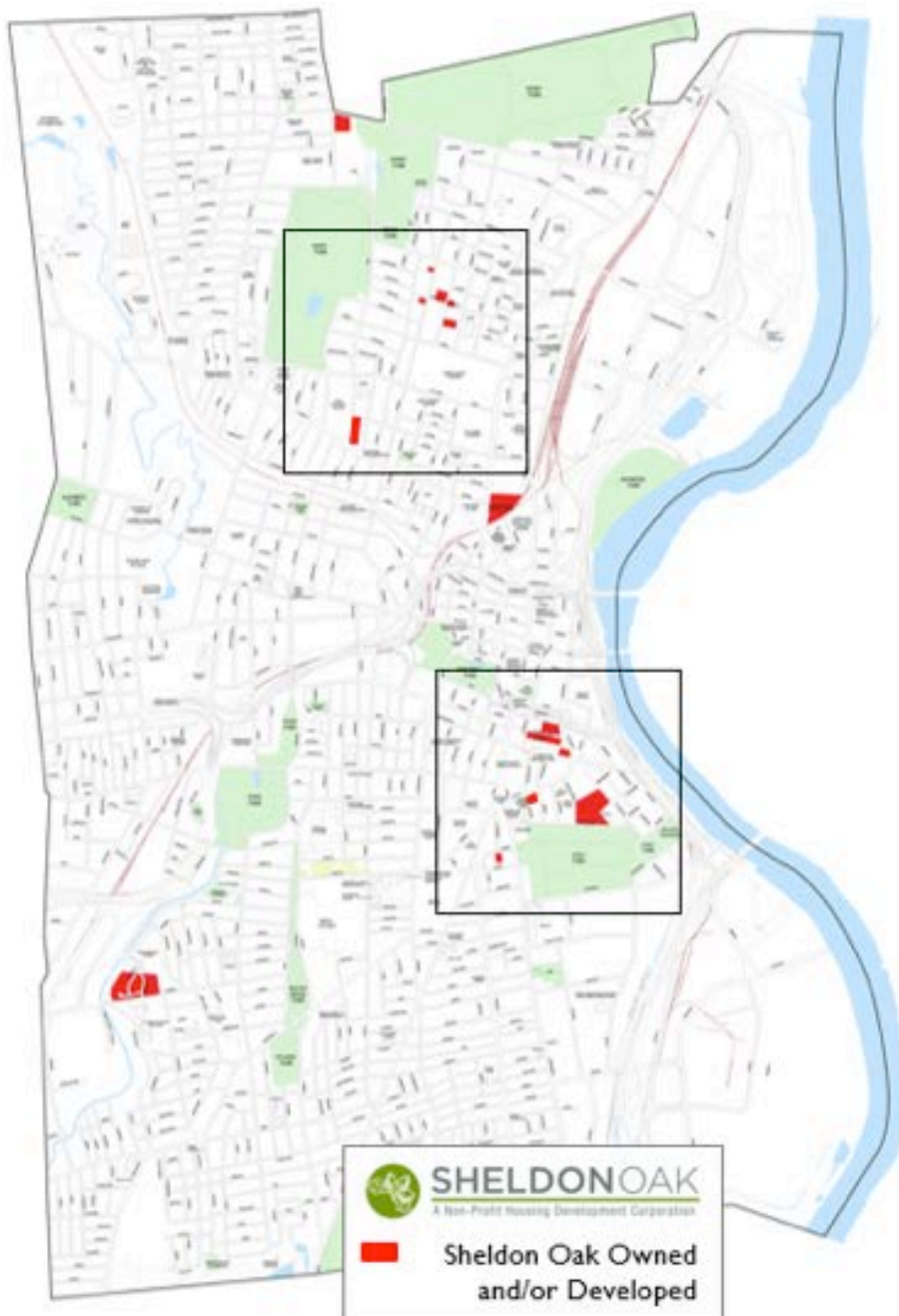


Since 2016, SOC has recapitalized and renovated 152 units in Sheldon/Charter Oak. In 2016, SOC completed a tax-credit financed project to complete a major revitalization of Twin Acres (now Stonington Acres) and add five market-rate units. In 2018, SOC completed Sheldon Wyllys, an LIHTC-financed project to combine Wyllys Lisbon and Sheldon Oak Cooperative into one 107-unit development with upgraded energy efficiency, new roofs and improved kitchens and baths. The final stage of the Sheldon/Charter Oak neighborhood redevelopment begun by Sheldon Oak and the Coalition to Strengthen the Sheldon/Charter Oak Neighborhood (CSS/CON) in the 1990's is the planned replacement of the 64-unit public housing style complex at MLK Apartments with a 155-unit mixed income walk-to-work community. SOC expects to close on the financing, which includes the recent award of a \$3.75 million grant through the Community Investment Fund, in early 2023.



SOC developed the Northeast Hartford Affordable Housing (NHAH) development in the early 2000's. NHAH consists of 68 scattered site residential buildings located on Martin, Nelson and Garden Streets in the Northeast neighborhood. In 2020, SOC secured commitments from HUD for Section 8 rental subsidies to support 100% of NHAH's previously unsubsidized units. This will improve conditions for severely rent-burdened families and enables NHAH to complete a rehabilitation addressing the properties' capital needs, and improve energy efficiency, livability and marketability.

Recently, in response to encouragement from the City and LISC, SOC has been working to establish a larger role in the neighborhood. The headquarters for this work is SOC's 2200 square foot freestanding community building, the Johnson Stewart Center at 127 Martin Street.



Development Portfolio

Sheldon/Charter Oak

- Sheldon Wyllys 107 Units
- Stonington Acres 45 Units
- Martin Luther King Apartments 64 Units

South Green

- Bacon Congregate 23 Units

Upper Albany

- 4-40 Vine Street 74 Units
- Rehoboth Place 15 Units

Clay Arsenal

- North End Gateway 57 Units
- SANA Apartments 256 Units

Northeast

- Northeast Hartford Affordable Housing 68 Units
- 96-98 Martin / 655 Garden 10 Units

Behind the Rocks

- Rice Heights 44 Units

Blue Hills

- Phillips CME Housing in Honor of Ida B. Wells 40 Units
- 803 Units**





B: PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This plan is a roadmap for SOC's work in the Northeast neighborhood that will:

- Recapitalize and renovate the Northeast Hartford Affordable Housing Development, a 68-unit scattered-site development, and 22 additional units, for a total project of 90 units.
- Expand its real estate development activities in the neighborhood.
- Increase and leverage public and private investment to align and target resources and programs to stimulate revitalization and maximize opportunities presented by current city, regional, and state development initiatives.
- Through SOC's Johnson-Stewart Community Center, develop a robust community engagement strategy.
- Continue to build SOC's financial and technical capacity as an effective, comprehensive community development organization.



"If you get out and see more things life could be so much better." – DUKE, Sheldon Oak Intern

C. PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SOC's Northeast Neighborhood Plan was developed in partnership with residents, the Northeast Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) City of Hartford, and LISC. SOC believes in the power of the community voice and grass roots community organizing. To that end, to develop this plan, SOC conducted the following community activities:

- Reviewed SOC accomplishments and impact on neighborhood.
- Distributed surveys to the Board of Directors and key stakeholders to obtain feedback on the impact of SOC in the community and the vision for the organization.
- Assessed the neighborhood's physical needs.
- Facilitated meetings with residents to develop plans and the resources necessary for implementation.
- Identified target areas for development and intervention.
- Participated in the Northeast NRZ Plan process to set the strategic vision and goals for the neighborhood.
- Reviewed demographic data and identification of new development opportunities.



**"Giving up is not in my life. I try to touch one person every day. Older people spend so much on us to make our lives better."
– DUKE, Sheldon Oak Intern**

WHERE YOU LIVE

✓ LIKES

- Quiet ✓✓
- Nothing much / There is nothing
- Greet & Meet people in the morning
- There are respectful and helpful people in the afternoon and at night
- Love most neighbors
- Our Community, tight with each other
- Everyone is close
- Northeast neighborhood has a lot of good people
- Very nice



- Neighborhood
- Corner stores
- Small Business
- Swift Factory

- Everything close by
- Nice backyard
- It's where I grew up
- The memories I have as a young person having fun walking to the store, without worrying about getting shot
- Nice place to try to raise your family
- The ability to find mental peace of mind amongst the situation

✗ DISLIKES

- Violence / Gun violence, shooting and killing XXXXXXXXXXXX (9)
- Crime, Illegal activities
- Drugs, Addicts
- The energy



- Disrespect
- Secrets
- Fix people
- Everybody is like family because everybody know each other / People don't mind their own business

- Can't play and enjoy themselves like my kid did

- Visiting tenants



- Empty buildings
- Dirty streets
- Man Power

- I don't like where I live right now. I have been there for 5 years and have not gotten anything fixed. I call maintenance and no one comes to fix the problems.

- Crowded
- It gets too loud
- Homeless people



- Driving too fast down Martin St.

WISH TO DO WITHOUT LEAVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

☆ Accessibility & Community:

- Fix my own place up as far as ceilings and etc.
- Make it cleaner
- To see the positive growth amongst our community
- Better communication, Work better with the neighbors



☆ Services:

- Housing, Food, Transportation
- Groups, Church
- Job opportunities



☆ Shopping:

- Grocery shop / More stores / Shopping centers

☆ Community & Recreation:

- Recreation & Fun, Community Garden
- Centers for children, young adults, teens
- Help kids, More good schools

WHAT CAN WE AS A GROUP DO NOW TO IMPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

<p>COMMUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork contributes in so many aspects • Be kind to neighbors • We are a family & community, not just neighbors 	<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep crime down / No Drugs!! • Pick stuff up / Don't litter • Clean & Repair streets • Don't destroy vacant building 
<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit here more / Better contact, Reach out • Work together with a good plan • Walk the walk. True facts. • Uplift one another Stop knocking each other down 	<p>SOCIAL SUPPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the city accountable • Community Centers • Groups for teenagers • More housing • Work, Jobs 

SUGGESTIONS FOR LONGER TERM IMPROVEMENTS

COMMUNITY & COMMUNICATION

- All of the above (ie. previous suggestions)
- On-going meeting with each other
- Neighborhood meetings
- Keep dedicated
- Schedule, timing
- Keep people posted
- A place to come – for game night, movie night, plan a clean up the streets day



SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Employment
- Housing
- Clothing
- Too many homeless
- Counseling services
- Have a place to come at least once a month to talk about the changes that supposed to be made
- How to get into adulthood: how to do a resume, how to balance checkbooks, free education – where and when to apply
- Become involved in the NRC



* Summary of input from SOC Strategic Planning meeting

SECTION II: THE HARTFORD CONTEXT



Renovations will improve energy efficiency, promoting environmental sustainability and saving the residents money on utility costs. Our investments in the outdoor spaces are intended to increase the neighborhood's aesthetic appeal and improve the perception of safety.

A: THE HARTFORD CONTEXT

Hartford is the capital city of Connecticut. Although once one of the richest cities in the US, it is now one of the poorest. It is the historic home of many prominent insurance companies that are still based in Hartford. Its population peaked in 1950 with over 177,000 residents but has since decreased to just over 121,000 residents in 2020. 85% of residents are BIPOC, while 15% are white.³ Hartford’s housing challenges are complex. See data below provided by the Partnership for Strong Communities.⁴

2022 Housing Data Profiles

HARTFORD



KEY FINDINGS

Housing

40%

of housing is subsidized

65%

of households rent their home

81%

of housing units are in multifamily buildings

Affordability

22%

of households spend between 30% and 50% of their income on housing

27%

of households spend more than half of their income on housing

\$25.04

the hourly wage needed to afford a 2-bedroom apartment

Population

31

the median age of residents

85%

of residents are people of color (BIPOC)

+0.3%

projected population change from 2020 to 2040

* Source: pschousing.org or housingprofiles.pschousing.org. Data comes from the 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

Hartford’s poverty rate is 28% and the annual median household in 2020 is \$36,154⁵, or \$17.38 per hour.

Each year, the National Low Income Housing Coalition calculates the “housing wage,” the hourly wage needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home without paying more than 30% of income on housing. The current Housing

3-4 [2022 Housing Data Profiles: Hartford | Partnership for Strong Communities](#)
(Data sourced from 2016-2022 American Community Survey)

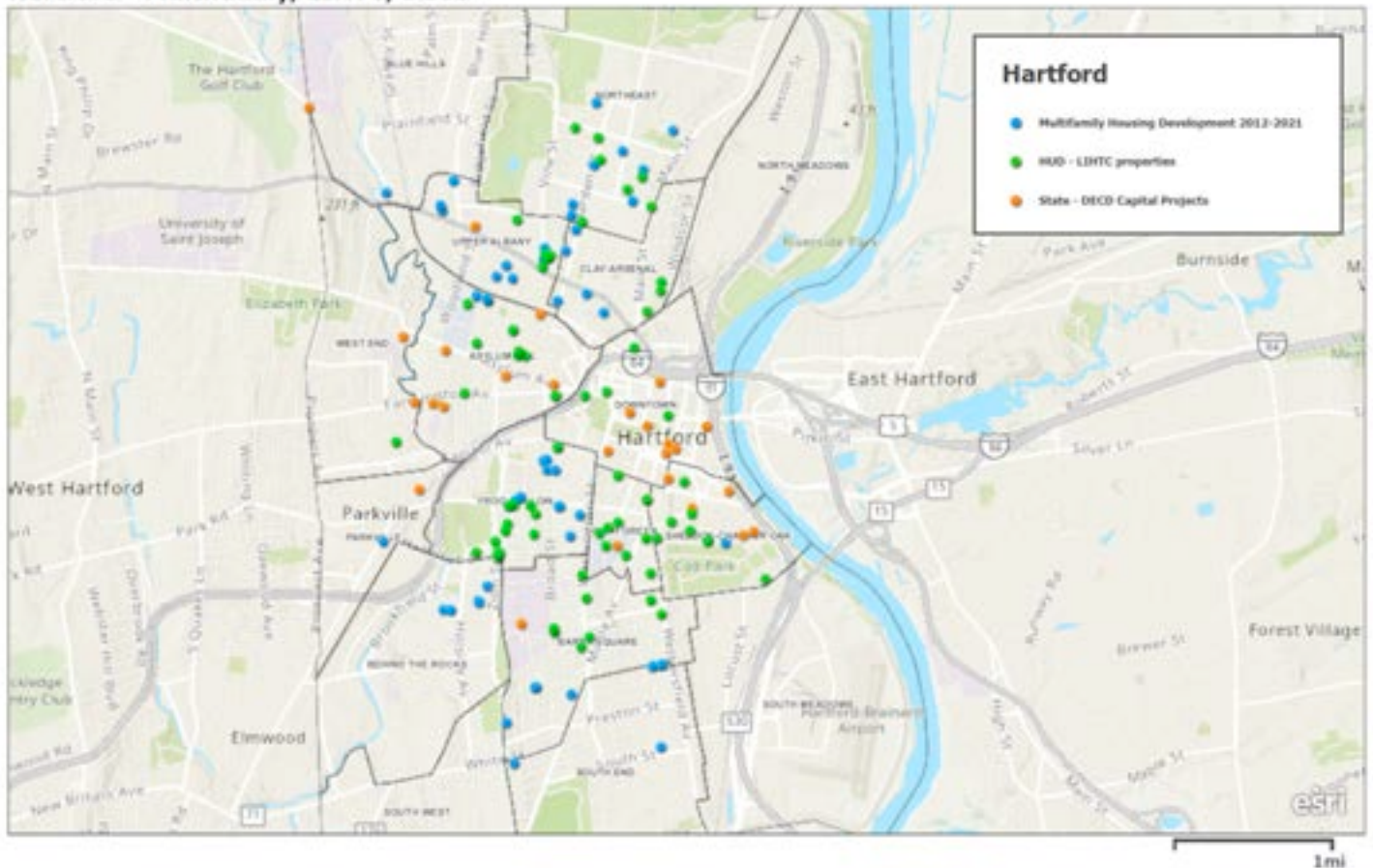
5 [Hartford, CT | Data USA](#)

wage for a two-bedroom unit in zip code 06120, which composes much of the Northeast neighborhood is \$21.73 ⁶, meaning the median household wage of is significantly below what is necessary to afford housing.

The City of Hartford recently finalized its Affordable Housing Plan. The plan seeks to deconcentrate subsidized housing, improve the existing housing stock, and prioritize homeownership and tenant programs. Other findings include:

- Affordable homeownership is lacking especially among people of color.
- Households are severely cost-burdened, especially among lower-income renters.
- Rents continue to rise.
- Increase in the number of complaints to the Hartford’s Fair Rent Commission with lower-income households particularly at risk of housing instability.
- Lack of affordable housing options for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

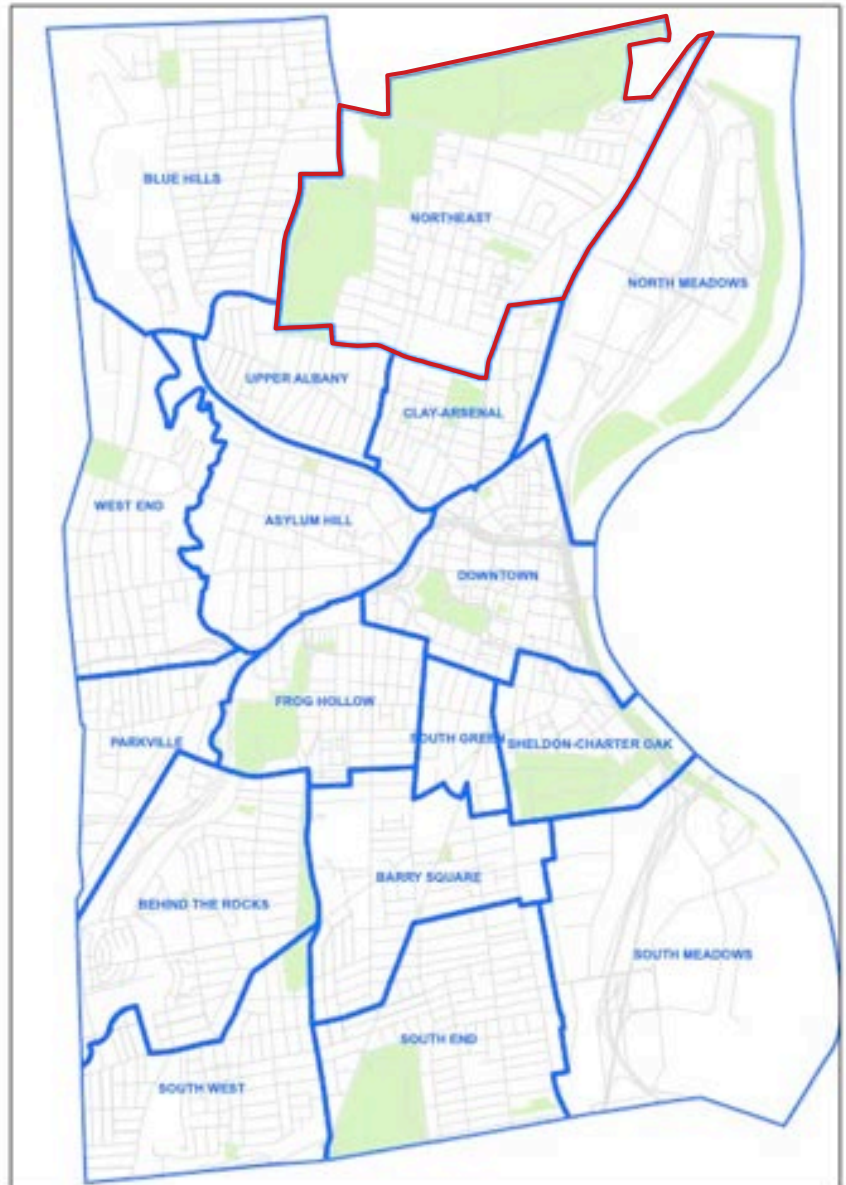
Hartford - Multifamily, LIHTC, DECD

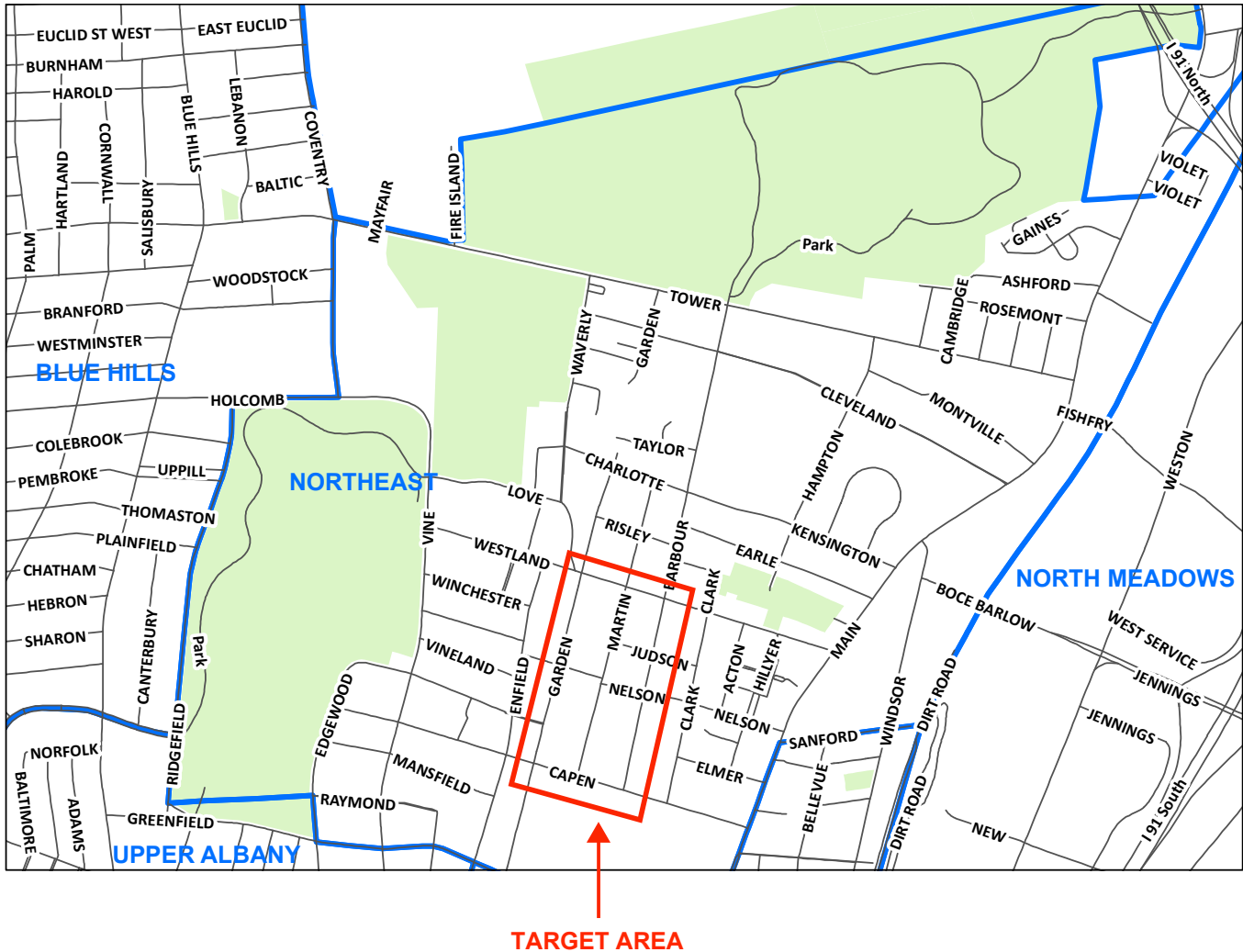


Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA | City of Hartford, CT, MDC, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census

B. NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The Northeast neighborhood, located north of downtown Hartford, is bounded by Spring Grove Cemetery to the south, the railroad line to the east, and Keney Park on the north and west. One can see several stages of the City's history in the landscape and architecture of the Northeast neighborhood: wooded/open space areas, worker housing, local retail/service areas, assisted housing, industrial areas and suburban style housing. The physical development of the neighborhood evolved as economic conditions dictated who would comprise successive generations of residents. The neighborhood grew in a predictable pattern, extending out from downtown and the river. Enterprising landowners recognized and responded accordingly to the need for housing, services and jobs. Commercial development grew up along Main Street and at key intersections in the neighborhood; first, the corner of Capen Street and Garden Street, and later at Barbour and Judson, and Barbour and Kensington/Charlotte Streets. Industrial uses primarily sprang up on upper Main Street and Windsor Street to take advantage of the railroad, and multi-family residential uses spread northward in the areas between Main Street and Keney Park.

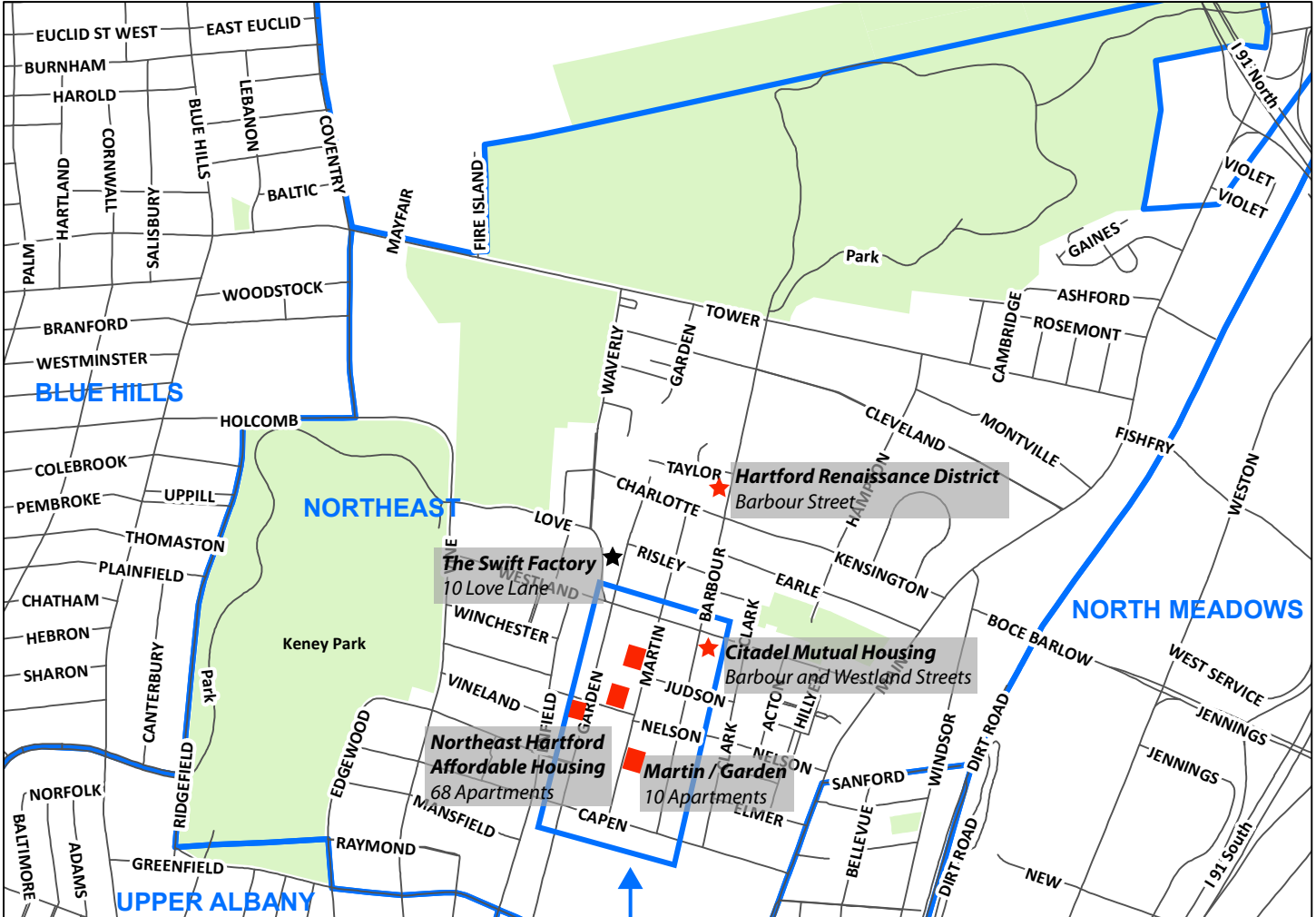




SOC’s target area within the Northeast neighborhood is bordered by the rectangle formed by Capen, Garden, Westland and Barbour Streets. This area contains several housing units owned by SOC that were acquired and renovated in the early 2000’s and are now in need of additional investment. SOC is in the process of acquiring vacant Housing Authority owned property in close proximity to other SOC properties in this area.

Although the overall condition of housing stock in the neighborhood is poor due to significant deferred maintenance and neglect, SOC is one of the responsible property owners in the neighborhood, and has taken on the challenge of improving the housing stock and the quality-of-life for the residents. It should be noted that there are other non-profits also present in the neighborhood that manage their properties well, including the Mutual Housing Association of Greater Hartford.

Sheldon Oak Central Northeast Development Portfolio



TARGET AREA

Legend/ Key

■ SOC development	★ Proposed non-SOC project	★ Complete Non-SOC project
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C. DEMOGRAPHICS⁷

In 2020 the Northeast Neighborhood was home to 11,199 people or about 9.2% of the City of Hartford’s population. As described below Northeast is a low-income rent burdened neighborhood:

Population	2010	2014	Change (%)	2020	Change (%)
Northeast	10,327	10,816	4.7%	11,199	3.5%
Hartford (City)	124,775	124,705	0.0%	121,054	-2.9%
Hartford (County)	894,014	897,985	0.4%	899,179	0.1%

The neighborhood continues to struggle, although there have been some improvements in the poverty rate, income levels, and homeownership rates. Households suffer from a high rate of poverty of 37%, as compared to the city’s rate of 29%. The median household income is \$27,990, 19.9% lower than the city’s median of \$34,962, with 57.9% of the households in this community rent-burdened.

2014	Northeast	Hartford	2020	Northeast	Northeast Change (%)	Hartford	Hartford Change (%)
% Persons in Poverty	41.4%	34.4%	37%	37%	-10.6%	29%	-15.7%
Median Household Income	\$23,858	\$29,313	\$27,990	\$27,990	17.3%	\$34,962	19.3%
Rent Burdened Households	60%	58.0%	57.9%	57.9%	-3.5%	52.1%	-10.2%
Home Ownership Rate	17.0%	23.5%	24.9%	24.9%	46.5%	24.1%	2.6%

The Northeast Neighborhood population grew from 2010 to 2020, increasing by 8.4%, from 10,327 to 11,199. The racial characteristics also changed during the same time-period. The number of residents that identify as Black decreased by 3.8%, from 8,181 to 7,871. The number of people that identify as Latino rose by 26.6%, from 2,399 to 3,038. Latinos now represent 27.1% of the population of the neighborhood. Over ninety-four percent (94%) of neighborhood residents are people of color.

Race or Ethnicity	2010	% of Total	2014	% of Total	Change (%)	2020	% of Total	Change (%)
Black	8,181	76.4%	8,069	74.6%	-1.4%	7,871	70.3%	-2.5%
White	673	6.3%	1,080	10.0%	60.5%	628	5.6%	-41.9%
Asian	49	0.5%	0	0.0%	-100%	43	0.4%	143%
Two or More Races	381	3.6%	614	5.7%	161.5%	905	8.1%	147.4%
Some Other Race ⁸	1,357	12.7%	1,009	9.3%	-25.6%	1,702	15.2%	68.7%
Latino ⁹	2,399	22.4%	2,569	23.8%	7.1%	3,038	27.1%	18.3%

7 [ESRI. https://www.esri.com/en-us/home.](https://www.esri.com/en-us/home)
(Data sourced from US Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey.)

In the Northeast neighborhood, 62% of households consist of families. Of all households, 44% include children under 18, and about 37.1% are led by single parents.

Households	2010	% of Total	2014	% of Total	Change (%)	2020	% of Total	Change (%)
Total Households	3,840	100.0%	3,865	100.0%	0.7%	4,105	100%	6.2%
Family Households	2,596	67.6%	2,527	65.3%	-2.7%	2,581	62.0%	2.1%
o Married with Children	346	9.0%	300	7.7%	-13.3%	300	7.2%	0.0%
o Married without Children	330	8.6%	299	7.7%	-9.4%	231	5.6%	-22.7%
o Single Parents	1,920	50.0%	1,928	48.8%	1.4 %	1,543	37.1%	-20.0%
o Other						507	12.2%	
Non-family Households	1,403	36.5%	1,338	34.6%	-4.6%	1,581	38.0%	18.2%
o Living Alone	1,056	27.5%	1,212	31.3%	14.7%	1,431	34.4%	18.1%
Average Household Size	2.76		2.78		0.7%	2.72		-2.2%
Average Family Household Size	3.35		3.72		11.0%	3.31*		-11.0%

The following chart illustrates that in 2022 there were 4,705 housing units in the Northeast neighborhood. The vacancy rate is 12.8%. However, homeownership is on the rise, 21.7% of units are owner-occupied in 2022 up from 18.6% in 2010. In 2022, 65.5% of the housing is renter occupied.

Housing Units	2010	2014	Change (%)	2022	Change (%)
Total Housing Units	4,685	4,834	3.2%	4,705	-2.7%
Total Occupied Housing Units	3,840	3,956	3.0%	4,105	3.8%
Owner-occupied Housing Units	866	824	-4.8%	1,021	23.9%
Percent Owner-occupied	18.6%	20.1%	8.1%	21.7%	8.0%
Renter-occupied	2,974	3,132	5.0%	3,084	-1.5%
Residential Vacancy Rate	17.6 %	20.0%	13.6%	12.8%	-36%





D. CRIME⁸

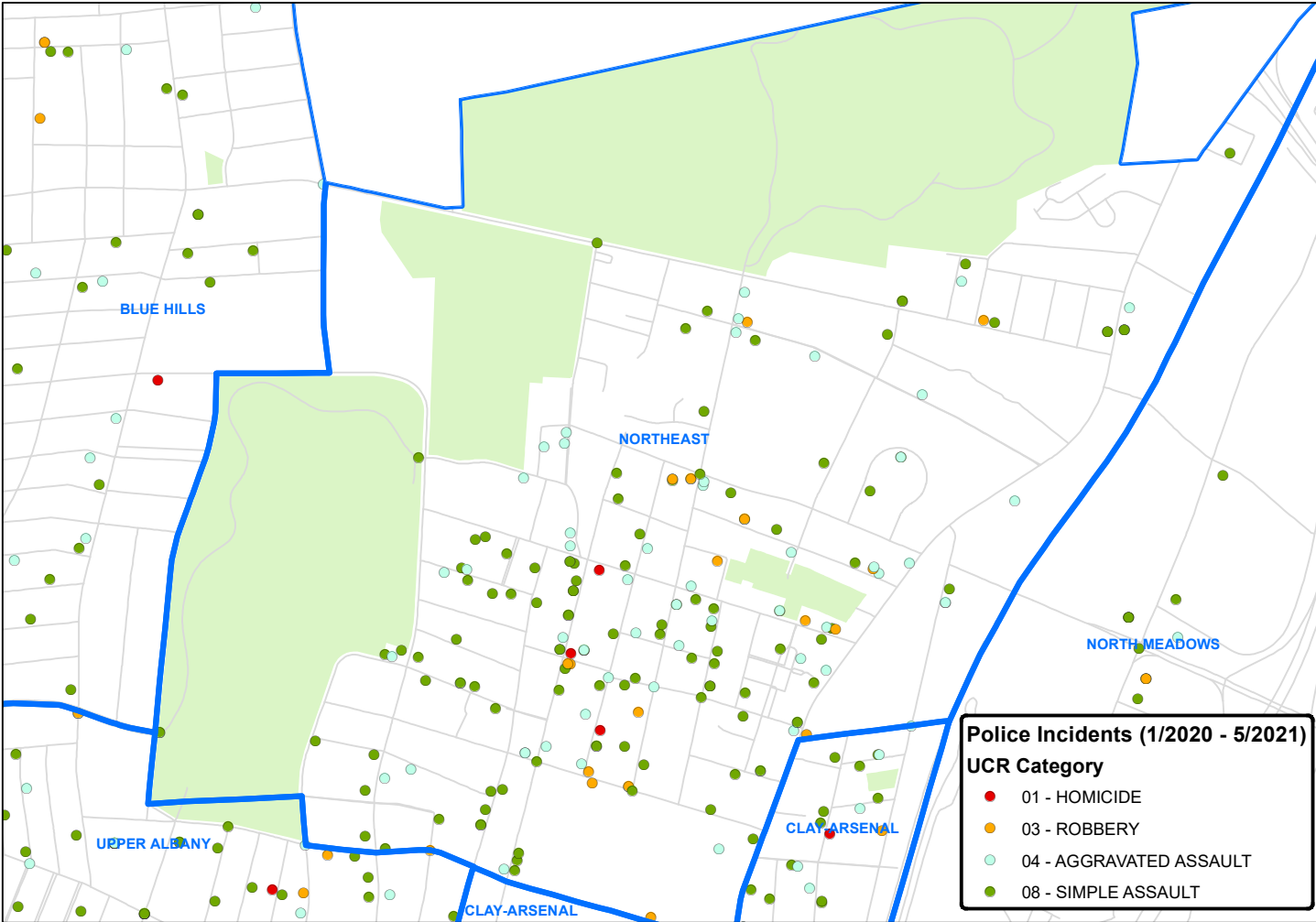
The Northeast neighborhood experiences high rates of crime relative to the city as a whole.

	Hartford (City)	Northeast (Neighborhood)
Total crime index	168	203
Personal crime index	248	352
Murder index	319	490

AGS Crime Index scores are indexed to the national level, which is given a score of 100. A value of 100 for a local area means that its risk is about equal to the national average. A score of 200 indicates that there is double the risk of crime, and a score of 50 indicates one half the national risk.⁹ Northeast's score of 490 is almost five times the national average.

8 Data sourced from AGS (2022)

9 <https://appliedgeographic.com/2020/07/faq-crimerisk/>





E. TRENDS

The City and stakeholders are undertaking initiatives to address the neighborhood's considerable challenges.

The area is designated as a Federal Promise Zone, an Enterprise Zone, and an Opportunity Zone; these programs are all meant to spur investment and economic viability. The Hartford Housing Authority redeveloped Stowe Village and Nelton Court, two large, low-income public housing properties. Private investors redeveloped the 180-unit Chappelle Gardens. The Swift Factory—a former gold leaf factory was transformed by Community Solutions into a vibrant hub for entrepreneurship training, learning, and community engagement. The area has experienced a growth in homeownership thanks to an 11 unit developments by Toraal Development that will grow to 20 and Habitat for Humanity's efforts in the community.

Other proposed private investment in the Renaissance District, also known as the Barbour Street Corridor, include developer David McCarthy's revitalization of the Barbour Gardens complex and a project sponsored by a local funeral home director, Howard K. Hill, which includes mixed-use housing and commercial development.

The community has supported a focus on Main Street that includes rezoning for commercial use and exploration of specific proposals. These include a proposal by Max Kothari of Kitchen Express to develop a shopping center. There are also proposals for expanding senior housing and providing daycare.

There is a need for a property-owner assistance program targeting under-maintained multifamily residential properties with the goal of preserving privately-owned rental buildings and preventing their blight and abandonment as well as resources for homeownership improvement. Community Solutions is acquiring and renovating properties through the North Hartford Housing Trust. Rebuilding Together is providing emergency repair services to homeowners.

Despite the progress made there continues to be a demand for basic services. A recent survey of 269 residents noted the following top five needs in the neighborhood:

- Supermarket
- Banking Services
- Job Training and Development
- Living Wages
- Affordable housing and homeownership opportunities

F. STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis conducted as part of this planning process identified the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

STRENGTHS

- The neighborhood has seen **significant investments** over the past few years. For example, at the Swift Factory, the City was awarded a grant from the State Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for \$600,000 under the Brownfield Municipal Pilot Program to assist with environmental remediation of the property. Community Solutions rehabilitated the 2.6-acre property, and in 2020 the 80,000 square foot campus was transformed from a vacant factory into a hub for offices, education, urban agriculture, and entrepreneurship.
- **Vacant land and underutilized properties** available for development, such as city-owned former schools, former health department building on the Blue Hills border containing 80,000 square feet of space, and a garage.
- The City has formed **The Hartford Land Bank** to address vacant city-owned properties and blight. This organization will be an asset to SOC in accomplishing its mission of redeveloping blighted properties in the neighborhood.
- **Excellent access to rail, I-91 and I-84.**
- **Keney Park**- a 693-acre public park designed by Olmsted, Olmsted and Elliot Landscape architects.
- The park is also home to an 18 hole golf course professionally designed by Emmet Devereux in 1927. It was rated by Golf as the second-best public golf course in Connecticut.
- **Historic Cemetery** – Frederick Law Olmsted Landscape Architect buried there amongst other luminaries.
- Kelvin Anderson/Parker Memorial Recreation Center
- Intact period architecture
- Community Gardens
- Involved and energetic residents willing to volunteer
- Sense of roots, history, and a common heritage
- Spiritual support from churches
- Social Clubs
- Commercial Center on Main Street
- **Enterprise Zone Designation** – 80% five-year local property tax abatement on real property and personal property. 25% or a 50% credit on state corporate business tax of eligible businesses.
- Opportunity Zone Designation
- Promise Zone Designation
- Industrial corridor on Windsor Street

WEAKNESSES



- **Median income is very low** and 46% of residents live below the poverty line
- Insufficient homeownership
- **High crime rate** and public safety concerns without an established process to significantly reduce illegal activities and shootings
- **Low performing schools** and limited access to quality educational programs
- **Limited employment opportunities** and lack of job training opportunities
- Blight, illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles and litter
- Lack of mechanisms for access to institutional sponsors/corporate connections
- Insufficient links to regional economic development initiatives
- Limited access to capital
- Challenging to recruit compatible new businesses
- The high incidence of investor-owned and absentee landlord properties and competition from cash buyers and investors.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Property available** for repurposing
- **Outreach and intervention** through various community groups including but not limited to Community First School, Swift Factory, and religious groups
- **Youth programs** which transition to adulthood
- Engage **institutional sponsor/corporate stakeholders** from within Hartford and the region
- **Organizational/technical assistance** to the NRZ with a focus on community development, small business and employment, and training for specific job opportunities
- Deploy **SOC-owned community space**, the Johnson-Stewart Community Center at 127 Martin Street, to provide monthly breakfast as a means to engage and identify needs, and collaborate with the Kelvin Anderson/Parker Memorial recreation center and other community facilitate programming
- **Transform libraries, vacant schools, and other City owned buildings** to implement resident-driven services, in particular afterschool programs geared towards recreation and academics
- More **parental involvement** concerning education to enhance achievement
- Hartford Land Bank now operating with potential to target blighted properties in the neighborhood
- Hartford Renaissance District led by Howard K. Hill.
- Citadel Mutual Housing concept for 60-70 units in planning by Mutual Housing Association of Greater Hartford, Inc on Barbour and Westland Streets.

THREATS



- The **rise in illegal activities**, including shootings and drug sales
- **Educational levels continue to lag** behind state averages
- Continued deferred maintenance of the housing stock
- Potential increase in unemployment rates due to current economic conditions
- Low level of home ownership

SECTION III: VISION AND PRIORITIES



In 2021, we made major repairs and upgrades to the units, structures, and outdoor spaces. To address the exterior issues, we repaired brickwork, replaced all the fencing and paving, and put in new landscaping.

SECTION III: VISION

SOC’s immediate goal is to stabilize their properties to ensure that they can continue to provide safe, affordable homes with attractive and well-maintained units and common spaces. SOC’s vision is to work comprehensively with the residents and other stakeholders to make the Northeast neighborhood a desirable place to live, work, and play.

The Northeast NRZ is undergoing a collaborative planning process that is aligned with the goals of the Hartford 2035 City Plan, completed in 2020, which embraces the five key themes of Green, Grow, Live, Move and Play.

These five interconnected themes help organize SOC’s plan and will support the City’s vision of becoming a more sustainable, prosperous, equitable, mobile, and vibrant City. These themes include the following:

<p>green</p>	<p>ENERGY FAUNA FLORA RESILIENCY RIVER WASTE</p>	<p>To Green Hartford... we need to make a more sustainable environment</p>	<p>The city has an award-winning environmental sustainability initiative that has earned national recognition for its efforts in agriculture, green infrastructure, and renewable energy.</p>
<p>grow</p>	<p>AVENUES CONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP KNOWLEDGE WORKFORCE</p>	<p>To Grow Hartford... we need a more prosperous economy</p>	<p>With start-up entrepreneurs and established companies alike, we’re building an innovation economy that is growing fast, and we’ve created a service corps to bring job skills to hundreds of youth.</p>
<p>live</p>	<p>FOOD HEALTH HOUSING SAFETY SCHOOLS SOCIAL SERVICES</p>	<p>To Live Hartford... we need a more equitable community</p>	<p>Quality, affordable housing is going up in nearly every neighborhood, along with new and rebuilt schools, streetlights, community gardens, medical facilities, and park improvements.</p>
<p>move</p>	<p>AIRPORTS BIKING BUSES RAIL ROADS WALKING</p>	<p>To Move Hartford... we need more mobile transport</p>	<p>New commuter rail and bus rapid transit, and investments in walking and biking, are improving the way we move, while our popular regional airport is growing rapidly.</p>
<p>play</p>	<p>ARTS CULTURE HISTORY PARKS SPORTS</p>	<p>To Play Hartford... we need more vibrant culture</p>	<p>Our stadiums, museums, music halls, and neighborhood cultural attractions are pulling in visitors from across the Northeast, and downtown is emerging as a vital urban hub once again.</p>

* Source: Hartford 2035 POCD

A. PRIORITIES

Sheldon Oak’s goals proposed to align its strategic plan with the Northeast Neighborhood Plan as follows:

Action Items	Northeast NRZ Goal	SOC’s Strategy
<p>green</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure Northeast is a vibrant and resilient neighborhood that is prepared for future climate risks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with other non-profits, specifically Knox and KPSP to develop gardening and green space. 2. Enhance beauty and sustainability of landscapes SOC owns. 3. Develop housing with high standards of energy efficiency and sustainability
<p>grow</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support transformative projects, developments, and initiatives aimed at revitalizing commercial and industrial corridors. 2. Support the growth of retail and services that are targeted to the diverse needs of the communities in Northeast. 3. Create a business-friendly environment that encourages businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and stay in the Northeast neighborhood. 4. Better connect youth and adults to new job and job training opportunities in growing sectors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through SOC’s Johnson-Stewart Community Center, provide youth development, leadership, and entrepreneurial training.

Action Items	Northeast NRZ Goal	SOC's Strategy
<p>live</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure residents have access to healthy, affordable fresh foods. 2. Provide access to tailored social support services and programs that support families and residents within the neighborhood. 3. Invest in opportunities for youth in Northeast. 4. Create a safe, healthy, and attractive neighborhood where residents and visitors enjoy walking and feel comfortable doing so. 5. Ensure residents have access to a mix of affordable housing options and clear pathways to homeownership. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete Northeast Hartford Affordable Housing II, which will restructure and renovate 68 existing units and add an additional 22. 2. Expand real estate development activities in the neighborhood by securing additional sites. 3. Increase and leverage public and private investment to align and target resources and programs to stimulate revitalization and maximize opportunities presented by current city-wide regional and state development initiatives.
<p>move</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve mobility options and safety of those options in the neighborhood. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support incorporation of active design. 2. Include CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) in developments.
<p>play</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand and improve Northeast's parks and open space network. 2. Promote Northeast as a destination area with diverse restaurants and retail, open space and recreation, and unique history. 3. Strengthen and increase capacity of the NRZ. 4. Improve visibility of the neighborhood. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop collaborations with other non-profits through resident engagement programs at the Johnson-Stewart Community Center. 2. Collaborate with the City and the NRZ.

SOC has set out ambitious goals for their work in the Northeast neighborhood including:

GOAL #1: RENOVATE SOC'S PORTFOLIO AND DEVELOP ADDITIONAL RENTAL UNITS

Strategies:

- » Complete restructure/renovation of the existing 68 units that comprise NHAH and two small buildings totaling 10 units at 96-98 Martin Street and 655 Garden Street
- » Acquire and restore vacant property at 123 Martin Street
- » Over the next five years, acquire and renovate additional multi-family buildings

Outcome:

- » 90 new or rehabilitated units that increase quality affordable well-managed housing options

GOAL #2: SUPPORT CITY/NEIGHBORHOOD GOAL OF INCREASING HOMEOWNERSHIP

Strategies:

- » Develop vacant parcel at 134 Nelson with two single family homes.
- » Acquire additional properties for development, alone or in partnership with others

Outcomes:

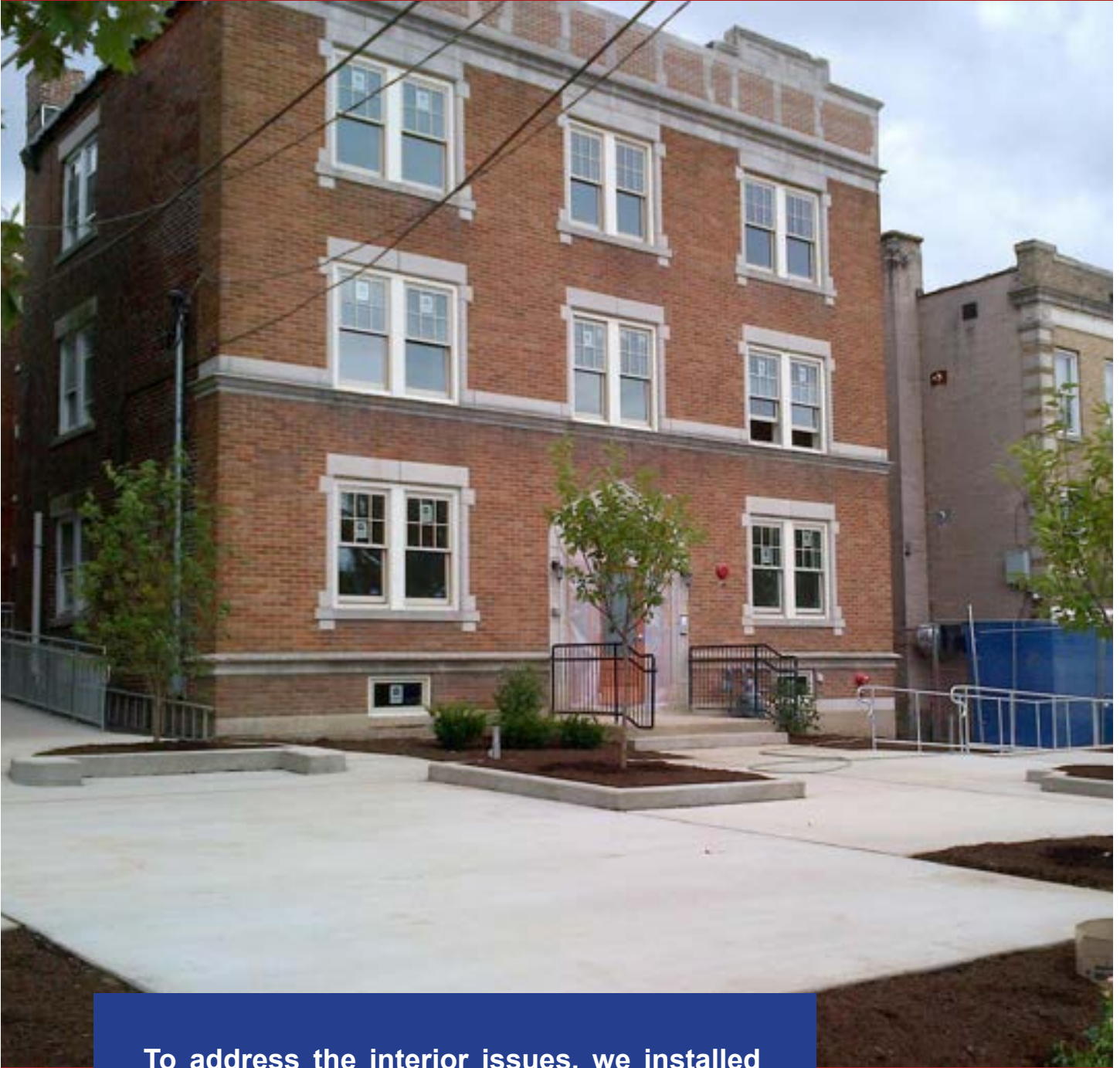
- » Develop additional homeownership opportunities that help families build wealth and stabilize blocks

GOAL #3: PUBLIC SAFETY/CRIME REDUCTION

- » Reduce crime by working with the residents and the NRZ to identify resources and best practice programs to combat crime.
- » Work with the NRZ to mobilize residents, small businesses and other stakeholders through programs at Johnson Stewart
- » Continue and expand programs for youth



SECTION IV: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS



To address the interior issues, we installed new windows, doors, flooring, roofing, bathrooms, and kitchens. In addition, we replaced all mechanicals and repainted the basements of all eleven buildings.

A. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

To ensure its success Sheldon Oak will:

1. Increase organization capacity.

- Hire additional staff to support development and resident services engagement.

2. Participate in Northeast NRZ.

- Support the implementation of the Northeast Neighborhood NRZ Plan.
- Advocate for City resources for the neighborhood.

3. Continue to compete for public financing.

- Advocate for the State's and Connecticut Housing Finance Authority's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to be balanced so that projects in urban centers can compete well for public funding.
- Be involved and up to date on local funding policies and politics.
- Pursue CHDO and nonprofit set asides for local HOME, CDBG Funding.
- Explore other resources, including CRDA, Community Investment Fund 2030, and Urban Act Funding for homeownership appraisal gaps, etc.
- Maintain a balance of housing products and financing to fund housing developments in all stages of development scattered throughout the City.

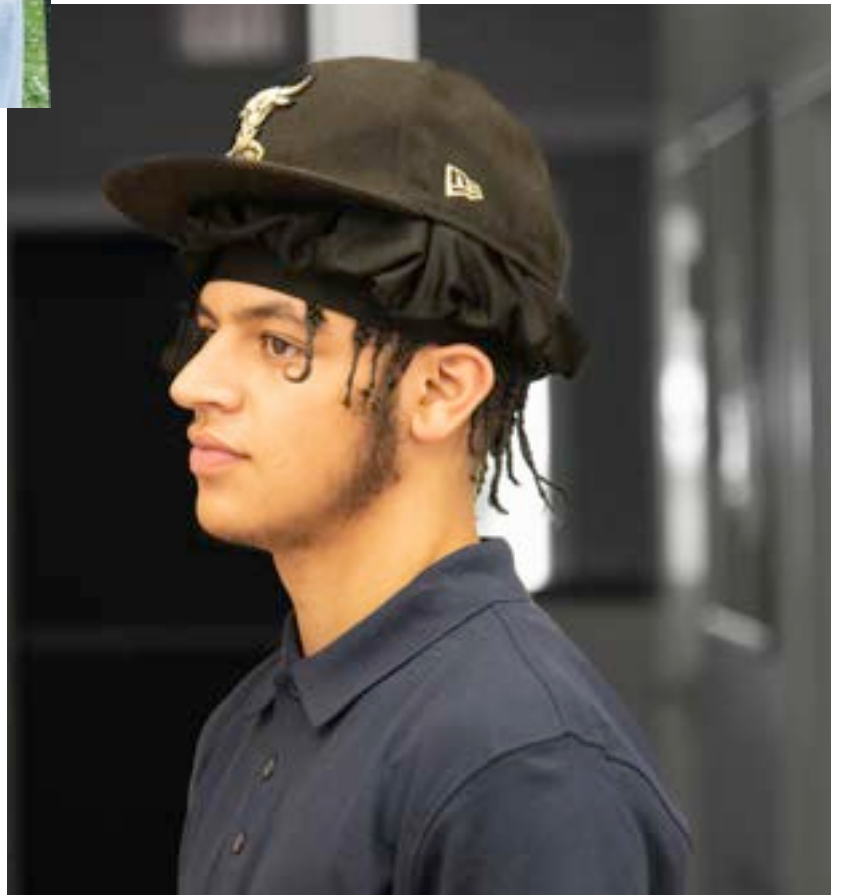
4. Manage competition for resources and land.

- Develop partnership with others when appropriate to be more competitive for public funding opportunities, i.e., Community Investment Fund 2030.
- Collaborate with the City of Hartford on tax incentive agreements and stay abreast of local laws and policies governing City-owned property and financing.
- Obtain properties at a discount by identifying City and/or Hartford Land Bank-controlled properties.
- Develop and execute other acquisition strategies, include obtaining parcels through tax lien holders, auctions, short sales, and bank acquisitions.

5. Collaborate on crime reduction and addressing vacant and blighted properties in conjunction with residents and stakeholders.



"Sheldon Oak is helping me get ready for a job." – RYAN, Sheldon Oak Intern



"It's important to fix the buildings. People are being murdered behind vacant buildings." – NOEL, Sheldon Oak Intern

SECTION V: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, UPDATES, EVALUATION AND REFLECTION



This project will also improve the sustainability of these developments, so that Sheldon Oak can continue to provide stable, quality affordable housing in the Northeast neighborhood for many years to come.

V. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, UPDATES, EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

Over the next five years, 2023-2027, Sheldon Oak will implement the planned priorities identified by the community and Board of Directors, including but not limited to rehabilitation of its housing stock, reduction of blighted buildings, and creation of programs to be housed at the community center in collaboration with the NRZ, Hartford NEXT and other stakeholders on crime reduction.

Sheldon Oak will provide ongoing updates on the progress of their rehabilitation work and involvement in the community.

Sheldon Oak will conduct an annual evaluation to assess the progress of the plan and identify impediments to accomplish planned activities. Including funding, staffing levels and support of the community.



**"I'm going to be an architect. I'll make the neighborhood beautiful and green."
– NOEL, Sheldon Oak Intern**

APPENDIX A: ATTACHMENTS

Demographics: Hartford (City) vs. Northeast (Neighborhood)

Northeast Neighborhood Profile: Population & Racial Characteristics

Northeast Neighborhood Profile: Households & Housing



Summer 2021 Sheldon Oak Interns in the community garden

	Hartford (City)	Northeast (Neighborhood)
Population	121,054	11,201
Average Household Size	2.43	2.72
Households below poverty line	29%	37%
Unemployment rate	11.90%	21%
Median Household Income	\$36,154	\$27,990
Median Home Value	\$194,779	\$196,429
Race		
White	19.40%	5.60%
Black	38.20%	70.30%
American Indian	0.80%	0.40%
Asian	3.50%	0.40%
Pacific Islander	0.10%	0.10%
Other	25.50%	15.20%
2 or more races	12.60%	8.10%
Age		
Under 18	24%	30%
Ages 18 to 64	64%	59%
Aged 65+	12%	12%
Education		
No high school diploma	23%	14%
High school graduate	33%	44%
Some college	24%	30%
Bachelor's/Grad/Prof degree	19%	11%
Income		
<\$15,000	26.80%	31.90%
\$15,000-\$24,999	12.80%	14.10%
\$25,000-\$34,999	10.50%	11.20%
\$35,000-\$49,999	12.30%	13.30%
\$50,000-\$74,999	15.50%	14.40%
\$75,000+	22.20%	15.20%
Gender		
Male	47.50%	41.70%
Female	52.50%	58.30%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino Origin	44.70%	35.50%
Not Hispanic or Latino Origin	55.30%	64.50%

NORTHEAST

This neighborhood profile includes data for Census Tracts 5012, 5013, 5015, 5244

2014	Northeast	Hartford	2020	Northeast	Northeast Change (%)	Hartford	Hartford Change (%)
% Persons in Poverty	41.4%	34.4%		37%	-10.6%	29%	-15.7%
Median Household Income	\$23,858	\$29,313		\$27,990	17.3%	\$34,962	19.3%
Rent Burdened Households	60%	58.0%		57.9%	-3.5%	52.1%	-10.2%
Home Ownership Rate	17.0%	23.5%		24.9%	46.5%	24.1%	2.6%

Population

Population	2010	2014	Change (%)	2020	Change (%)
Northeast	10,327	10,816	4.7%	11,199	3.5%
Hartford (City)	124,775	124,705	0.0%	121,054	-2.9%
Hartford (County)	894,014	897,985	0.4%	899,179	0.1%

Racial Characteristics

Race or Ethnicity	2010	% of Total	2014	% of Total	Change (%)	2020	% of Total	Change (%)
Black	8,181	76.4%	8,069	74.6%	-1.4%	7,871	70.3%	-2.5%
White	673	6.3%	1,080	10.0%	60.5%	628	5.6%	-41.9%
Asian	49	0.5%	0	0.0%	-100%	43	0.4%	143%
Two or More Races	381	3.6%	614	5.7%	161.5%	905	8.1%	147.4%
Some Other Race ⁸	1,357	12.7%	1,009	9.3%	-25.6%	1,702	15.2%	68.7%
Latino ⁹	2,399	22.4%	2,569	23.8%	7.1%	3,038	27.1%	18.3%

* Source: Data sourced from the 2020 Census and 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

Households & Housing

Households	2010	% of Total	2014	% of Total	Change (%)	2020	% of Total	Change (%)
Total Households	3,840	100.0%	3,865	100.0%	0.7%	4,105	100%	6.2%
Family Households	2,596	67.6%	2,527	65.3%	-2.7%	2,581	62.0%	2.1%
o Married with Children	346	9.0%	300	7.7%	-13.3%	300	7.2%	0.0%
o Married without Children	330	8.6%	299	7.7%	-9.4%	231	5.6%	-22.7%
o Single Parents	1,920	50.0%	1,928	48.8%	1.4%	1,543	37.1%	-20.0%
o Other						507	12.2%	
Non-family Households	1,403	36.5%	1,338	34.6%	-4.6%	1,581	38.0%	18.2%
o Living Alone	1,056	27.5%	1,212	31.3%	14.7%	1,431	34.4%	18.1%
Average Household Size	2.76		2.78		0.7%	2.72		-2.2%
Average Family Household Size	3.35		3.72		11.0%	3.31*		-11.0%

Housing Units and Tenure

Housing Units	2010	2014	Change (%)	2022	Change (%)
Total Housing Units	4,685	4,834	3.2%	4,705	-2.7%
Total Occupied Housing Units	3,840	3,956	3.0%	4,105	3.8%
Owner-occupied Housing Units	866	824	-4.8%	1,021	23.9%
Percent Owner-occupied	18.6%	20.1%	8.1%	21.7%	8.0%
Renter-occupied	2,974	3,132	5.0%	3,084	-1.5%
Residential Vacancy Rate	17.6%	20.0%	13.6%	12.8%	-36%

*2022

* Source: Data sourced from the 2020 Census and 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

