



West End Strategic Plan

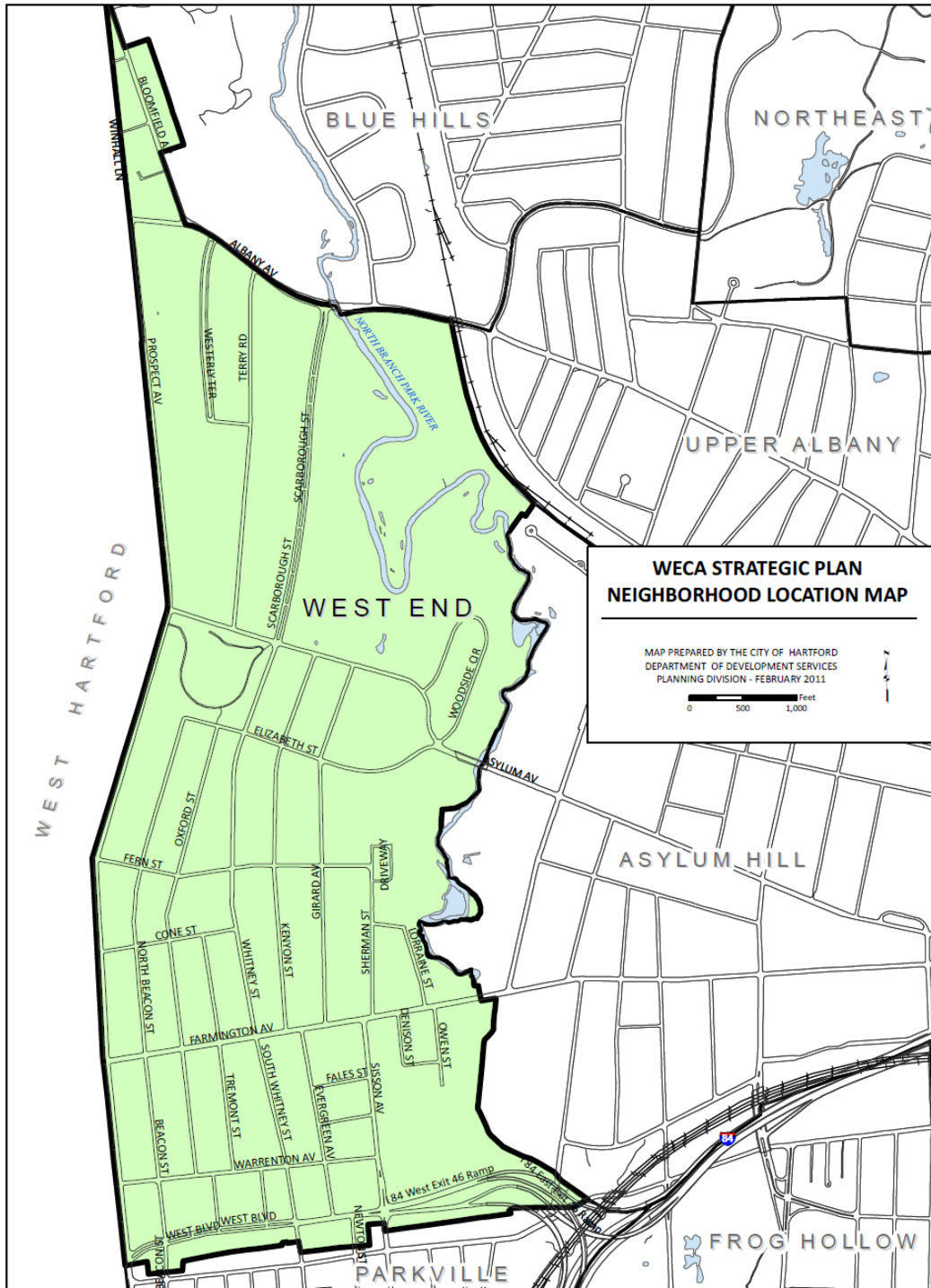
West End Civic Association
Hartford, CT
2012

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Map of the West End Neighborhood

The West End neighborhood of Hartford is located in the west central section of the city. It lies just west of the Asylum Hill neighborhood at the north branch of the Park River, which is also its eastern boundary. To the west, the neighborhood ends at the West Hartford town line at Prospect Avenue, and at Albany and Bloomfield Avenues to the north. The southern boundary follows Capitol Avenue.



West End Civic Association Vision and Goals



The West End Civic Association is a neighborhood organization that seeks to involve all of the community's stakeholders: homeowners, renters, local businesses, and other neighborhood non-profit organizations. WECA strives to strengthen the community of the West End while respecting and preserving its economic, racial, and cultural diversity. To that end, WECA works to promote safe and beautiful streets, desirable and affordable housing, excellent and accessible schools, varied and inclusive cultural events, historical preservation, and a thriving business corridor, while lessening the effects of racism and other forms of discrimination.

The West End Civic Association's 2020 identified goals are to:

COMMERCIAL

- Complete implementation of the Farmington Avenue streetscape to Prospect Avenue
- Rezone B3 and B4 West End commercial districts into a new Neighborhood Business Zone
- Create and adopt design guidelines for West End Commercial Districts
- Establish a new building line on Farmington Avenue
- Establish a new parking strategy in conjunction with a new Farmington Avenue business district
- Beautify and maintain gateway entrances to the neighborhood
- Improve and enforce parking, building and zoning standards

RESIDENTIAL

- Preserve and protect the historic character of West End properties
- Implement a Residential Overlay for the West End to prohibit upward conversions
- Allow Accessory Dwelling Units at owner-occupied properties, for carriage houses and one- and two-family homes
- Adopt a transition overlay district for properties abutting a commercial zone
- Improve and enforce residential parking, building and zoning standards

NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECREATIONAL FIELDS

- Preserve, enhance and protect the quality, access and recreational uses of Elizabeth Park, while recognizing its scenic and historic nature
- Improve maintenance and management of recreation fields
- Develop a more effective recreational use of the land behind the Sisson Avenue firehouse, and/or develop an alternate recreation site south of Farmington Avenue in an appropriate location
- Support the protection and maintenance of the North Branch of the Park River Watershed
- Ensure that the North Branch of the Park River Greenway does not disturb ecologically sensitive areas of the river corridor
- Explore the creation of a dog park at an appropriate location

INSTITUTIONAL

- Encourage conversion of institutional uses on residential streets to private residential uses
- Develop revised zoning regulations to prohibit the conversion of large residential structures to institutional use



History of the West End

The West End of Hartford was developed as a residential neighborhood mostly between 1880 and 1920. While neighborhood streets were laid out decades before, and some houses were built in the 1870's, periodic economic slumps contributed to unsteady development in the area. (Enterprising real estate developer Eugene Kenyon, for example, went broke attempting to cash in on homes built on speculation.) Residences on the main arteries in the West End -- Farmington, Asylum and Prospect Avenues -- were built for the wealthy, while the side streets housed the middle- and upper-middle classes. Houses were constructed in a tremendous variety of styles, ranging from Second Empire and Gothic Revival to Queen Anne, Colonial, Georgian and Tudor Revival, and were influenced by still other architectural styles, including Renaissance Revival, Mission, Swiss Chalet, Bungalow and Prairie.

The University of Connecticut School of Law was originally built in 1923-29 for the Hartford Seminary Foundation. Occupying a 30-acre campus of Gothic-style buildings, Hartford Seminary educated men and women for the clergy. In the late 1970's the State of Connecticut bought the complex to house the University of Connecticut's growing law school. In the 1990s the state expanded the campus by adding a four-story library, duplicating the style and materials used in campus's original construction -- even locating and using the same local quarry that was the source of the original stone. As a result, the library blends in perfectly with the original buildings.

When Hartford Seminary sold its campus to make way for the law school, it didn't leave the West End. Instead, it simply moved one block south, hiring noted architect Richard Meier to construct a new and highly distinctive postmodern building that remains a regular attraction for architects from around the world.

While most residential areas of the West End look much as they did at the turn of the twentieth century, Farmington Avenue has not fared as well. A few of the original houses remain and have been converted into office use. But low-rise commercial construction, geared to accommodate the automobile, has greatly altered an avenue once lined with gracious homes.

Most of the West End is listed as an historic district in the National Register of Historic Places.



Neighborhood Characteristics

Most of the West End is residential. Two-thirds of its 650-acre area contains well-maintained single and two- and three-family homes, representing an interesting and varied array of architectural styles. West End real estate values are traditionally the strongest in the city, with buyers drawn to its streets of bluestone sidewalks and spacious older homes.

Yet the majority of the West End population lives in rental housing. High- and medium-density apartment buildings cluster in the southeast section of the neighborhood, on and near the area's commercial corridor, Farmington Avenue. Clemens Place, a 1920's-era complex of 46 buildings, occupies a grid of tree-lined streets in a district recognized in the National Register of Historic Places.

The West End's diverse housing stock, ranging from efficiency apartments to mansions, is well suited to a wide spectrum of ages, incomes and lifestyles, and houses a diverse population of about 9,000. A growing student population attends nearby colleges. Their presence helps create a large demand for the West End's many restaurants.

The neighborhood's primary commercial corridor, Farmington Avenue, caters to automobile-oriented and convenience shopping, but in recent years new pubs and restaurants have thrived. Farmington Avenue is also home to professional offices.

Public spaces – schools, a park, and a museum -- add to the neighborhood's usefulness and charm. Elizabeth Park, a city park noted for its gardens, is a favorite destination for West Enders, popular for strolling and jogging, active play on its fields, courts and playground, sledding, dog walking, picnicking at summer music festivals, or for just smelling the roses. There's even an informal daily late-afternoon meeting of dogs and their owners on the park's east lawn. Elizabeth Park's Rose Garden, built in 1902, holds over 12,000 rose bushes and attracts visitors from the region and beyond.

Two schools, Hartford College for Women, now affiliated with the University of Hartford, and the University of Connecticut School of Law, have roomy campuses on the eastern edge of the West End, near the Park River. The law school offers its front lawns for use in a neighborhood soccer program and as a community garden. Nearby is Hartford Seminary, a graduate theological school with special centers for religion research, interfaith studies and ministry in daily life for both religious and lay leaders. Also nearby is the Connecticut Historical Society, with a library accessible to the public and long-term exhibits such as the story of the Amistad, a ship commandeered by slaves that landed on the Connecticut nearly 200 years ago.

The West End is known as an activist neighborhood – and for more than thirty years, its neighborhood association, the West End Civic Association, has been active in a wide range of issues and causes, working to preserve and improve the quality of life in the West End.



West End Civic Association

The West End Civic Association (WECA) is a non-profit, nonreligious, nonpartisan neighborhood organization dedicated to promoting the welfare and best interests of the West End and the City of Hartford. The Executive Board is the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Committee for the West End. A substantial force in strengthening community, WECA strives to create diversity, community cultural events, safe and beautiful streets, desirable housing, good schools and a thriving business corridor.

WECA is governed by the West End Civic Association bylaws. There are 500 members in the association. WECA holds ten Board meetings and four General Member meetings per year. The group’s structure consists of an Executive Board supported by sector representatives and Committees, including:

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|------------------------------|--|
| Housing | Architectural History & Resources |
| Membership | Beautification |
| Planning & Zoning | Education |
| Public Safety | Farmers' Market |
| Seniors | Finance |
| | Community Development |

Committees are added and modified as the need arises, and ad hoc subcommittees on an as-needed basis. The Committees report to the Board at the meetings, to review goals and to obtain sufficient resources for progress toward those goals. The leaders of these Committees are members of the Board, as are the sector representatives. The majority of recommendations contained within this plan will be driven through the Committees, coordinating with appropriate agencies and institutions.

West End Civic Association accomplishments and activities include:

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| WECA-WECC Community Job Fair | Summer Picnic | Progressive Dinner |
| Grantmaking | Housing | Honoring Honor Roll Students |
| Community Building | Public Safety | Jane’s Walk |
| Block Parties | Tree Plantings | Youth Sports Programs |
| Neighborhood Clean-ups | Zoning Enforcement | Beautification |
| Farmers’ Market | Candidate Forums | Traffic Calming Measures |
| Neighborhood Block Watches | | |

The Board meetings are open to the public, and efforts to promote attendance at the quarterly General Meetings include emails, newsletters and notification on the WECA website. Comprised entirely of volunteers, the Board currently does not reflect the neighborhood’s diversity, with a disproportionate representation among its membership of homeowners, white residents and residents living north of Farmington Avenue. Significant efforts need to be continued to promote WECA engagement with, and by, residents who fully reflect the West End’s geographical, racial and residential/economic diversity.

Economic Development

To optimize economic life in the neighborhood, WECA recommends that

- The City of Hartford should:
 1. Encourage and attract new businesses to the West End that positively affect the quality of life for residents. A butcher/grocer, a bakery and a bike shop would be a good start.
 2. Review, and where necessary, change zoning laws to maximize the neighborhood's ability to attract and retain such businesses.
 3. Survey the neighborhood for potential development sites, then coordinate with WECA to determine priorities and creative incentives to attract new development to the neighborhood.
 4. Strongly encourage mixed-use development, especially along the main thoroughfares of Farmington Avenue, Sisson Avenue, Prospect Avenue and Whitney and South Whitney Streets.
 5. Work with WECA to generate and prioritize a list of blighted properties, then contact landlords to address issues and ensure proper maintenance of said properties.

- Neighborhood Businesses should:
 1. Hire local residents when possible.
 2. Create incentive plans to encourage employees to live in and/or purchase a home in the West End.
 3. Develop a Think Local/Shop Local program that gives discounts to neighborhood residents.
 4. Establish consortiums of "like-minded" businesses to look at common impact on economic development in the neighborhood, e.g. the Educational Economic Consortium (U of H, UCONN Law, Hartford Seminary) and the Religious Economic Consortium (Living Church of God, Churches on Prospect and Scarborough, United Methodist Church).

- WECA should:
 1. Dedicate one general membership meeting to discussing the economic plan.
 2. Solicit ideas from the community for development in the neighborhood at that meeting or via newsletter.
 3. Establish, as the budget allows, a yearly economic development contest, with applications circulated at educational institutions with urban studies/planning programs, sponsoring a prize for the best submission.
 4. Create a position of Neighborhood Development Coordinator, incentivizing the position with payment for projects that actually come to fruition.
 5. Work with the Farmington/Asylum Business District (FABD) to encourage already established businesses to suggest further desirable development on Farmington Avenue.

WECA will work with the City of Hartford, the FABD, the aforementioned consortiums and appropriate agencies and institutions to achieve these economic development goals.



Commercial

Farmington Avenue forms the primary commercial corridor of the West End. While a small number of street-front businesses dot Sisson Avenue, West Boulevard and Whitney Street, Farmington serves as the neighborhood’s “Main Street.”

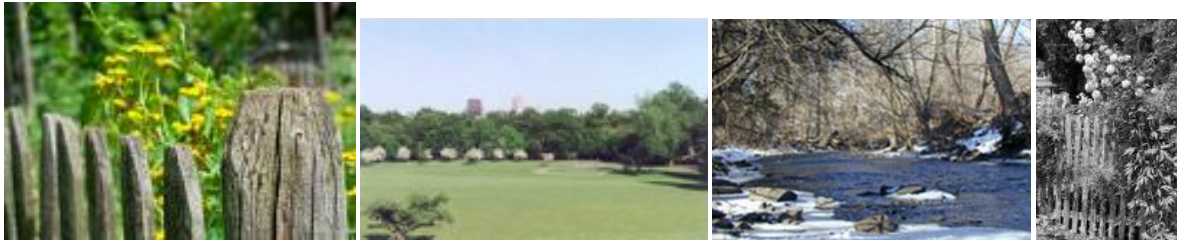
Historically, Farmington Avenue was a grand avenue lined with trees and large homes. With the arrival of the streetcar and a growing population, apartment and office buildings displaced many of these homes. Today, the avenue caters to automobile-oriented convenience shopping, and in recent years has become home to a handful of successful restaurants, cafés, and pubs. Feeding these businesses are approximately 13,000 vehicles per day, many pedestrians, and a Connecticut Transit bus line generally believed to be the most traveled line in the system.

Additionally, the West End has a seasonal Farmer’s Market, a thriving community institution providing a vibrant marketplace for local products for the mutual benefit of its customers and Connecticut farmers and artisans.

Strategic opportunities for the future include:

- Constructing a new streetscape on Farmington Avenue, including a bike lane.
- Rezoning B3 and B4 zones into a new Neighborhood Business Zone.
- Establishing design guidelines for the West End commercial districts, including a new building line for Farmington Avenue.
- Encouraging mixed-use development and a diversity of businesses that cater to the neighborhood’s needs, including a bakery and a bike shop.
- Managing parking within commercial districts through shared-use parking and other creative strategies, while considering a parking garage as an option.
- Expanding mass transit with such options as a city shuttle and/or park shuttle to support neighborhood commercial vibrancy.
- Expanding the Farmer’s Market into a sustainable institution that provides employment opportunities and engages a wider network of West End residents in its funding and community-building work, benefiting the neighborhood with increased food security, educational opportunities for customers about local food and economies, and a stronger social fabric.
- Continuing to support organizations such as the Farmington/Asylum Business District and the Farmington Avenue Alliance.
- Encouraging the “greening” of neighborhood businesses and landscapes through energy and water conservation, litter management, waste minimization, hazardous waste management, recycling and composting programs and the improvement of landscaping and tree canopy maintenance.

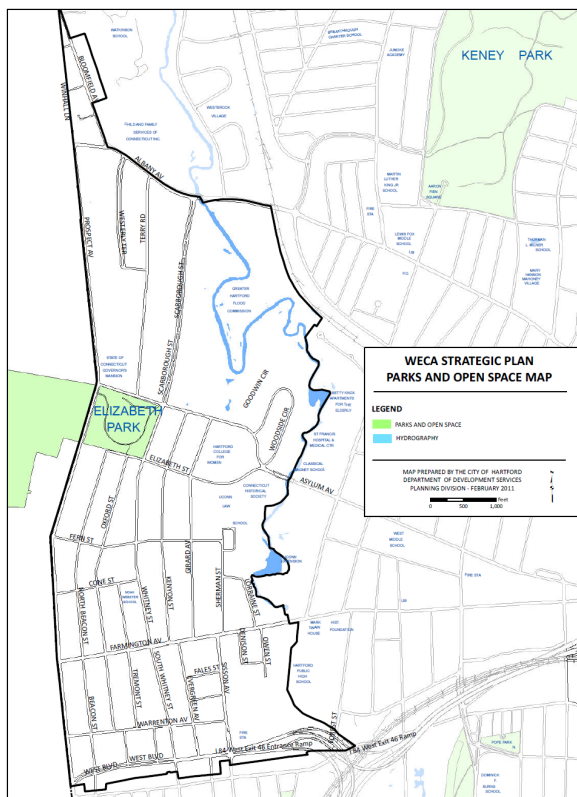
WECA will work with the City of Hartford, the FABD, the aforementioned consortiums and appropriate agencies and institutions to achieve these goals.



Green Spaces

The greatest source of natural capital in the West End is our trees. According to a 2008 Hartford Tree Canopy survey, the West End enjoys a higher level of tree cover (roughly 40%) than any other Hartford neighborhood except Northeast. Maintaining the health of our trees is important for maintaining the health of our community, and efforts to maintain tree cover in the West End must continue as older trees die and need to be replaced.

Another source of natural capital is the watershed of the North Branch of the Park River. The watershed and specified flood plain areas are important natural areas that provide some wildlife habitat. The West End Civic Association supports efforts to protect and maintain this watershed, and to ensure that the North Branch of the Park River Greenway does not disturb the ecologically sensitive areas of the river corridor.



WECA also recommends that the City of Hartford preserve and enhance the Park River’s North Branch by increasing and improving the stream buffer as needed, and that it develop a viable “green infrastructure” improvement proposal for the Woodland Park area.

The West End should preserve, enhance and protect the quality, access to and recreational uses of all green spaces, and balance recreational uses with the preservation of a healthy, scenic landscape.

Elizabeth Park is an important scenic and recreational center in the West End. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the 102-acre park straddles the Hartford-West Hartford boundary and features a two-and-one-half acre rose garden with 800 varieties of roses. A playground, softball fields and other recreational facilities are provided on the Hartford side of the park, and an overlook off Prospect Avenue near Asylum offers a sweeping vista of the park with a view of downtown Hartford. WECA’s recommendations for Elizabeth Park include developing and implementing a cohesive lighting plan that will

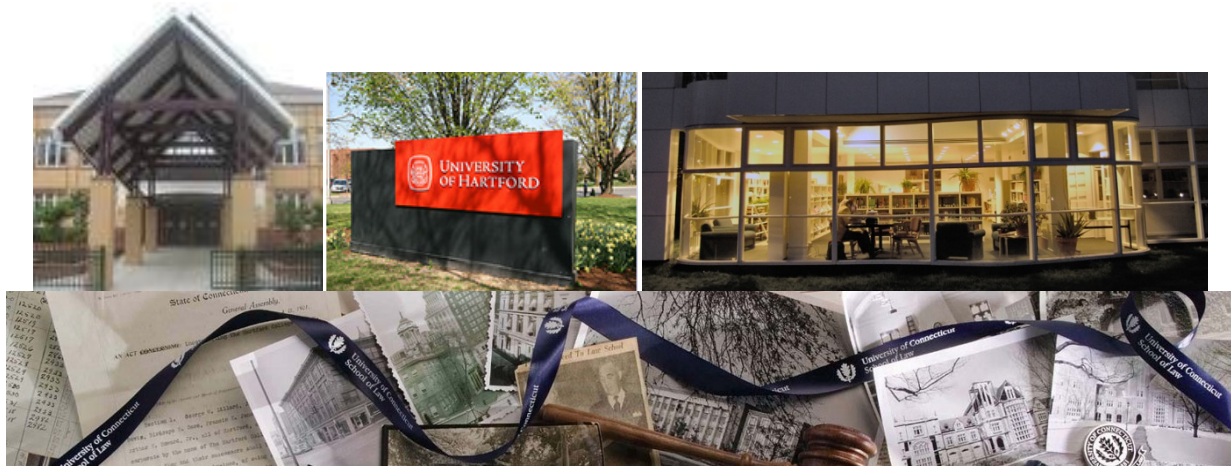
both enhance safety and reflect the historic character of the West End; and redesigning pedestrian entrances to the park and playground area along Elizabeth Street.

Several community gardens in the West End provide access to land for gardening: one on Evergreen Street, another at the University of Connecticut Law School on Girard Avenue, and an informal neighborhood garden on

Lorraine Street. In addition, the Watkinson Community Garden, technically in the Blue Hills neighborhood just outside the West End, is used by a number of West End residents.

Green spaces in the West End also host vital recreational use. The fields at Elizabeth Park provide space for T ball, coach pitch and Little League teams. The fields at the University of Connecticut Law School are used for community soccer leagues. WECA recommends improved maintenance and management of these recreational fields, and the development of additional recreational fields south of Farmington Avenue, either behind the Sisson Avenue firehouse or in an alternative site.

WECA's Beautification Committee is actively engaged in improving the Green Spaces throughout the neighborhood. WECA supports the work of the committee in coordinating with Knox Parks Foundation, the City of Hartford, the Park River Watershed Revitalization Initiative, the Friends of Elizabeth Park and all appropriate agencies and institutions to carry out these goals.



Education

The West End is home to schools and educational institutions of many types and levels: the Noah Webster elementary school, the University of Hartford, the Hartford Seminary, the University of Connecticut School of Law and the Watkinson School.

With over 600 students, Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet School has been a central West End institution for a century, a place where many different groups meet with the common aim of a quality education. In 2004 the school became a magnet school, implementing the MicroSociety curriculum, in which students from diverse backgrounds create a 'miniature society' within the school. The curriculum's goal, and the school's, is to nurture the self-discipline, work habits, and academic and life skills students need to achieve success in a global society.

Given that the strengths and weaknesses of Noah Webster ultimately reflect those of our neighborhood, WECA would like to see a further expansion of after-care programs and community-based outreach at the school, along with a higher level of parent involvement. In addition, WECA strongly supports enrollment guarantees for West End residents, so that Webster may continue to fulfill its longstanding role as the West End's neighborhood school.

The West End is also home to the Hartford Seminary and the University of Connecticut School of Law. The Seminary dates to 1834, when the Theological Institute of Connecticut was established in East Windsor to prepare young men for the ministry. The institution moved to Hartford in 1865, and in 1923-29, they constructed a Gothic-style complex on a 30-acre campus, listed today on the National Register of Historic Places. In the late 1970s, the Seminary moved to a new site one block south and sold the campus to the state, which since then has used it to house the University of Connecticut School of Law. Founded in 1921, the Law School is the only public law school in the state and one of only two in New England. Many of its 700 students, professors and administrators live in the West End and make a significant impact on the flavor of the community.

The Watkinson School is a private coeducational day school situated on Bloomfield Avenue adjacent to the University of Hartford, and serves 250 students from 6th through 12th grade. Just across the Park River, in Asylum Hill and adjacent to the West End, is Classical Magnet School, a college-prep middle and high school with a traditional curriculum.

WECA hopes to see improvement in collaboration among all community institutions involved in education, including the schools, the numerous churches in the West End, and various cultural groups active in the neighborhood. Additionally, we see opportunities to:

- Involve the Board of Education in providing opportunities for resource development and strategic partnerships between school and community.
- Coordinate culturally competent and diverse programming for the arts to meet a cross-section of interests, popular trends, skills, abilities and talents within the neighborhood and community.
- Increase language and literacy offerings, e.g. E.S.L. Conversational Spanish, basic skills (reading, writing, and math), computer literacy, career competencies, and special language offerings.
- Provide creative writing classes and book clubs for younger people and for adults.
- Offer entrepreneurial workshops and clinics, and small-business technical assistance workshops and trainings.
- Expand support and involvement with Hartford High School.

WECA's Education Committee is actively engaged in pursuing many of the goals listed above. WECA supports the work of the committee in carrying out these neighborhood goals, coordinating with the appropriate agencies and institutions.



Historic Preservation

The West End of Hartford is home to many notable structures, both institutional and residential, that represent the history of the past three centuries. The oldest building dates from the 18th century and was once a tavern on Albany Avenue. Among the newest is the Hartford Seminary building, designed by Richard Meier in 1981, a future candidate for inclusion in the historic buildings of the West End. In between on this architectural timeline, one finds an entire neighborhood of 19th and early 20th century houses and institutions. The dominant style of the neighborhood is Colonial Revival, though examples of styles ranging from Greek Revival to Queen Anne can also be found. Time has been good to the neighborhood, leaving it largely intact. The quality and condition of the West End's buildings is one of the neighborhood's greatest assets.

First and foremost, our goal with respect to historic preservation is just that -- to preserve what is here, and in doing so, to protect the historic character of the West End and its properties. To accomplish this, we propose to:

- Protect all parts of the neighborhood eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic places by petitioning for their inclusion.
- Advocate for enforcement of the Historic Preservation Ordinance in the West End.
- Monitor infrastructure projects, such as the MDC sewer separation project, that impact the historic fabric of the neighborhood, and work with the entities carrying out infrastructure projects to minimize the effects on the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Support extension of the Historic Preservation Ordinance to housefront fencing.
- Educate residents about our architectural resources by sponsoring architectural walking tours.
- Provide information on programs, such as the historic preservation tax credit program, that can assist residents in maintaining historic structures.

WECA's Architectural History & Resources Committee is actively engaged in pursuing many of the goals listed above. WECA supports the work of the Committee in carrying out these neighborhood goals.



Recreation & Culture

The following recreational activities and amenities are available for West End residents:

- Youth basketball league at the Noah Webster School gym
- Youth soccer league at the fields at the University of Connecticut Law School
- Fitness Center at St. Francis Hospital, available on a fee-payment basis
- Track at Hartford High School, available for walking or running
- Basketball courts behind the Sisson Avenue firehouse – though neglected and needing improvement.

Additionally, Elizabeth Park is home to a children’s playground, two basketball courts, two baseball fields, a cinder walking and running track surrounding the park and an impromptu sledding hill in winter.

To boost the array of recreational activities available to West End residents, we propose the formation of dance groups, Zumba groups, and other fitness outreach opportunities for the community, including food, nutrition, and fitness classes for all residents. We would also promote the development of adult sports leagues and additional youth programs.

West End residents enjoy limited cultural opportunities within the neighborhood proper. However, the Asylum Hill neighborhood immediately to the east houses a branch library, the Hartford ballet, and the Hartford Camerata Conservatory, as well as the Mark Twain House and the Harriet Beecher Stowe house. Just to the west, the western half of Elizabeth Park hosts summer music events.

Other events to help foster culture have been hosted in the neighborhood, including the *Discover Farmington Avenue* event, a Jane’s Walk, summer concerts and a cultural awareness program at the former Hartford Community Center. The West End also includes the Connecticut Historical Society, which offers a variety of programs to residents about the history of Connecticut, and the Albano Ballet Company of America, where residents ages 3 and up can attend ballet classes.

WECA advocates continued support of these recreational activities and cultural events assets, and promotes encouraging their growth and flourishing through block parties, exhibits, street fairs, and other neighborhood programs.

Public Safety

The West End is one of the safest neighborhoods in Hartford, and crime overall in the neighborhood has not increased in recent years. Nevertheless, there has been a significant increase in the incidence of larcenies in the past three years, specifically in car break-ins by thieves searching for GPS units, iPods, laptops, cell phones and the like.

The Hartford Police Department (HPD) is working with WECA's Public Safety Committee on initiatives to combat this issue, including undertaking undercover operations, flyering cars parked on the street, and educating residents on how to make their cars less inviting targets. In 2010 the Public Safety Committee started a BlockWatch, with volunteers from all sectors of the West End going on patrols at night to observe activity and report back to HPD Dispatch and the Community Service Officer.

Traffic and related issues continue to preoccupy West End residents. Major concerns include the incidence of drivers speeding through the neighborhood, running stop signs, and parking too close to intersections and driveways; the danger to pedestrians of being struck by cars; and the need for more crosswalks. The Hartford Police Department enforces some traffic calming issues, but it cannot provide the omnipresence needed. The Public Safety Committee has been quite successful in obtaining speed tables throughout the West End, but much more needs to be done – and funding strengthened – in order to meet the ongoing concerns of residents.

The Public Safety Committee would like to see a crime-free, safe neighborhood. To accomplish this, we recommend:

- Establishing a permanent full-time community safety officer with an office in the neighborhood.
- Fully implementing the traffic calming plan.
- Actively enforcing current parking laws.
- Continuing and improving the BlockWatch program.
- Increasing transparency and improving communication regarding crimes in the neighborhood.
- Enforcing graffiti prevention ordinances and supporting efforts to develop and implement improved abatement programs, such as the "True Colors" program.
- Developing creative approaches to increase participation in current programs and to expand them in order to maximize the inclusion of currently unsupervised neighborhood youth.

WECA's Public Safety Committee is actively engaged in pursuing some of the goals listed above. WECA supports the work of the Committee in carrying out these public-safety goals while coordinating with appropriate agencies and institutions.



Housing

The West End neighborhood covers the area between the Park River to the east, Albany and Bloomfield Avenues to the north, the West Hartford town line along Prospect Avenue to the west and Capitol Avenue to the south. Most of its 650 acres is devoted to residential use. Thirty-three acres are zoned for high-density and 26 acres for medium-density residential uses, R-1 through R-4. In addition, 418 acres are zoned for low-density residential uses, R-5 through R-8. The remaining 173 acres comprise the business corridors, high-density and residential/office development and public land uses.

The West End is one of Hartford's largest and most prominent residential neighborhoods. Although development in the West End began in the mid 1800's, it wasn't until the turn of the 20th century that upper-middle-class development began to boom. From modest Victorian homes in the southern areas to stately mansions in the northern areas, the neighborhood offers housing of all styles for homeowners and renters. Also included in this housing stock are many 2- and 3-family houses with large rooms, porches, high ceilings and period craftsmanship not found in newer construction. A number of apartment buildings round out the neighborhood are housing stock. Approximately 70% of the West End is located in one of five National Register of Historic Places Districts.

Despite such favorable basics, some disturbing trends need to be addressed. Owner occupancy in the West End has been decreasing steadily, from 20.1% in 1970 to 17.7% in 2000, paralleling the overall trend for Hartford during the same period. From 1990 to 2000, owner-occupied housing units in the West End decreased in value by over 30%, as was the case throughout the city, and rental unit vacancy rates more than doubled.

Housing-related goals and objectives in the West End include:

- Preserving and protecting the historic character of West End properties.
- Implementing a Residential Overlay for the West End to prohibit upward conversions.
- Allowing Accessory Dwelling Units at owner-occupied properties, for carriage houses and one- and two-family homes.
- Adopting a transition overlay district for properties abutting a commercial zone.
- Improving and *enforcing* residential parking, building and zoning standards.
- *Enforcing* blight ordinances requiring acceptable property maintenance.
- Creating a Tenant/Landlord Committee to ensure rights of both parties.
- Creating and funding a program to encourage owner occupied homeownership.
- Encouraging the city to promote homeownership by its employees.
- Encouraging the "greening" of neighborhood homes and landscapes through energy and water conservation, waste minimization, hazardous waste management, recycling and composting programs.

WECA's Zoning and Housing Committees are actively engaged in pursuing some of the goals listed above. WECA supports the work of the committees in carrying out these neighborhood goals, while coordinating with appropriate agencies and institutions.

Land Use & Zoning

Summing up and expanding on points included elsewhere in the Strategic Plan, WECA recommends for the neighborhood's commercial districts:

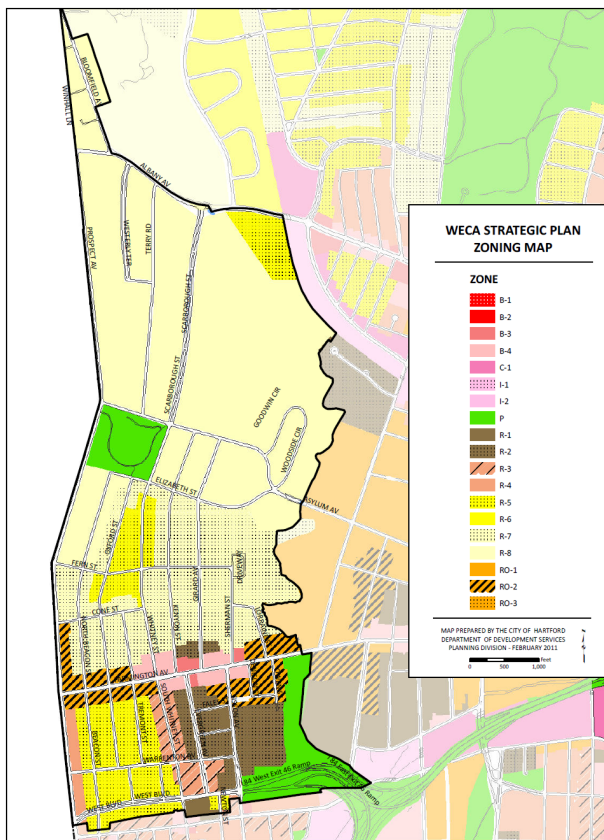
1. Implementing the Farmington Avenue streetscape plan to Prospect Avenue.

2. Rezoning B3 and B4 West End commercial districts into a new Neighborhood Business Zone in order to promote pedestrian-oriented, attractive, economically viable businesses. Such businesses will in turn promote the revitalization of the commercial streets, enhance the city’s tax base, support the character and value of the adjacent residential streets, and provide a “neighborhood main street” as a gathering place.

3. Establishing new building lines on Farmington Avenue, with new construction and major rehabilitation sited at a “build-to” line that will allow a minimum 12’ sidewalk for the pedestrian public.

4. Establishing a new parking strategy, in conjunction with a new Farmington Avenue business district, that will: forbid parking between building façades and the curb, whether on public or private property; restrict parking to areas behind or alongside buildings; eliminate minimum parking requirements; allow curb cuts and driveways by special permit only, and only if they lead to the side or back of the lot; eliminate new construction of “drive-thru” windows; provide, as an incentive to retail development, angle parking on the street(s) in front of establishments subject to this zoning ordinance.

5. Considering form-based zoning, based on building height and bulk, to ensure the uniformity of new buildings to between a minimum of two and a maximum of four stories in height from street level, with the first story at least 14’ high and upper stories at least 12’, and street-level facades with doors no less than every thirty feet. Windows and doors with transparent glass must constitute 60% of all street-level facades, and 50% of all stories above the street level.



WECA encourages the development of mixed-use buildings, and foresees no legal uses being prohibited as long as all other requirements of the plan are met. Sidewalk cafes would be allowed as long as the public’s right to pass is preserved. All occupants of buildings would be required to maintain the public sidewalk in front of their establishments, and encouraged or required to provide and/or maintain benches, bike racks, bus stops, planters, street trees, awnings, and other amenities that contribute to the comfort and safety of pedestrians.

Design standards created for buildings and sites developed under this ordinance will determine rooflines, building materials, signs and architectural style and other design features, and shall be applied by the Hartford Design Review Board. Approval under this ordinance shall be obtained through an “as-of-right” process kept as simple as possible in order to encourage small property owners to develop and redevelop their properties, and to reduce their cost and risk in doing so.

For the neighborhood’s residential districts, WECA affirms the importance of preserving and protecting the historic character of West End properties by promoting and enforcing the Historic Preservation ordinance, improving and enforcing the Anti-Blight ordinance, and strengthening and enforcing residential parking, building and zoning standards. It recommends implementing the Residential Overlay for West End by keeping the existing zoning for single, two-, three-family and multi structures in its current form; allowing the continuation of prior non-conforming uses until such use terminates, at which time property use must revert to the zoning norm; and disallowing upward conversions of dwellings from one-family to two-family or two- to three.

The plan would allow Accessory Dwelling Units, either in a converted carriage house (defined as a secondary structure, on a lot whose main building is a house, built before 1940 to house animals or automobiles and including additional space previously used as living quarters or storage); or in a third-floor unit in single- and two-family homes, provided that:

1. The main house is owner-occupied.
2. Certificate of Occupancy is obtained with each ownership change and on a periodic renewal basis.
3. Off-street parking exists for any car whose owner resides in the unit.
4. There is a 7500 square foot minimum lot size.

Finally, WECA recommends implementing a Streetscape design, including encouraging traffic calming; promoting “green streets” by mitigating stormwater run-off; developing street lighting to meet historic and dark-sky standards; developing, beautifying and maintaining gateway neighborhood entrances (*esp.* from I-84); and enhancing community cohesion through functionality, including safe paths to schools, improved walkability, and common community maintenance.

WECA’s Zoning and Housing Committees are actively engaged in pursuing some of the goals listed above. WECA supports the work of the sector reps and committees in coordinating with the appropriate agencies and institutions to carry out these goals.



Neighborhood Services

WECA wants to develop and expand current neighborhood services through strategic partnerships with the City of Hartford, and community, social and human service providers, Hartford schools, businesses, and other community institutions to provide:

- Expanded community-based after-school enrichment and youth entrepreneurial programs
- A Community Technology Learning Center to support education and technology for job searches, internet research, and career and skill development
- Cultural and social enrichment activities including community education, symposiums and workshops on “special interest” and quality-of-life topics
- Workforce and economic development activities and services such as job fairs, employability workshops, job coaching/counseling and job creation and entrepreneurial programs
- Seniors’ outreach activities and services
- Demand-driven recreational activities and services
- Enhanced library services

Given high poverty levels and poor economic stability concentrated within the neighborhood’s Southeast Sector, and low usage rates among some resident populations of key social, economic, and cultural systems of support and community resources, WECA sees a need for:

- Increased services that meet basic needs (food, housing, employment, and shelter) within the neighborhood
- Increased crisis and intervention services, including substance abuse, mental health, housing and eviction, anger management, and parenting education classes

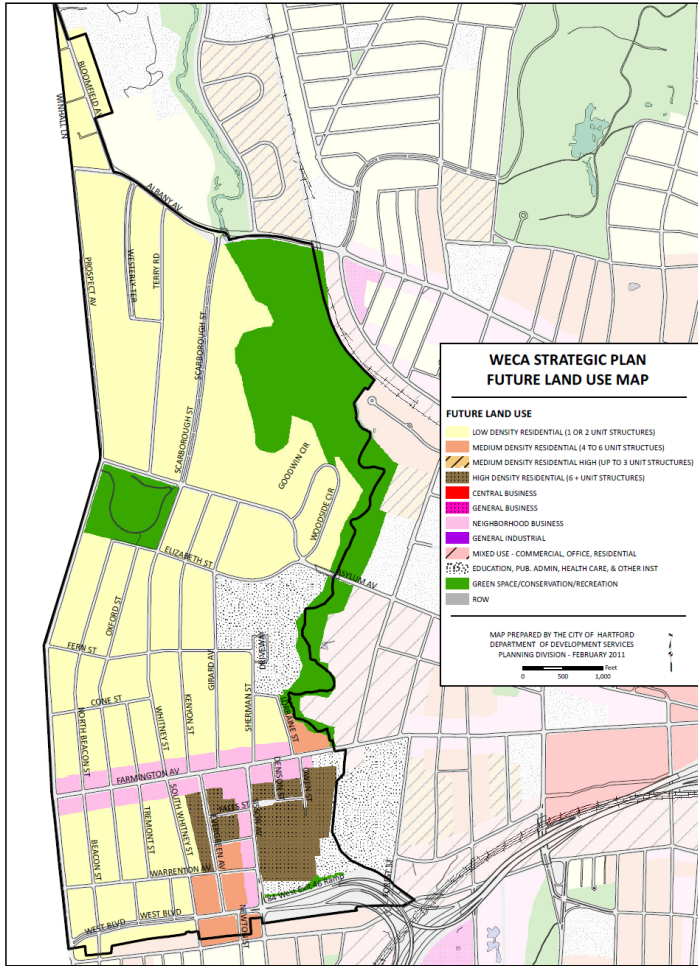
WECA’s Sector representatives and committees are dedicated to promoting the welfare and best interests of West End residents. WECA supports the work of the sector reps and committees in coordinating with the appropriate agencies and institutions to carry out these goals and improve neighborhood services.

West End Priorities Plan

Not all of the recommended actions within this strategic plan can be achieved right away. Therefore, in the short term (2011-2013) the following actions are considered as priorities:

- Promote WECA engagement with, and by, residents who fully reflect the West End’s geographical, racial and residential/economic diversity. Owner: WECA Board.
- Complete the Farmington Avenue streetscape to Prospect Avenue. Owners: Farmington/Asylum Business District (FABD), the City of Hartford and the Farmington Avenue Alliance.
- Make improvements to Elizabeth Park and its recreation fields to guarantee the preservation, enhancement, and protection of the park. Owners: Beautification Committee, the City of Hartford and the Friends of Elizabeth Park.

- Develop a more effective recreational use of the land behind the Sisson Avenue firehouse, and/or develop an alternate recreation site south of Farmington Avenue in an appropriate location Owners: Beautification Committee and the City of Hartford.



- Establish a permanent full-time community safety officer with an office in the neighborhood. Owners: Hartford Police Department, City of Hartford and the Public Safety Committee.
- Fully implement the traffic calming plan, with first priority near the Noah Webster elementary school. Owners: City of Hartford and the Public Safety Committee.
- Create design guidelines for West End Commercial Districts; establish a new building line on Farmington Ave and a new parking strategy in conjunction with a new Farmington Ave design district; revise zoning regulations to prohibit the conversion of large residential structures to institutional use. Owners: Zoning Committee, City of Hartford, and FABD.

- Preserve and protect the historic character of the West End; improve and enforce residential parking, building, and zoning standards; limit upward conversions; allow Accessory Dwelling Units at owner-occupied properties, for carriage houses and one- and two-family homes. Owners: Architectural History & Resources, Zoning, and Housing Committees. Partner with Local Initiatives Support Collaborative, State Historic Preservation Office and City of Hartford.
- Expand the Farmer’s Market into a sustainable institution that provides employment opportunities and engages a wider network of West End residents in its funding and community-building work: Owners: Farmer’s Market, City of Hartford and WECA Board.
- Encourage the “greening” of neighborhood residences, businesses and landscapes through energy and water conservation, waste minimization, litter and hazardous waste management, recycling and composting programs and improved landscaping and tree canopy maintenance. Owners: WECA Board and City of Hartford.
- Expand after-care programs and community-based outreach at the Noah Webster elementary school. Owners: Board of Education, Noah Webster and the Education Committee.

- Obtain enrollment guarantees at Noah Webster elementary school for West End residents. Owners: Board of Education, Noah Webster and the Education Committee.

Acknowledgements

West End neighborhood revitalization planning committee

West End Civic Association Board

Farmington Avenue Alliance

City of Hartford