

**BURNSIDE AVENUE CORRIDOR
CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
AND
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

**Prepared For:
East Hartford Redevelopment Agency
Town of East Hartford**

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BURNSIDE AVENUE CORRIDOR CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

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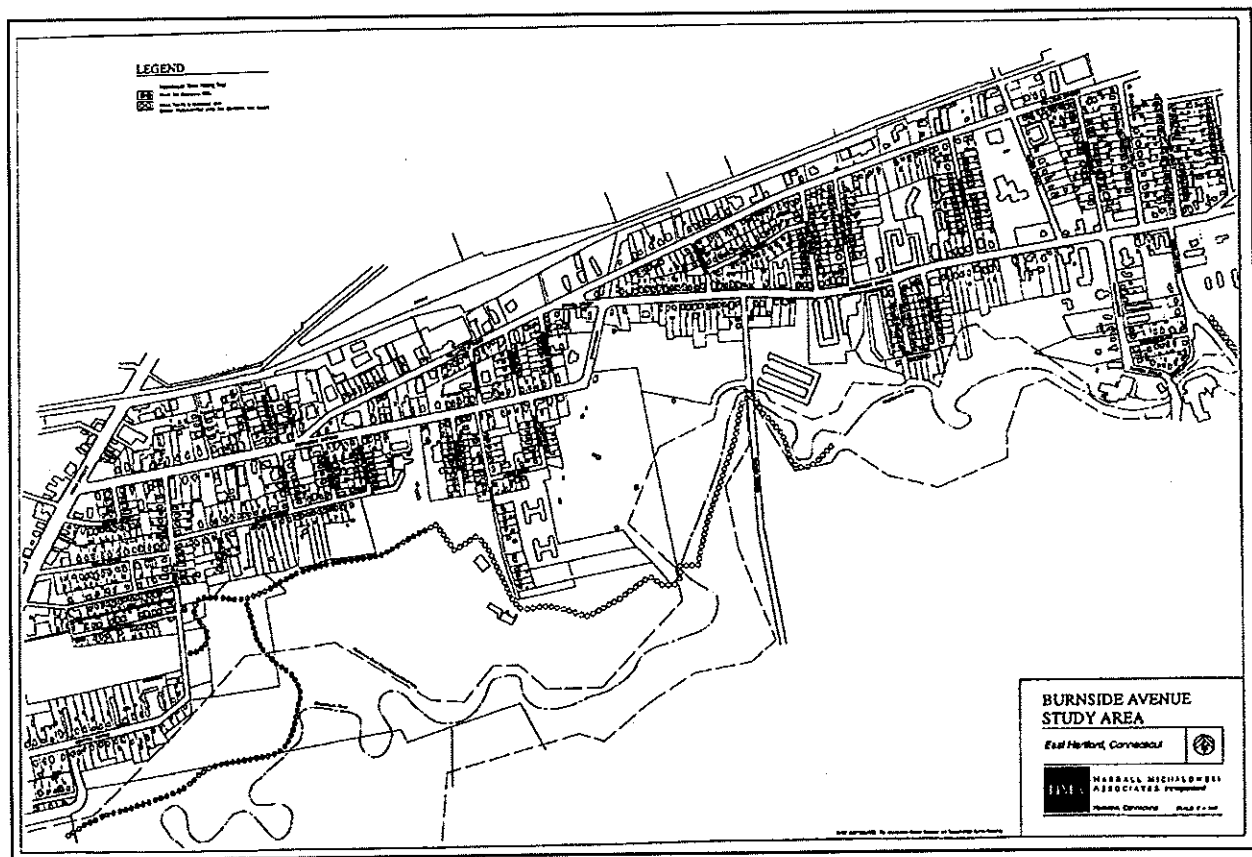
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I. INTRODUCTION

This Plan was conceived at a time when a number of forces and events were converging which promised to have profound effect on the Burnside Avenue Corridor. The Burnside Avenue Corridor from Elm and Clark Streets on the west to Scotland Road and Francis Street on the east is exhibiting signs of physical deterioration, disinvestment and social distress. Yet it has many quiet, well maintained residential streets, a strong core of institutional uses, neighborhood scale retail uses and nearby park and open space opportunities that many neighborhoods can only envy. Recognizing that change is inevitable in neighborhoods, the Town felt the need to come to some agreement on how to manage and influence events to the Burnside Avenue Corridor's advantage. Developing a comprehensive strategy and identifying the resources to address the issues confronting this area is the subject of this planning effort.



This document presents a framework for the revitalization of the Burnside Avenue Corridor. The locational advantages, neighborhood strengths, institutional resources, and potential are described. Many changes, both small and large, in physical and social investments will lead to renewed community confidence in an area with sound neighborhood fundamentals. A basis for decision-making and a reference for generating site-specific project activities are contained in this document.

II. VISION

The Burnside Avenue Corridor Study Area contains the diversity of land uses which can nurture its stability and desirability. These uses provide the dominant residential sector within the area with potential for employment, services, recreation and easy access to the larger East Hartford community. These elements have historically nurtured stable urban environments.

This document provides a strategy to keep the Burnside Avenue Corridor a vital district within the Town of East Hartford. This vitality is important in terms of preserving a large residential area; retaining a segment of the Town's tax base; and stabilizing a district that serves as a gateway to the core of the Town. The strategy is intended to encourage reinvestment and new investment throughout the area in support of existing residential neighborhoods.

The Burnside Avenue Corridor should be directed toward its historic development form as a medium density residential neighborhood.

Burnside Avenue today remains predominately a medium density residential corridor served by a high-volume roadway. The neighborhood will be strengthened by fostering increased home ownership, reinvesting in the one to four unit housing stock, encouraging neighborhood commercial businesses in concentrated clusters, replanting street trees along Burnside Avenue, expanding community policing and reducing multi-family density. Tolland Street's north side should continue its transition to light industrial use.

The strategy expects gradual change in the residential mix and business activity and the physical condition of buildings over time. It builds upon the Town's heightened maintenance of the area's infrastructure and encourages uncomplicated and achievable actions to be completed as soon as possible to build the momentum needed to sustain change and promote reinvestment in the area.

III. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The Plan for Burnside Avenue is intended to manage the change which inevitably occurs in mature neighborhoods; it ties a series of recommendations to a larger vision for the 2.1 mile Burnside Avenue Corridor neighborhood.

The Plan provides a strategy to keep the area a vital residential/commercial corridor district within the Town. This vitality is important in terms of retaining the desirability of an important residential area; arresting the decline of one of the gateways to the downtown; retaining an important segment of the Town's tax base; and maintaining selected clusters of attractive businesses. The strategy is intended to encourage reinvestment or new investment in the Burnside Avenue Corridor while strengthening its residential areas.

The Plan recognizes that there is an interplay between the residential and commercial areas of the Corridor and Burnside Avenue which provides outstanding access to the region. The current imbalance in residential densities caused by a concentration of apartments in a small area needs to be mitigated. The sprawl of retail uses along Burnside Avenue needs to be redirected to sustainable clusters that minimize impact on adjoining residential areas.

The Plan seeks to build on the strengths which exist in the area today.

The Plan intends to focus on work with existing homeowners, residents and businesses. The intent is to strengthen the existing residential and business base, to fill vacancies and guide new investment to upgrade the physical character of the Burnside Avenue Corridor.

The Plan expects to see gradual change in the conditions of the residential stock, a reduction in apartments and retail activity, and a general improvement of physical condition of buildings over time. It encourages simple and achievable actions to be completed as soon as possible to build the momentum needed to sustain change and keep the Burnside Avenue Corridor an attractive neighborhood.

The Plan is not static. It will need to change as circumstances change, and so constant evaluation is required. An organization and staff which is responsible for the Plan and with representing Burnside Avenue is crucial for long term success.

IV. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Conceptual Development Plan for the Burnside Avenue Corridor follows a framework established by the operating principles of revitalization and a vision for the future of the area. Efforts to upgrade the existing fabric of the area are proposed in the following six functional areas: land use, rehabilitation, new development, image, circulation and parking, and neighborhood recreation and open space. Each of these areas is essential to upgrading the whole and each relies upon the implementation strategies, to be discussed later, in order to be realized.

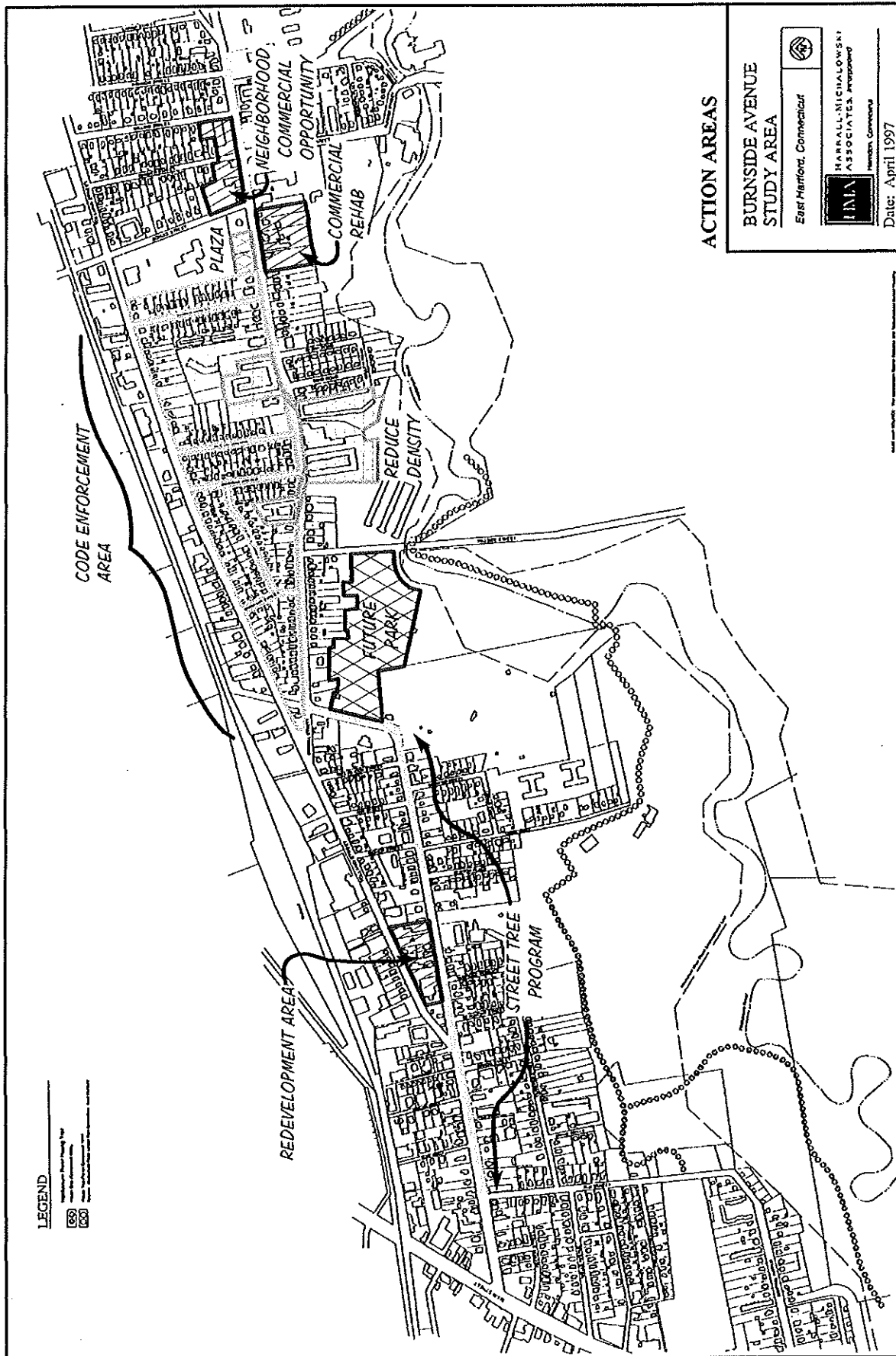
A. Land Use Strategy

Burnside Avenue contains the ingredients of a healthy neighborhood: easy access, a mixture of housing types, conveniently located neighborhood commercial areas, recreation and open space, job opportunities along Tolland Street and supportive institutions. The lack of sustained investment in the current building stock has resulted in a decline of the area concentrated along Burnside Avenue. To restore the area requires the regeneration of its residential neighborhoods with greater owner occupancy rates than currently exist and reducing retail sprawl along Burnside Avenue. The criminal element taking advantage of the easy access to the area must permanently be brought under control. A comprehensive targeting of resources toward the area, will be required to regenerate the area. Sub-neighborhood based improvement planning, with active involvement of its residents and property owners, will highlight needs and projects most relevant to specific blocks. The current population of the area is an essential ingredient in spawning revitalization of the area.

In general terms, the strategy for area improvement is to enhance the appeal and marketability of neighborhood homes and apartments in a manner to maintain property values, enhance occupancy and attract a population with sufficient income to support property maintenance and provide a good customer base to local convenience retail as well as Main Street businesses.

The area is reported to suffer from crime and drug problems, both perceived and real. East Hartford police have established a neighborhood sub-station and area property managers recognize that a serious effort is being made by the Town to overcome this problem. But this recognition is not prevalent in the community at large and some new input is needed to raise the neighborhood's level of desirability.

This land use strategy is intended to offer a loose framework for a dominant land use pattern within which site specific block-level planning can be conducted. The premise underlying the land use strategy for the Burnside Avenue Area is the recognition that the historically dominant residential land use pattern remains essentially valid today and should be the foundation for revitalization of the area. Refer to the Action Areas map on the following page for locations of programs in support of the land use strategy.



Land use objectives proposed for the Burnside Avenue Corridor Study Area are:

- Reduce the density of rental apartments on Burnside Avenue where deterioration and functional obsolescence have destroyed property values.
- Buffer homes from commercial uses.
- Identify architectural building elements, historic building styles, signage, and landscaping elements that are important to the image of Burnside Avenue as viewed from the roadway. These elements are to form the basis for design standards for the Avenue.
- Discourage conversions of residential buildings to retail use along Burnside Avenue.
- Encourage conversions of buildings along Burnside Avenue to destination uses such as professional offices, non-profit and institutional uses with minimal parking requirements.
- Promote facade improvements, shared parking, site beautification and addition of a limited number of new convenience retail outlets at the existing retail cluster at Burnside Avenue/School Street.
- Protect the land use integrity of predominately residential streets.
- Reuse obsolete apartment sites for duplex housing in scale with abutting residences and encouraging home ownership.
- Concentrate retail use into commercial clusters along Burnside Avenue.
- Revise zoning regulations to promote compatible conversions of use along Burnside Avenue and to institute a design review process.
- Promote expansion of institutional uses serving the neighborhood.
- Consider redevelopment of the area east of the Burnside/Tolland intersection for commercial/light industrial use.
- Promote the continued transition of the north side of Tolland Street into modern light industrial/commercial uses.
- Acquire the 12.5 acre parcel adjoining Martin Park for use as a public park/open space.

Levels of Effort

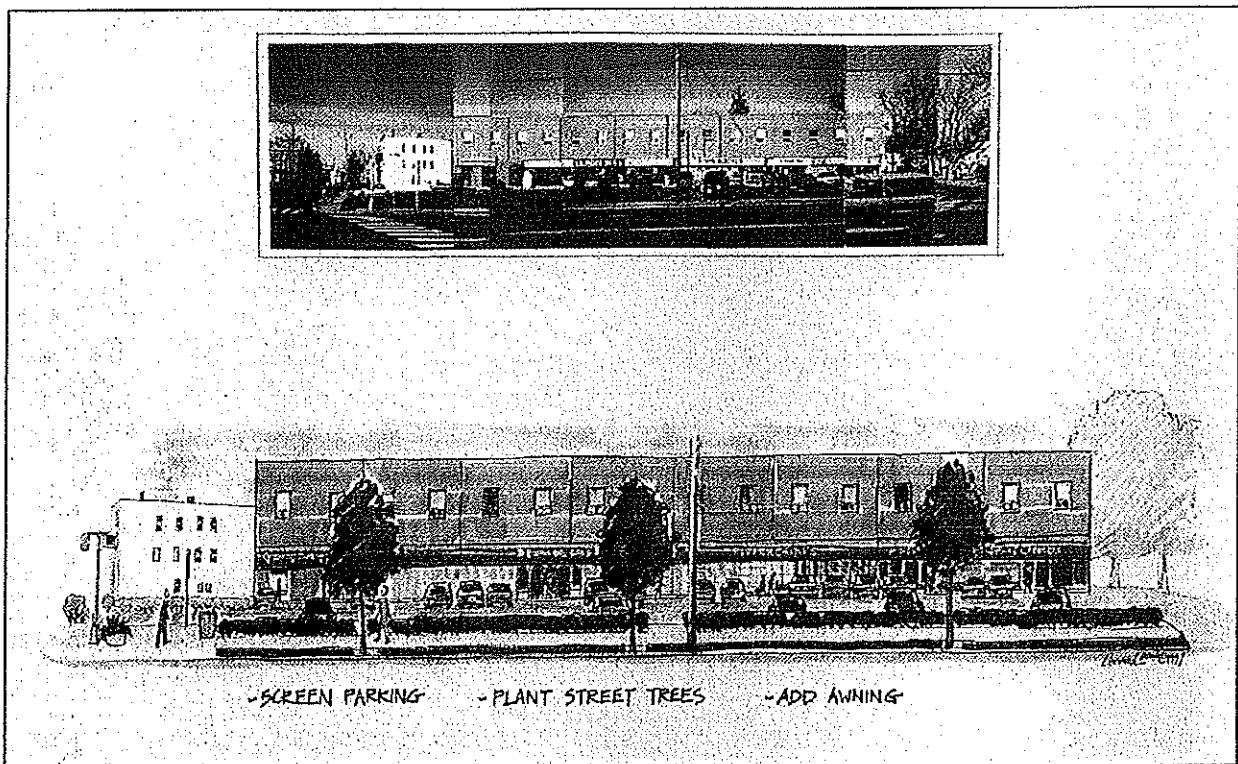
Within the neighborhood there are several different sub-areas with characteristics that call for different levels of effort to attain the general objectives of this Plan. The various possible levels of activity are described generally below and a "Level of Effort" Map illustrates the various areas where the separate approaches seem appropriate.

1. Conservation: These are areas where the land use is fairly cohesive and the level of effort is such as to maintain the neighborhood. Typical conservation activities might include normal municipal service delivery, spring clean-up, targeted housing finance programs for owner-occupants and promotion of neighborhood association activities.
2. Property & Security Management: This is a level of effort associated with the higher density apartment and multi-family sites. Police, fire, social services and on-site property managers need to address needs and problems associated with concentration of low income tenants. Density should be reduced in this area if at all feasible.
3. Conversion Control: This effort is proposed for application to selected stretches of Burnside where former residences have been increasingly converted to business uses. The conversion process needs to be regulated to assure proper parking availability and to encourage building and signage design that improves neighborhood appeal.
4. Transform/Redevelop: Some areas have a very eclectic mix of uses, vacant buildings and/or a concentration of older buildings on small sites that could be assembled for redevelopment. These are areas where more substantial land use change is sought and might be fostered through revised zoning and/or actual municipal redevelopment activity.
5. Linkages to Riverway: This effort involves possible site, access or scenic easement application to create stronger physical and visual linkages between the Hockanum River and Burnside Avenue. These physical improvements could be supplemented with organized recreational and social activities that draw people into the neighborhood for special events and for on-going programs.
6. Expand: There are several existing institutions in the neighborhood, with a concentration in the vicinity of School Street and Church Street. Their activities and their physical facilities might be expanded to elevate the "institutional" image of the neighborhood and new institutions could be sought out to move into this area. Such expansion and linkages to the greenway could be supportive of a greater sense of safety and employment at these institutions could help support restaurants and convenience shops along the street. Such uses could be encouraged to supplant some of the less attractive low end commercial enterprises.



B. Rehabilitation Opportunity Areas

The primary focus of the Concept Plan for the Burnside Avenue Corridor is the promotion of rehabilitation and reinvestment in the existing building stock, fully respecting the historic and architectural integrity of each building. This does not mean rigid adherence to restoration standards but rather building rehabilitation that respects the distinctive architectural qualities of each structure while adapting it to meet contemporary use requirements. The building stock of the Burnside Avenue Corridor has evolved over the years and represents many architectural periods. Reconditioning and adapting these buildings to contemporary needs is a primary focus of the Concept Plan.



Enhancing A Commercial Plaza

Building design guidelines for existing buildings, as well as for new construction need to be prepared under this program. It is imperative that these guidelines be added as a section of the Town's zoning regulations in order to achieve compatibility of appearance. The guidelines should address acceptable facades, window and door types, approved siding materials, masonry repair, replacement or highlighting of trim, cornices and other architectural details, selection of appropriate colors and removal of incompatible signs. Design guidelines for new buildings must also be added to the zoning regulations. This measure will ensure sensitive treatment of building facades, particularly along Burnside Avenue.

Once facade standards are in place, building owners must be encouraged to improve building facades. Development of incentive programs and creation of funding mechanisms to promote the program are required. Contractual links between incentive programs and adherence to architectural standards are desirable. Buildings with gross violations of the guidelines will need to be cited through code enforcement activities. Preliminary design services for property owners to illustrate the potential of upgrading buildings will be necessary to stimulate interest in the rehabilitation program.

The following are elements to promote rehabilitation and reinvestment in the area:

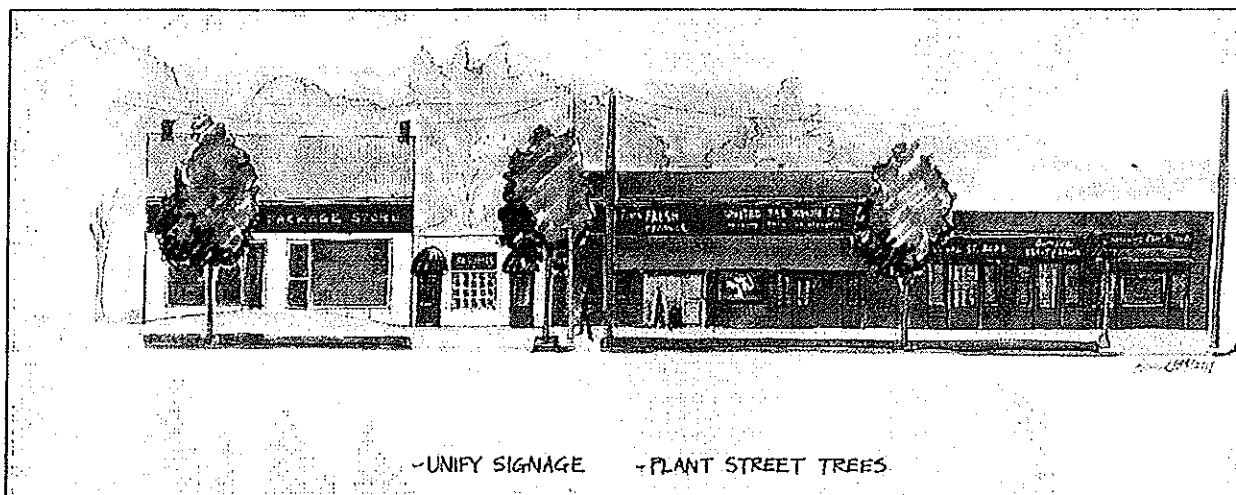
Housing:

- Undertake a concentrated code enforcement program to ensure the soundness of the existing housing stock.
- Establish a first time home buyers program targeting the area. Encourage home ownership in all program activities.
- Establish a home improvement loan pool with local banks, supplemented with community development funding for special needs situations.
- Repair municipal infrastructure i.e. - roadways, sidewalks, etc. on residential streets.
- Form strong linkages with East Hartford's human service agencies to provide homeowner and tenant support.
- Put in place programs for youth in on-going education, recreation, employment and training.
- Production of new housing units should be keyed to identified demand and emphasize home ownership.

Commercial:

- Commercial uses servicing the residents of the Burnside Avenue neighborhood should be clustered at strategic locations along the Burnside Avenue Corridor.
- Identify architectural building elements, historic building styles, signage, and landscaping elements that are important to the image of Burnside Avenue as viewed from the roadway. These elements are to form the basis for design standards for the Avenue.

- Promote facade improvements, shared parking, site beautification and addition of a limited number of new convenience retail outlets at the existing retail cluster at Burnside Avenue/School Street area.
- Establish an organizational structure to coordinate programs for the Burnside commercial sector similar to the model of Main Street Plus.



Facade Improvements Along Burnside Avenue

Industrial:

- Promote the continued transition of the north side of Tolland Street to light industrial/commercial use.
- Discourage residential use in this area.

C. Development Opportunity Areas

There are three primary development opportunity areas within the Burnside Avenue Corridor which generate self contained development opportunities. Another area that is desirable to assemble, but complex in scale and financial commitment, is the apartment area. The development opportunity areas are:

- The area east of the Burnside/Tolland intersection contains a major vacant building and properties in fair to poor condition. Assemblage of this area into a commercial/light industrial site would stabilize this area.
- The 12.5 acre vacant parcel abutting Martin Park and extending from Short Reach to Hillside Street should be acquired as a major addition to the park and open space resources of the neighborhood.

IV. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- The area east of the Burnside/Tolland intersection contains a major vacant building and properties in fair to poor condition. Assemblage of this area into a commercial/light industrial site would stabilize this area.
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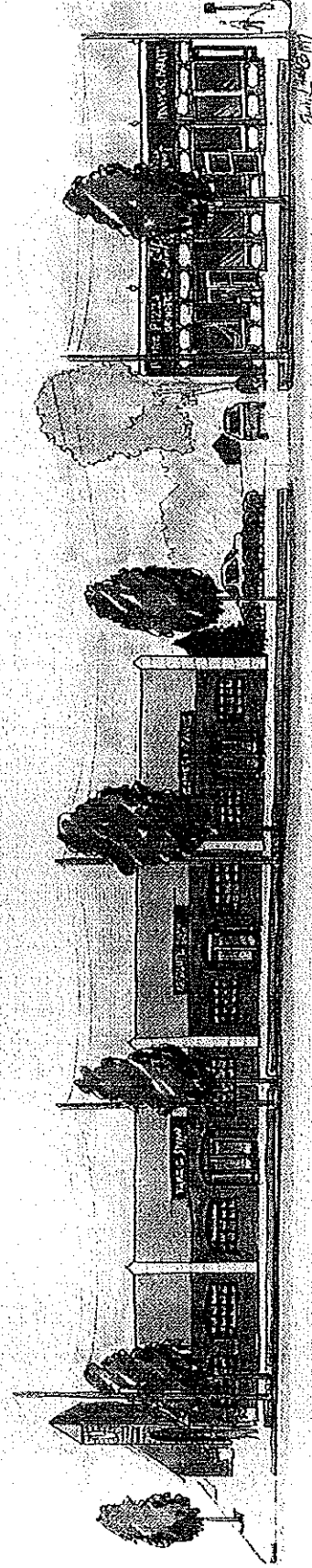
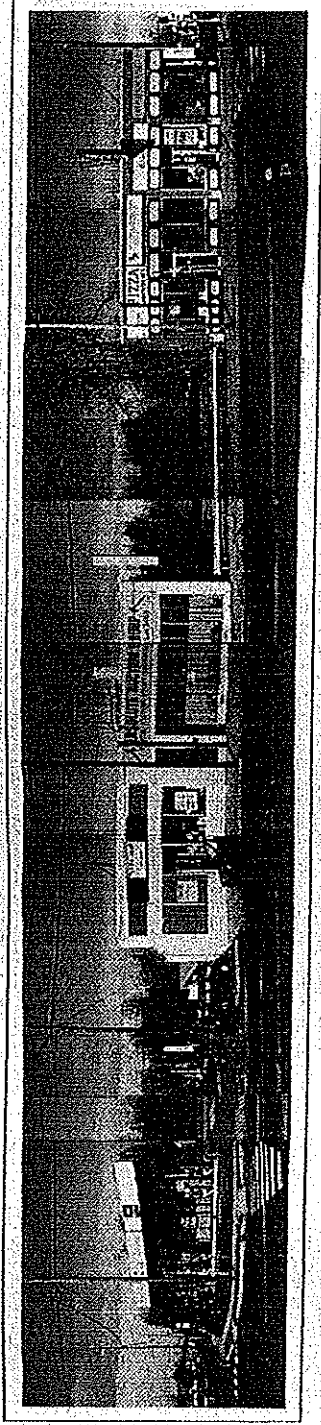
Development on the site would be restricted by flood plain management constraints, but the site is shown as commercial in the Town Plan of Development and is presently zoned commercial. While retail and/or office development appears possible on the site and is consistent with Town zoning and the Plan of Development, it should be expected that such commercial development would detract from the retail and office market position of space located and/or planned along Main Street.

Most importantly, the introduction of commercial activities onto this site are considered by the Consultants as likely to be detrimental to the market appeal of existing nearby residences and the aesthetic and recreational amenity of both Martin Park and the Hockanum River Greenway.

Having considered the foregoing possibilities, the acquisition of this tract for incorporation into the Town recreation system and the regional greenway would be the strategy most supportive of Burnside Avenue area neighborhood improvement, as well as, downtown redevelopment.

- The commercial uses at the corner of Burnside Avenue/School Street have the potential to be redeveloped as a neighborhood commercial center. Adjoining commercial uses fronting on Burnside Avenue could be integrated into a new development and the considerable rear yard area used to advantage in support of more intensive use of the block. Refer to the sketch which follows this page for an illustration of redevelopment of this block.
- Several apartment complexes along Burnside Avenue are in physical and financial difficulty. Without major financial investments to upgrade the housing or to remove some of the complexes, rapid decline of this housing can be expected. This decline will further depress the market value of adjoining residential areas, causing decline of the larger neighborhood. The Town should begin negotiations with the financial institutions that foreclosed on the properties, to determine if the site should be acquired and recycled for duplex housing in character with abutting residential housing.

IV. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



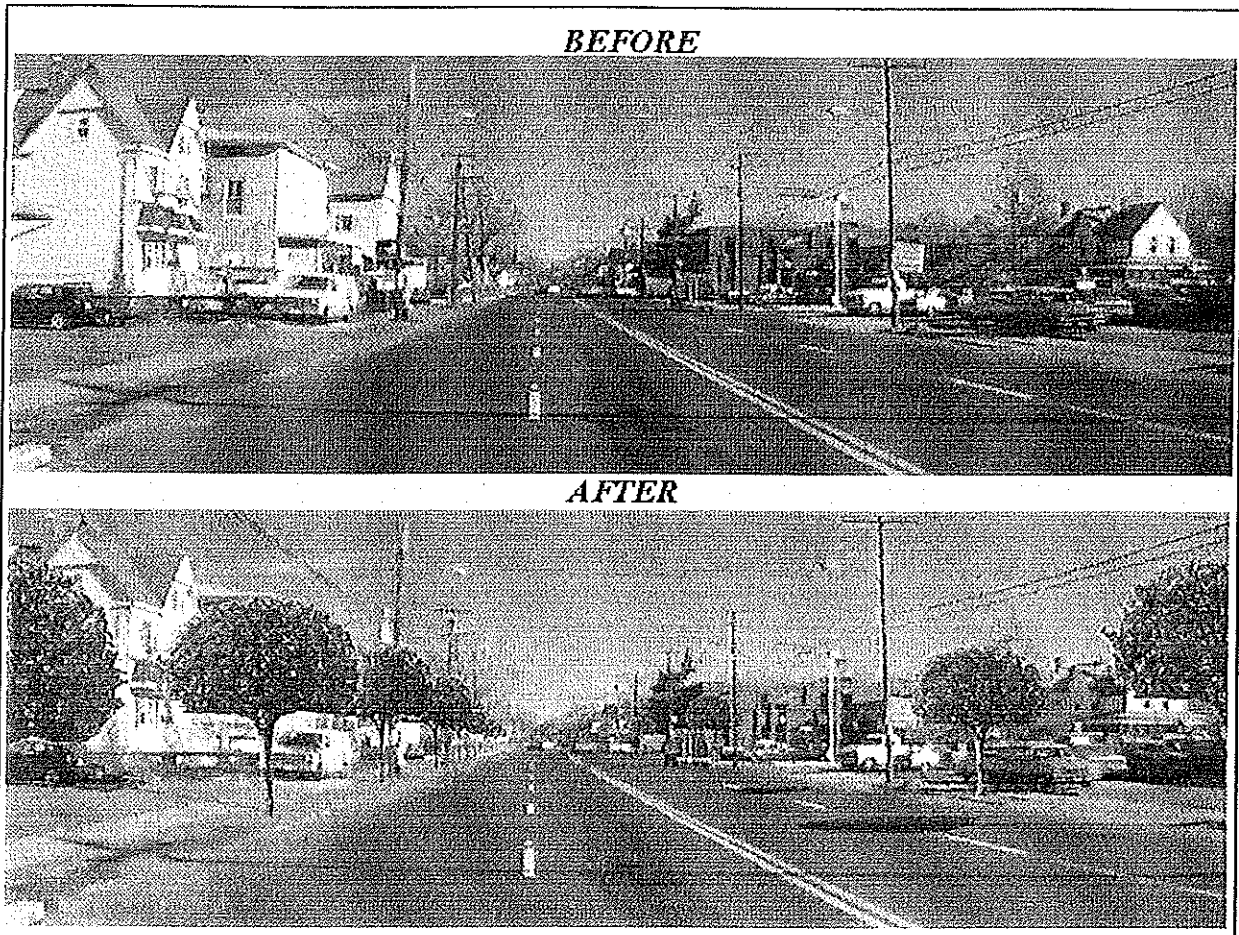
~NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ~PLANT STREET TREES ~SCREEN PARKING ~UNIFY SIGNAGE

Redevelopment of Burnside Avenue/School Street Block

D. Image

Burnside Avenue is an important arterial roadway carrying significant volumes of traffic. It also is one of the gateway corridors to the downtown, further enhancing its role as a community image maker. Improvements to the visual image of Burnside Avenue can be accomplished in the following areas. These recommendations can be accomplished over time as resources permit.

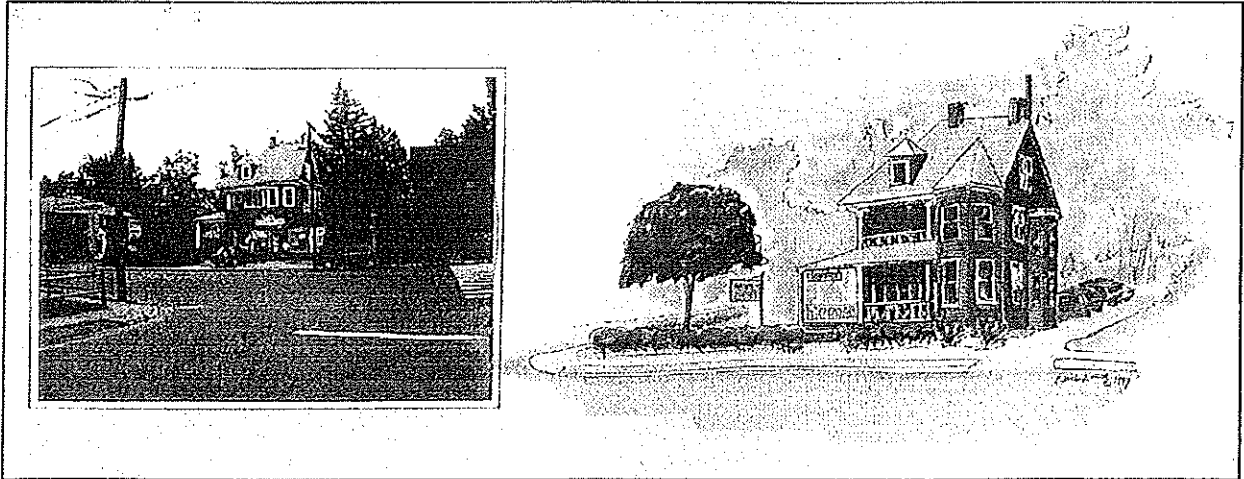
- Develop a small public plaza along the Burnside Avenue frontage between the library and BOE playfield entrance.
- Initiate a street tree planting program along Burnside Avenue to replace trees lost to development. This program will soften the hard edge of the tightly developed sections of Burnside Avenue, particularly the western third of the street.



Burnside Avenue Street Tree Program

IV. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Create a Burnside Avenue Commercial Overlay Zone which would prohibit conversion of residential buildings to general retail use, provide incentives for conversions to office, institutional or other non-retail uses which retain the residential character/massing of the building, provide flexible parking options and submit to a Burnside specific design review process.



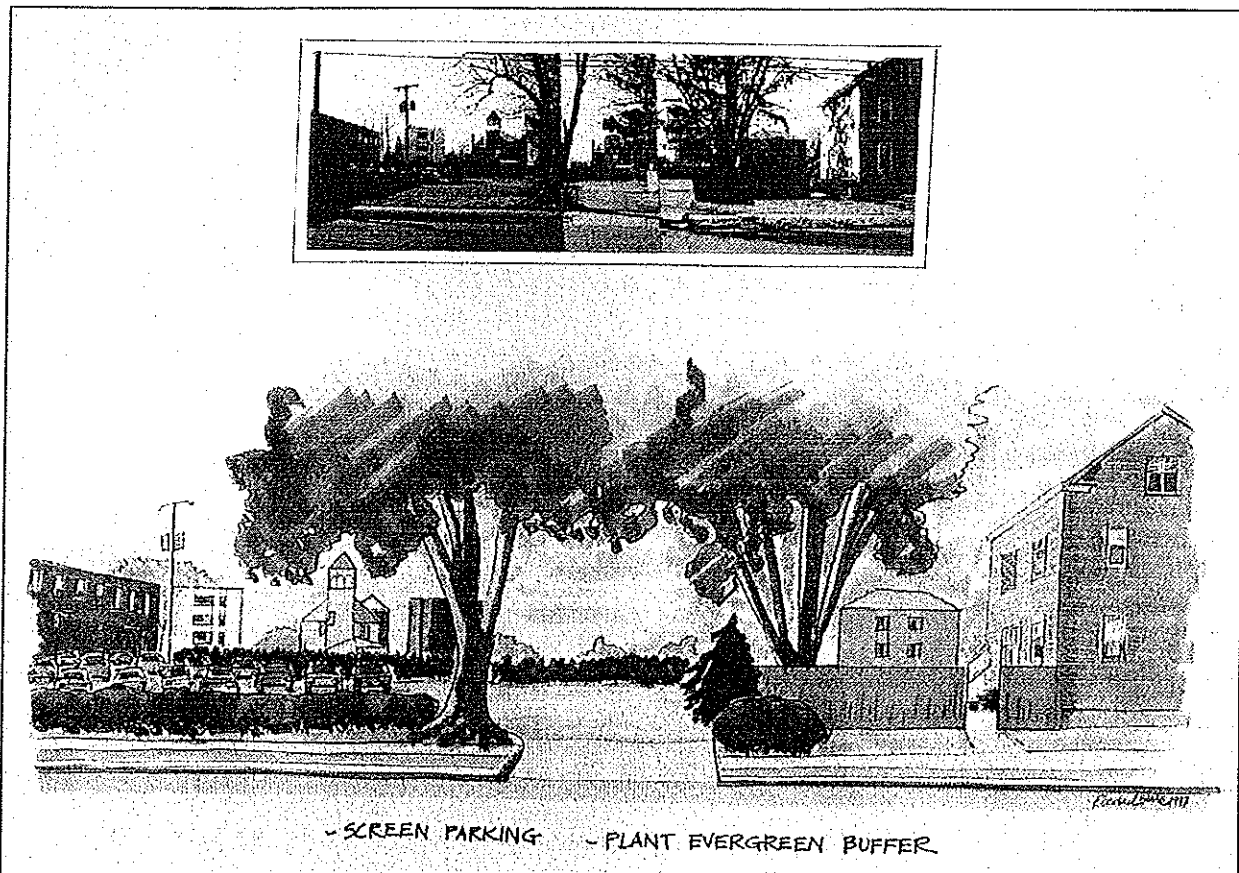
Retail Conversion To Professional Office

E. Circulation and Parking

Burnside Avenue provides outstanding access for the area and is one of the strengths of the Corridor. The dead-end and loop streets serving residential areas ensure quiet residential streets and are also strong assets of the area. Maintenance of these local access streets requires attention and should be part of the area improvement program.

Off-street parking, especially for older retail uses along Burnside Avenue is a problem. The four lane roadway configuration of Burnside Avenue is reduced to two lanes where on-street parking narrows the travel lanes, resulting in restrictions to free flow movement. Encouraging transition to less parking intensive commercial uses than retail should be pursued through zoning incentives. There are several residential office conversions along Burnside Avenue which illustrates reasonable off-street parking solutions. Existing clusters of retail uses need to be encouraged to produce combined off-street parking.

There are many instances of commercial parking lots abutting residential properties. Attention to buffering and screening between the uses will serve to minimize conflicts between the uses.



Minimize Parking Impact on Residences

F. Neighborhood Recreation and Open Space

The following recommendations address the need for enhancing the recreational and open space resources of the corridor.

- The major open space supporting the neighborhood lies along the Hockanum River and Martin Park. This linear park should have additional and stronger links to the adjoining neighborhoods.
- Acquire the 12.5 acre parcel currently for sale at Short Reach as an addition to Martin Park. Encourage the continued use of the driving range parcel for its current open land use.
- Continue to develop the Hockanum River Greenway.
- Increase recreational programs for neighborhood youth.

V. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Carrying out a revitalization scheme for any area of a town is always a complex and time consuming enterprise. Many factors must be blended together to create an attitude that produces a successful revitalization effort. Since neither the public nor private sector holds all the keys to success, collaboration and coordination of efforts are essential to area improvement. It is as important to fine-tune the zoning regulations to encourage private investment in specific types of development as it is to upgrade the appearance of private and public property in the area. Measured improvement on many fronts, occurring within a defined time-frame is fundamental to upgrading the area. Public and private improvements must reach a certain "critical mass" before sufficient momentum is generated to sustain the level of improvement activity.

In order to reach this "critical mass" most Burnside Avenue stakeholders must be committed and carry out their portion of the strategy. The Town, residents, property owners, businesses, and institutions each have an important role in the revitalization of the area. Success will be achieved only with all parties contributing to carry out the Plan.

The Plan for Burnside Avenue is based upon strengthening existing residential neighborhoods along with public actions intended to support this goal with code enforcement, financing, regulation, and public improvements. In order to implement this program, we believe that several actions are necessary. Some actions relate to the systematic code enforcement, implementation of physical improvements and promotion of development opportunities. Others are organizational and service oriented.

Several financing and funding sources to pay for the improvements proposed will be required. In this age of limited government budgets and uncertain private financing markets, this task is a formidable one. However, by combining several resources together with private funding, a viable program funding plan can be developed. Support should always be sought at the local level first, both because it is the only assured means to obtain funds and because it makes the project a community effort - the key to ultimate success.

The largest on-going capital improvement expense facing the program will be for facade and building improvements, largely a property owner responsibility. A facade and building rehabilitation program needs to be created with incentives for property owners and tenant participation. Public buy down of mortgages, direct subsidy, low interest direct loans are all tools used in Connecticut to spark property investment by lowering effective financing costs. A phased assessment program and waiver of permit fees can also assist in stimulating reinvestment activity and are recommended program incentives. Local banks should be approached to form a loan pool for Burnside Avenue renovation work with some credit enhancement by the public. Community development block grant funds are currently being used to stimulate rehabilitation activity and need to be enhanced.

V. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Property owners must be encouraged to upgrade their buildings in conformance with architectural design guidelines and be flexible with tenants if the revitalization program is to succeed. Beside being convinced of the appropriateness of the program, owners will require incentives to modify their business practices.

Some incentives are:

- Tax assessment deferrals for substantial renovation - adopt revisions of Section 12-65c-f of the General Statutes which permit gradual phasing in over ten years of the value of the rehabilitation. This removes the disincentives of higher property taxes for upgrading buildings.
- Architectural assistance for exterior renovation is a necessary service. Providing property owners and merchants with preliminary design assistance to help visualize the type of improvements that could be made to their properties stimulates rehabilitation activity. This also assists in achieving a high level of design quality and consistency of approach.
- Forego municipal permit fees for conforming property improvements.
- Create a loan pool for property rehabilitation with the Town providing a vehicle for credit enhancement. Community development block grant funds can form a major component of the financial incentive program. Current East Hartford rehabilitation program standards and procedures exist upon which to model a Burnside Avenue program.

Simultaneous action along several fronts is required to promote a positive climate for revitalization of the Burnside Avenue Corridor. The following outlines an implementation strategy for the Burnside Avenue Corridor and identifies the responsible Town agency.

**BURNSIDE AVENUE CORRIDOR
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN & ESTIMATED BUDGET**

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

<u>Action</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Agency/Source</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Concentrated Code Enforcement	\$40,000	Town/General Fund & CDBG	Extra personnel & over-time - annual
Home Improvement Targeted Loan Pool	\$255,000	Banks/CDBG	17 loans @ \$15,000 annual programs - annual
1st Time Homebuyer Program	\$250,000	Banks/State/CDBG	Annual
Landscaping Fund (Buffer commercial uses)	\$100,000	Town/CDBG	20 loans @ \$5,000
Housing Site Development Seed Funds	\$100,000	Grant Office/CDBG	
Tax Phase In/Deferral	(variable)	Town/General Revenue	
Wavier of Permit Fees	(variable)	Town/General Revenue	
Architectural Design Services	\$50,000	Grants Office/CDBG/State Grant	residential/businesses facade assistance - document architectural elements of Burnside Avenue for use in overlay zone & rehab program
Architectural Character Documentation	\$15,000	Redevelopment Agency/State Grant	
Commercial Facade Improvement Program	\$200,000	Grant Office/CDBG/Bond Issue	10 loans @ \$20,000

**BURNSIDE AVENUE CORRIDOR
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN & ESTIMATED BUDGET**

ACQUISITION

<u>Action</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Agency/Source</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Open Space - 15 acre parcel		Redevelopment Agency/Bond Issue/ State Grant	
Apartment Acquisition			
Commercial Sites			
Soft Costs - Appraisals, legal, etc.			
Total	\$5,500,000		

INFRASTRUCTURE

<u>Action</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Agency/Source</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Sidewalks & Roadways		DPW/Bond Issue/State Grant	Annual
Public Plaza at Library	\$125,000	RA/Bond Issues/State Grant	
Street Tree Program	\$100,000	Beautification Comm/Bond Issue/ State Grant	
Hockanum River Greenway		Parks & Rec/Development Dept./ State Grant	

REGULATION

<u>Action</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Agency/Source</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Zoning Regulation Change - Conversion to Destination Uses Along Burnside Avenue	Staff	P & Z/Annual Budget	
Zoning Regulation Change - Burnside Avenue Commercial Overlay Zone	Staff	P & Z/Annual Budget	
Zoning Regulation Change - Tolland Street Commercial Overlay Zone	Staff	P & Z/Annual Budget	

BURNSIDE AVENUE CORRIDOR

**IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN & ESTIMATED BUDGET**

PUBLIC SAFETY

<u>Action</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Agency/Source</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Community Policing	\$75,000	Police Dept/Annual Budget	Annual
Youth Recreation Program	\$50,000	Recreation Dept./local non-profit/ Annual Budget	Annual

BUSINESS SUPPORT

<u>Action</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Agency/Source</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Small Business Support Using Main Street Plus model	\$50,000	CDBG/Private	Annual

VI. PLANNING ANALYSIS

In 1990, East Hartford adopted its updated Plan of Development. Among the objectives included in the plan was the desire to preserve and enhance older residential neighborhoods. The plan recommended elimination of land use conflicts and facilitation of infill development which was responsive to future market conditions.

In pursuit of the goals expressed in the town's plan, East Hartford has been engaged in a series of detailed area studies. Such studies examine in detail existing land use and building conditions, infrastructure conditions, aesthetic considerations and other concerns - all at the neighborhood level. Existing conditions are evaluated relative to generally accepted planning standards, input received from the local neighborhood community and the state of the area real estate market and economic outlook evaluated. Based on this evaluation, a conservation and redevelopment strategy is developed for the neighborhood.

The neighborhood strategy for the Burnside Avenue Corridor is developed in this study. The plan outlines priorities and action items for municipal programs. These items include land use, zoning regulations, infrastructure, municipal facilities, design review procedures, organizational management, marketing, site acquisition, building reuse, capital budgets and project financing.

The focus of this area study is the 2.1 mile Burnside Avenue and Tolland Street corridor between the railroad tracks and the Hockanum River.

A. Delineation of Study Area and Market Area

The study area is generally labeled as "Burnside Avenue Corridor". More specifically, the study area is defined as bounded on the west by Elm Street and Clark Street, on the south by the Hockanum River, on the east by Scotland Road and Francis Street and on the north by the railroad tracks. The area is illustrated in graphic form on the "Project Boundary Map".

Streets included within the study area are:

Elm Street	Myrtle Street
Clark Street	Oakwood Street
Burnside Avenue	Bidwell Street
Olmsted Street	Short Beach
Spring Street	Zebulon Street
Duggo Court	Daniel Street
Highland Street	Bidwell Avenue
Clune Court	Moore Avenue
Rosenthal Street	Hillside Street (part)
Bragg Street	Wind Road
Baumont Street	Bellew Road
Ambrose Street	Terry Road

Ecology Drive	Elmer Street
Tolland Street	School Street (part)
Kenyon Place	Hammer Street
Latimer Street	William Street
Signor Street	Francis Street
Ann Street	Church Street
Westbrook Street	Goodwin Lane
St. Joseph Street	Goodwin Place
Ralph Road	Scotland Road (part)

At the easterly and westerly ends of the study area, the project boundary runs along the rear property line to include both sides of the street in the study area.

The project area is influenced by the broader community in which it is located. General attention will be given to the Hartford region and Town of East Hartford economic setting and more specific attention will be paid to the immediately surrounding neighborhood. This latter area is considered to include census tracts 5104, Block Groups 1, 2, and 4 and 5113, Block Group 3. The larger neighborhood setting includes the section of East Hartford east of Main Street (Route 5) and north of the Hockanum River to the South Windsor and Manchester town lines.

B. Community Setting and Area Demographics

In 1990 the State of Connecticut population was approximately 3,287,000. The Capitol Region in which East Hartford is located had a population of about 698,000. East Hartford's own town population was approximately 50,450. Since 1990, the general trend in the State has been downward and intermediate range forecasts are for continued shallow but steady declines in State population. This trend is evidently occurring locally as well. The July 1, 1995 State Population estimates lists East Hartford population at 48,125, a 4.6% decline from the 1990 census. This declining trend is contrary to the growth trend estimated in the 1990 Plan of Development.

Population - 1990

State of Connecticut	3,287,116
Hartford Region	697,700
East Hartford	50,452
Burnside Avenue Corridor	5,178

The Connecticut economy has been struggling to recover from the 1988-1992 recession, but only a fraction of the jobs lost during that period have, in fact, been recovered. There has also been a continuing shift in the economic structure of the State. Manufacturing jobs continue to decline while service sector jobs increase. The end of the cold war and the cutbacks in national defense spending have hit Connecticut much harder than less defense oriented economies and East Hartford's key employer - Pratt & Whitney - has been impacted by cutbacks.

1. *Hartford Region*

In the Hartford labor market, non-farm employment as of November, 1995 was 591,900, down about 1.9% from the prior year. Within that overall category, manufacturing employment was 92,000, down more steeply at a decline of 5.4%. Another key sector in the Hartford regional economy is finance and insurance. This is also a sector that has undergone a series of consolidations and downsizing. The result is a November 1995 regional employment in F.I.R.E. of 71,200 down 4.6% from the prior year.

2. *East Hartford*

Historically, East Hartford has been an important employment center for the State. Industries and businesses located here have imported workers to fill local jobs. Still, the growing unemployment rate within the local labor force led the U.S. Labor Department to add East Hartford to its list of "labor surplus areas" effective October, 1995 through September, 1996.

Within this overall pattern of declining population and employment there have been some notable geographic shifts taking place. The population and economic centers of the region have become increasingly suburbanized. While Hartford, West Hartford and East Hartford population has dropped, population has increased in outlying suburbs. Industrial parks and office parks have increased outlying employment opportunities. The most recent manifestation of this general geographic shift has been the expansive retail growth in the Buckland Hills section of Manchester.

The East Hartford Plan of Development noted some of these shifts in the region and recognized that they contain some potential economic development opportunities for East Hartford. In particular, the Connecticut Boulevard and North Meadow areas of East Hartford were identified as key locations to capture some of this shift in development. The plan envisions conversion of Connecticut Boulevard to a mid-rise office type neighborhood and redevelopment of North Meadows would be a mix of high-rise residential and office/ R & D facilities.

Implementation of these plans for the riverfront will create a need for relocation sites for the many auto dealers along Connecticut Boulevard and for the variety of small manufacturing and warehouse operations in the North Meadows. Some considerations will be given to whether the project study area might be a suitable location to accommodate such moves. This study effort is also cognizant of plans for Downtown East Hartford as a mixed use retail/office/service center and will aim to prepare a Burnside Avenue Plan and Strategy that is supportive of Main Street goals and not in conflict with them.

3. *Burnside Avenue Study Area*

Demographic data has been tabulated and analyzed for the Burnside Avenue Study Area. Population, household characteristics, housing, income and employment data have been reviewed and comparisons have been made between the neighborhood and the town as a whole. The purpose of the comparative analysis was to identify any distinguishing features of the local data which might become important considerations for future planning.

**DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS
BURNSIDE AVENUE**

	EAST HARTFORD	TOWN %	TRACT 5104 BG1	TRACT 5104 BG2	TRACT 5104 BG4	TRACT 5113 BG3	STUDY AREA	STUDY AREA %
POPULATION	50452	100.0%	1,642	1,764	734	1,038	5,178	100.0%
Over 64	7856	15.6%	143	180	70	153	546	1.5%
HOUSEHOLDS	20343		722	786	370	459	2,337	100.0%
Family	13403	65.9%	382	395	141	262	1,180	50.5%
Non-Family	6940	34.1%	340	391	229	197	1,157	49.5%
Living Alone	5472	26.9%	248	285	193	155	881	37.7%
In Group Quarters	1013	5.0%	0	15	14	0	29	1.2%
Persons per Hshld	2.43		2.27	2.23	1.95	2.26	2.21	-
Resident 5+ yrs.	27627	54.8%	235	243	108	194	780	33.3%
HOUSING								
Total	21274	100.0%	799	865	388	484	2,536	100.0%
Occupied	20343	95.6%	722	786	370	459	2,337	92.2%
Owner Occupied	12108	59.5%	218	224	67	192	701	30.0%
Renter Occupied	8235	40.5%	504	562	303	267	1,636	70.0%
Median Value	\$146,200		138,200	128,300	126,600	131,400		
Median Rent	\$511		564	522	433	496		
Pers/Owner Unit	2.61		2.23	2.44	2.75	2.48		
Pers/Rental Unit	2.17		2.29	2.14	1.77	2.1		
"Crowded" Units	413	1.9%	59	31	18	5	113	4.8%
Built Before 1939	3697	17.4%	304	425	231	186	1,146	45.2%
INCOME/ EMPLOYMENT								
Median Hshld	\$36,584		28,214	33,182	30,236	35,000		
Median Family	\$42,853		32,176	36,250	35,982	36,667		
Per Capita	\$16,575		13,411	14,786	15,932	16,833		
Persons Below Poverty	2683	5.3%	128	180	20	21	349	6.7%
Paying Over 35% Rent	1373	6.7%	170	117	61	37	385	7.4%
In Labor Force	29110	57.7%	960	1,110	449	657	3,176	61.3%
Not In Labor Force	12572	24.9%	290	305	151	225	971	18.8%
Employed	27515		912	1,016	393	616	2,937	-
Unemployed	1537		48	94	56	41	239	-
Percent Unemployed	5.3%		5.0	8.5	12.5	6.2	7.5	-

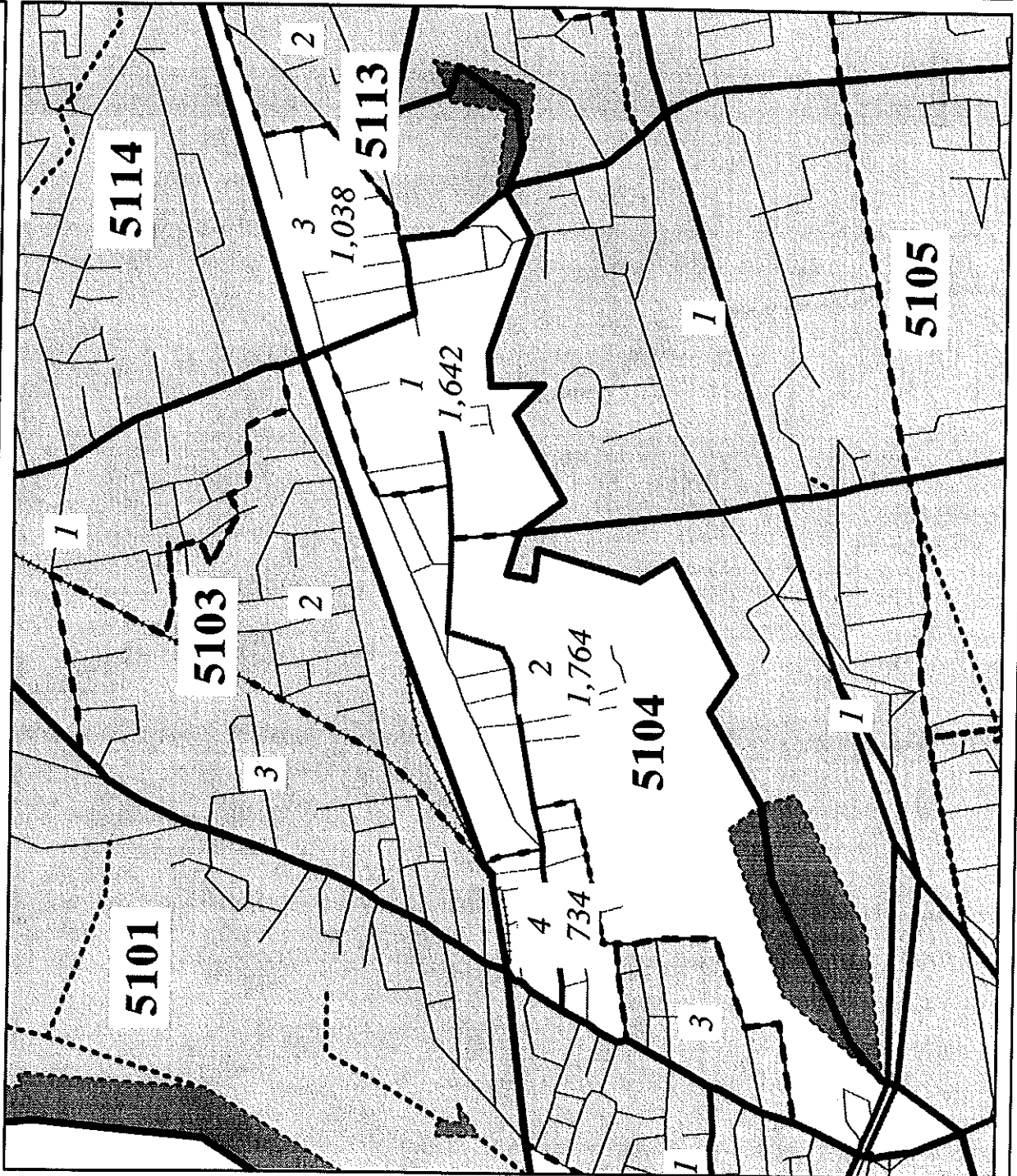
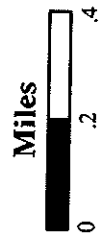
Source: 1990 Census

BLOCK GROUP POPULATION

BURNSIDE AVENUE STUDY AREA

LEGEND:

- Roads
- Highways
- - - Railroads
- ⋯ Block Group
- Census Tract



The data is presented in the table labeled "Demographic Analysis Burnside Avenue". Overall, the neighborhood has a population of about 5,200 in about 2,300 households. One-half of these are family households. About 33% of the neighborhood residents had resided at the same address for over 5 years when the census was tabulated. The household size varies amongst the sub-areas within the neighborhood from 1.95 to 2.27. The average household size was about 2.21.

Within the area there are over 2,500 housing units. Owner-occupied units account for about 30% of the inventory and rental units are about 70%. The neighborhood tends to have more rental and less owner-occupied housing than the town-wide distribution. The neighborhood includes about 22% of the total rental units in East Hartford. While the area has a high proportion of the rental inventory, the vacancy rate in this category is about half the town-wide vacancy rate.

Negative housing quality indicators tend to be disproportionately evident in the study area. The area inventory represents about 12% of the town housing, but it represents over 27% of the units in the Town classified as crowded units. However the actual numbers are not large, 113 units in the category. The area also contains over 45% of the units built before 1939. In the four neighborhood block groups, the median house value is about \$8,000 to \$19,600 below the town-wide median. Rental rates in the area tend to be close to or higher than the town median.

The median household income in East Hartford was \$36,584 and in the study neighborhood the median ranges from \$28,214 to \$35,000 depending on the census tract. In general, the area tends to a lower income level than the town as a whole, with a higher incidence of unemployment and of poverty.

It is notable that in several categories such as median income, percentage of owner-occupied housing, the tract 5113/ BG3, which is the area east of School Street, tends to be higher income than the balance of the neighborhood.

Land use by building type is presented in the following table.

BURNSIDE AVENUE STUDY AREA LAND USE BY BUILDING TYPE

Residential

<u>Building Use</u>	<u># of Buildings</u>	<u>Dwelling Units</u>
1 Family	340	340
2 Family	186	372
3 Family	76	228
4 Family	23	92
Apartments	33	990
Condominiums	4	570
	662	2,592

Non-Residential

<u>Building</u>	<u># of Buildings</u>	<u>Dwelling Units</u>
Auto Related Buildings		
Gas Station	2	
Sales/Service	3	
Service Garage	15	
Car Wash	2	
Storage	28	
Restaurants	10	
Offices	13	
Office/Residential	14	27
Manufacturing	9	
Funeral Home	1	
Businesses	136	
Commercial Combination	5	
Store/Apartment	19	76
Store/Offices	3	
	260	103

Public/Semi-Public

Police/Fire Stations	2
Library	1
Schools	1
Churches	2
Convents	1
Clubs	3
	10

Source: East Hartford Assessor records.

C. Existing Conditions in the Project Area***1. Existing Zoning***

The commercial corridor along Burnside Avenue is zoned B-1, a mixed use district that allows both residential and commercial development. Permitted residential uses are one and two family dwellings and hotels. Other residential uses allowed are rooming houses, convalescent homes, and non-profit clubs and lodges. Permitted retail uses are stores for the sale of goods, personal business services, restaurants and by special permit recreation, theaters and liquor stores. Other business uses allowed are offices and financial institutions, funeral homes, manufacturing of goods to be sold on the premises, newspaper and job printing and by special permit research and development laboratories.

The minimum lot size in the B-1 district is 5,000 square feet, with minimum 50 foot frontage. Building coverage can be 75% of the lot and height can be up to 100 feet. The minimum lot for multiple dwellings is 10,000 square feet. For auto sales, the minimum lot must be 40,000 square feet.

A portion of the project area along Tolland Street is designated B-3. This zone excludes most residential uses and it expands the permitted commercial and industrial activities to add operations such as dairy processing plants, bakeries, wholesale storage and warehousing, contractors material and equipment sales and storage, manufacturing. By special permit gas stations, truck terminals and fuel storage are additional potential uses. In the B-3 zone the minimum lot size is increased to 10,000 square feet with required frontage of 100 feet. Maximum lot coverage is 75% and building height can be up to 50 feet.

Also along Tolland Street, a section of the project area is zoned I-3. In this zone any use is permitted except a list of 35 specific activities which might be considered obnoxious or hazardous or unsuitable to an industrial area. In the latter category are schools, hospitals and residences.

The minimum I-3 lot must be 40,000 square feet and shall include a "minimum square" of 200 feet on each side. Lot coverage can be 75% and building height can be up to 100 feet.

The balance of the area is mostly designated R-4 and R-3 residential. In the R-4 district permitted uses are mainly one and two family houses with special permits allowing churches, convents and non-profit schools, also hospitals. Civic clubs, multi-family dwellings, convalescent homes, office buildings and funeral homes. The R-3 designation is more restrictive allowing only one family dwellings, with special permits for churches and other non-profit institutions. Required lot size in the R-4 category

is 7,600 square feet with 75 feet frontage. In R-3 the minimum is 8,000 square feet with 75 feet frontage.

2. *Existing Land Use and Building Conditions*

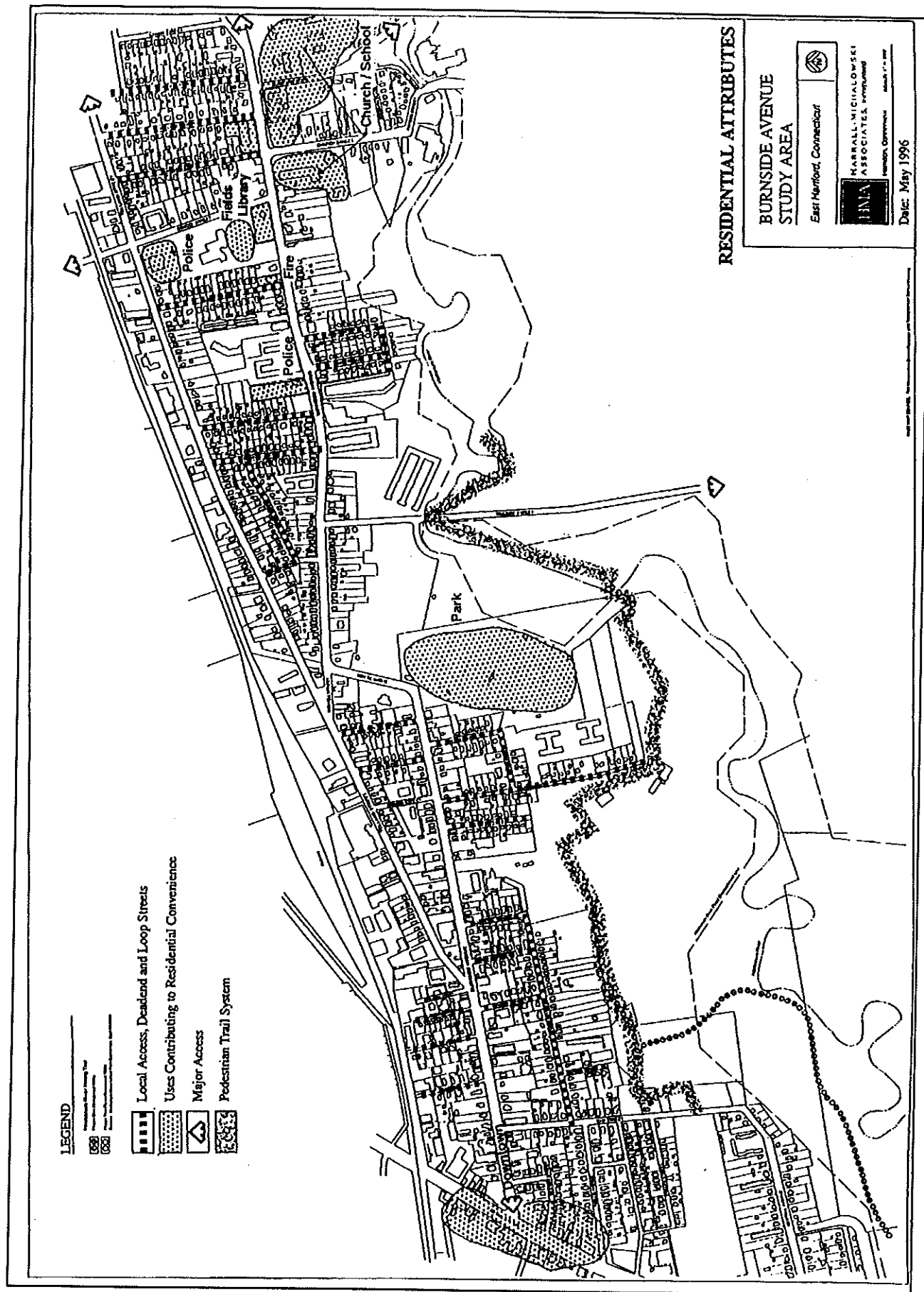
Existing land use is summarized in the "Land Use By Building Type Table" found on page 22.

Generally, the overall area is a diverse mix of uses including manufacturing, warehousing, auto service, retail stores, personal and business services, restaurants, government and non-profit institutions, single family homes, two to four family multiple dwellings and apartment buildings. Commercial uses are generally concentrated along Burnside Avenue and industrial uses are mostly along Tolland Street. Side streets tend to be mostly residential. Throughout the area, almost half the buildings were constructed prior to 1939.

Within the overall mix, some patterns emerge. Along Burnside Avenue, between Scotland and Elmer Streets there is a cluster of institutional uses. These include East Hartford Middle School, Data Institute Business School, Burnside Methodist Church, St. Rose Elementary School, St. Rose Church, the Wickham Library, the East Hartford Police Department, the East Hartford Board of Education, the Social Security Administration, the East Hartford Housing Authority, and an East Hartford Fire Station. Frequently, there are large open space areas associated with these uses.

From Elmer Street to Hillside Street the dominant land use is a cluster of several large apartment/condo blocks. These include Burnside Avenue Apartments, Lamplighter Condominiums, Coachlight Village and Eastwood Condominiums. There is also the Daley Court Housing for the elderly in this area. Just about all of the apartment buildings in the area were constructed during 1964 and 1965.

The typical design for these buildings is a three story brick structure with a gable roof and a layout of multiple "wings". The buildings appear to have adequate, but not abundant on site parking, including garages built into basement levels, overall exterior condition appears average for buildings their age. The size of units referenced on rental signs are efficiencies, one and two bedrooms. Some of these buildings have landscaped courtyards, but generally, exterior common area amenities appear minimal. While several of these apartment/condo complexes abut the Hockanum River open space, there is no direct linkage to that resource as a recreational amenity.



RESIDENTIAL ATTRIBUTES

BURNSIDE AVENUE STUDY AREA

East Hartford, Connecticut

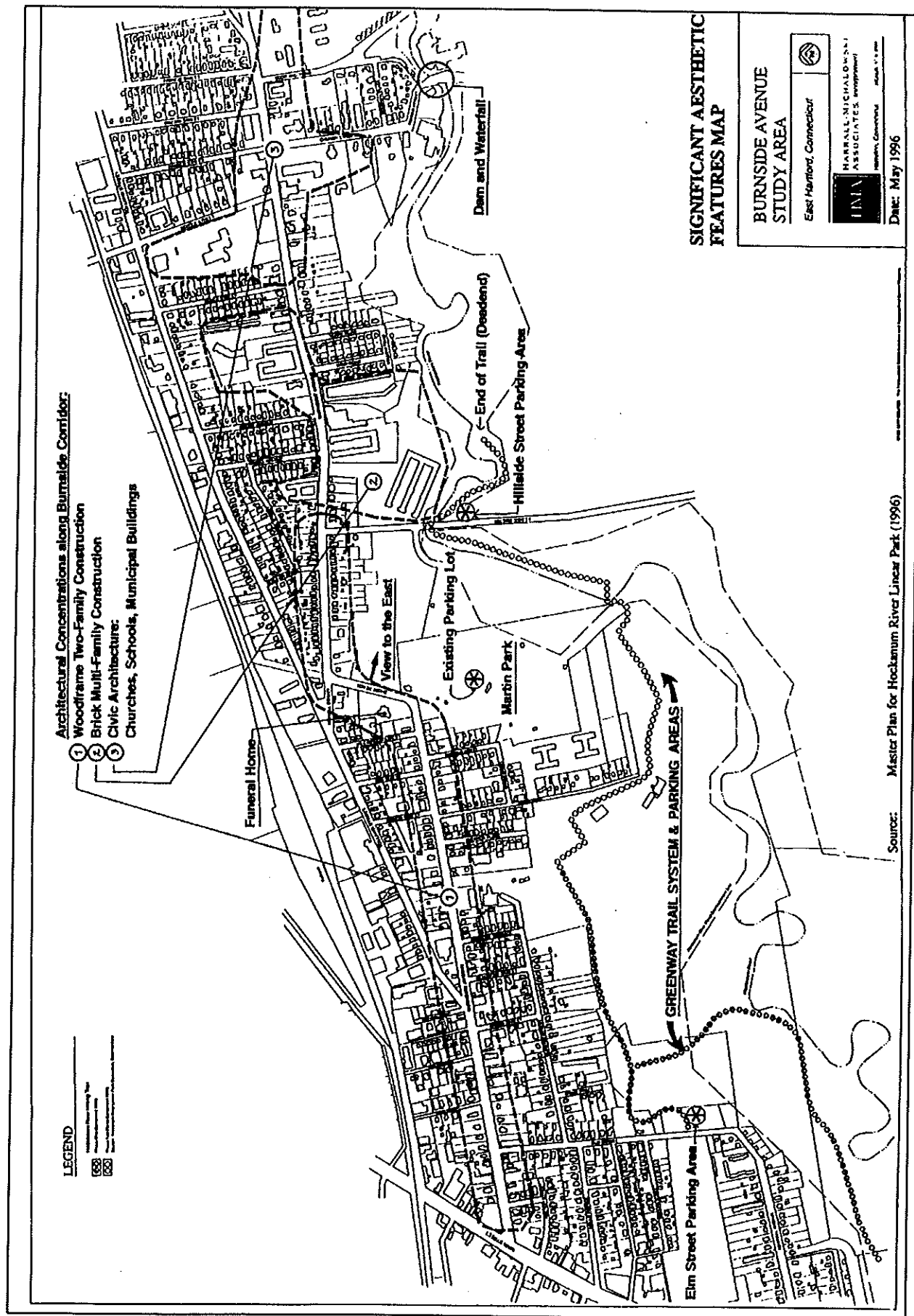


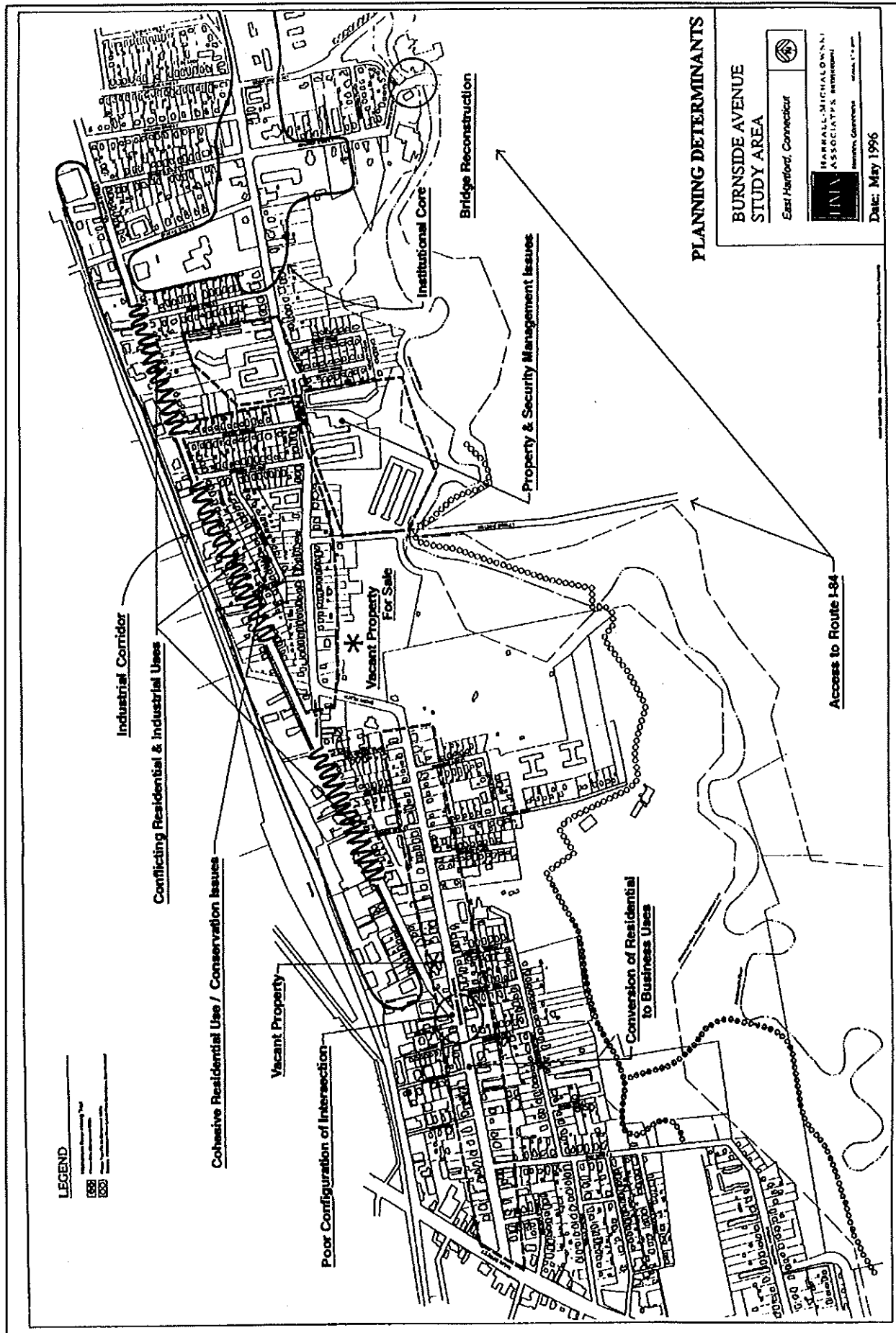
HARRALL, MICHALOWSKI
ASSOCIATES, INC.

Planning, Design, Construction



Date: May 1996





Moving closer to downtown, the stretch of Burnside Avenue from Hillside Street to Short Reach is mostly smaller wood frame residential structures on 50' lots. The area is in a B-1 zone and many of these structures have had their ground floor converted to retail use. Location on a heavily traveled main thoroughfare gives these houses the visibility that commercial uses desire. However, the conversions confuse the image of the block so it is neither clearly business nor residential and tends to detract from the residential desirability of the structures which have not been converted. Additionally, the conversions usually have been made without provision for off-street parking beyond the original residential driveway. Consequently, a conflict develops between on-street parking needs of the businesses and traffic flow management along Burnside Avenue.

At Short Reach the most notable uses are a funeral home, a large tract of vacant land that stretches back to Hillside Street and the driveway entrance to Martin Park. The funeral home has some architectural charm and serves as a landmark along the street. The vacant tract is about 12.5 acres, zoned B-1 and could be developed for a variety of uses such as a shopping center, an office complex, an apartment complex, or an auto dealership plaza. A limiting factor on site development will be flood plain management. Another option for the vacant tract might be Town acquisition for addition to the Martin Park or the Hockanum River open spaces. The tract is next to Martin Park which has numerous facilities including athletic court, play lots, ballfields, and a swimming pool. This tract is currently being advertised for sale.

While the Hockanum River is a major natural amenity in the neighborhood it is not visibly linked to Burnside Avenue. Stronger linkages between the open space and Burnside Avenue could enhance the desirability of apartments and condos in the area and might create an opportunity for some specialized retail geared to recreation.

From Short Reach to Main Street, Burnside Avenue has a very heterogeneous mix of residential, office, retail and heavy commercial uses. The vacancy rate appears more severe in this area and there are more structures in poor condition. The most recent evident investment along this area has been into small office buildings and a combination retail/office plaza geared to neighborhood service.

The other principal route through the study area is Tolland Street. It displays a much different character from that of Burnside Avenue. At the westerly end of the street from Burnside Avenue to Bidwell Street, are mixed commercial and industrial uses with industrial concentrated on the north side of the roadway. For its length through the study area, the north side of Tolland Street is predominately industrial but there are several commercial and apartment uses interspersed. The south side of Tolland Street from Bidwell Street east is mainly one to three family residential.

The established uses are often in conflict with each other, at least aesthetically, if not operationally. A series of neighbors might be an apartment building, an auto service garage and a light industrial facility. However, given the small lot sizes and sunk costs in building improvements, it would not seem likely that a more cohesive "highest and best" use will come to prominence through normal market activity. The most evident recent investment in this section appears to be in the industrial category. There is a new auto emissions test facility, some older industrial buildings have been converted to multi-user occupancy in a mini-industrial park style and some of the industrial space has been renovated.

The overall impression of existing land use in the area is that there are multiple viable activity groups but there needs to be some "weeding and sorting" to enhance their individual viability and the overall attractiveness of the neighborhood.

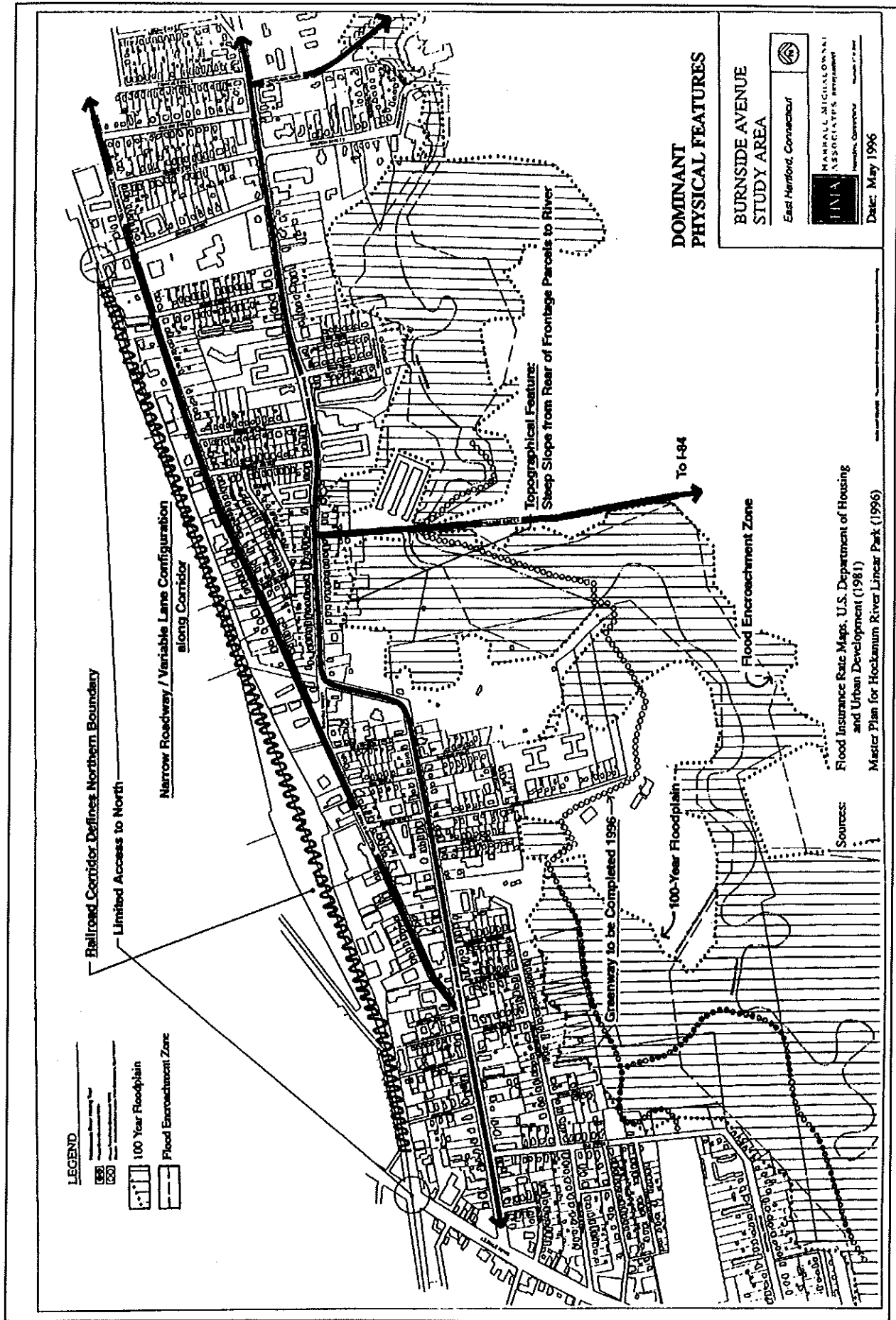
3. *Topography and Natural Features*

The outstanding natural feature in the neighborhood is the Hockanum River and the associated open space along its course. Refer to the Dominant Physical Features Map following this page. Through the study area the river is a free-flowing, winding channel. Both east and west of the study area there are wider sections of the river with more ponding and expansive water surface.

The preservation, management, use and linkage of this key natural resource to the rest of the neighborhood would seem to be an important factor in enhancing the attractiveness of neighborhood homes and maintaining their values, both in the owner and renter categories.

Since the area is sewerred and served by public water supply, soils and groundwater conditions are not so important to development planning as in areas dependent on septic disposal and private wells. A restrictive natural feature that does play a role in site planning is the flood plain of the Hockanum River. Lower elevations south of Burnside Avenue are subject to flood hazard. Coachlight Village has experienced some historic flooding problems. There is a large development tract of 15 acres between Hillside Avenue and Short Reach. Parts of this tract are in the flood plain and this fact will influence the nature of development which is feasible.

The Town has recognized the river as an important asset in the Plan of Development and projects are underway for bike trail and recreational enhancement of this open space. Still, while the river generally lies below Burnside Avenue, there are few opportunities to view the open space or waterway from that street. There are some uses that do tie into the riverway. The East Hartford Middle School, St. Rose School, Hillside Cemetery, Martin Park, the Town Public Works Complex and other miscellaneous town lands do connect with the open space corridor.



Another feature of the area terrain is the slight increase in elevations as you move east along Burnside Avenue. The combination of the slope and the layout of Burnside Avenue afford some distant views of the Hartford skyline as you drive west.

4. *Transportation and Traffic Conditions*

The Burnside Avenue corridor is a principal east-west artery in the overall East Hartford street network. While most of the traffic through the community uses Interstate-84, Burnside Avenue, Silver Lane, Brewer Street and Connecticut Avenue are the key east-west routes with town. Traffic volume along Burnside Avenue runs about 14,000 ADT. Only Main Street and Silver Lane have higher volumes. Burnside is also a local bus route.

Within the study area there are several key intersections. Along Burnside Avenue there are signal controls at Tolland Street, Hillside Street, School Street, Scotland/Francis Streets. On Tolland Street the intersection with School Street is also signalized. The level of service for these intersections was identified in the Town Plan of Development as shown below:

	AM	PM
Burnside/Tolland Street	E	E (intersection rebuilt - 1996)
Burnside/School Street	E	F
Burnside/Scotland/Francis Streets	C	C
Tolland/School Street	C	C
Burnside/Hillside Street	Not Rated	Not Rated

Should Rentschler Field be redeveloped to include a new north-south street it would connect with Hillside and lead to increased volume requiring some intersection upgrades at Burnside Avenue.

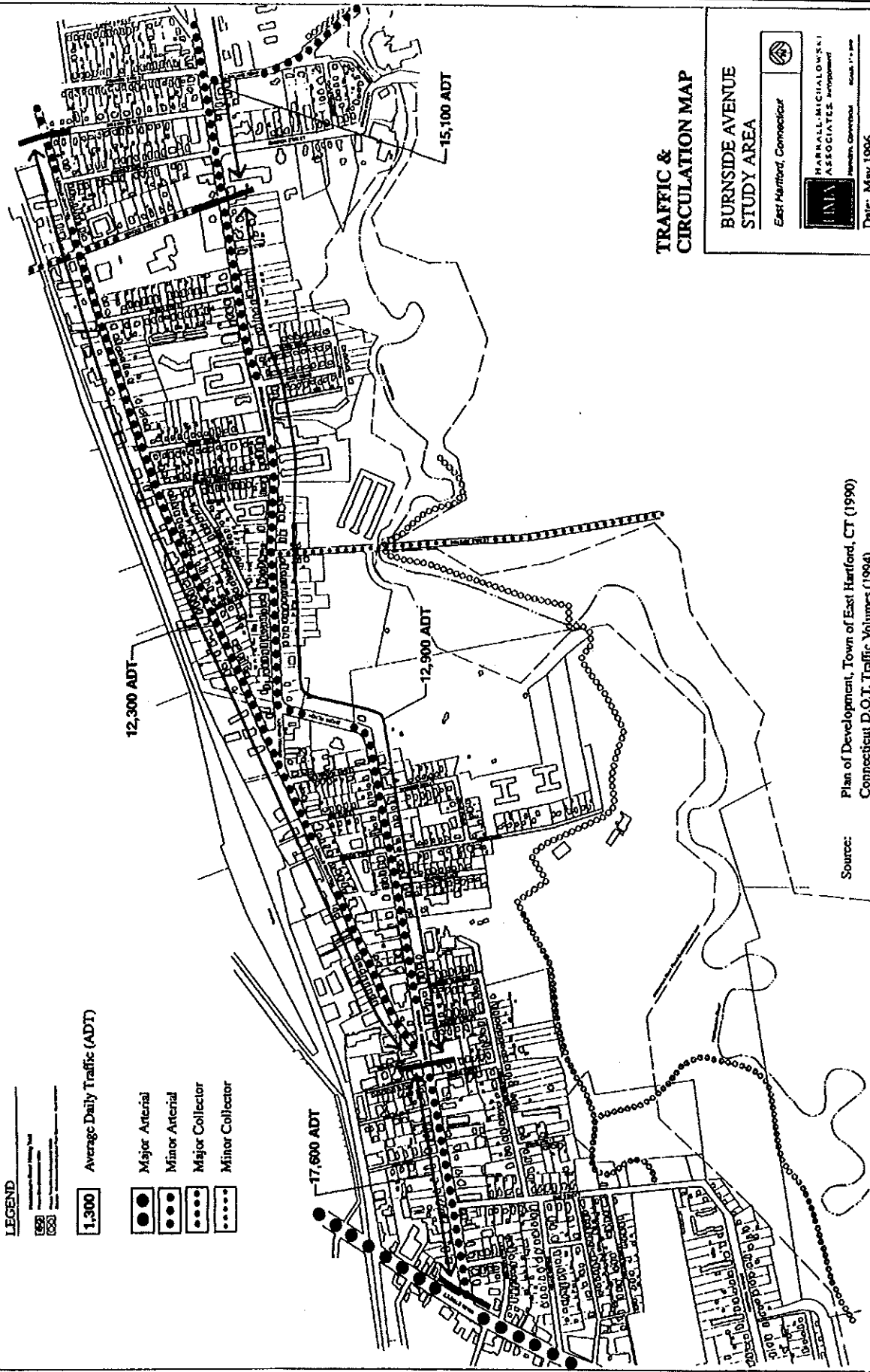
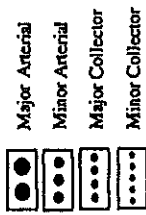
Generally, levels of services at "E" or "F" conditions are considered undesirable. At "E" delay between 45-60 seconds per vehicle are experienced and significant congestion can occur. At "F" levels delays exceed one minute and the intersection capacity is considered over saturated. At both of these conditions vehicles can count on having to stop at the intersection and having to wait in backed up traffic.

Physically, Burnside Avenue has a right-of-way of about 70 feet with four travel lanes. At intersections there is no median stacking and turning lane for left turns. There is on street curbside parallel parking which is controlled by signs posting permitted times. The road is designated as a winter storm route with parking restricted during and after storms. Sidewalks run the length of the street. Bus stops along Burnside Avenue are marked by signs. There are no bus shelters, benches or cut-outs at these stops. In East Hartford generally about 5.9% of commuters to work

LEGEND



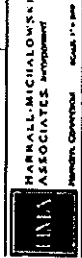
1,300 Average Daily Traffic (ADT)



TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION MAP

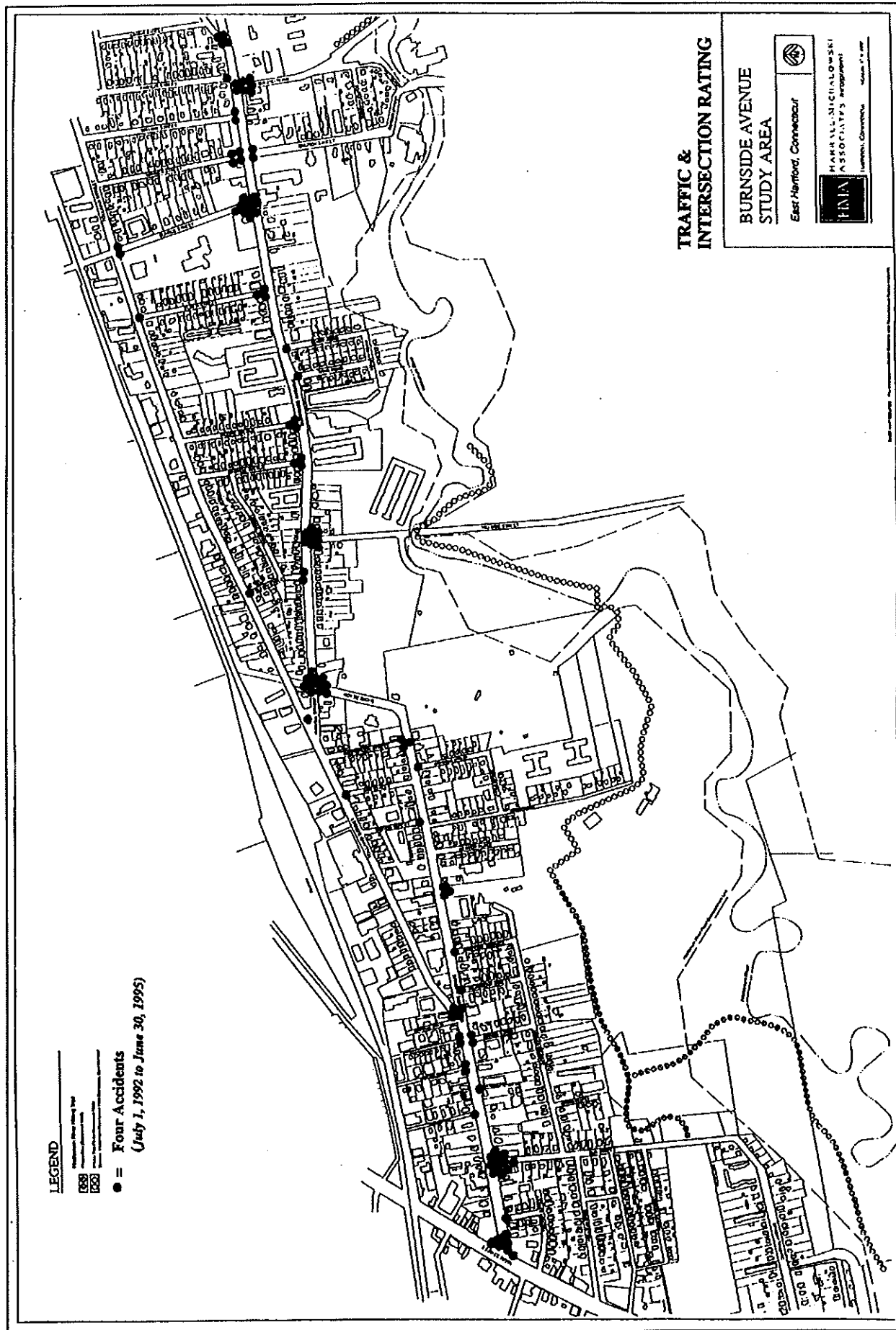
BURNSIDE AVENUE
STUDY AREA

East Hartford, Connecticut



Date: May 1996

Source: Plan of Development, Town of East Hartford, CT (1990)
Connecticut D.O.T. Traffic Volumes (1994)



used the bus system. Within the study area that usage was often higher as shown below for the separate census tracts.

Tract 5104	9.8%
Tract 5113	8.2%

D. Market Analysis

In considering the market potential for various uses within the study area, market data was collected and evaluated for retail, industrial and housing development.

1. *Retail Market*

Within the Town of East Hartford there are only a few key commercial strips. These are Main Street, Connecticut Boulevard, Burnside Avenue and Silver Lane. Along these streets there are five principal shopping centers and numerous smaller retail outlets.

Principal Local Shopping Centers and Their Size:

East Hartford Shopping Center	145,600 sq.ft.
School Street Square	147,569 sq.ft.
Putnam Bridge Plaza	180,000 sq.ft.
Charter Oak Mall	216,063 sq.ft.
Silver Lane Plaza	<u>180,000 sq.ft.</u> 869,232 sq.ft.

Three out of the five plazas include a grocery store as an anchor. The "Big Y" is located in the School Street Plaza. Stop & Shop is located at Silver Lane and the Putnam Bridge Plaza includes Andy's Supermarket. Grocers not represented locally include "Waldbaums", "Shaws" and "Shoprite". However, some of these operations do have stores within a short drive in the Buckland Hills area of Manchester. East Hartford Shopping Center is substantially vacant with ownership seeking to reposition the center.

A review of data for major shopping plazas contained in the National Research Bureau's 1995 Directory of Shopping Centers indicated the following distribution of retail centers "east of the river".

<u>Town</u>	<u>Space</u>	<u>Percent</u>
East Hartford	870,000	18%
South Windsor	70,000	1%
East Windsor	70,000	1%
Vernon	480,000	10%
Manchester	2,820,000	59%
Bolton	20,000	<1%
Glastonbury	<u>440,000</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	4,770,000	100%

The NRB data includes only multi-tenant centers and there are numerous additional free-standing retailers not covered by the above listing. In the Buckland Hills section of Manchester, for example, there is probably an additional 500,000 - 600,000 square feet of space not listed in the NRB directory. Based on the listed space East Hartford has about 18% of the area retail space, with a smaller percentage likely when miscellaneous additional retail outlets are included.

2. *Neighborhood Based Retail Expenditures*

The U.S. Bureau of the Census conducts sample surveys as part of the Census process to develop estimates of consumer retail expenditures by household. These estimates are developed based on income of the household and vary with the amount of income available. Two of the census tracts adjoining the project area have median income close to \$34,000 and one has a median income of almost \$53,000, with the fourth at about \$29,000. To estimate the potential retail expenditures by type the census per household figure is multiplied by the number of households in the area. To develop these estimates the Consultants applied the expenditure figures for the \$30,000 to \$39,999 bracket which is most reflective of the general character of the area.

VI. PLANNING ANALYSIS

Town of East Hartford, Greater Burnside Area, Estimated Buying Potential				
1995 Estimates:				
Population - 14,782				
Households - 6,031				
Selected Retail Category:	Average Household Expenditures:	Estimated Total Expenditures:	Median Sales Per Square Foot	Estimated Supportable Square Feet
Food at Home:	\$3,060	\$18,454,860	\$292.52	63,089
Food Away from Home:	\$1,939	\$11,694,109	\$204.88	57,078
Alcoholic Beverages:	\$442	\$2,665,702	\$214.32	12,438
Smoking Products:	\$348	\$2,098,788	\$159.46	13,162
Personal Care Services:	\$465	\$2,804,415	\$126.62	22,148
Drugs and Medical Supplies	\$319	\$1,923,889		
Furniture:	\$235	\$1,417,285	\$145.92	9,713
Floor Coverings:	\$33	\$199,023	\$145.92	1,364
Major Appliances:	\$119	\$717,689	\$145.92	4,918
Household Textiles:	\$109	\$657,379	\$143.90	4,568
Small Appliances/Housewares:	\$81	\$488,511	\$143.90	3,395
Misc. Household Equipment:	\$487	\$2,937,097	\$143.90	20,411
Apparel & Accessories:	\$1,990	\$12,001,690	\$170.37	70,445
Footwear:	\$339	\$2,044,509	\$175.04	11,680
TV, Radio, Sound Equipment:	\$570	\$3,437,670	\$214.24	16,046
Fees and Admissions:	\$386	\$2,327,966		
Reading Materials:	\$210	\$1,266,510	\$144.12	8,788
Other Entertainment Equipment:	\$221	\$1,332,851	\$159.46	8,359
Housekeeping Supplies	\$422	\$2,545,082	\$157.95	16,113
	\$11,775	\$71,015,025		343,715
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Claritas Corporation; U.S. Department of Labor, Consumer Expenditure Survey;				
Urban Land Institute, Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers:1995; Compiled by HMA Inc.				

When the expenditure dollars for retail items, exclusive automobile purchases, were applied to the area households, the gross potential retail expenditures by neighborhood residents was calculated at about \$71,000,000. As shown in the table of "Estimated Buying Potential" these expenditures are broken down by type of purchase. Based on industry average sales per square foot annually, an estimate of "supportable" retail space in each category was calculated. The total "supportable" space within the neighborhood was about 345,000 square feet. But this is a somewhat theoretical calculation since it disregards competitive space and assumes all resident purchases are made in the neighborhood with no buyers drawn from outside the neighborhood.

In fact, we have shown there are 870,000 square feet of competitive space at shopping plazas in East Hartford and 3,900,000 additional square feet of competition in neighboring towns within convenient driving distance. Most of the stores along Burnside Avenue are under 5,000 square feet and the aggregate space is less than 50,000 square feet in or adaptable to the uses for which sales were noted. The "gravity" model for retail space distribution links volume of sales to size of retail centers. Given this operating model we can expect most retail sales to go out of the neighborhood - to other shopping plazas in East Hartford and to regional retail centers such as Manchester. Once local expenditures have been drawn into those larger centers it becomes very difficult to recapture them back at the neighborhood level unless a large scale retail component is introduced at the neighborhood level.

When the "estimated buying potential" model was applied to East Hartford as a whole, the estimated locally supportable space in the categories noted was about 1,160,000 square feet. It is typical that in these categories 75% of the market is captured at major brand chain stores and principal shopping centers. In fact the local principal shopping center space is just about 75% of the supportable total at about 870,000 square feet.

If the balance of supportable square footage is distributed across neighborhoods based on household distribution, the four tracts surrounding Burnside Avenue would obtain about a 29% share of the 290,000 square foot balance, about 84,000 square feet. This is probably the maximum feasible space along Burnside and, considering established space east of Scotland Road and outside the study area, the street is probably close to saturation.

Expansion of retail space in the neighborhood will likely have to come at the expense of retail space already established, with new space superseding older, obsolete facilities. While the local expenditure potential would not appear to warrant significant commercial expansion, retail is a competitive business and any individual retailer may feel confident he can compete and attract market share from an existing outlet. Confidence in the ability to penetrate a market and capture share will lead stores to enter markets regardless of the saturation level.

Within the context of the present expenditures levels and distribution of competitive space in and around the neighborhood, the retail categories most likely to succeed within the neighborhood are smaller outlets in the restaurant, apparel & accessories, personal care, entertainment and convenience food categories. These are categories for which the potential expenditures and sales per square foot data combined with typical store size indicate a relatively high number of potential stores.

There is the possibility of introducing a large retail facility into the neighborhood if this is deemed desirable. One site is on the 12.5 acre tract between Short Reach and Hillside. This size parcel could accommodate a major commercial plaza with superstore grocery anchor and multiple supporting retailers.

Another possibility would be acquisition, clearance and redevelopment of multiple parcels along Burnside Avenue.

The key issues with any large retail redevelopment proposal are whether it is good strategy when considered in conjunction with Town interest in revitalizing Main Street and the impacts on nearby residences and existing neighborhood businesses. Main Street is close enough to be the neighborhood shopping area for Burnside Avenue residents. Introduction of large retail space along Burnside Avenue will detract from the market drawn to Main Street. It will also have negative consequences for residences and small businesses. Therefore, the Consultant's conclude that Burnside Avenue program emphasis should be on attracting neighborhood scale, convenience retail only and upgrading of existing stores.

3. *Apartment Market*

The East Hartford housing inventory includes about 8,235 rental units and about 1,636 of these are located in the general Burnside neighborhood. So, 20% of the Town of East Hartford's rental housing is located in the area. This inventory includes units in smaller multi-family dwellings as well as units in larger apartment buildings. Within the study area, it appears that about 80% of the rental inventory is in smaller properties and about 20% in apartment buildings.

The town-wide rental vacancy rate per the census data was about 6.0%. Within the census tracts of the study area the vacancy for rental was considerably lower at only 3.3%. The town-wide median rental rate was \$511 and in the Burnside area it ranged from \$504 to \$556 depending on census tract. The vacancy rate has increased significantly since the census with some of the large apartment complexes experiencing major vacancies.

Discussions with local property managers indicate that vacancy and turnover are problems at some of the major apartment complexes. In considering courses of action in the neighborhood, the consultant keeps in mind that the census statistical data was based on a sample and dates back to 1989-90 when the economy was more robust. Information from property managers and area real estate brokers is considered to be a more likely to be an accurate portrayal of current conditions.

Along Burnside Avenue about 690 apartments were identified in buildings of 8 units or larger. The typical building is a two or three story brick structure without elevator service. About 80% of these buildings were constructed from 1960 to 1965. Since 1965, there has been minimal new construction in the apartment category and none in the last 10 years. The "Eastwood" is the newest residential development in the project area, but this was built as a condominium complex.

In fact, there are a number of large condominium projects - Coachlight Village, Lamplighter Village and Eastwoods - which are competitive in the rental category. The condominium conversion and new construction activity has generally been to the detriment of the rental market in communities all across Connecticut. Impacting the study area has been the expansion of condo construction in neighboring towns of South Windsor and Manchester. The impact is two-fold. First, lower priced condo units become affordable substitutes that allow moderate income renters to become owners. Second, the surplus of unsold condo units get placed into the rental inventory and become competitive with rental units. The problem is heightened by the downturn in the real estate price level generally which has drastically reduced both condo and detached single family homes.

Consider that in 1995, the median home sales price in East Hartford was \$90,000 and the median condo sales price was \$67,000. The typical rental rate of \$525 in the Burnside area, after deducting a 20% allowance for taxes and insurance, would support a mortgage of about \$60,000 at prevailing interest rates. That is sufficient to buy into just about any condo in the bottom half of the market or to finance a lower priced detached single family home. In neighboring Manchester, the 1995 median condo sales price was \$80,000 and in South Windsor it was \$94,000. The market pressure from the condo supply tends to push the ceiling down on apartment rental rates and narrow the market for rentals to the more transient and lower income population. In the immediate neighborhood the condos at Coachlight Village have been marketed at \$30,000 to \$40,000 for a one or two bedroom unit.

Within the apartment buildings identified in the study area most units are four room two bedroom apartments. A large component of the units are one bedroom and smaller segments are SRO's, two rooms or five rooms. The distribution tends to be as follows:

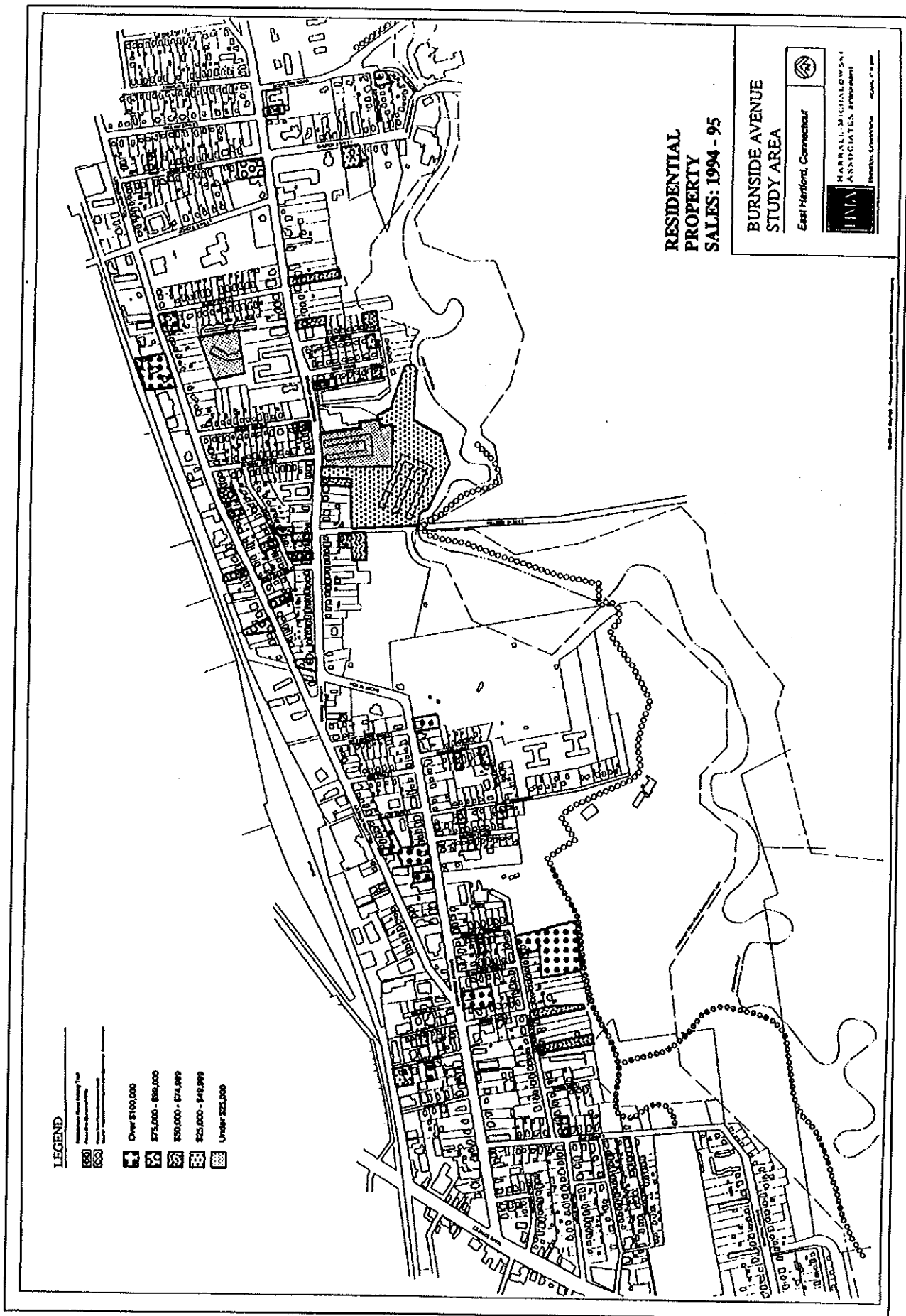
SRO	5%
2 Room Units	15%
3 Room Units	30%
4 Room Units	48%
5 Room Units	<u>2%</u>
	100%

While the market for rentals has been damaged by the condominium boom, there remains an active interest in apartment buildings as income investment properties. A report by Farley Whittier Partners delivered to the 1995 Connecticut Real Estate Conference identified 31 sales of apartment buildings over 20 units in Hartford County. There were 8 sales in East Hartford, representing about 25% of the activity. The East Hartford activity represented about 90% of the sales east of the river, where general sales activity was limited.

For specific East Hartford projects identified by Farley Whittier the sales prices ranged from about \$11,700 to about \$23,600 per unit, with an average of about \$16,200 per unit. One of the sales identified was located within the project area and sold at about \$15,000 per unit, slightly below average, but in the "middle third" of the market. No recent sales data is available but recent purchase offers are reported to be below recent sales price lows, indicating a further decline in market value. Such prices are well below the likely cost to construct such units new. Based on the data collected, the market for new construction of additional apartments or condominiums in the project area would appear to be weak.

The most troubled apartment complexes require large infusions of capital to stabilize their decline and retrofit the properties to current market standards to the extent architecturally feasible. Without such investment continued decline is inevitable with damaging impact on surrounding housing and businesses. Either capital infusion or removal appear to be the options.

Treatment of the other large apartment and condo complexes should probably focus on neighborhood improvements and property management activities to enhance market appeal, occupancy and rental levels. The concentration of some high density housing close to the downtown is a source of market support for Main Street retail activity and neighborhood convenience shops.



4. *Industrial Market*

In the east suburbs of Hartford over the past several years, new construction has been dominated by retail activity. About 50% of the new construction has been retail. But industry has been the second most active category representing about 25% of new projects. However, very little of the industrial activity has been in East Hartford.

The Town of East Hartford has several industrial areas. There is the Pratt and Whitney facility and associated Rentschler Field. Other areas for industry are along Burnham Avenue close to the South Windsor town line, where there are some industrial cul-de-sacs with half acre to one and a quarter acre sites available. These are typically being developed for small warehouse and distribution operations. There is also the Prestige Industrial Park, which tends to be characterized by large industrial operations with a concentration in warehousing and distribution, but also including light industry.

Other industrial areas are at McKee Street and Oakland Avenue, at Legget Street and Rumsey Road, and in the study area along the length of Tolland Street. Another existing combined heavy commercial and industrial area is the North Meadows section which the Plan of Development recommends for future redevelopment to a combination of high-rise residential and research and development.

One of the apparent reasons that there has been limited new industrial construction in East Hartford is that there is very limited land available for new buildings. Most of North Meadows is built-up. There are only one or two possible sites at Prestige Industrial Park. The Burnham Avenue area probably has the most sites available, but these are small and less than a half dozen in number.

While new construction has been limited, the sales activity, in the industrial category has been active. From 1987-1993 about 1.5 million feet of industrial space sold in East Hartford and that represented about 25% of the sales in the area. The level of sales activity suggests East Hartford is still a desirable industrial location.

As noted, the main concentration of industrial activity in the study area is along Tolland Street. The total industrial type space along the street is about 286,000 square feet. Most of the facilities are smaller sized buildings. Only seven of thirty-five buildings are over 10,000 square feet. Overall, the buildings range from under 1,000 square feet to an exceptionally large facility of just over 67,000 square feet and average about 8,400 square feet. This is consistent with the size of area companies. Reference to Hall's Directory of Manufacturing Firms and Directory of Service firms indicated that study area companies tended to be smaller businesses, usually with 5 to 50 employees.

The buildings in this area also tend to be older structures. The typical industrial building on the street was constructed in 1949. Most of the buildings were originally constructed as warehouse facilities or vehicle service garage facilities. Approximately 200,000 square feet are warehouses, about 40,000 square feet are service garage and 34,000 square feet comprise manufacturing space. There are only four scattered parcels along the street that are not already developed and some of these may be in use with an associated neighboring parcel. While most of the parcels on the north side Tolland Street back up to the railroad tracks, there are no service spurs indicating that rail access is not important to these particular uses.

Since there are half acre to acre and a quarter sites available at the Burnham Avenue Industrial Park where prices have ranged from \$75,000 to \$125,000 per lot, the economics of the market would seem to be marginal at best for private acquisition and clearance of residential properties in the industrial zone since most are situated on narrow lots of only 7,500 to 10,000 square feet.

Over the long term, the desirable land use solution would be to see some of the residential properties consolidated and either combined with existing adjacent industrial uses or redeveloped to create a more uniformly commercial/industrial corridor on the north side of Tolland Street. Some special attention should be paid to any requests for conversion of the residences to commercial use. Conversions of such structures on non-conforming lots can create a parking problem at the site. The conversion can also inflate the value of the property and thus further delay the point at which redevelopment might become feasible.

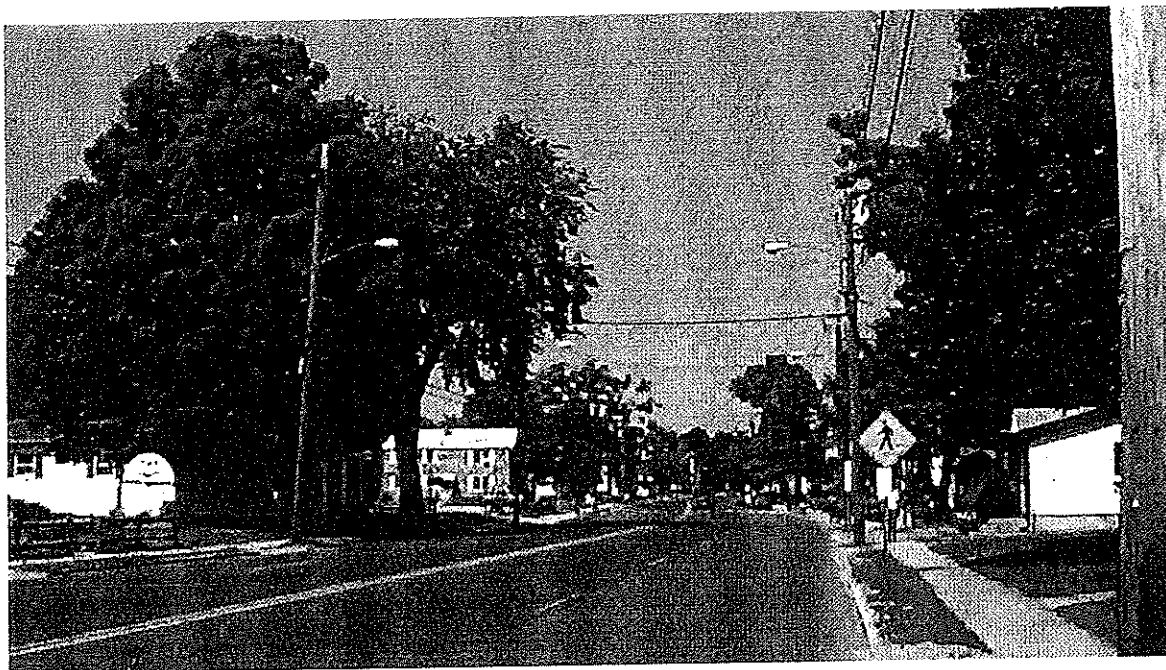
If this area were to be considered a future potential relocation area for industrial and heavy commercial uses now in the North Meadows, then, some broader redevelopment would be required to create adequate sites to accommodate such moves. The section of the neighborhood between Tolland Street and Burnside Avenue, from Burnside to Bidwell would seem to be the most logical site for such a project. Uses in this area are mixed, but are more predominantly commercial/industrial than in the blocks further east on Tolland. This is also an area designated as proposed commercial development in the Town's adopted Plan of Development. As an industrial enclave, the streets through this section, Signor, Ann and Westbrook could be terminated as cul-de-sacs off Tolland Street with industrial uses focused toward Tolland Street and the Burnside frontage maintained for uses more consistent with the retail/office/residential mix along that street.

This approach might be physically feasible and find some demand waiting in the small industrial site segment of the market. However, the problems in pursuing such a redevelopment are expected to be the high costs of site acquisition relative to potential resale value and the substantial relocation of existing owners and tenants that it would involve.

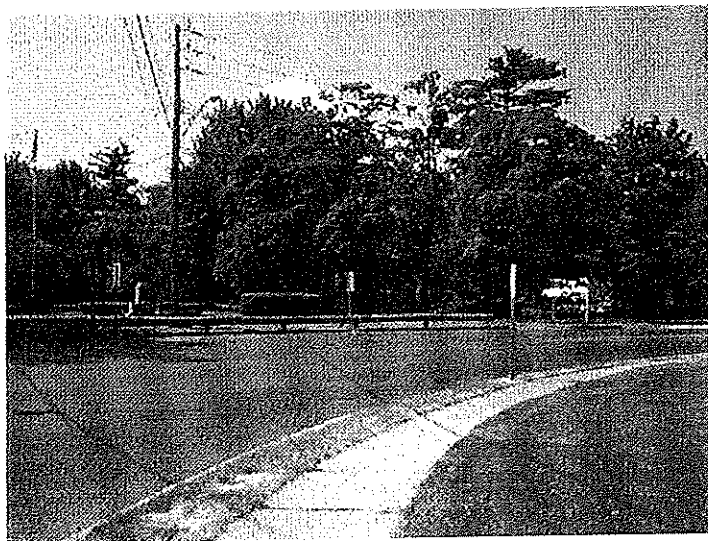
APPENDIX I

Photo-Reconnaissance of Burnside Avenue Study Area

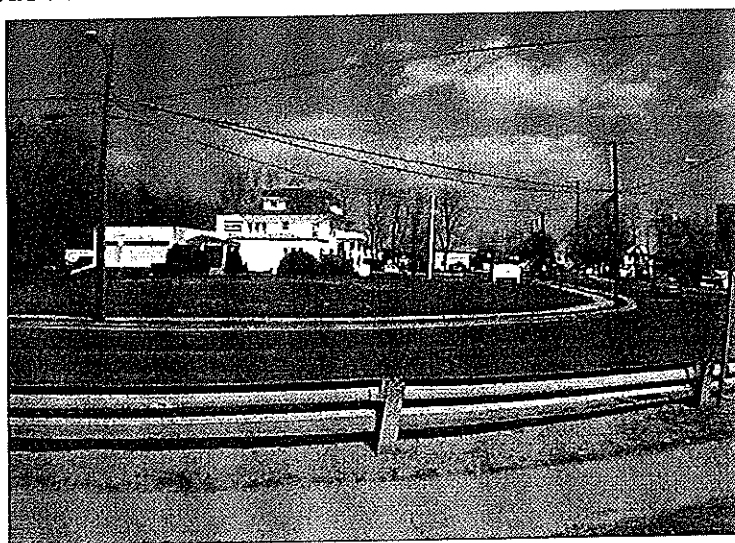
Views from the Road: Burnside Avenue



Upper Burnside Avenue



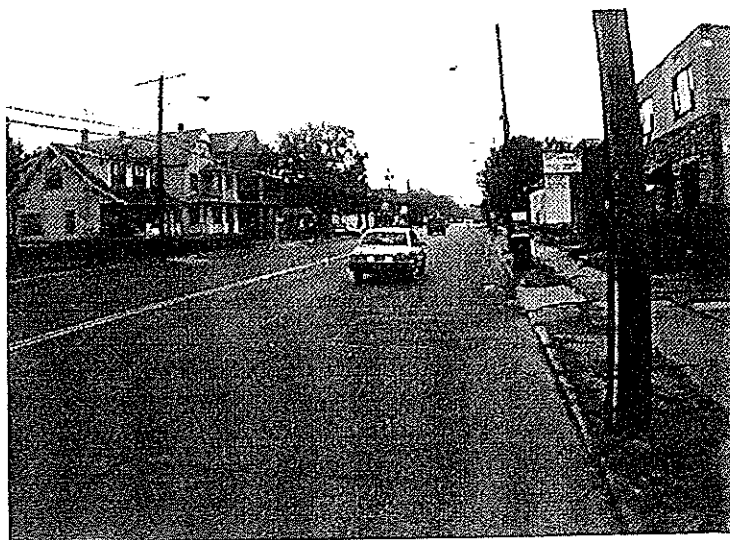
View West at Short Reach



View East at Short Reach



Lower Burnside Avenue

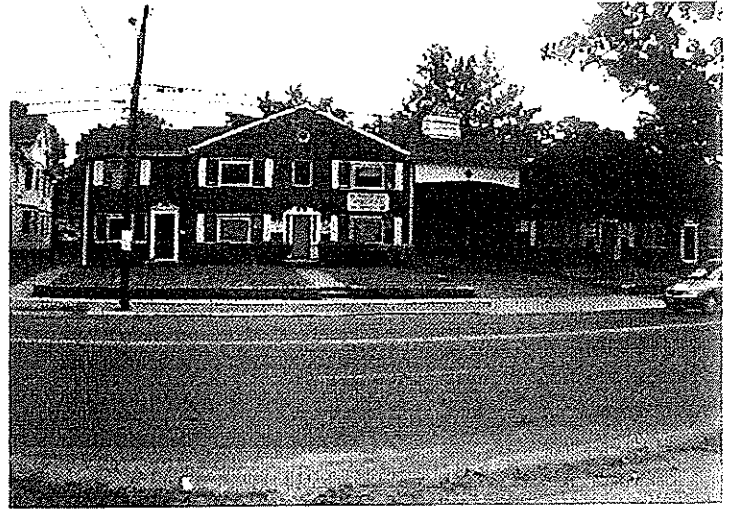


View West

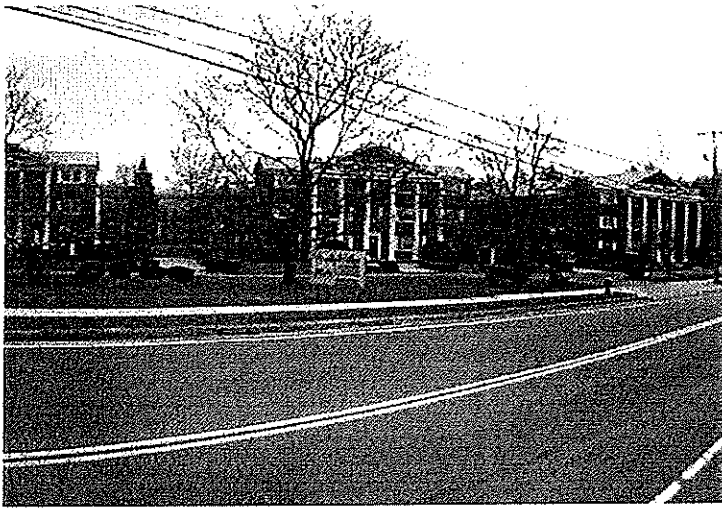
Major Multi-Family Housing



Eastwood Condos - 421 Tolland Street



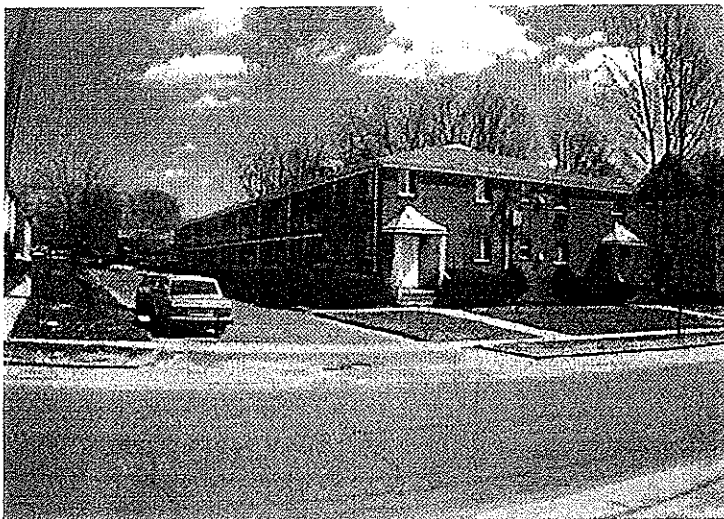
Burnside Apts. - 539 - 541 Burnside Avenue



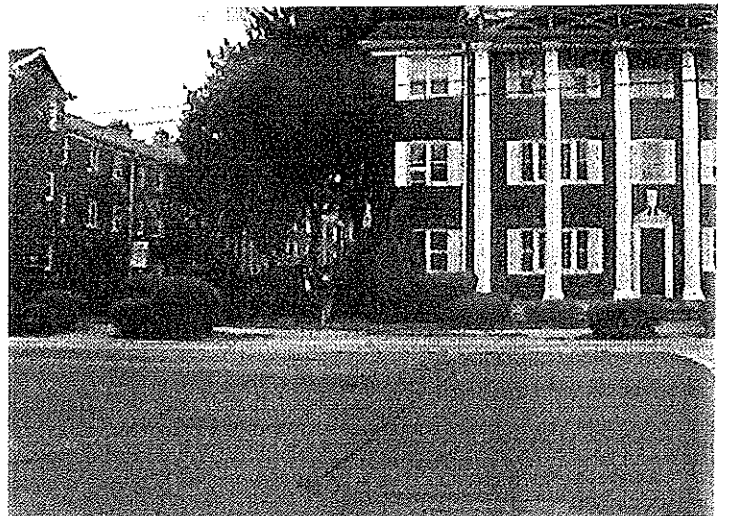
Coachlight Village - 30 Hillside Avenue



8 Turtle Creek Lane

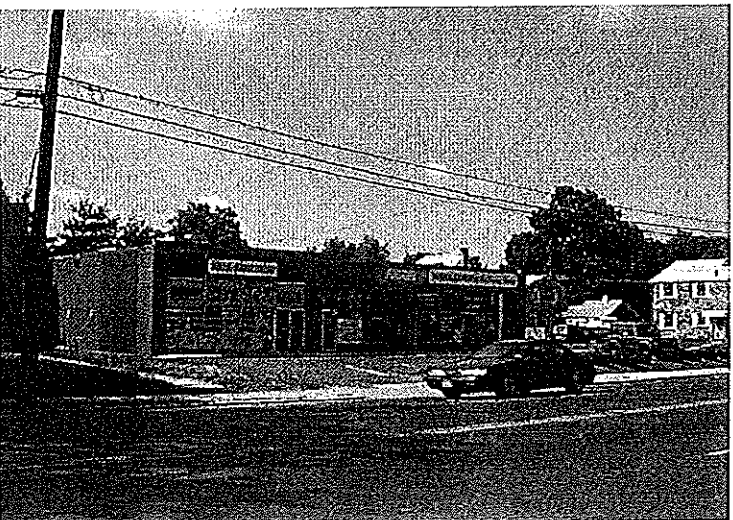


50 Church Street

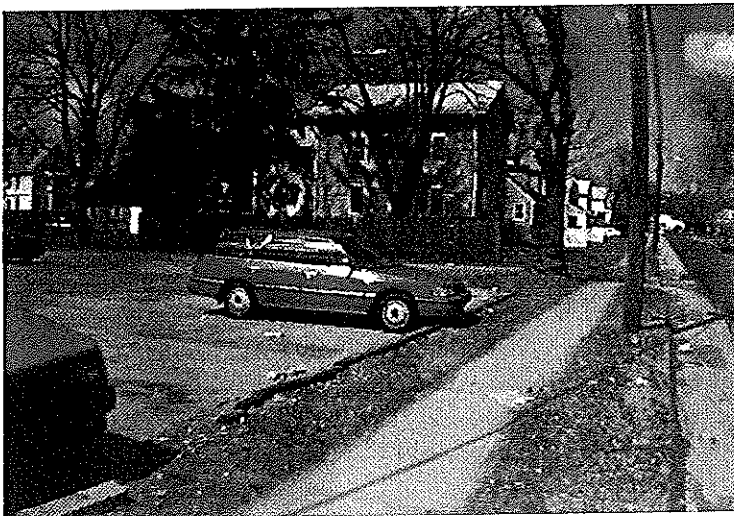
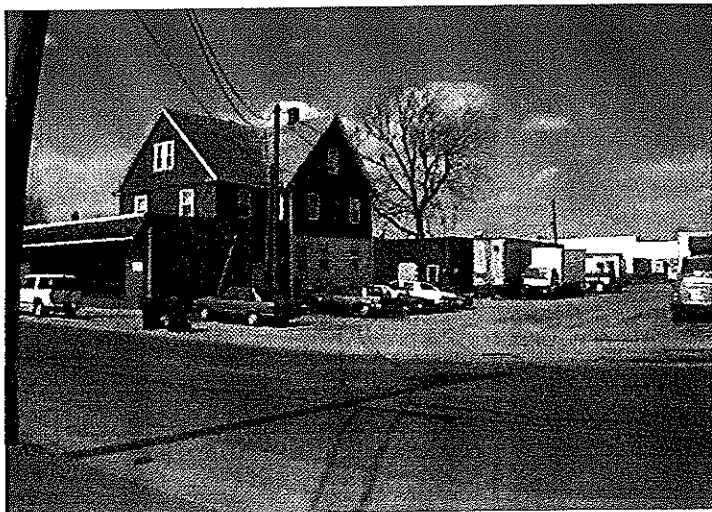
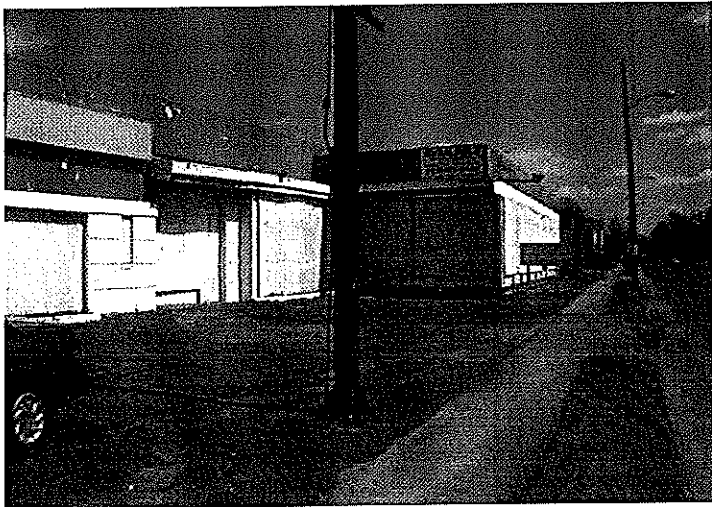
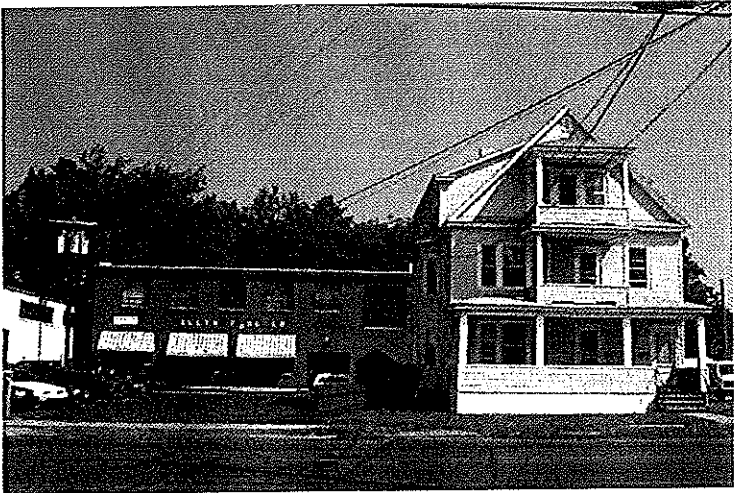
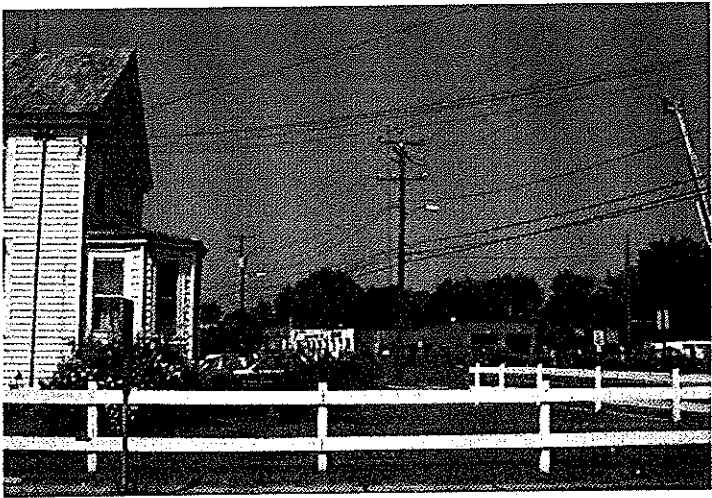


Lamplight Village - 505 - 509 Burnside Avenue

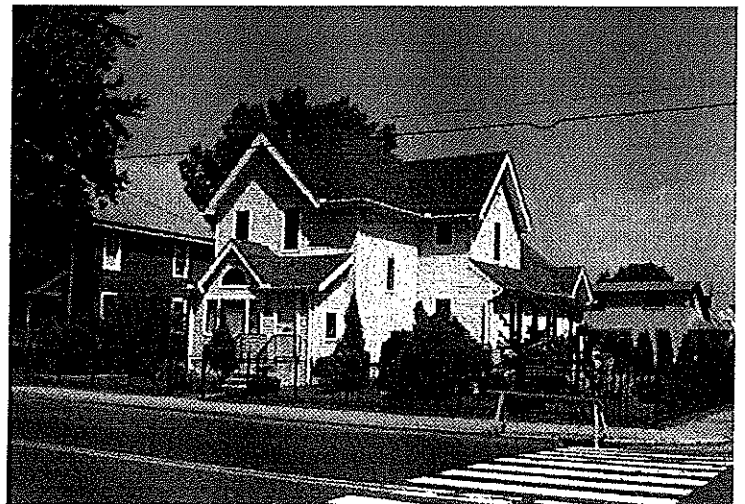
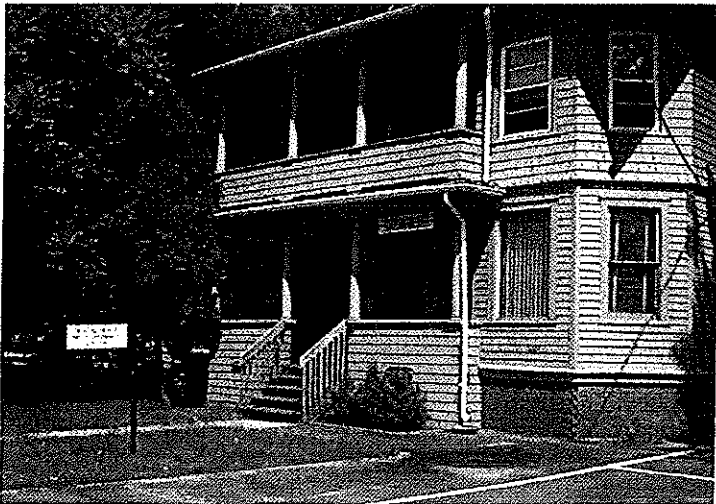
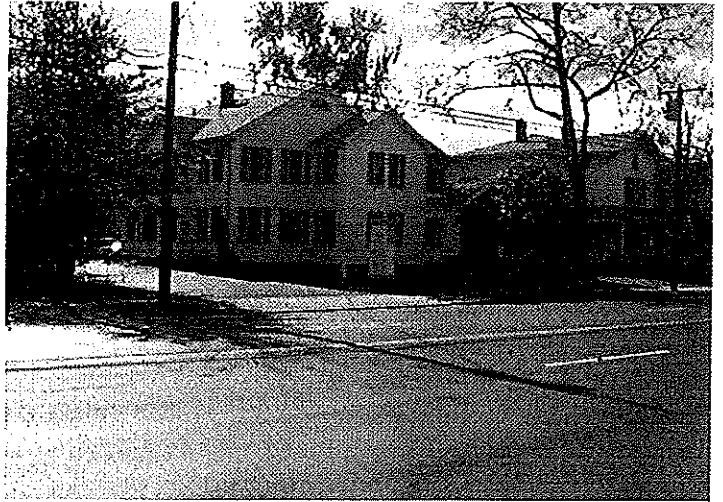
Neighborhood Commercial



Land Use Conflicts



Office Conversions



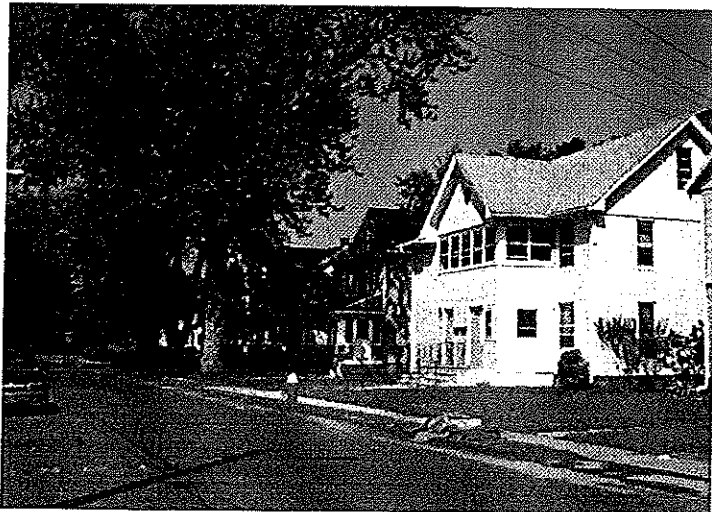
Residential Development



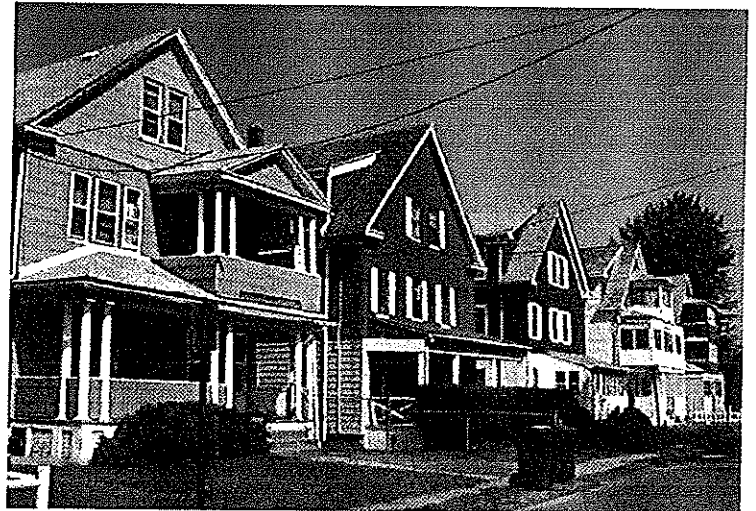
Bidwell Avenue



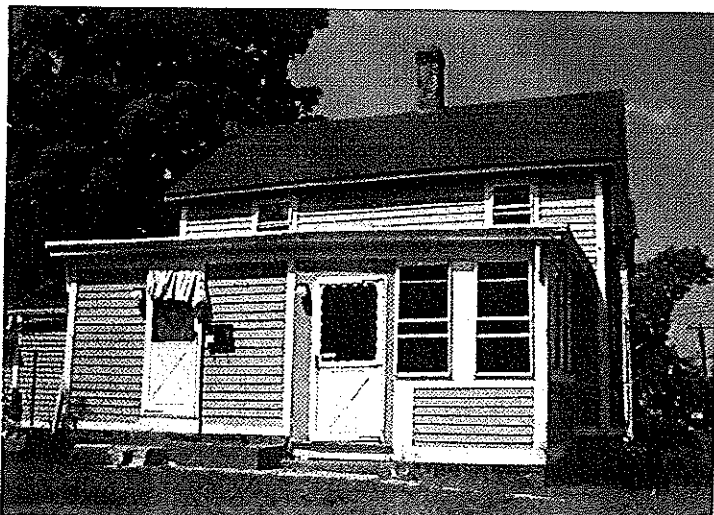
Elmer Street



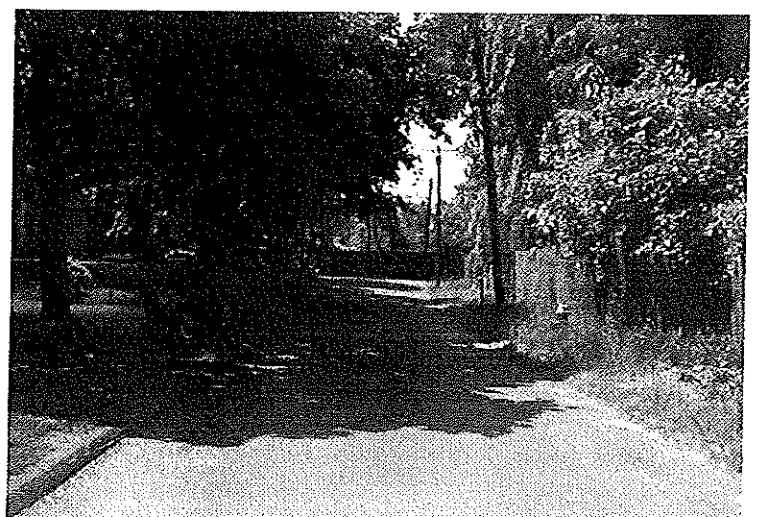
Daniel Street



Bidwell Avenue

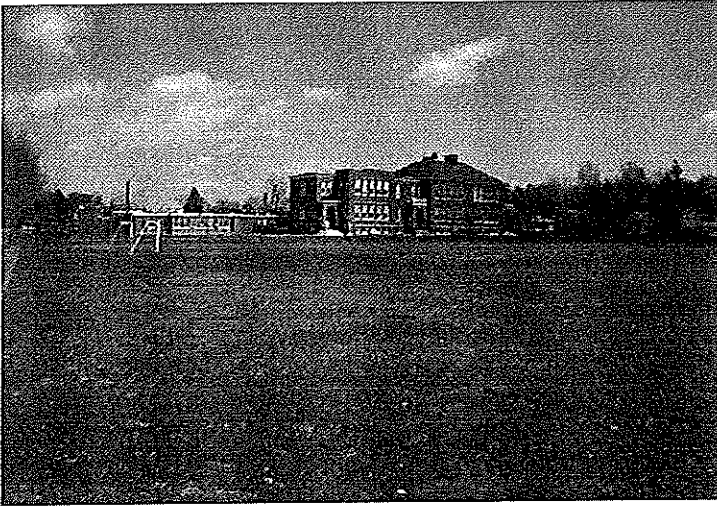


Burnside Avenue

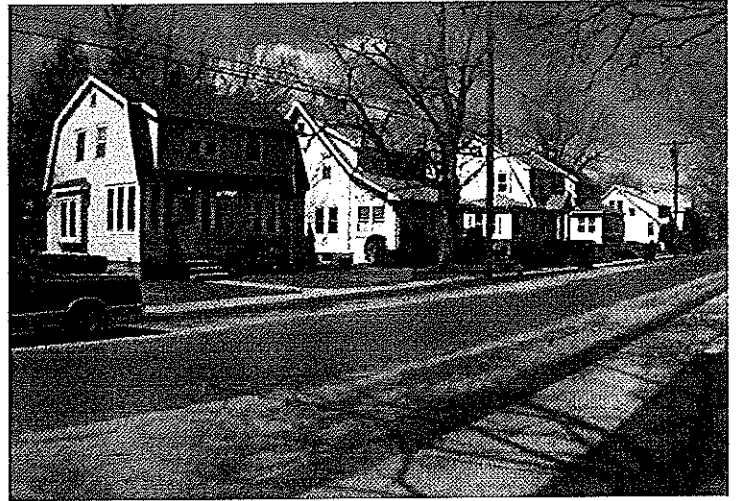


End of Latimer Street

Burnside Neighborhood Assets



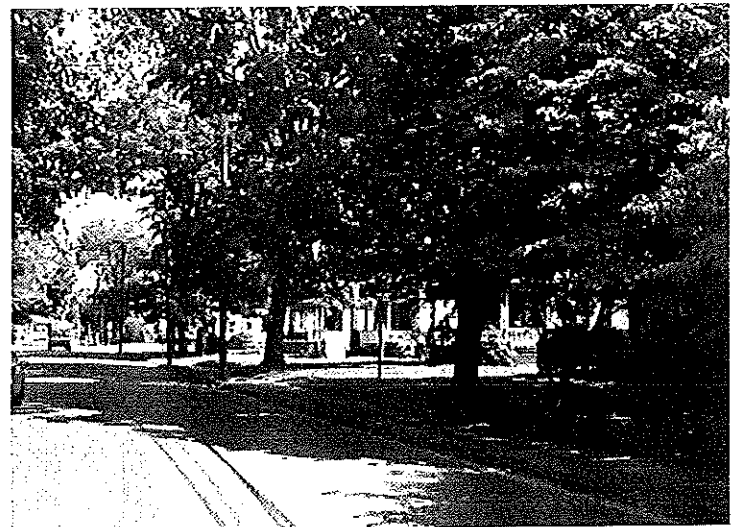
Board of Education & Playfield



Single Family Homes, Westbrook Street



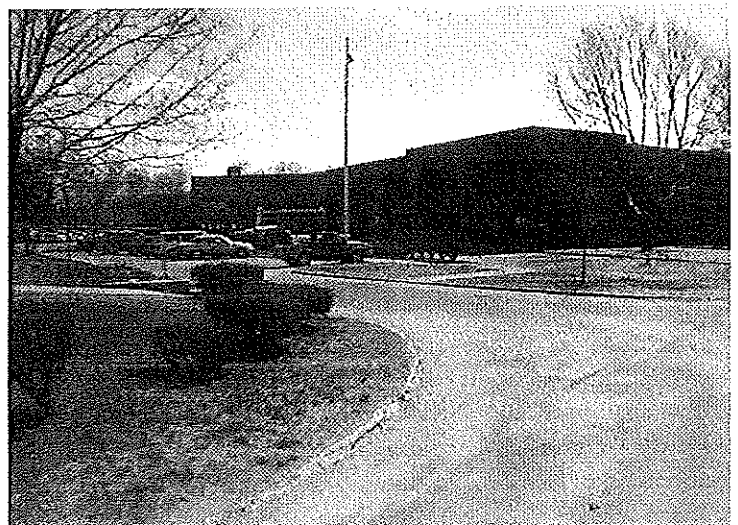
Martin Park



Residential Street, Elmer Street



Community Policing



East Hartford Middle School