

neighborhood revitalization zone plan



Black Rock Neighborhood Bridgeport, Connecticut

FINAL DRAFT: March 8, 2008

With Special Appreciation

The NRZ Planning Committee extends special appreciation to the following stakeholders in the Black Rock community for their involvement, support, ideas, and collaboration throughout the planning process.

City Staff and Consultants

Nancy Hadley, Tom Coble, George Estrada, Lawrence Kenney and Tom Corso

Planning Committee Members

Residents

Lori Baker
Don Greenberg
Scott Hughes
Laura Hurwitz
John Lee
Dan Leito
Monique Lindsay
James Wijnberg
Suzanne Dreyer
Cody Smolik
Kraig Steffens
Phil Young
Frank Basler

Small Business

Miguel Tomasio

Large Business

George Krawiec

Churches/Religious

Rev. Beth Anderson
Bishop Patrick Kelly

Nonprofit/ Community

Phil Blagys
Kristine DeMarco

Public Sector

Donna Curran
Angie Staltaro
Michael Nidoh

Special Appreciation

Daisy Young
Edie Cassidy
Janet Habansky
Steve Tyliszczak
Gail Robinson

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I. Executive Summary



Black Rock is the neighborhood in Bridgeport, Connecticut known for its stunning open space and beautiful waterfront access, strong arts community, high-quality residences, and interesting commercial corridor. While the neighborhood is growing and becoming stronger, it is not immune to the same issues that face the rest of Bridgeport, including high tax rates, a population with low educational attainment, blight, vacant lots with high visibility, and blight.

Recognizing that the community has yet to reach its potential in economic growth and quality of life for its residents, the Black Rock community has come together to develop its Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. While it had been forming for some time, the NRZ process officially began in May 2007. Through numerous public meetings, interviews, surveys, research, and data analysis, the following draft has been developed to guide the Black Rock neighborhood revitalization effort.

The plan, in total, consists of thirty-five recommendations, which are listed on Page 34 with detailed explanations on the pages immediately following them. These thirty-five recommendations focus on key themes that came up repeatedly during our discussions, including: Environment and Open Space; Arts, Culture and Entertainment; Zoning, Land Use and Historic Preservation; Business and Economic Development; Design Review and Development Standards; Circulation, Access, Transportation and Parking; Quality of Life; and Education.

The major recommendations which were heard multiple times were:

- Participate in redesigning Ellsworth Park and PT Barnum Park, and developing the waterfront Linear Park
- Foster and support the arts in Black Rock, including encouraging artist loft development and supporting the development of an arts center
- Develop guidelines for and ratify a Conservation Overlay Zone
- Preserve the neighborhood's historic districts and create preservation assistance for these districts
- Draft and promote a dock ordinance
- Establish a liaison within the City for business and neighborhood development in Black Rock
- Eliminate inappropriate commercial uses
- Identify, encourage, and support high-priority development opportunities
- Plan for the development of Brewster Street
- Establish Black Rock Village District and guidelines
- Create commercial rehabilitation and façade improvement programs and plan streetscape improvements
- Improve municipal parking lots, explore new municipal parking options, and enforce on-street parking regulations
- Provide traffic lights or other traffic-calming devices where needed
- Improve infrastructure at Black Rock's neighborhood schools and build partnerships between the schools and the community

Swift implementation is critical to successful completion of these and other recommendations, as is support both from the City of Bridgeport, the State of Connecticut and other stakeholders.

II. Purpose and Background of NRZ Strategy

WHAT IS AN NRZ?

The Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) process was established by the Connecticut General Assembly in the State of Connecticut in 1995. The legislation outlined a process that encouraged stakeholders in a community to collaborate with all levels of government to improve neighborhoods that were affected by adverse or blighted conditions. The legislation requires the neighborhood to work together to determine its priorities and create a plan to revitalize the area. Once this plan is developed, submitted, and approved, the neighborhood can be designated as an NRZ, or a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. One main benefit of becoming an NRZ is the ability to bypass often onerous regulations and rules that might otherwise impede an implementation process.¹

TYPICAL NRZ PLANNING STEPS

Typically, the NRZ planning process includes the following steps:

- **Assembling the community and the planners.** During this stage, the community leaders, associations, property owners, businesses, agencies, organizations, and residents all come together to start to work on the planning process. With the help of planning consultants, these communities start to identify the highest priority development needs in their neighborhood and identify the projects that will revitalize their local area. In this neighborhood, the Black Rock Stakeholders have been assembled and meeting regularly since May 2007.
- **Learning about the needs and priorities of the community and seeking input.** Both the planners and the stakeholders together work to create venues for public input and gather data and information to inform the highest priority projects that will be included in the plan. Input is sought through workshops, surveys, interviews, informal conversations, and data analysis. The process in Black Rock consisted of extensive data collection and analysis, interviews and surveys, two public input workshops, and a one-day design charrette.
- **Developing and refining recommendations.** After data has been collected and input has been incorporated, the planning consultants develop draft recommendations which are then refined by the stakeholders.
- **Drafting the NRZ Plan.** After agreement is reached on the recommendations, the NRZ plan is drafted, reviewed, refined, and submitted to the State.
- **Implementing the projects identified in the plan.** Many of the projects can be immediately implemented, and others may be eligible for assistance (e.g., technical support).



THE BLACK ROCK NRZ PLANNING PROCESS

Black Rock initiated its formal planning process to seek the NRZ designation in May 2007. The process of applying to become an NRZ contained several steps, including:

- Data collection on demographics, crime, zoning and land use, housing stock, historic districts, coastal management areas, traffic conditions, proposed public improvements, proposed new developments, real and personal property tax, property identifications
- Input provided during monthly Black Rock Planning Committee Meetings
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, August 4, 2007
- Input provided through a Public Workshop held on Saturday, September 15, 2007
- Input provided through a Design Charrette held on Saturday, October 13, 2007
- Input provided through surveys and interviews with over 60 residents (see Appendix B for interviewee list).
- Input provided through surveys and interviews with 32 business owners (see Appendix B for interview list).

¹ State of CT Office of Policy Management, "Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Strategic Planning Guidelines," pp 1-2.

LIMITATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are based on our analysis of the information available to us. We assume that the information is correct, complete, and reliable. To the best of our ability, we analyzed trends and the information available to us in drawing conclusions and making the appropriate recommendations. Our analysis does not take into account the potential impact of major economic shocks on the national, regional, or local economies, nor does it take into account any generally unforeseen conditions. We strongly recommend that any actions taken in response to this report are carefully considered and analyzed on their own merits based on the specific circumstance at the time of implementation.

DRAFT

IV. Neighborhood Characteristics and Economic Profile

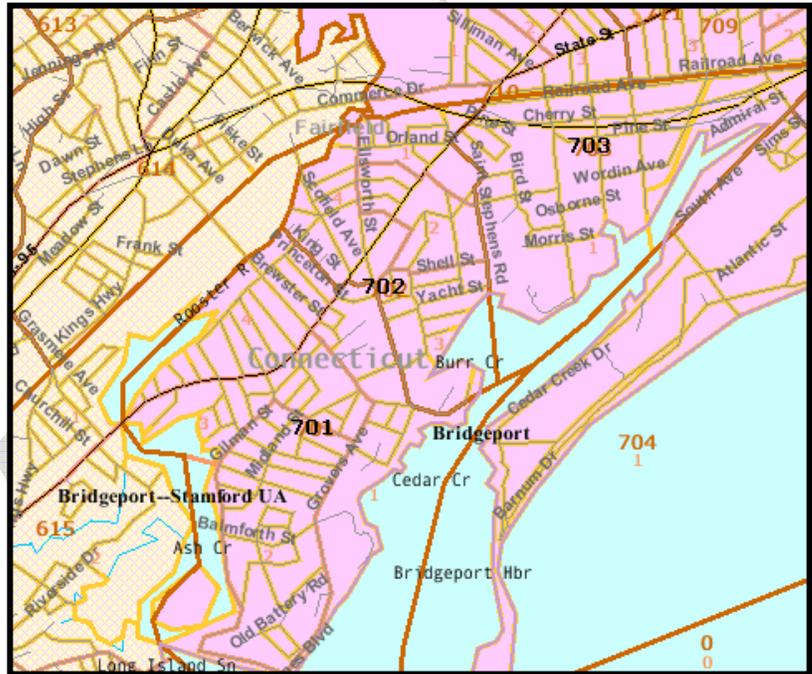
A. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The Black Rock neighborhood is in the southwest side of Bridgeport, Connecticut and contains a population of approximately 9,000 residents. Overall, Black Rock residents are slightly older and have a higher level of education than Bridgeport residents do as a whole. The Black Rock neighborhood is significantly more diverse than the County and the State but slightly less diverse than the rest of the City of Bridgeport. Specifically:

Population Size and Density. The Black Rock neighborhood contains an estimated population of between 8,863 (Tracts 701 and 702) and 9,983 (which includes all of Tract 703). In general, Bridgeport is a denser area than Fairfield County and the State, with a population density of 8,996 persons per square mile (2005), compared with 1,453 per square mile in Fairfield County and 706 persons per square mile in the State.

Population Growth. Bridgeport’s population is growing at a pace close to that of Connecticut and the region overall, with a 0.5% growth per year anticipated between 2005 and 2010, compared with a 0.5% growth rate anticipated for Fairfield County and a 0.7% increase anticipated for statewide in Connecticut.

Race and Ethnicity. The Black Rock neighborhood is less diverse than the rest of Bridgeport, although it is more diverse than Fairfield County and Connecticut as a whole. Compared with 81% of Connecticut’s population that is White, 59% of Black Rock residents are White. Bridgeport as a whole has 46% of people identifying as White. Again, the percentage of African Americans in Black Rock at 22% is lower than in the rest of Bridgeport at 28%, however, it is higher than the County (10%) and the State (9%). Black Rock’s Asian population is consistent with Bridgeport, Fairfield County, and Connecticut. The “other” category in the Black Rock Neighborhood includes those identifying as something other than the categories offered (11%), and those who identified as two or more races (5%). The Black Rock neighborhood contains 2,276 individuals (23%) who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino.



| Race | Black Rock Tracts | | Bridgeport | | County | | State | |
|-----------|-------------------|-----|------------|-----|---------|-----|-----------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| White | 5,920 | 59% | 65,924 | 46% | 708,206 | 78% | 2,858,875 | 81% |
| Black | 2,190 | 22% | 40,511 | 28% | 88,379 | 10% | 318,835 | 9% |
| Asian | 270 | 3% | 6,330 | 4% | 38,839 | 4% | 117,997 | 3% |
| Native Am | 50 | 1% | 1,032 | 1% | 2,792 | 0% | 14,298 | 0% |
| Other | 1,540 | 16% | 30,140 | 21% | 71,047 | 8% | 224,275 | 6% |
| Total | 9,979 | | 143,937 | | 909,263 | | 3,534,280 | |

* Black Rock data based on 2000 census for Tracts 701, 702, and 703. City, County, and State data based on 2005 CT DECD.

Gender. Black Rock’s gender breakdown is consistent with county, state, and national breakdowns, with 49.1% men and 50.9% women.

Age. In Black Rock, 20% of residents are between the ages of 25 and 34 years. Another 17% are between 35 and 44 years old. Looking at the table below, it is interesting to note that Black Rock’s age breakdown is very consistent with that of

Fairfield County and Connecticut. However, compared to the rest of Bridgeport, it shows fewer residents under the age of 25 and a larger group concentrated between the ages of 25 and 64.

| Age | Black Rock Census Tracts | | Bridgeport | | County | | State | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----|------------|-----|---------|-----|-----------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| 0 to 24 years | 3,332 | 33% | 57,593 | 40% | 301,572 | 33% | 1,149,329 | 33% |
| 25 to 64 years | 5,510 | 55% | 69,501 | 48% | 486,733 | 54% | 1,901,623 | 54% |
| 65 years & older | 1,141 | 11% | 16,843 | 12% | 120,958 | 13% | 483,328 | 14% |
| Total | 9,983 | | 143,937 | | 909,263 | | 3,534,280 | |

* Black Rock data based on 2000 census for Tracts 701, 702, and 703. City, County, and State data based on 2005 CT DECD.

Educational Attainment. Black Rock demonstrates a high level of educational attainment in certain census tracts of the neighborhood. A total of 83% of the State’s population has at least a high-school diploma, and Black Rock has 77% of its residents attaining a high-school degree while only 65% of Bridgeport residents have a high-school diploma. In this neighborhood, 29% of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher (9% have a graduate or professional degree). Black Rock’s educational attainment is not consistent throughout the neighborhood. Specifically, in census tract 703, only 37.9% of residents have a high-school degree.

| Education | Tract 701 | | Tract 702 | | Tract 703 | | Bridgeport | | State | |
|---|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Less than 9 th grade | 249 | 6% | 350 | 14% | 86 | 23% | not avail | | not avail | |
| 9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma | 406 | 10% | 303 | 12% | 145 | 39% | not avail | | not avail | |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 795 | 21% | 854 | 34% | 109 | 29% | 26,404 | 31% | 653,300 | 28% |
| Some college | 791 | 20% | 397 | 16% | 15 | 4% | 18,137 | 22% | 553,667 | 24% |
| Post-secondary degree or more | 1,646 | 42% | 611 | 24% | 17 | 5% | 10,332 | 12% | 720,994 | 31% |
| Total | 3,887 | | 2,515 | | 372 | | 143,937 | | 3,534,280 | |

* Black Rock data based on 2000 census for Tracts 701, 702, and 703. City, County, and State data based on 2005 CT DECD.

B. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Despite negative reports about Bridgeport’s overall housing stock, described by a housing stock analysis as part of the City of Bridgeport’s pending Housing Policy as “generally poor,” the housing stock in Black Rock is exceptional when compared not only to Bridgeport proper but to other Connecticut cities as well.

- A significant number of homes in Black Rock are owner-occupied.
- In 2000, 43% of Bridgeport residents owned their own home (compared to 65% in the county). At the same time in Black Rock, 40% of residents owned their own homes. This rate is exceeded only by seven out of Bridgeport’s reported 17 neighborhoods. Numbers reflecting ownership rates in Black Rock and the nation seem to be steadily increasing.
- The nation’s sub-prime mortgage crisis has taken its toll on many American cities and towns, yet Black Rock seems to be faring well in sustaining low levels of abandonment and high ownership levels.
- The average sale price of a home in Black Rock exceeds every other Bridgeport neighborhood. Between 2004 and 2006, the average sale price of a single-family home in Black Rock was \$409,860. For a multi-family house, the average sale price was \$330,386 during the same time period.

| | Black Rock 2000 | Bridgeport |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Owner-Occupied | 1,655 | 21,758 |
| Renter-Occupied | 2,778 | 28,549 |
| Median Year Built | 1952 | 1952 |
| Median Gross Rent | \$563 | \$671 |
| Median Value | \$128,150 | \$107,700 |
| # Units per Structure | | |
| 1 | 1,010 | 17,993 |
| 2 or Duplex | 908 | 9,644 |
| 3 or 4 | 1,192 | 11,161 |
| 5-49 | 1,101 | 10,097 |
| 50 or more | 526 | 5,427 |
| Mobile home | 11 | |

Data source: 2000 census for Tracts 701, 702, and 703.

C. INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Within the Black Rock neighborhood, the median household income ranges from \$12,469 to \$47,517, depending on census tract. All census tracts show a median household income that is significantly below that of the City of Bridgeport (\$51,262 in 2005), Fairfield County (\$72,573), and the State (\$59,761).

| Median Household Income Level | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Tract 701 | \$47,517 |
| Tract 702 | \$31,225 |
| Tract 703 | \$12,469 |

** Black Rock data based on 2000 census.*

In Bridgeport:

- 62% of households earn less than \$50,000 a year.
- 53% of households are renters and 47% are homeowners.
- Housing price increases and rent increases are going up faster than incomes.
- Vacancy rates are low in rental housing and new construction is largely beyond the incomes of most residents.
- 40% of households are rent burdened.
- Earnings are rising at two-thirds the country’s rate.
- Housing price increases and rent increases are going up faster than Bridgeport incomes.
- Bridgeport’s area median income (AMI) is currently \$79,900 for a family of four.

D. WORKFORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

Of the 5,046 neighborhood residents who are employed, approximately one-third (34%) are working in management, professional and related occupations. Another third (31.7%) are employed in sales and office jobs. Service occupations consist of 17% of employment in Black Rock. Construction, extraction, and maintenance, as well as production, transportation, and material moving occupations are each 8.5% of occupations for Black Rock residents. Farming, fishing and forestry occupations consist of less than 1% of occupations for residents of Black Rock. While the State boasts an unemployment rate of 4.2%, the estimated rate in Bridgeport is 7.2%, which is fourth-highest in the state after Hartford (9.4%), Waterbury (7.4%) and New Britain (7.3%). The Bridgeport workforce is estimated to be approximately 62,000 people. Currently nearly 58,000 are working and 4,473 are unemployed.²

Employment

| Employed Population 16 years and over | 5,824 | |
|---|--------------|-------|
| Occupations | | |
| Management, professional and related | 1,724 | 34.2% |
| Sales and office | 1,599 | 31.7% |
| Service | 858 | 17.0% |
| Production, transportation, and material moving | 430 | 8.5% |
| Construction, extraction, and maintenance | 427 | 8.5% |
| Farming, fishing and forestry | 14 | <1.0% |

* Black Rock data based on 2000 census.

E. RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY

The Black Rock neighborhood has many community resources, including:

Schools

- Black Rock Preschool and Child Care Center – 233 Bennett Street
- Black Rock School – 545 Brewster Street, grades K-6
- Bridgeport Regional Vocational Aquaculture School – 60 St. Stephens Road
- Longfellow School Net 8 – 139 Ocean Terrace, grades PreK-8
- Park City Academy – 86 Whittier Street, alternative education
- Make the Grade Opportunity School – 86 Whittier Street, alternative education
- St. Ann School – 521 Brewster Street

Nonprofit Organizations

- Black Rock Art Center / International Performing Arts – 2838 Fairfield Avenue
- Black Rock Senior Center – 2676 Fairfield Avenue
- Burroughs Community Center – 2470 Fairfield Avenue
- Community Development Institute Headstart – 2838 Fairfield Avenue
- Gary Crooks Community Center – 301 Bostwick Avenue
- Southwest Community Health Center – 361 Bird Street

Places of Worship

- Cathedral of Faith – 2319 Fairfield Avenue
- Church of God – 126 Davis Avenue
- Second New Light Baptist Church – 25 Princeton Street
- St. Ann Parish – 521 Brewster Street
- St. Mark's Lutheran Church – 10 Jetland Street
- United House of Prayer – 2525 Fairfield Avenue

² Department of Labor: April 2007.

- Unity Church – 116 Bartram Avenue

Community organizations and associations

- Ash Creek Conservation Association
- Black Rock Community Council
- Black Rock Homeowners' Association
- Black Rock Online
- Black Rock Restaurant & Entertainment District
- Black Rock Little League
- Black Rock Garden Club

Open space

- Ellsworth Park
- PT Barnum Park

Clubs and social organizations

- Black Rock Garden Club
- PT Barnum Residents Council
- Black Rock Senior Center

Other

- U.S. Post Office – 2253 Fairfield Avenue

Arts Resources

- Black Rock Art Center (2838 Fairfield Avenue)
- First Friday Art Walk
- The Jeffrey Weiss Gallery
- Art classes through Bridgeport Public Schools
- Art exhibits at Bloodroot Restaurant (85 Ferris Street), dish (2889 Fairfield Avenue), Port Coffeehouse (2889 Fairfield Avenue), Home on the Range (2992 Fairfield Avenue), Harborview Market (218 Harborview Avenue), Burroughs Community Center (2470 Fairfield Avenue), elementary schools, and Day One Skate Shop (605 Brewster Street).
- Showcase Cinemas Bridgeport (movie theater, 286 Canfield Avenue)
- Acoustic Café (2926 Fairfield Avenue)
- The Green Room (3442 Fairfield Avenue)
- Concerts and other musical performances at local churches.
- Live music at the Norden Club (4 Seabright Avenue), Captain's Cove Seaport (1 Bostwick Avenue), and some of the restaurants and bars on Fairfield Avenue.
- The Black Rock Writers Group
- The film industry's use of Black Rock locations for shoots

F. HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The following Bridgeport crime statistics are provided for 2005 and 2006:

| Bridgeport Crime Report – Annual Totals | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| | 2005 | 2006 |
| High Offense Crimes | 7,562 | 7,538 |
| Aggravated Assaults | 410 | 332 |
| Property Crime | 3,514 | 3,061 |
| Burglaries | 690 | 630 |
| Larcenies | 2,217 | 1,892 |
| Motor Vehicle Theft | 607 | 539 |
| Murder | 21 | 30 |
| Forcible Rape | 25 | 42 |
| Robbery | 264 | 284 |

In addition, the following health considerations are taken into account in developing a neighborhood strategy:

- *High rates of communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS compared with the State and surrounding areas.* For example, as of December 2006, Bridgeport has 855 residents diagnosed and living with AIDS, the third highest rate of any city in Connecticut, after Hartford and New Haven.
- *High rates of infant mortality, compared with the State and surrounding areas.*
- *High-risk birth rates and prenatal care.* In Bridgeport, 0.4% births were to mothers age less than 15 years (compared with 0.2% in all of Connecticut), and 5.9% less than 18 years (compared with 2.7% in all of Connecticut) (Source: Data Haven 2000 data), with 10.5% at low birth weight (compared with 7.5% in all of Connecticut). Twenty-one percent (21%) of Bridgeport births had late or no prenatal care, compared with 10.6% in all of Connecticut.
- *High lead screening and incidence rates.* In 2001, 6,203 children under the age of six years were screened for high lead levels. Fifty-four of these children were found to have rates from 20-44 ug/dL (0.9%, compared with 0.4% statewide) and four children were found to have rates higher than 55 ug/dL (0.1% compared with 0.0% statewide).
- *High cancer rate.* In 2000, Bridgeport had 639 new cancer cases, compared with 461 in Hartford and 510 in New Haven.³

³ All health data provided by DataHaven, <http://research.yale.edu/datainitiative>.

V. Economic Development and Market Assessment

A. ECONOMIC BASE

In order to fully understand the issues surrounding the Black Rock neighborhood, it is important to look at the market on a broader level to include Bridgeport and Connecticut, as well as on the neighborhood level. In this report, major regional considerations are taken into account during planning, and include the following:



- Connecticut’s “Cautiously Optimistic” Economic Market.** The Connecticut Department of Labor announced that it believes in a “cautiously optimistic” economic forecast for Connecticut in its April 2007 *Connecticut Economic Digest*. As examples of generally positive indicators, the unemployment rate is 4.2%; personal income is anticipated to rise 4.7% for the past year; net business formation has increased over the past year, signifying a net increase in the number of businesses registered with the Secretary of State; Connecticut’s labor force increased by 1.2% over the past year; and unemployment rates decreased by 0.2⁴.
- Increasing Disparity in Income Gap.** The New England region has experienced the largest increase in the income gap in the country between 1989 and 2004, as reported by the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire. The Institute has reported that this difference is caused particularly by the loss of manufacturing employment for low-skilled workers, a greater demand for high-skilled and high-tech employment, and the push of low-skilled jobs elsewhere where the cost of business is lower. Connecticut was among the top five states in the nation to experience this increase in income disparity, and Bridgeport is one of the 20 metropolitan areas with the highest income disparity in the nation. Suggested solutions to close this widening gap are upgrading education for all residents, increasing the opportunity for people to receive technological training, and ensuring economic opportunities with retraining to help those displaced.⁵
- Utility Costs.** Businesses throughout Connecticut feel the impacts of high utility bills. When compared to other states, Connecticut is ranked 47th in its retail price of electricity out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, according to the United States’ Government Energy Information Administration, and 48th in the nation according to the 2006 Small Business Survival Index. One Black Rock small business owner, during our interviews, reported that his monthly electricity bill has more than tripled over a 12-month period.
- Competing in a Global Marketplace.**

Connecticut Rankings in 2006 Small Business Survival Index

| Issue | Rank | Actual / Range from other states |
|--|------|--|
| Capital gains tax rates | 22 | 5.000 (lowest: 0.000, highest: 10.300) |
| Corporate income tax rates | 30 | 7.500 (lowest: 0.000, highest: 9.990) |
| State and local property taxes | 45 | 4.29 (lowest: 1.33, highest: 5.31) |
| Number of health insurance mandates | 47 | 2.50 (lowest: 0.65, highest: 3.10) |
| Electric utility costs (State average revenue per KWH for electric utilities relative to US average) | 48 | 1.67 (lowest: 0.59, highest: 2.42) |
| Workers’ compensation benefits per \$100 of covered wages | 14 | 0.83 (lowest: 0.36, highest: 3.76) |
| Crime Rate | 12 | 2.91 (lowest: 2.00, highest: 6.23) |
| Number of bureaucrats (full-time-equivalent state and local government employees per 100 residents) | 15 | 5.28 (lowest: 4.16, highest: 8.59) |
| State gas taxes | 51 | 0.450 (lowest: 0.080, highest: 0.450) |

Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council’s Small Business Survival Index 2006, http://www.sbecouncil.org/Media/pdf/SBSI_2006.pdf

⁴ <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/misc/cedapr07.pdf>

⁵ <http://hr.blr.com/news.aspx?id=75692&source=RSA&effort=4>

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSIDERATIONS

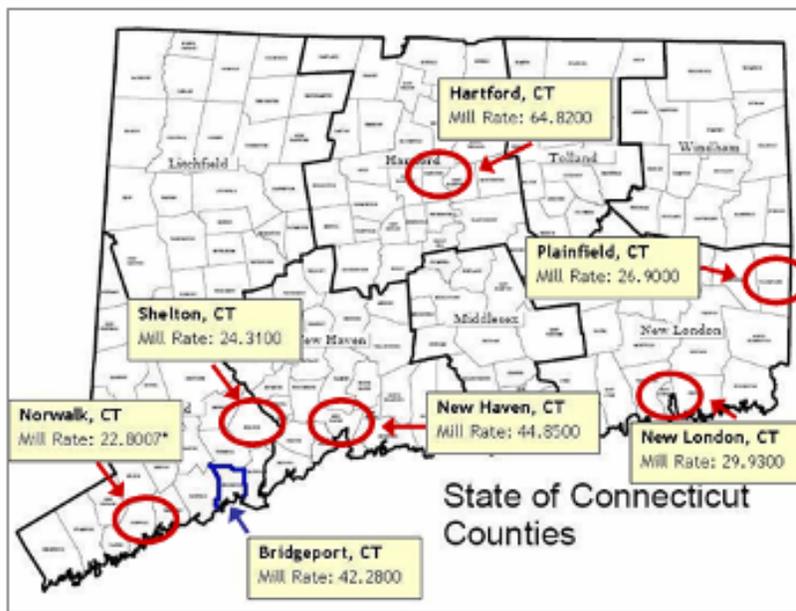
Looking more closely at the neighborhood itself, the climate for redevelopment is moving in a positive direction. The Black Rock neighborhood has significant improvements in the last three years, with the rehabilitation of several formerly blighted sites into new shops, restaurants and housing.

Economic Location One of the greatest economic advantages of the Black Rock neighborhood is its location. The neighborhood is in immediate proximity to major transportation channels, including I-95, the Port of Bridgeport, Amtrak and MetroNorth commuter service to New York City. Its proximity to water recreation activities, waterfront parks, and cultural activities in downtown Bridgeport provides a potentially high quality of life for its residents. Black Rock in particular is the part of Bridgeport closest to the Town of Fairfield, which allows the positive economic impacts of Fairfield—the high spending power of its residents and the investment in residential properties—to spill over into Black Rock. Finally, the planned new train station on Commerce Drive will further improve the economic value of its location.

Top Employers The top local employers in Bridgeport are Bridgeport Hospital, People’s Bank, St. Vincent’s Medical Center, Bridgeport Health Care Center, and Sikorsky Aircraft (DECD 2006). While none of these top employers are located in the Black Rock neighborhood, these major local employers located in the nearby vicinity is an advantageous source of jobs.

Challenging Tax Rates During interviews with local business owners, the high tax rate was cited as key factors regarding a company’s ability to compete and a company’s willingness to stay in Bridgeport and in this neighborhood. Business owners interviewed stated that businesses had little incentive to stay in Black Rock and Bridgeport long term, as their taxes rose every year. The chart below compares Bridgeport’s mill rate with those of similar-sized, similar-urban areas along major Connecticut transportation corridors. The mill rates of surrounding towns also have an impact on business decisions on relocating. Milford’s rate is 34.3600, 7.92 mills below Bridgeport; Ansonia’s mill rate is 32.3000, 9.98 mills lower; Stratford’s mill rate is 28.8600, 13.42 mills below; Derby’s rate is 17.48 mills below Bridgeport’s; and Shelton’s is 24.3100, at 17.97 mills lower.

| Nearby Towns | # of Mills Below Bridgeport |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Milford | 7.92 |
| Ansonia | 9.98 |
| Stratford | 13.42 |
| Derby | 17.48 |
| Shelton | 17.97 |

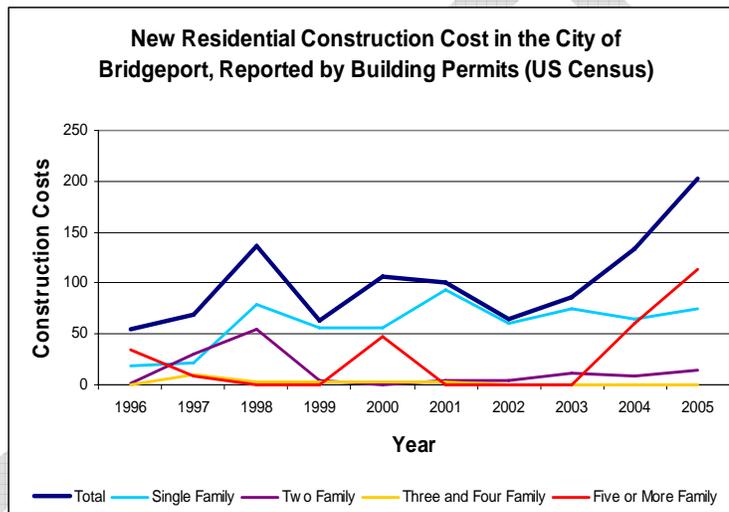


Economic Drivers

Bridgeport’s economy is largely driven by the trade, manufacturing, and services sectors. While services constitute 44% of both the firms and the employment, manufacturing constitutes 16% of the employment, and trade constitutes 15% of the employment (DECD 2006). Major economic drivers for the neighborhood include the waterfront location, the commercial corridor along Fairfield Avenue, and the high-quality homes in the neighborhood.

Housing Permit Activity

New residential construction permits in the City of Bridgeport suggest an increase in the investment of residential housing in Bridgeport. Census data shows an increase of 218% in the cost of residential construction in the past five years and an increase of more than 500% in the past 10 years. In 1996, the total construction cost associated with building permits filed was \$1,915,070, compared with \$4,095,081 in 2000 and \$13,013,227 in 2005 (see graph). In 2006, Bridgeport registered 25 housing permits. In the first two months of 2007, Bridgeport had already registered 20 housing permits. Between 2006 and 2009, the neighborhood is expected to see a total of more than \$745 million of investments in residential use and 278 new units.⁶



Quality of Uses

The Black Rock neighborhood has some mix of residential and commercial properties in the neighborhood. However, the quality of many of the commercial uses is lacking, and some low-end uses are over-represented (for example, massage parlors, package stores and convenience stores). Although some of the more “unsavory” bars and massage parlors have left Black Rock in recent years, several remaining businesses have been identified by stakeholders as having a detrimental effect on the neighborhood and quality of life. Stakeholders also speak about a lack of daily services in Black Rock and would like to see new businesses such as a dry cleaner, a bank, a hardware store, and more restaurants that would appeal to the lunchtime business crowd.

Public Investments

Often, public investments stimulate private investment. The most significant public investment in this neighborhood in recent years is the \$4-million renovation and expansion of Black Rock Library, which started in late 2007 and will be completed in summer 2008.

Private Investments

Private investments into the neighborhood are a good indicator of the neighborhood’s own willingness to invest in its property. There are several new investments that demonstrate growth and new investments into the Black Rock neighborhood, including:

- New Super Stop & Shop at 2145 Fairfield Avenue, costing \$12 million.
- Village at Black Rock, 105 luxury condominiums at 3250 Fairfield Avenue.
- New Wendy’s on Fairfield Avenue, across the street from Stop & Shop.
- New, higher-end dining and entertainment establishments on Fairfield Avenue, such as Café Tavolini, The Field, Viale Restaurant, Port Coffeehouse, Dish Restaurant, and Aura lounge.
- Significant renovation of Black Rock Castle.

⁶ Bridgeport Economic Resource Center, 2007

- Brochures, banners and other marketing of the “Black Rock Restaurant & Entertainment District,” by more than 30 local businesses.

Area Investments

Even though some improvements in the area are outside of the specific boundaries of the neighborhood, they can generate positive “spillover” effects into the Black Rock neighborhood. These area investments include:

- New AKDO Intertrade industrial building at 1501 State Street for marble, tile, and granite wholesale distributor, employing 50, using 115,000 square feet and inputting a \$7.3-million investment
- New ASAP Bedliners retail showroom at 435 Howard Avenue, costing \$1.4M
- New State Street commercial development for food service establishments at 1163-1197 State Street, including private financing of a \$1.1-million project
- Cesar A. Batalla Elementary School
- South West Community Health Center
- Carr’s Ice Cream in West Side / West End
- Andiamos Café, 1020 Fairfield Avenue
- Fairchild-Wheeler 36-hole municipal golf course in Fairfield
- Veteran’s Memorial Park Improvements of the 107 acres in northern Bridgeport, including three athletic fields, hiking trails and nature pathways, estimated at \$5.6 million (in design phase)
- Housatonic Community College planned expansion
- Bridgeport Hospital expansion
- Fairfield Metro Center: just over the Fairfield town line, construction of a new bus terminal, transit garage, train station, office buildings, hotel, and restaurants, with an estimated cost of \$184 million

Proposed Projects

Another good indicator of the local economic climate is the projects that are being proposed. Immediately in the neighborhood, several locations have specific proposals, including:

- Riverbank Landing, 56 luxury condominiums at 3336 Fairfield Avenue, totaling \$15 million.
- Bridgeport Regional Vocational Aquaculture School, a \$31-million expansion adjacent to its current facility.⁷

⁷ Bridgeport Development and Transportation Initiatives, 2004-2007.

B. EMERGING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

In response to this information and the numerous interviews and surveys conducted, the following were identified as emerging economic development issues and opportunities:

- Unwanted commercial uses (massage parlors, heavy volume of package and convenience stores)
- Quality and mix of commercial uses
- Vacant, unused surface parking lots
- Parking: Quantity, awareness/marketing, restrictions and enforcement, maintenance, ownership
- Traffic, particularly high rates of speed on Fairfield Avenue, making the street unfriendly to pedestrians
- Need for façade improvements
- Lack of design guidelines and/or standards for important development parcels
- Lack of designation of the “central corridor” or the heart of the Black Rock neighborhood
- Historic district designations and enforcement
- Public safety
- Landscaping and maintenance: Unkempt sidewalks, overflowing garbage receptacles, and overgrown plants and trees deter customers from walking on Fairfield Avenue and indicate blight
- Visual destabilizing indicators, such as overgrown lots, chain link fences, broken bottles
- High taxes
- Significant red tape and no constant liaison with the City on economic development and neighborhood development projects

DRAFT

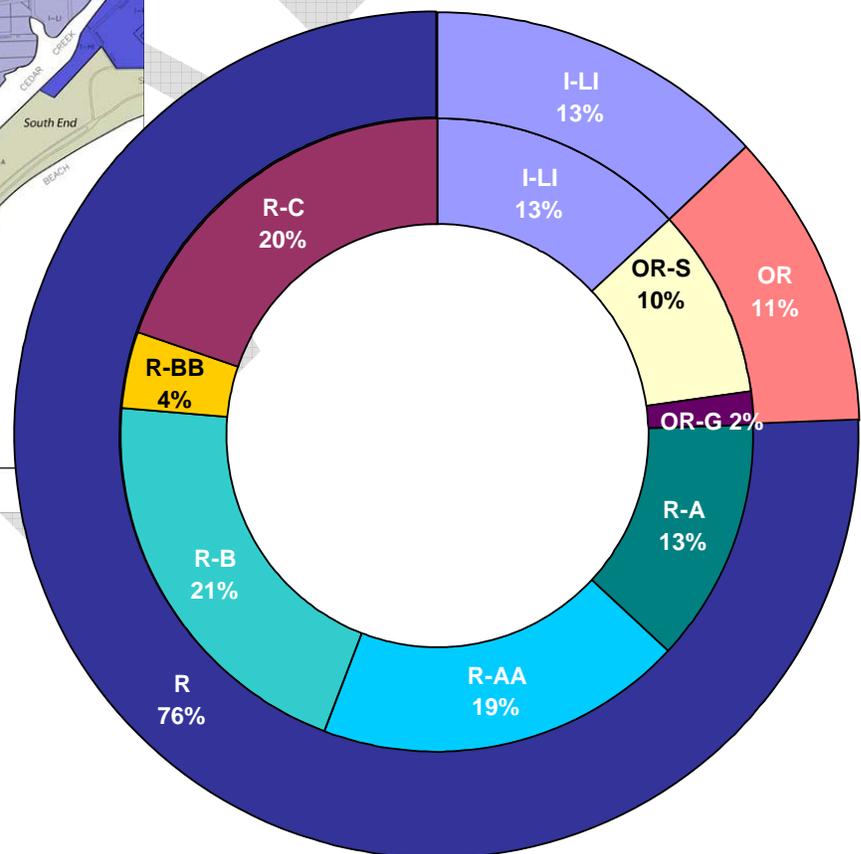
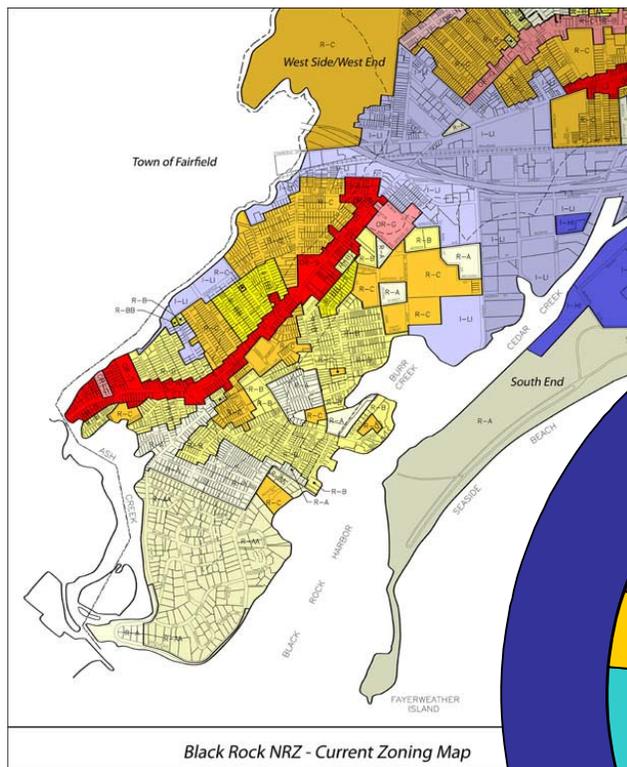
VI. Review of Land Use Issues

A. IDENTIFICATION OF LAND USE DISTRICTS AND ZONES

It is important to note that these numbers do not directly translate into tax revenue, as many of the commercial properties may be owned or operated by the State of Connecticut or municipal entities (and therefore do not pay taxes) or are owned and operated by nonprofit organizations (and therefore are exempt). In addition, many exemption, deferral, and PILOT programs exist, which do not allow for direct translation of assessed value to tax income.

LAND USE

Black Rock encompasses eight of the nineteen land use designations described in the City of Bridgeport’s Zoning Ordinance. Those uses include Residential-AA(single family) Residential-A (single family), Residential-B (two and three family), Residential-BB (two and three family), Residential C (four + family), Light Industrial, Office/Retail General, and Office/Retail Storefront. The approximate distribution of land uses is as follows:



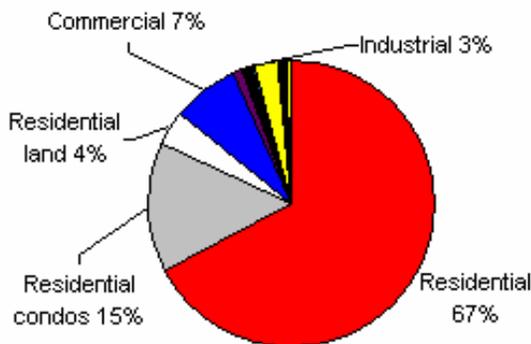
Note: Outer circle distinguishes general land distribution (Residential, Industrial, Office/Retail). Inner circle distinguishes zoning subcategories of these three general land-use types.

PROPERTY CLASS

Black Rock has 2,628 properties. According to the City of Bridgeport property data, approximately 86% of the properties (2,253 properties) in the neighborhood are classified as residential uses, including homes, condominiums, and residential land. Approximately 10% (260 properties) are classified as commercial, including commercial condos, commercial apartments, and commercial land. Three percent (3%, 89 properties) are classified as industrial or industrial land in the neighborhood.

| Approximate Property Class Data for Black Rock | |
|--|--------------|
| Property Class | # in Class |
| Com/Res Mixed | 8 |
| Commercial | 196 |
| Comm Apt | 30 |
| Comm Land | 30 |
| Industrial | 72 |
| Industrial Land | 17 |
| Public Utility | 3 |
| Residential | 1759 |
| Residential Condo | 390 |
| Residential Land | 104 |
| Unassigned | 15 |
| Total | 2,628 |

% of Properties in Each Property Class



DRAFT

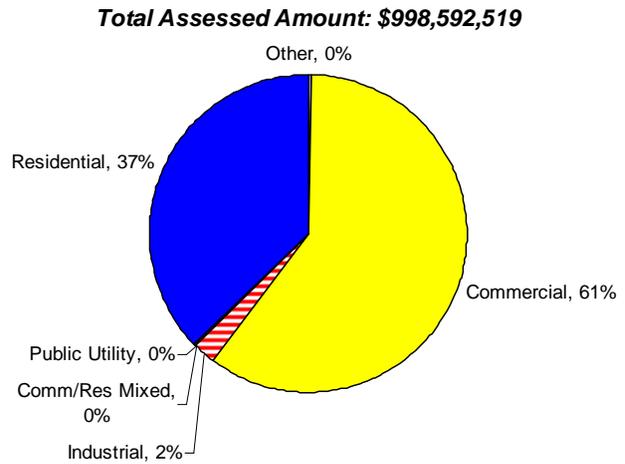
REAL ESTATE ASSESSED VALUE

While the property class breakdown shows a primary presence of residential property, an analysis of the assessed value of these properties show that the commercial and properties outweigh the assessed value of the residential properties, and the assessed value of industrial properties is nearly that of residential. The commercial properties constitute 49% of the total assessed value, the industrial properties constitute 22% of the total assessed value, and the residential properties constitute 29% of the assessed value.

| Approximate Property Class Data for Black Rock | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Property Class | Total Assessed Value (2006) |
| Com/Res Mixed | \$1,964,380 |
| Commercial | \$600,955,821 |
| Industrial | \$20,285,685 |
| Public Utility | \$168,708 |
| Residential | \$372,743,501 |
| Other | \$2,474,424 |
| Total | \$998,592,519 |

Source: City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

Percentage of Taxes Assessed by Property Class in Approximate Black Rock Neighborhood, 2006



In addition, the analysis found the average assessed value per property class. Industrial properties had the highest average assessed value (\$4,016,392), commercial properties had the second-highest average assessed value (\$2,979,545), commercial-residential mixed had the third-highest (\$245,540) and residential properties had the lowest average assessed value (\$183,171).

Average Assessed Value for Primary Property Classes in the Approximate Black Rock Neighborhood (2006)

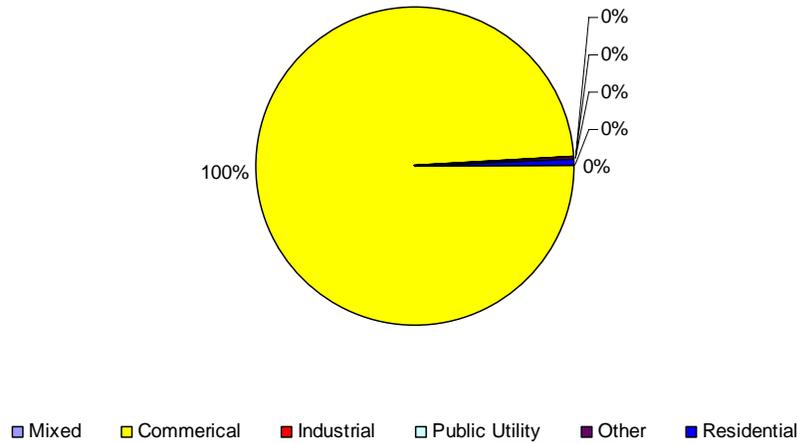
| Property Class | Average Assessed Value |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Commercial | \$2,979,545 |
| Industrial | \$4,016,392 |
| Comm/Res Mixed | \$245,540 |
| Residential | \$183,171 |

Source: City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

Approximately \$537,469,411 was exempt from property taxes. Those properties, all commercial, were tax exempt. The breakdown of exemption categories are provided in the charts below.

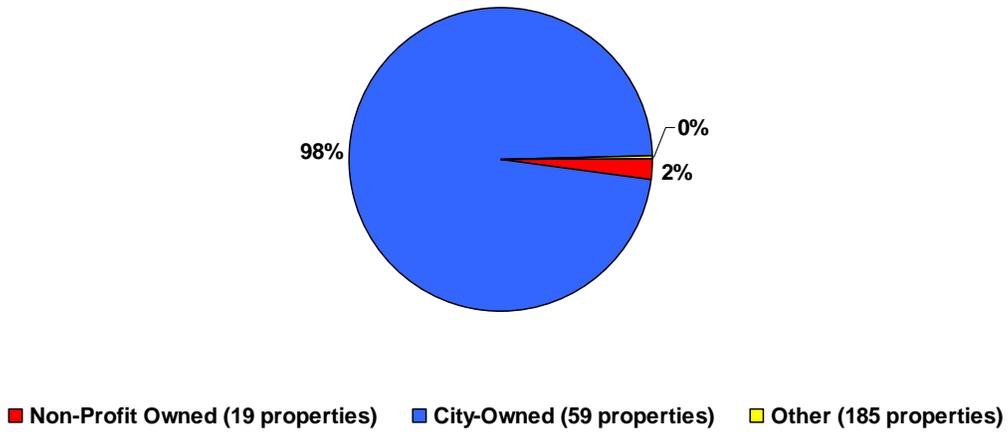
Percentage of Total Exemptions by Property Class in Approximate Black Rock Neighborhood, 2006

Total Exempted Amount: \$537,469,411



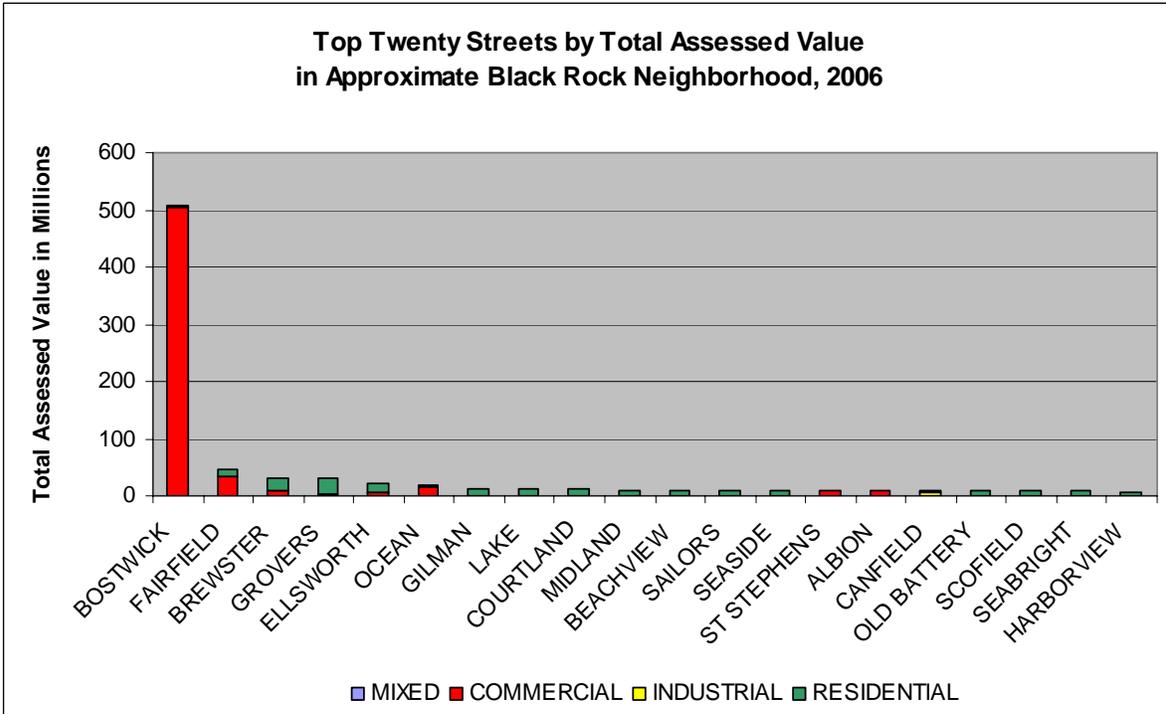
Percentage of Total Exempted Amount Grouped by Exemption Reason in Approximate Black Rock Neighborhood, 2006

Total Exempted Amount: \$537,469,411

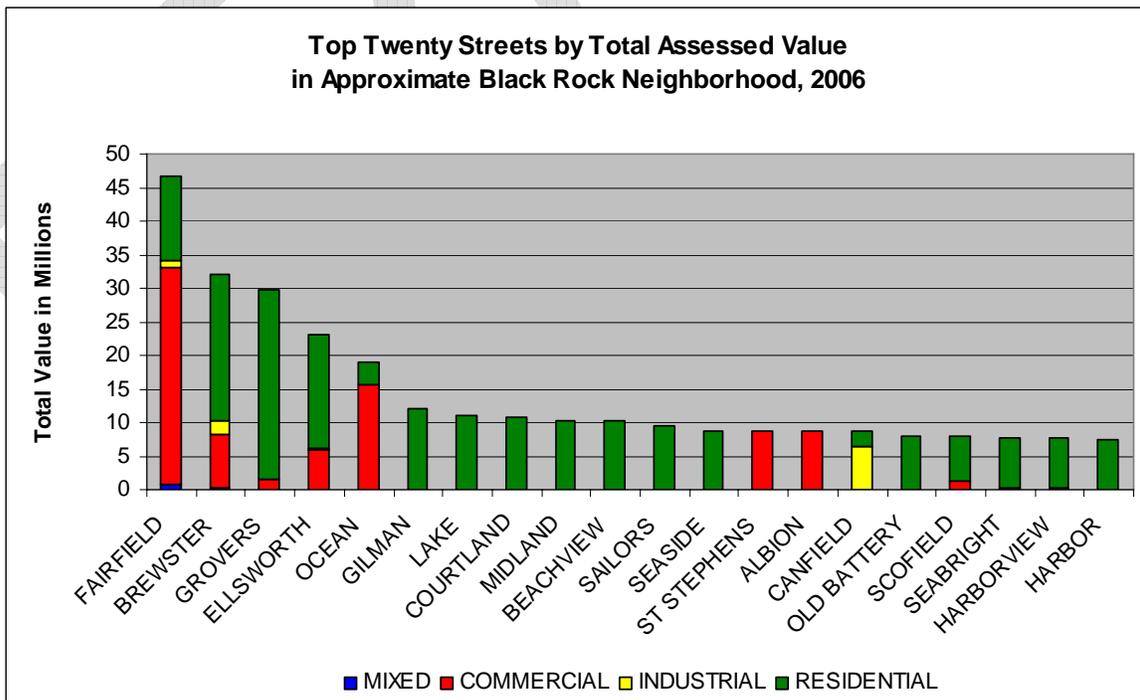


IDENTIFICATION OF STREETS WITH HIGHEST ASSESSED VALUES

Often, data analysis by street is conducted to identify the top commercial corridors and the weight that each street has in its contribution to the assessed value of the neighborhood. The data was assessed to determine the streets with the highest assessed value and the source of this value (commercial, industrial, or residential). The graph below summarizes these findings:



Removing Bostwick from the graph, the distribution of assessed value appears as identified in the chart below.



IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES WITH HIGHEST ASSESSED VALUES

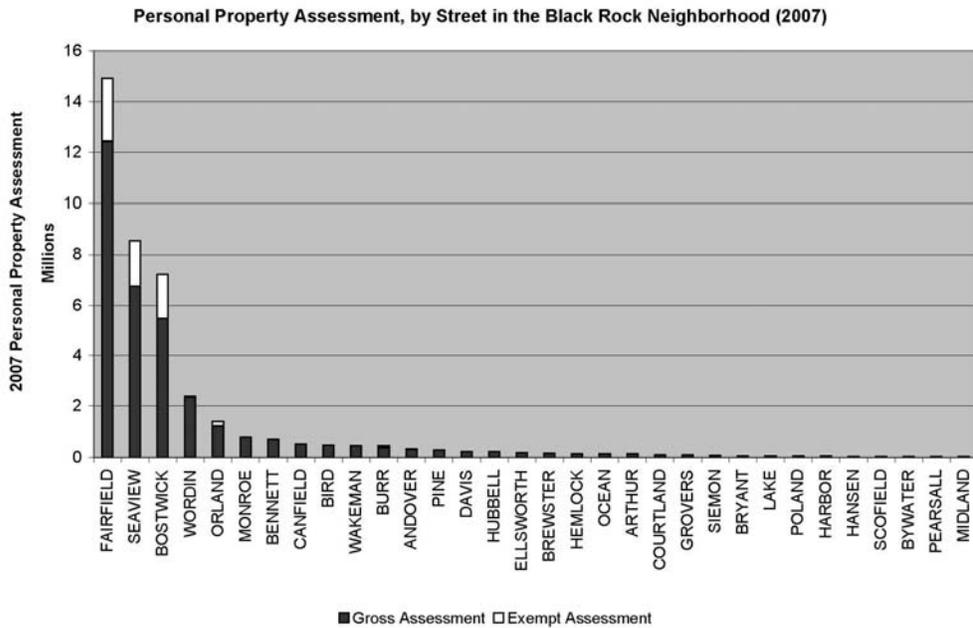
Individual Properties with High Assessed Value in the Approximate Black Rock Neighborhood

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| \$500 million | City of Bridgeport Disposal Plant – 205 Bostwick |
| \$250 million | Connecticut Resources – 95 Howard |
| \$15 - \$20 million | PT Barnum Apartments – 96 Taylor |
| \$5 - \$10 million | Bridgeport Park Department – 68 St. Stephens Bridgeport Housing Authority – 25 Albion Bridgeport Towers apartment – 68 Ocean Terrace Showcase Cinemas – 306 Canfield |
| \$2 million - \$5 million | Black Rock Village – 3250 Fairfield Longfellow School – 139 Ocean Terrace St. Ann Parish – 481 Brewster Goodwill Industries – 165 Ocean Terrace U-Haul – 3025 Fairfield 575 Ellsworth, LLC – 575 Ellsworth O&G Industries – 260 Bostwick Robbins Tesar – 925 Brewster Bridgeport Garden Apartments – 2821 Fairfield |
| \$1 million - \$2 million | Public Storage – 1087 Railroad Bridgeport Metal Goods Manufacturing – 365 Cherry West End Moving & Storage – 241 Pine Bridgeport Garden Apartments – 2769 Fairfield O&G Industries – 325 Hancock Black Rock School – 545 Brewster Bridgeport Garden Apartments – 2 Rowsley Burroughs Community Center – 2468 Fairfield Bridgeport Fire Department – 245 Ocean Terrace Southern Connecticut Gas Company – 39 Pine Office building – 585 Ellsworth Westnor Apartments – 45 Monroe The Chimneys – 124 Old Battery Industrial – 2475 Fairfield Captain Cove’s Seaport – 1 Bostwick Private home – 98 Grovers Park City Academy – 86 Whittier Fayerweather Yacht Club – 51 Brewster Private home – 1 Thorne Place Black Rock Yacht Club – 80 Grovers |

* City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

STREETS WITH HIGHEST PERSONAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

The data was assessed to determine the areas which hold the highest assessed value of personal property and which corridors are contributors. The graph below summarizes these findings, showing Fairfield, Seaview, Bostwick, Wordin, Orland, Monroe, Bennett, Canfield, Bird, Wakeman, and Burr. The graph also differentiates the personal property assessment that is exempt (e.g., belongs to a non-profit or municipal organization) and non-exempt.



INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES WITH HIGHEST PERSONAL PROPERTY VALUES

Individual Properties with High Personal Property Value in the Approximate Black Rock Neighborhood

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>\$1 million - \$2 million</p> <p>\$500,000 - \$1 million</p> | <p>Stop & Shop Supermarket – 2145 Fairfield Avenue</p> <p>U-Haul Storage Black Rock – 3029 Fairfield Avenue</p> <p>Dover Tool Co. – 297 Orland Street</p> <p>Alloy Engineering Co. – 304 Seaview Avenue</p> <p>Panish Controls Inc. – 191 Bennett Street</p> <p>M J Metal Inc. – 201 Hancock Avenue</p> |
|---|---|

* City of Bridgeport Property Tax Data, 2006 Grand List

B. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATED TO ZONING AND LAND USE

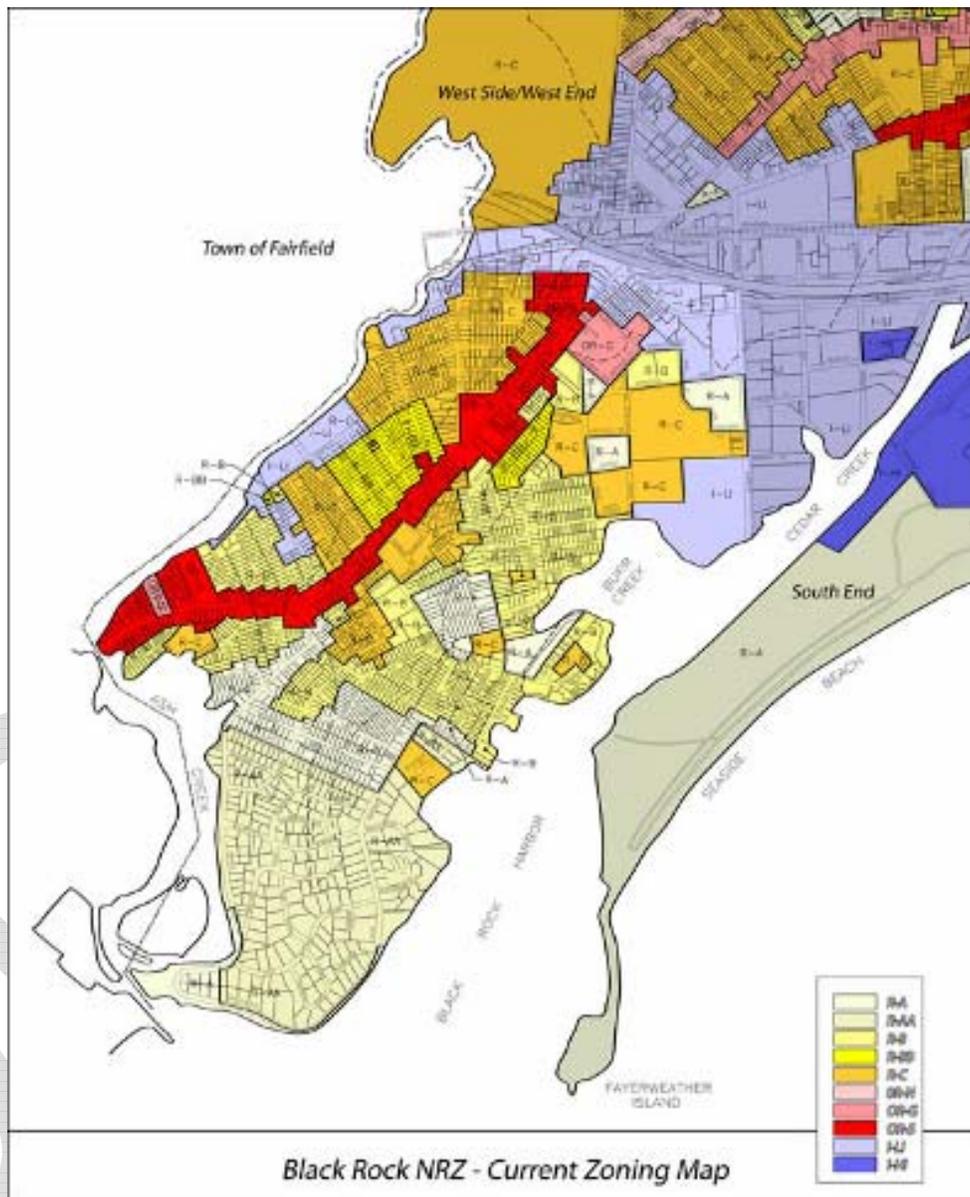
A great deal of energy has been spent in researching the records and intentions of developers submitting proposals for land-use relief in Black Rock. In some cases that relief has been sought only after the initiation of development activities and as a result of citizen whistle-blowing. Residents and stakeholders greatly desire a means by which to give constructive input into development plans for their neighborhood in advance of a ground-breaking ceremony.

Fortunately, the existing and proposed (by planners of Bridgeport's Master Plan of Development and conservation) land-use designations make a lot of sense to the future development of Black Rock. Both suggest that Fairfield Avenue exists as a commercial spine (with minimal institutional uses) flanked by residential uses that decrease in density as they approach the waterfront.

Benefits of diverse/consistent zoning

- Broad tax base
- Diversification of revenue, and therefore stabilization
- Services and regulations can focus on specific types of business / residential activities
- More consistent / similar goals among community members

Currently, the challenge in Black Rock is to ensure that zoning and land-use regulations are being adhered to and that new regulations are applied if required. Two points of increased contention are the development of properties along the Fairfield Avenue corridor and the development of privately owned waterfront property.



VII. Neighborhood Assessment

A. ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

The Black Rock Neighborhood has many assets to offer its businesses, residents and stakeholders. While the neighborhood is subject to significant challenges (see chart below), some issues are not unique to this neighborhood or to Bridgeport (e.g., rising utility costs) and others are well within their power to be changed. The neighborhood is seeing steady business presence, employment, and strong mixed-use presence, which lends diversification to the economy. In addition, the strong public investments that have been made in the neighborhood are serving as stabilizing factors, and businesses have made significant investments as well. Property remains affordable (and therefore attractive for development) and outsiders are starting to show an interest in making investments in the neighborhood.

| Strong Positive Indicators | Real Challenges |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Waterfront location ▪ Strong loyalty amongst residents & business owners ▪ Established commercial corridor ▪ Good public investments serve as base for increasing property values ▪ Property remains affordable ▪ Proximity to I-95, train, port, NYC, Fairfield ▪ Some businesses are making significant investments (e.g., Black Rock Castle) ▪ Outside developers are starting to show interest in investments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High taxes (higher than surrounding towns) ▪ Presence of blight ▪ Rising cost of utilities ▪ Security / safety ▪ Litter, particularly on sidewalks ▪ Condition of infrastructure such as landscaping and sidewalks ▪ Shortages of public parking and poor maintenance and management of parking that exists ▪ Low property values lack incentive for owners to improve their properties ▪ Red tape when dealing with the city and lack of city support |

B. BLIGHT AND PROPERTY ABANDONMENT (CITYSCAN)

Assets:

- City blight elimination program
- Formerly blighted properties being eliminated by new investment and developments
- Limited blight compared to other Bridgeport neighborhoods

Challenges:

- Perception of neighborhood for residents, employees, business owners and visitors
- Lack of initiative by property owners to improve blighted properties
- Lack of coordination with the City’s blight elimination program
- Properties identified by the neighborhood as high-priority economic development opportunities (either due to their blighted condition or their strategic location) are located up and down Fairfield Avenue, with a few properties scattered along Brewster Street .

C. HOUSING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Assets:

- Black Rock boasts quality housing stock exceeding that of other Bridgeport neighborhoods.
- The neighborhood’s relationship to the waterfront, the location of the commercial corridor and proposed commuter rail station, and the existence of a number of neighborhood resources, make for a community that is ideal for singles, seniors and families alike.

Challenges:

- Denser housing at northern end of the neighborhood is not inappropriate but in greater need of maintenance and repair.
- No true connection exists between P.T. Barnum housing development and the rest of Black Rock.

D. WATERFRONT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Assets:

- Proximity to waterfront
- Presence of open space
- Presence of indigenous wild-life and foliage
- Ash Creek (an estuarine body of water with tremendous coastal resources)

Challenges:

- Defining appropriate uses of the waterfront space
- Defining conservation zones and managing these conservation zones
- Preserving ecological resources

E. BUSINESS CORRIDOR AND GATEWAY ISSUES

Assets:

- Strongly defined commercial corridor: Fairfield Avenue
- Private investment along that commercial corridor
- Premier properties along the commercial corridor
- Types of retail evolving, positively impacting safety and perception of neighborhood

Challenges:

- Significant number of vacant lots along business corridor
- Parking issues along business corridor
- Lack of designation of the “core” or “heart” of the neighborhood
- Infrastructure issues, especially sidewalks, litter, and lighting, along corridors
- Gateways into Black Rock are easily identified but not well defined
- Lack of design standards along commercial corridors
- Areas around on and off-ramps to I-95 in the neighborhood are not cared for
- No incentive system exists for businesses to invest in their properties
- Public facilities are not exemplary of maintenance, landscaping, signage, and lighting (e.g., Black Rock Arts Center, Bridgeport Public Library, Black Rock Senior Center)

F. RECREATION and OPEN SPACE

Assets:

- Ellsworth Park offers ball fields courts and a playground.
- P.T. Barnum Park also offers ball fields and courts and a playground.
- One passive park is located at the rear of the Burroughs Community Center.
- Ash Creek & Burr Creek
- Waterfront linear park
- Longfellow Park on St. Stephens Road contains basketball courts, a tot lot, and walking area.
- Saint Mary’s by the Sea on Grovers Avenue offers nine acres of space with bird watching and a half-mile walking path along the water.
- Captain’s Cove Seaport and Fayerweather Yacht Club (private clubs)
- Beach near the Norden Club

Challenges:

- The impact of parking during neighborhood events/games
- Lack of “connection” between outdoor resources
- Lack of communication / coordination among youth-serving agencies



G. YOUTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

Assets:

- Black Rock Little League
- P.T. Barnum Park, also offers ball fields and courts and a playground.
- Longfellow Park on St. Stephens Road contains basketball courts, a tot lot, and walking area.
- One passive park is located at the rear of the Burroughs Community Center.
- Black Rock Senior Center has an active membership and service program.

Challenges:

- Facilities for seniors and youth are antiquated.
- Lack of communication / coordination among youth-serving agencies
- Antiquated schools sap enthusiasm over education out of youth

H. JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT, SMALL BUSINESS NEEDS

Assets:

- Many, many home-grown businesses in the neighborhood
- Low-cost office space for small businesses
- Black Rock businesses planning on staying in town
- Plans to renovate or make improvements by existing businesses

Challenges:

- Perception of safety for potential employees traveling from outside of neighborhood
- Availability of parking for potential employees traveling from outside of neighborhood
- No bank in the neighborhood
- High state and local property taxes (45th in nation according to 2006 Small Business Survival Index: http://www.sbecouncil.org/Media/pdf/SBSI_2006.pdf)
- Large number of health insurance mandates (47th in nation according to 2006 Small Business Survival Index)
- Electric utility costs for State are ranked 48th according to 2006 Small Business Survival Index, and Connecticut is ranked 47th according to the Energy Information Administration for industry average retail price of electricity.
- State gas taxes are the worst in the nation (51st, 2006 Small Business Survival Index)

I. LINKAGES, TRANSPORTATION, PARKING AND ACCESS

Assets:

- *Interstate I-95.* Interstate I-95 is a major six-lane expressway that follows the Eastern United States coastline from Florida to Maine. In Connecticut, I-95 is an east-west highway, however, because of its regional significance it is designated a north-south highway (south being westbound and north being eastbound).
- *Fairfield Avenue.* Fairfield Avenue is a divided roadway with two lanes of travel in each direction. A 4.5-foot-wide median separates the two directions of traffic as it enters the neighborhood but ceases just beyond the neighborhood border at the overpass of Interstate I-95; the avenue then becomes a major one-way arterial running northeast to southwest. According to Connecticut Department of Transportation traffic counts, the 1998 average weekday daily traffic on Fairfield Avenue was 17,500 vehicles per day near the intersection of Fairfield Avenue and I-95, where Fairfield Avenue has travel in two directions. Timing plans depend on traffic patterns and density, thus improving traffic control along the roadway.
- *Brewster Street.* Brewster Street, northward from Fairfield Avenue to the Town of Fairfield, is a secondary commercial corridor in Black Rock. Currently a two-lane roadway, it is anticipated to experience greater congestion when it becomes the primary connector to the future Fairfield Metro Center.
- *Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority.* The greater Bridgeport Transit Authority operates bus and shuttle service throughout Bridgeport, Fairfield, Stratford and Trumbull, with Route 15 service extending to Shelton and Derby and the Coastal link (CL) along Route 1 from Milford to Norwalk. Bus Route 8 is the primary route relevant to the Black Rock neighborhood. This route runs north / south, starting at Westfield Trumbull Mall, southward on Main Street, down to State Street, with final stops in Black Rock

at Fairfield Avenue and Hancock Avenue, P.T. Barnum Apartments, and Black Rock Cinemas on Brewster Street.

- *Waterfront.* Pedestrian Access to the waterfront in Black Rock is exceptional.

Challenges:

- Parking availability is one of the greatest impediments to successful integration of the many land uses that make up Black Rock.
- Customers park in neighborhoods surrounding Fairfield Avenue, disrupting the residents who live there.
- Signage, maintenance, operations, and upkeep of existing public parking areas are poor.
- Enforcement of traffic and parking laws seems a low priority.
- Lack of public transportation options for residents, and the existing bus line runs through Black Rock infrequently.

J. URBAN DESIGN ISSUES/ HISTORIC RESOURCE ISSUES

Assets:

- One historic district in neighborhood with active membership and governance.
- St. Mary’s by the Sea, though not an historic district in and of itself, lends remarkably to the historic “feel” of the neighborhood as a whole.
- Quality stock of historic properties with well-maintained details.



BLACK ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT - 2007

Challenges:

- Some prime properties are not developed with vibrant, active uses
- Few incentives currently exist for business owners or residents to maintain or improve the façades of their buildings.
- The historic district is plagued by development initiatives that seek to by-pass district requirements.

K. INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

Assets:

- Well-maintained sidewalks along commercial corridors, main streets and the waterfront

Challenges:

- Uneven and broken sidewalks / roadways and curbing on some side streets
- Scarcity of trash receptacles promote litter problems
- Commercial noise in residential neighborhoods
- Litter (general)
- Lack of appropriate signage
- Inconsistent street cleaning / plowing
- Inconsistent bulk trash removal

L. IMPACT OF RECENT AND PROPOSED PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS

Assets:

- Quality residential development adds vitality to the neighborhood and creates a consumer base for local businesses.
- Quality commercial development revitalizes the commercial corridor and provides ‘choice’ to consumers.

Challenges:

- Developers too often try to bypass land-use regulations, leaving the neighborhood with inappropriately-designed and/or sited buildings.
- Publicly-owned properties detract from the efforts of the private market.

M. QUALITY OF LIFE

Assets:

- Waterfront
- Proximity to amenities: shops, arts and entertainment, schools, restaurants, cafes
- Proximity to Fairfield, New York City, regional destinations
- Artist community

Challenges:

- Businesses that do not fit with the emerging neighborhood identity (e.g., massage parlors)
- Traffic volumes & speed on Fairfield Avenue
- Insufficient buffers between residential and loud commercial uses (e.g., bars)

VIII. Defined Issues and NRZ Vision Statement

A. DEFINED ISSUES

Participants in the NRZ planning process generated a working list of neighborhood issues, which includes:

- Land-use regulations and enforcement
- Inappropriate businesses
- Quality of life
- Traffic, parking, and access
- Real estate taxes & personal property taxes
- Cost of energy for the businesses
- Prime properties are not developed with active, vibrant uses
- Quality of commercial district
- Interest in a façade improvement program
- Litter
- Youth activities and positive involvement in the community
- Crime / Safety
- Waterfront uses and conservation
- Historic District Preservation
- Inappropriate signage – commercial and municipal
- Marking the arrival within the neighborhood through gateways (e.g., signage, monuments, structures)
- Enhancing Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street as commercial corridors

B. VISION STATEMENT

Black Rock is a vibrant multicultural community that wishes to capitalize on its assets (including open space, the waterfront and the arts) and to create ways to link its neighbors and provide a place where business-owners, residents and visitors alike feel welcome, safe and able to participate in all the neighborhood has to offer.

IX. NRZ Strategy

As a result of careful planning, analysis, and stakeholder input, the consultants recommend the following 39 components to create a successful revitalization strategy for Black Rock. An implementation timeframe is also indicated, with immediate implementation (■) occurring within one year, short-term implementation (▣) in one to five years, and long-term implementation (⊞) in six to ten years. Each strategy is further defined on the following pages.

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| A. Implementation | |
| 1. Identify/create an entity to oversee implementation of the plan | ■ Within 1 year |
| B. Environment and Open Space | Implementation |
| 2. Participate in design of improvements to Ellsworth Park | ■ Within 1 year |
| 3. Participate in design of improvements to P.T. Barnum Park | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 4. Develop Black Rock Waterfront Linear Park | ⊞ 6-10 Years |
| C. Arts, Culture and Entertainment | Implementation |
| 5. Develop a strategic plan for the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Industry in Black Rock (include plan for interface with business and economic development plans) | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 6. Identify developer/funding and sites for artist and entertainment venues including live/work spaces, an arts center and multi-use performance venues. | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 7. Develop a public art plan to commission juried public art. | ⊞ 6-10 Years |
| D. Zoning, Land Use and Historic Preservation | |
| 8. Develop guidelines for and ratify the Conservation Overlay Zone | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 9. Influence ordinance re-draft to include denial of zone changes in historic districts | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 10. Develop preservation loan program | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 11. Draft and promote dock ordinance | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 12. Pursue alternative development options for 340-344 Brewster Street | ■ Within 1 year |
| E. Business and Economic Development | Implementation |
| 13. Establish a liaison within the City for business and neighborhood development in Black Rock | ■ Within 1 year |
| 14. Eliminate inappropriate commercial uses | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 15. Identify, encourage, and support high-priority development opportunities | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 16. Create incentives for sustainable development | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 17. Plan for the further development of Brewster Street | ⊞ 6-10 Years |
| F. Design Review and Development Standards | |
| 18. Establish Black Rock Village District and guidelines | ■ Within 1 year |
| 19. Create commercial rehabilitation and façade improvement programs | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 20. Develop plan for streetscape improvements | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| G. Circulation, Access, Transportation, and Parking | Implementation |
| 21. Develop neighborhood gateways | ■ Within 1 year |
| 22. Improve existing municipal parking lots | ■ Within 1 year |
| 23. Provide traffic lights or other traffic-calming devices at trouble intersections | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 24. Investigate potential for neighborhood trolley route | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 25. Investigate potential for foot bridge across Ash Creek | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 26. Enable bicycle access in Black Rock | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 27. Implement on-street parking regulations | ■ Within 1 year |
| 28. Develop parking plan for Black Rock Library | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 29. Explore expansion of municipal parking on available sites | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| H. Quality of Life | Implementation |
| 30. Increase communication between the City, public safety, and the community | ■ Within 1 year |
| 31. Advocate for a police officer position dedicated to Black Rock | ■ Within 1 year |
| I. Education | Implementation |
| 32. Improve infrastructure at Black Rock schools | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 33. Increase children's access to education, including transportation to neighborhood events | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 34. Emphasize partnerships within Black Rock | ■ Within 1 year |
| 35. Identify additional funding for gaps in education | ▣ 1-5 Years |
| 36. Support keeping Black Rock School as a neighborhood school | ■ Within 1 year |

A. IMPLEMENTATION

1. IDENTIFY/CREATE AN ENTITY TO OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

The Black Rock NRZ should establish a legal entity that can grow and develop with the neighborhood and gather and develop resources for long-term sustainability. The same should be a grassroots organization able to flex its political power in any number of arenas and any number of political scenarios.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Nominate an individual or sub-committee to review existing by-laws. Use these as the basis of a revised document to govern the implementation process. Nominate and elect officers. These steps will be helpful whether a more formal organization such as a legal not-for-profit organization is formed or the committee (now the Black Rock Implementation Committee) continues to operate as a community organization.
- Adopt revised by-laws. The newly-formed Implementation Committee should review/revise existing by-laws. New by-laws should reflect changes in membership, including number, quorum requirements, demographics and mission.
- Nominate individual or sub-committee to coordinate and draft the 501(c)3 application.
- Nominate an individual or sub-committee to review status of Black Rock CDC. This group should report back to the implementation committee the feasibility of resuscitating the former CDC or developing a new entity capable of engaging in community development activities.
- For implementation purposes, assign one committee member (possibly a sub-committee chair) to each of the nine (9) target areas identified. That person will serve as point-person or liaison between the Implementation Committee and City Staff or the Committee and other organizations such that those resources are not unnecessarily bombarded by uncoordinated communication. To streamline communication, one committee member may serve as point-person for multiple areas (issues) with similar contacts.

Target Areas Include:

- A. Implementation
- B. Arts, Culture and Entertainment
- C. Zoning, Land Use and Historic Preservation
- D. Business and Economic Development
- E. Design Review and Development Standards
- F. Circulation, Access, Transportation and Parking
- G. Quality of Life
- H. Education

- The Bridgeport Public Library can serve as a valuable knowledge-base for beginning a 501(c)3 organization. The following web pages are useful, informative links to assist in the founding of a 501(c)3 organization in the State of Connecticut.

<http://www.sharinglaw.net/npo/links.htm>

http://www.managementhelp.org/str_t_org/str_t_np/str_t_np.htm

http://nonprofit.about.com/od/nonprofitbasics/For_Beginners.htm

In this scenario, the Black Rock Planning Committee should nominate members (those members may be planning committee members and/or other community members. We would suggest limiting the number of members at first because the next step is to vote to adopt by-laws to include the mission of implementation any changes in Board membership (ie # of members, demographics)

B. ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACE

2. PARTICIPATE IN DESIGN OF IMPROVEMENTS TO ELLSWORTH PARK

As funding has been secured to support improvements to Ellsworth Park, a rare opportunity exists for the Implementation Committee to forward ideas for improvements, as envisioned by the Planning Committee, to the Park Commission and other authorities, that not only preserve and beautify the park, but also address certain deficiencies in parking and access to this important community asset. The challenge in implementation here is the speed at which efforts to utilize granted funding are moving and the extent to which there are many stakeholders involved in the process – many of whom are unfamiliar with the NRZ process or structure.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Meet with champions of park funding (State Representative, and City staff and officials) to determine RFP process for selecting an approved planner for park amenities. Such meetings should absolutely involve members of the community who might not have been a part of the NRZ process to date. It's an opportunity to share with them the history and importance of the NRZ Planning and Implementation Committees.
- Assign a member of the Implementation Committee and/ or a member of the Environment and Open-Space sub-committee to review qualifications and/or interview selected firms.

3. PARTICIPATE IN DESIGN OF IMPROVEMENTS TO PT BARNUM PARK

A number of deficiencies were identified in this public park, negatively affecting the quality of life of its users. Forwarding improvements to this critical outdoor space would begin either with devising a capital plan or promoting one already established. Improvements should include plans to link the outdoor space either to pedestrian or bike trails connected to other neighborhood outdoor spaces.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Meet with City staff and Housing Authority staff to determine scope of capital improvements required and availability of funding. Determine RFP process for selecting an approved planner for park amenities.
- Assign a member of the implementation committee and/ or a member of the environment and open-space sub-committee to review qualifications and/or interview selected firms.
- Peter Hance is the new Director of Modernization and Re-Development at the Bridgeport Housing Authority. (203) 337-8917, phance@bridgeporthousing.org Jonas De Guzman is the Deputy Director of Modernization , (203) 337-8955, jdeguzman@bridgeporthousing.org Either of them might be helpful in determining the Housing Authority's plans for the park and/or what resources might be available. We suggest a face to face meeting between BRNRZ Implementation Committee leadership and BPHA staff.

4. DEVELOP BLACK ROCK WATERFRONT LINEAR PARK

The neighborhood charrette as well as meetings with proponents of green-space conservation revealed a sincere desire to develop a link between existing open spaces as well as between remote sections of the neighborhood. Work has already ensued to plan a linear park/green-space that wraps around the Black Rock peninsula. The linear park would link and provide waterfront access for: St. Mary's By the Sea, Ash Creek, Burr Creek, and Seabright Beach. ***We would like to mention here that a number of significant initiatives, not related to the linear park, but absolutely encompassing the goals of environmental stewardship, are by virtue of the means by which they should be accomplished, not listed here under "Environment and Open Space" but under "Zoning, Land-Use and Historic Preservation".*

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Determine project Goals.
- Determine project scope or program.
- Develop a design charrette/competition for development of a linear park .
- Contact others involved in linear park development. Contacts for one large project, The Farmington Canal Greenway which stretches from New Haven, Connecticut to Northampton, Massachusetts, include Executive Director of the Farmington Canal Rail to Trail Association, Norm Thetford, nthetford@att.net or info@farmingtoncanal.org
- Determine the extent to which trail may encroach on private property – determine extent to which easements are required and strategize about approaching property owners for access. Also contact the City of Bridgeport’s Parks department to determine jurisdiction for a new linear park.

C. ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

5. DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IN BLACK ROCK (INCLUDE ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES)

Black Rock is a community with a vast amount of untapped talent, potential resources from both Bridgeport and Fairfield, and a strong interest in the arts. The sub-committee of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee assigned to arts culture and entertainment has developed the following mission statement for Black Rock as an arts and entertainment area:

“To inspire and enliven the community through the arts and entertainment and to enhance the cultural, historic and economic health of Black Rock. This mission is to be accomplished through a range of arts and entertainment activities and initiatives, large and small, local and regional, for the artist, students, and patrons of the arts, the Black Rock community, and visitors.”

The community should develop a plan to expand and enhance the arts in Black Rock. Such a plan would include the promotion of cultural activities (e.g. the First Friday Art Walk, Black Rock Arts Festival), street art and public art in the neighborhood.

Such a Plan should include (but not be limited to):

- 1) a process for working in consort with the business and economic development subcommittee and
- 2) procedures for commissioning juried public art.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Plan for joint meetings of the Arts, Culture and Entertainment and the Business and Economic Development subcommittees such that opportunities and/or desires to collaborate on specific projects are efficiently communicated.
- Develop a strategic plan for the Arts in Black Rock. This might include hiring a consultant to help stakeholders determine community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It should end with an implementable plan for pro-actively engaging residents, business-owners, artists and visitors in arts, cultural and entertainment activities in Black Rock. See the New England Foundation for the Arts about funding for technical assistance. www.usregionalarts.org/funding.htm Such funding might pay for a consultant to help the neighborhood develop a strategic plan. See also the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism for grant programs for arts-related technical assistance. www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=2162&Q=302192&CCTNAV_GID=1605



- As the “culture” part of Arts, Culture and Entertainment may include preservation and celebration of architectural resources, the neighborhood should consider taking advantage of opportunities to promote unique resources such as the local Historic District. Funding may be available for establishing a walking tour or other education programs for this cause. See www.cttrust.org/index.cgi/119 Planning along these lines should definitely include members of the Zoning, Land Use and Historic Preservation sub-committee.

6. IDENTIFY DEVELOPER/FUNDING AND SITES FOR ARTIST AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES INCLUDING LIVE/WORK SPACES, AN ARTS CENTER AND MULTI-USE PERFORMANCE VENUES.

Arts committee members suggested influencing inevitable development to suit the needs of Black Rock residents and stakeholders. Support for a particular development “type” would be a means of exercising control over the kinds of developments that enter the neighborhood. The importance of space for arts activities came up again and again. The Implementation Committee should be involved in any decisions made along these lines.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Research practices of other not-for-profit development corporations engaged in brown field development or artspace development, including: Seila Mosquera, Neighborworks, New Horizons, (203) 562-4514, Smosquera@mutualhousing.net ;and Arise and Build, LLC, Thea Buxbaum, thea.buxbaum@gmail.com Neighborworks New Horizons is a not-for-profit development corporation that has developed artist housing in New Haven and Hamden. Arise and Build LLC was their for-profit partner in New Haven. See also the Connecticut Brownfields Redevelopment Authority at www.ctbrownfields.com for more info. on the adaptive reuse of existing structures for artist housing and studios.

7. DEVELOP A PUBLIC ART PLAN TO COMMISSION JURIED PUBLIC ART

Stakeholders expressed a desire to distinguish Black Rock as a center for arts, entertainment and culture. To that end, the NRZ should be involved in expanding the neighborhood’s visibility when it comes to each of these charges. At the same time it is possible for the group to establish procedures, based on industry best practices, for engaging artists of all kinds, developers, and events planners to the area.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Parallel to the development of a comprehensive plan for the arts, a juried public art process may also be established. New Haven Public Schools’ “Percent for Art” program set aside school funding for commissioned art all new schools. Information about this community-led process can be accessed by contacting Susan Weisselberg at New Haven’s School Construction Program, susan.weisselberg@new-haven.k12.ct.us or Barbara Lamb BLamb@newhavenct.net . Ms. Weisselberg can give an overview of the program. Ms. Lamb is more familiar with the details.
- Mary Lou Aleski (mlaleskie@artidea.org) is the Creative Director of the International Festival of Arts and Ideas. She may have ideas about arts events planning or at the very least may be able to point you in the direction of people and/or programs that support activities the NRZ is interested in.

D. ZONING, LAND USE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

8. DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR AND RATIFY THE CONSERVATION OVERLAY ZONE

Currently the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Bridgeport has but one overlay zone – that is the Historic District Overlay Zone. The neighborhood should move to add an Environmental Overlay Zone (not to mention the Village District and Dock Ordinance, the criteria for which should fall under the Conservation Overlay Zone) The Planning Committee has already done significant research on conservation overlays and their

appropriateness in Black Rock. Now there is an opportunity to complete the process for establishing the overlay zone beginning with establishing boundaries and guidelines.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Review with City staff, the procedure for amending the City’s zoning ordinance. (This may be done congruently with other bulleted tasks) Currently the committee assigned to re-write the Zoning Ordinance meets every 4th Thursday from 2-5 pm in the Economic Development Conference Room at 999 Broad Street. Lynn Haig is the staff representative on the committee.
HaigL0@CI.BRIDGEPORT.CT.US
- Establish Conservation Overlay Boundaries and map them. (maps can be provide by the City Plan office Samuel.Shaw@bridgeportct.gov; Economic Development Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov ; or Zared Architecture regina@zaredarchitecture.com Identify unique resources, views, etc. on your overlay map. It will be **very** important to establish how management of the Conservation Overlay Zone is different from management of the Coastal Boundaries – already covered under the Zoning Ordinance.
- Develop guidelines to facilitate maintenance and protection of the zone’s natural resources. See the following site for best practices:
See Nature In Fragments: The Legacy Of Sprawl
By Elizabeth Ann Johnson, Michael W. Klemens in paperback or in Google Books
and
www.portlandonline.com/planning/index.cfm?a=geegf&c=dgcdi
Additionally, The Long Island Sound Study incorporates some model regulations for environmental conservation as well as a link to the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Act.
www.longislandsoundstudy.net/riparian/legal.htm
The US Fish and Wildlife Service has information on the US Clean Water Act and subsequently, guidelines for establishing resources.
www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/cwa.htm
All of these resources are important because much work will have to be completed in order to make a convincing case to the City of Bridgeport.
- Gather support for the plan among neighbors and property owners. We suggest that at a minimum, 35% of owners of property in the overlay zone commit in writing to support the zone’s boundaries and guidelines. That support should be developed over time, in public venues, and in the form of signed petitions and/or letters of support from those affected.
- Appeal to the City Plan Office (Sam Shaw, Samuel.Shaw@bridgeportct.gov) and the council person assigned to Black Rock for inclusion of the zone in the City’s Zoning Ordinance.

9. INFLUENCE ORDINANCE RE-DRAFT TO INCLUDE DENIAL OF ZONE CHANGES IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Supporters of historic preservation in general and the Black Rock Historic District in particular, should forward to the City a proposal for changing the current zoning ordinance to achieve the desired outcome.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Similar to #8 above, review with City staff, the procedure for amending the City’s zoning ordinance. (This may be done congruently with other bulleted tasks)
- Gather support for a change to the zoning ordinance that suggests that no zone changes be permitted in the Historic District . We suggest that at a minimum, 60% of owners of property in the historic district commit in writing to support the zone’s boundaries and guidelines. That support should be developed over time, in public venues, and in the form of signed petitions and/or letters of support from those affected.
- Appeal to the City Plan Office (Sam Shaw, Samuel.Shaw@bridgeportct.gov) and the council person assigned to Black Rock for this change to the City’s Zoning Ordinance.

10. DEVELOP PRESERVATION LOAN PROGRAM

Proponents of historic preservation in the neighborhood agreed that incentives and support in the form of grant reimbursement or low-interest financing would not only serve as an incentive for owners of properties with historic details or significance to renovate or maintain their properties in the neighborhood but they would ensure, to some extent, the long-term viability of historic structures and the historic nature of the neighborhood. The planners propose that a low-interest loan program could be initiated with private or public dollars. Developing the program with this initial guideline would prevent limiting the source of funding for the cause and ultimately the ability of the implementation committee to successfully launch it.

The planners also suggest that the implementation Committee distribute to all Historic district residents and historic property owners information about the State of Connecticut Historic Tax Credit Program. (see Appendix I.) One word of caution: tax credits are only as valuable as they are useful to those who would take advantage of them. Economic changes generally effect the value of tax credits.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Appeal to William Minor, City of Bridgeport, Land use Construction Review (LUCR) Office, (203) 576-7222, with the neighborhood's desire to establish a program for historic properties in Black Rock if not to petition for participation in existing programs.
- Susan Tabachnick is a consultant in Fairfield who has navigated through the historic tax credit process for a property in Bridgeport. She would be a good resource for guidance and general information. (203) 368-9046.
- CT Trust for Historic Preservation (General Resource) -- (<http://www.cttrust.org>)
 - CT Tax Incentives and Credits listed by CT Trust -- (<http://www.cttrust.org/index.cgi/107>) include:
 - CT Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit (State)
 - CT Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program (State)
 - Expanded CT Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program (State)
 - Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (Federal)
 - Low Income Housing Investment Tax Credit
 - National Trust Community Investment Corporation
 - New Markets Tax Credits
 - Small Deal Fund
- Review 1997 Connecticut Historical Commission's: Bridgport Historic Buildings Project for boundary and inventory consistency and apply to the State Historic Preservation Review Board for changes to any designations.
- See [Appendix I](#). for State Historic Tax Credit Guidelines.

11. DRAFT AND EXECUTE A DOCK ORDINANCE

It may be possible to achieve this outcome through regulations governing the conservation overlay zone (e.g. Bridgeport's Zoning Ordinance). Priorities should be established such that the intents of both actions are achieved most efficiently. It is the desire of the neighborhood to adopt the draft plan found in [Appendix H](#).

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Similar to #9 above, review with City staff, the procedure for amending the City's zoning ordinance. (This may be done congruently with other bulleted tasks)
- The committee must determine boundaries relative to the Dock Ordinance.

- The NRZ committee responsible for championing this item should get in writing from the Connecticut State DEP, a letter stating they have no jurisdiction over docks in Ash Creek. The City of Bridgeport need not be approached until such time as said letter is in hand.
- The NRZ should also build consensus around the language in the proposed Dock Ordinance found in [Appendix H](#). That being established, the group should present the Ordinance to the City (City Plan Office – Sam Shaw) and the Black Rock representative on the Common Council and request a procedure for adopting the same.

12. PURSUE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR 340-344 BREWSTER STREET

Of particular interest to stakeholders are the acquisition and development plans for 340-344 Brewster Street. This building in the Historic District belongs to a developer who proposes to raze the existing building and replace the single family house with a denser multi-unit development. Residents have discovered significant cause for preserving the property. Not only is it an historical property in the Historic District, there also have been found historic artifacts on the site potentially warranting archaeological exploration.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Work with a design consultant to determine alternative plans amenable to the developer.
- Absent some commitment from the developer to concede, determine possible resources/agency to purchase and develop the property for a qualified use.
- Explore the concept of converting the property into a visitor center or historical society office and gallery. Archaeological exploration would be a separate phase of the development plan. The Antiquarian and Landmarks Society might be a partner for fiduciary purposes as well as a steward for renovated property. Offices & Library, 66 Forest Street, Hartford, CT 06105, (860) 247-8996, email: als@hartnet.org. Another alternative for a fiduciary agency while the NRZ awaits its 501(c)3 status is the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust or Community Capital Fund www.commcap.org. The NRZ implementation Committee should reach out to Ann Robinson (Executive Director) or Elizabeth Torres (203) 332-7977.
- Explore financial resources available through the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. www.cultureandtourism.org

E. BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

13. ESTABLISH A LIAISON WITH THE CITY FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN BLACK ROCK

Black Rock businesses owners have cited red tape within the City as a barrier to starting, maintaining, and improving businesses in the community. Unlike other neighborhoods in Bridgeport, Black Rock does not have a dedicated City staff member. To open more effective and consistent lines of communication between the City and business owners, residents, and developers, work to establish a City staff member to serve as the liaison for Black Rock. Specifically, the relationship should focus on:

- Fostering effective and accurate communication between Black Rock and the City;
- Helping timely decisions be made about projects located in Black Rock;
- Accurately representing Black Rock’s needs to the City;
- Helping Black Rock with trouble-shooting and cutting through red tape at the municipal level; and
- Carrying out the arts development theme in the neighborhood.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact William Minor (Director of Land Use and Construction Review, 576-7222) and ask to be included on mailing list for all zoning and planning agendas.

- Contact Fleeta Hudson (City Clerk, 576-7081) and Tom White (Legislative Director for the City Council, 332-3009) and ask about process to be informed of all City Council and Committee meeting agenda items.
- Monitor agenda to determine any/all instances in which these projects arise for these properties, using Bill Coleman (Senior Economic Development Associate, 576-3980) as a resource for information about agenda items that are proposed for this area.
- Submit letters, provide testimony during the public hearing / public comment portions in favor of projects that meet these criteria and out of concern for projects that do not.

14. ELIMINATE INAPPROPRIATE COMMERCIAL USES

While the mix and quality of businesses in Black Rock is improving and attracting visitors to the area, there are remnants of the neighborhood’s past. A handful of massage parlors and strip clubs still exist, particularly along Fairfield Avenue. The community is concerned about those businesses and believes they are inappropriate in Black Rock. In response, the NRZ strategy is to work with the police department and City officials to address violations of undesirable uses and illegal businesses, draft ordinances to prohibit those uses from being established and work with the City to seek approval of these ordinances, and use community activism to encourage the elimination of these inappropriate uses.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- The NRZ Implementation Committee should actively market available commercial properties to appropriate businesses as suggested in #15 below.
- Inappropriate businesses are best addressed if and as they violate municipal and state quality of life regulations. The NRZ Implementation committee should become familiar with Connecticut’s **Nuisance Abatement** policies and enforcement procedures. See the State of Connecticut’s Nuisance Abatement Unit at www.ct.gov/csao/cwp/view.asp?a=1798&q=285774 or (860) 258-5810
- Find out from the Office of the Chief State’s Attorney, what State’s Attorney is most appropriate to hear concerns the Back Rock Neighborhood.

**Office of the
Chief State's Attorney**
300 Corporate Place
Rocky Hill, Ct. 06067
(860) 258-5800

- Assign a Sergeant of Arms to be the point person between the NRZ and the appropriate State’s Attorney’s office for advancing specific neighborhood nuisances. It is important that the attorney’s office is not bombarded with complaints from multiple sources in the same community. Make every effort to funnel community concerns through the NRZ and its representative.

15. IDENTIFY, ENCOURAGE, AND SUPPORT HIGH-PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Through the NRZ workshops and design charrette, more than 30 properties have been identified as high-priority development opportunities, either due to their key location or their current, underused condition. The goals for development of these properties are:

- Encourage mixed use with active, pedestrian-friendly retail uses on the first floor and office / commercial / residential on the upper floors.
- Cultivate the image of being a culturally diverse neighborhood.
- Cultivate the image of being a “green” neighborhood.
- Cultivate the image of being an arts-focused neighborhood.

These properties, included as Appendix E, form the basis of an ongoing database of high-priority development opportunities. The community should establish working relationships with these property owners and assist, to whatever extent is appropriate and helpful, with fostering new development opportunities in the neighborhood. For example, underutilized commercial / light industrial properties on Burr Creek are prime sites for development

of a waterfront access resource. Development of such property to this end would have to begin with the identification of the property's owner and negotiation for required access.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- The NRZ Implementation Committee might create a neighborhood marketing program to attract appropriate uses to the area. A starting point might be to create a database of existing industrial properties including square footage, parking provisions and amenities. (See Whalley Avenue Special Services District at: <http://www.precisionlinemedia.com/whalley%20district/> or contact the Whalley Avenue Special Services District Director, Sheila Masterson (203)776-5455. Also see the town of Orange Commercial Property Database at: <http://www.orangeedc.com/properties.htm> which is linked to the Town's website. <http://www.orangeedc.com/> gets you there). The benefit of such a database and public access to it is, it can be used to attract whatever business/residential or other developers the neighborhood desires.
- See practices of the Chicago Center for Green Techology (<http://egov.cityofchicago.org/>), Half Moon Outfitters in North Charleston South Carolina (http://www.halfmoonoutfitters.com/halfmoon/dept.asp?s_id=0&dept_id=30), or general information at the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) <http://www.usgbc.org/>

16. CREATE INCENTIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable design and development is an important feature to encourage, and the community is committed to encouraging these types of developments in the neighborhood. The community needs to develop its plan for what incentives are most important, how these will be funded, and how the incentive system is created and managed.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Identify and cooperate with any existing organizations (e.g. the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust) within the community that could assist in the promotion of the following state and federal programs. The following websites provide information and links regarding current state and federal programs that specialize in rehabilitation and home improvement for residential property owners:
 - Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) -- (<http://www.dsireusa.org/>)
 - Connecticut Housing Investment Fund - Energy Conservation Loan
 - Connecticut Clean Energy Fund - Solar PV Rebate Program
 - Office of Policy and Management - Replacement Furnace Rebate Program
- See practices of the Chicago Center for Green Techology (<http://egov.cityofchicago.org/>), Half Moon Outfitters in North Charleston South Carolina (http://www.halfmoonoutfitters.com/halfmoon/dept.asp?s_id=0&dept_id=30), or general information at the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) <http://www.usgbc.org/>

17. PLAN FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BREWSTER STREET

With the train station development in the planning stages, significant time was spent discussing the development of Brewster Street in response to this new economic driver. Specifically, the stakeholders were interested in seeing possible mixed-use development occur in the existing structures along Brewster Street to foster a more pedestrian-friendly pathway from the train station, including for example artist studios or restaurants on the ground-floor level. Emphasis was put on ensuring that the existing homes remain (rather than be demolished and new development occur). It was recognized that additional planning would need to exist before executing this plan.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Engage an urban planning consultant to look specifically at issues related to the corridor including, traffic, parking, housing inventory etc.

- Obtain property database information from Tom Coble, Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov

F. DESIGN REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

18. ESTABLISH THE BLACK ROCK VILLAGE DISTRICT AND GUIDELINES

Develop and establish the village district and its guidelines, specifically so that:

- The village district will focus on the commercial corridors, particularly: Fairfield Avenue, between Interstate 95 and Ash Creek; and Brewster Street, between the Town of Fairfield and Fairfield Avenue.
- Village design guidelines will not override regulations associated with historic designations and will not apply to residences.
- Village design guidelines will cover new developments and renovation in the designated commercial corridors.
- The group overseeing this process will be a subcommittee formed from the NRZ implementation committee. The subcommittee will: (a) Create a roadmap for the process; (b) Examine existing village district guidelines in towns such as Madison, East Haddam, New Canaan, Newtown, Ridgefield, and Coventry; (c) Identify which documents need to be created; (d) Identify what elements to include in the village design guidelines; (e) Incorporate ideas as appropriate from the “Establishment of a Village Center” recommendation of the January 2000 Black Rock Corridor Redevelopment Plan; (f) Identify whom to approach to enlist support (community stakeholders, city officials); and (g) Include a professional architect in the process, as required by state law

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Engage an planning consultant to look specifically at issues related to the Village District including boundaries, standards for development, review process and guidelines.
- Participate in planning meetings designed to revise Bridgeport’s Zoning Ordinance to advocate for the establishment of a Village District in Black Rock regulated by the ZBA
- Use best practices of other municipalities as back-up for presentations to the City of Bridgeport.
See: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2005/pub/Chap124.htm#Sec8-2j.htm>

Village Districts in Connecticut

- Coventry: <http://coventryct.org/vertical/Sites/%7BBAF0873E-BCC4-4141-8C0B-4A0F3C1E12CB%7D/uploads/%7B7A8D8DDE-0E37-407B-8C2C-20223D7B2F62%7D.PDF>
- Ridgefield: <http://www.ridgefieldct.org/content/46/78/1292/default.aspx>
- Newtown: http://www.newtown-ct.gov/public_documents/NewtownCT_POCD/RevisedStrategies050207.pdf
- New Canaan: http://www.newcanaan.info/filestorage/293/331/611/NC_Zoning_Regulations_6.07.pdf
- Brooklyn: Contact John Filchak at 860.774.1253(They were in the process of establishing their Village District when we began the NRZ planning process for Black Rock).

19. CREATE COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

These programs were identified as important strategies to improve the appearance of the commercial corridor and provide public incentives for private investments. Specifically, the stakeholders have identified that the program should:

- Target blighted properties and properties generally in need of façade and other exterior improvement.
- Create incentives to attract new businesses or improve existing properties in Black Rock.
- The group overseeing this process will be a subcommittee formed from the NRZ implementation committee. The subcommittee will:
 - a. Target blighted properties and eyesores within the village district’s designated commercial corridors
 - b. Interview property owners
 - c. Develop strategies to attract and recruit new businesses that meet the needs of the community and provide added value to Black Rock

- d. Develop a consistent and formal process for addressing blight and eyesores

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Schedule a meeting with Steve Tyliczszak (Director of Economic Development Division within OPED, 576-7221), Keith Cryan (209-6279), and Bill Coleman (576-3980) to learn about existing façade improvement program, including who is eligible, what are the program requirements, and what current level of funding is available, and to talk about options for the program within the Black Rock neighborhood.
- If program exists and is ready for new applicants, review the list of blighted commercial properties, identify prime targets, contact the business owners, and ask to meet with them to talk about the NRZ process and invite them to talk with the City about a potential façade improvement program.
- If sufficient program or funding does not exist, work with the City Hall team to start refining and developing the program to meet Black Rock neighborhood needs.
- Further, research private funding that may be allocated toward façade improvements in the Black Rock neighborhood.

20. DEVELOP PLAN FOR STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

There was consensus in the neighborhood that revitalization of commercial and industrial areas would go a long way to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in general. In order for funding to be raised or made available to the neighborhood (specifically, the Implementation Committee) for such improvements, support for them would have to be demonstrated by the adoption of a formal improvement plan. That plan would outline needs, desires and restrictions, addressing issues such as inconsistent signage and unnecessary traffic signals.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Meet with City Engineer and Consultants preparing to complete plans for Fairfield Avenue.
Morteza Hayatgheybi (576-7211) – City Engineer

Lorraine Eckenroth, from Burns & McDonnell, Community Relations, can be reached at 203-284-8590 x230. They are scheduled to complete their plans in September. Gain support from the City

for meeting with the contractor to make planting and paving suggestions before the work is complete.

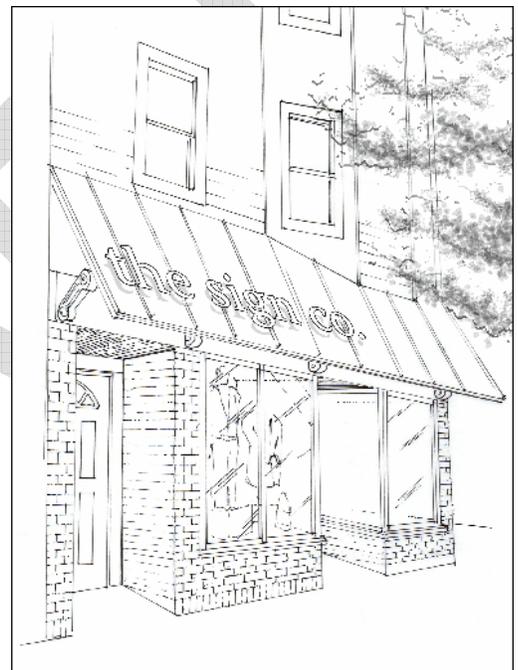
- Chris Swan, Director, CL&P 203-845-3421 should also be involved in discussions related to the development of Fairfield Avenue.

Other City of Bridgeport Contacts:

Tom Lattin (Public Facilities Department, 576-7976)
and Dennis Pittu PittuD0@ci.bridgeport.ct.us Lines & Signs Foreman
(203)-576-8225

Function of Department of Lines and Signs:

Replace/Repair street, traffic and parking signs. Maintain and collect from parking meters.



G. CIRCULATION, ACCESS, TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

Many of the action items outlined under “**Circulation, Access, Transportation and Parking**” require support and/or action by one, all or some combination of the following departments: Traffic and Parking, Engineering, and Public Works at the City of Bridgeport and the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation at the State of Connecticut.

The Planning Team suggests that the Black Rock NRZ Implementation Committee design plans, and gain community support for all items under this heading and present the same at one time to the departments with jurisdiction over them. This comprehensive plan is more likely to be received and acted upon, if presented as a well-thought-out and finite set of activities.

21. DEVELOP NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS

The community agreed that there are three key gateways into the Black Rock neighborhood, and that all of the gateways need to be developed as clear entryways into Black Rock. The three locations are:

- From the western side – Fairfield Avenue at the Fairfield Town line
- From the eastern side – Fairfield Avenue at the border of the West Side / West End neighborhood
- From the northern side – Brewster Street at Canfield Avenue

Potential measures of establishing those locations as gateways include installing signage and structures and improving landscaping.

Brewster Street in particular presents a unique opportunity, as the street is likely to become more congested when the Fairfield Metro Station is constructed just north of Canfield. Suggested improvements that would need to be studied and further developed include:

- Change the zoning to OR-S or mixed use for both sides of Brewster Street, between the Town of Fairfield and Fairfield Avenue.
- Reconfigure Brewster as a southbound one-way corridor from Canfield Avenue to Fairfield Avenue.
- Reconfigure the parallel streets on either side of Brewster (Fox and Scofield) to run northbound.
- Incorporate ideas as appropriate from the “Brewster Street Improvements” recommendation of the January 2000 Black Rock Corridor Redevelopment Plan
- Install gateway features—such as monumental posts—symbolic to Black Rock.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop a formal plan depicting the requirements outlined above for presentation to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to: the Department of Public Facilities (including the City Engineer and the head of the Department of Lines and Signs) and the Department of Transportation if necessary.
- Zone changes should be brought before the committee tasked with updating the City’s Zoning Ordinance. See Section D. Zoning, Land-Use and Historic Preservation for more information on this process.
- Rally neighborhood support for that plan in a series of public meetings.
- Demonstrate overwhelming support through letters or a signed petition.
- Deliver the plan and back-up documents to the Mayor and appropriate Council Representatives.
- Request a meeting with heads of each department and present the plan for discussion.
- Municipal advocates include Tom Coble Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Economic Development/Anti-Blight).

City of Bridgeport Contacts:

Tom Lattin (Public Facilities Department, 576-7976)

Dennis Pittu PittuD0@ci.bridgeport.ct.us Lines & Signs Foreman
1-(203)-576-8225

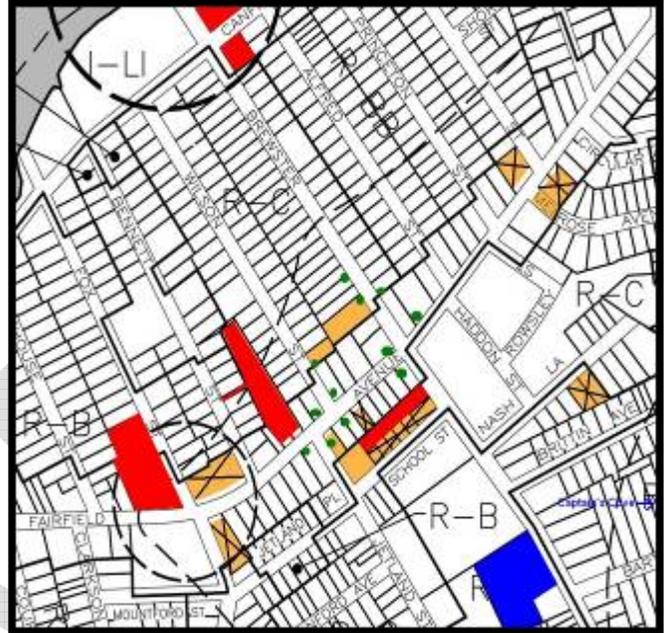
Function of Department of Lines and Signs:

Replace/Repair street, traffic and parking signs. Maintain and collect from parking meters.

Morteza Hayatgheybi (576-7211) is the City's Traffic Engineer

22. IMPROVE EXISTING MUNICIPAL PARKING LOTS

- Work with City Departments to pave and provide adequate lighting in municipal lots.
- Request that the locking up of the lots after hours cease, so that the parking is available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Work with the Bridgeport Police Department to ensure that the lots are patrolled for safety and kept litter free, particularly at night.
- Work with City Departments to improve signage so that the lots are clearly marked as Black Rock municipal lots (e.g., with banners that resemble banners on Fairfield Avenue).
- Advocate for the elimination of chain-link fences around municipal lots, consistently using the black wrought-iron fence that currently exists around the lot on Fairfield Avenue and Jetland Street.
- Advocate for the installation of trash receptacles in the municipal lots themselves.
- Advocate for access to the lot at the corner of Brewster Street and Fairfield Avenue from Wilson Street.
- Advocate for the installation of public "P" (for "park here") signs at key locations on Black Rock's commercial corridors (see map).



*Orange = current municipal lots
Red = privately owned properties / lots
Black "X" = no longer available
Blue = possible shared parking lots
Green = "Park here" signs*

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop a formal plan for presentation to the City Engineer and the Department of Public Facilities.
- Rally neighborhood support for that plan in a series of public meetings.
- Demonstrate overwhelming support through letters or a signed petition.
- Deliver the plan and back-up documents to the Mayor and appropriate Council Representatives.
- Request a meeting with heads of each department and present the plan for discussion.
- Municipal advocates include Tom Coble Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Economic Development/Anti-Blight). Tom Coble is currently working with Public Facilities and outside vendors to provide trash receptacles in other areas. Discuss with him the process for similar activities in Black Rock.

City of Bridgeport Contacts:

Tom Lattin (Public Facilities Department, 576-7976)

Dennis Pittu PittuD0@ci.bridgeport.ct.us Lines & Signs Foreman
1-(203)-576-8225

Function of Department of Lines and Signs:

Replace/Repair street, traffic and parking signs. Maintain and collect from parking meters.

Morteza Hayatgheybi (576-7211) is the City’s Traffic Engineer

23. PROVIDE TRAFFIC LIGHTS OR OTHER TRAFFIC-CALMING DEVICES AT TROUBLE INTERSECTIONS

It seems the intersection of Brewster Street and Fairfield Avenue, among others, are problematic to vehicular as well as pedestrian traffic because of traffic volume, inadequate signage or insufficient enforcement. Physical means of correcting such issues include: speed bumps or dips, bump-outs, and parking setbacks (the latter preserve sight-lines) among other remedies. The implementation committee should work with design professionals to determine the most appropriate means of addressing the problem areas.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop a formal action plan for presentation to The Department of Traffic and Parking, and the City Engineer.
- Rally neighborhood support for that plan in a series of public meetings.
- Demonstrate overwhelming support through letters or a signed petition.
- Deliver the plan and back-up documents to the Mayor and appropriate Council Representatives.
- Request a meeting with heads of each department and present the plan for discussion.
- Municipal advocates include Tom Coble Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Economic Development/Anti-Blight).

Morteza Hayatgheybi (576-7211) is the City’s Traffic Engineer

24. INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TROLLEY ROUTE

Linking remote areas of the neighborhood was a concern for many stakeholders as was the issue of limiting vehicular travel in the neighborhood thus alleviating some parking problems. A shuttle service seemed exceedingly appropriate. The idea of an actual trolley came out of the desire of some to “dress up” local transportation—creating a unique environment and experience for visitors to the neighborhood. This trolley might loop through Black Rock and provide access to the Fairfield Metro Station, Black Rock Library, Stop & Shop, Captain’s Cove Seaport, Ellsworth Park, and Showcase Cinemas Bridgeport.

In 1998 the City of New Haven along with the Greater New Haven Clean Cities Coalition and with support from Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and Senator Joseph Lieberman, pulled together support and funding for an electric trolley shuttle in Downtown New Haven. Funding came from the Transportation and Community and Systems Preservation Pilot program (TCSP) and the Federal Transit Administration Bus Program. The Greater New Haven Transit District now owns and maintains the trolleys). Identical programs may no longer exist but some research may uncover alternative funding sources.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop a formal action plan for presentation to the Department of Traffic and Parking, the City Engineer and the Department of Public Facilities.
- Rally neighborhood support for that plan in a series of public meetings.
- Demonstrate overwhelming support through letters or a signed petition.
- Deliver the plan and back-up documents to the Mayor and appropriate Council Representatives.
- Request a meeting with heads of each department and present the plan for discussion.
- Municipal advocates include Tom Coble Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Economic Development/Anti-Blight).
- Research funding sources with help from City administrators.
- Once funding is Identified, develop (with the help of a consultant if necessary) an RFP for appropriate vehicles.

Important links:

New Haven Trolley Fact Sheet: www.cityofnewhaven.com/TrafficParking/pdfs/TrolleyF.pdf
TCSP Website: www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/
Federal Transit Administration Website: www.fta.dot.gov/

25. INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL FOR FOOT BRIDGE ACROSS ASH CREEK

A bridge across Ash Creek would provide direct and scenic pedestrian access to Fairfield from the neighborhood. The footbridge would directly benefit Black Rock residents and patrons of the new Fairfield Metro Station.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop a formal action plan for presentation to the City Engineer, the Department of Public Facilities and the Department of Environmental Protection.
- Rally neighborhood support for that plan in a series of public meetings.
- Demonstrate overwhelming support through letters or a signed petition.
- Deliver the plan and back-up documents to the Mayor and appropriate Council Representatives.
- Request a meeting with heads of each department and present the plan for discussion.
- Municipal advocates include Tom Coble Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Economic Development/Anti-Blight).

26. ENABLE BICYCLE ACCESS IN BLACK ROCK

Create a bike path that begins at Ash Creek, loops around St. Mary's, through the historic district, and ends at the West End neighborhood, encompassing the proposed waterfront linear park. Develop appropriate signage and road markings to make the path visible to bicyclists and to ensure their safety against vehicular traffic.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- See strategies outlined under **B. Environment and Open Space: Develop the Black Rock Waterfront Linear Park**
- Discuss plans with Morteza Hayatgheybi (576-7211) the City's Traffic Engineer

27. IMPLEMENT ON-STREET PARKING REGULATIONS

The neighborhood is interested in a number of public improvements to ease congestion and parking difficulties along commercial corridors as well as residential streets in the neighborhood.

- Establish permit parking in particular neighborhoods surrounding Fairfield Avenue, setting aside those streets for residential parking and containing public parking to Fairfield Avenue and the municipal lots.
- Paint curbs red and yellow where appropriate, clarifying the existing parking regulations and improving visibility for drivers.
- Ensure that signage restricting parking is consistent and easily understandable, particularly at the southwest corner of Brewster Street and Fairfield Avenue; in front of Harborview Market; and at the southeast corner of Fairfield Avenue and Fox Street.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Develop a plan reflective of the aforementioned goals.
- Rally neighborhood support for that plan as previously described.
- Demonstrate that support through letters or a signed petition.
- Deliver the plan and back-up documents to the Mayor and appropriate Council Representatives.
- Request a meeting with heads of each department and present the plan for discussion.
- Municipal advocates include Tom Coble Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Economic Development/Anti-Blight).
- The Department of public facilities is responsible for public issues related to traffic and parking.

City of Bridgeport Contacts:

Tom Lattin (Public Facilities Department, 576-7976)

Dennis Pittu PittuD0@ci.bridgeport.ct.us Lines & Signs Foreman
1-(203)-576-8225

Function of Department of Lines and Signs:

Replace/Repair street, traffic and parking signs. Maintain and collect from parking meters.

Morteza Hayatgheybi (576-7211) is the City's Traffic Engineer

28. DEVELOP PARKING PLAN FOR BLACK ROCK LIBRARY

Neighbors are concerned that the pending Black Rock Library rehabilitation will increase the traffic and parking burden on Fairfield Avenue. While plans may exist and accompany any development plans, the implementation committee might become involved in development efforts in order to ensure compliance with approvals.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Review with Bridgeport Public Library staff and planners the proposed parking plan for the new facility.
- Express neighborhood concerns and brainstorm remedies.

Contacts:

City Librarian: Scott Hughes (203) 576-7777

Community Relations: Michael Bielawa (203) 576-7413

29. EXPLORE EXPANSION OF MUNICIPAL PARKING ON AVAILABLE SITES

Safety in municipal lots that are heavily utilized at night was a serious concern. Stakeholders felt one solution was an active police presence.

- Explore the possibility of entering into public shared-parking agreements with St. Ann School and Captain's Cove Seaport.
- Research the feasibility of the City's purchasing the parcels for use as municipal lots.
- Construct a two-level parking lot behind the Black Rock Art Center, on Brewster Street and Fairfield Avenue.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Brainstorm with Committee members (or sub-committee members) the goals of this task, including, but not limited to: number of spaces required; what specific parking problem will be alleviated by the action; and who the end users will be (neighborhood, visitors, business employees).
- Representative members of the Implementation Committee should approach (in writing, initially) the owner of Captain's Cove Seaport, the trustees of St. Ann School and any other property owner with appropriately sited and developed property for this use to discuss the potential for shared/leased spaces in order to alleviate congestion in the neighborhood.
- Where the potential for purchase or lease of land for public parking is amenable to the property owner, develop a plan that demonstrates the benefits of lease or acquisition.
- Rally neighborhood support for that plan and demonstrate the same through letters or a signed petition.
- Demonstrate overwhelming support through letters or a signed petition.
- Deliver the plan and back-up documents to the Mayor and appropriate Council Representatives.
- Request a meeting with heads of each department and present the plan for discussion.
- Municipal advocates include Tom Coble Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov and Angie Staltaro (both in the Department of Economic Development/Anti-Blight).

H. QUALITY OF LIFE

30. INCREASE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CITY, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND THE COMMUNITY

- Coordinate semi-annual public meetings where the primary speakers are the Chief of Police and Fire Chief.
- Coordinate public safety seminars, to be presented by the Bridgeport Police Department of Community Services.
- Coordinate regular public meetings with elected officials, possibly in the form of town hall meetings.
- Ensure that local public safety measures (conducted by the community and by police) are consistent with citywide initiatives.
- Publicize the fact that crime statistics for Black Rock are available online, at the website of the Black Rock Community Council www.blackrockcc.org The NRZ should be in communication with the Public Safety Chair at the BRCC.
- Develop communication plan with the community, specifically creating new connections with PT Barnum residents.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Contact Tom Coble (Director of Neighborhood Revitalization/Anti-blight) Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov to learn of all the current municipal enforcement strategies and how the Black Rock NRZ can assist those operations.
- Educate all members of the Black Rock NRZ regarding the current issues and applicable city regulations when it comes to housing quality. Coordinate the content of this education effort with the Neighborhood Revitalization/Anti-blight office(See: Tom.Coble@bridgeportct.gov)
- Create a shared reference resource to maintain community awareness of its enforcement options.
- See the Black Rock Community Council for contacts at the Department of Police Services. As the Police Department has a long standing relationship with the BRCC, a partnership between the NRZ and this vital community organization is essential. www.blackrockcc.org

31. ADVOCATE FOR A POLICE OFFICER POSITION DEDICATED TO BLACK ROCK

Seek an officer that will patrol Black Rock at all times, either on foot or on bicycle, with special attention paid to:

- Customers leaving Black Rock bars after hours, who create noise on the streets and litter, especially in municipal parking lots.
- Illegal parking around Black Rock, particularly on Ellsworth Street and at the southwest corner of Brewster Street and Fairfield Avenue.
- Speeding on Fairfield Avenue and on some of the side streets.
- Motorcycles that violate the City's noise ordinance.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Work through the existing Black Rock Block Watch. There's strength in organization. Contact Captain Leonard Samatulski for Block Watch program support information if appropriate but coordinate action with the Black Rock Community Council. Make sure block watch efforts include all sections of Black Rock. Crime statistics in Black Rock are posted on the Black Rock Community Council's website: www.blackrockcc.org
- Incorporate CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) tools into design standards for new construction. www.cpted-watch.com
- Determine effectiveness of the SCAT program at the City of Bridgeport.

The Strategic City Anti-Trespass (SCAT) program is a voluntary program designed to assist property owners in legally dealing with persons who knowingly enter and remain on private property without the

owner's permission. To enroll in the SCAT program, a property owner signs a waiver which states that the police, in the owner's absence, have the authority to question individuals observed on properties registered with the SCAT program.

For more information regarding the SCAT program, please call 576-8278.

- After testing its effectiveness, inform residents neighborhood-wide of the availability of security surveys: On request, a home or business is inspected for deficiencies in security. Approximately one week after the initial inspection, a report is given to the business or home owner. This report outlines ways in which the owner can increase safety and security and, thereby, reducing the risk of burglaries. For more information regarding security surveys, please call 576-8278.
- Establish/find funding for neighborhood block watches – include all area of Black Rock.
- After demonstrating activities along all these lines, and establishing the need for additional resources in specific areas at specific times the group should approach the Chief of Police with prime locations and times of day/week for certain incidents. Those should be the areas in which to concentrate additional resources and man-hours.

Bryan T. Norwood, Chief, 300 Congress Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604
Tel (203) 581-5100 Fax (203) 576-8130

Contact E-Mail:
bptctpd@bridgeportct.gov

- Advocate for a police sub-station in Black Rock. (This should include working with other NRZ sub-committees to determine an appropriate site for a field office).

I. EDUCATION

The community takes pride in the fact that it has a “neighborhood” school in the K-6 Black Rock School, on Brewster Street. Many also realize that it has the potential to improve its public schools; the challenge is in “building better partnerships and leveraging what we have already,” as one resident said. While there are broad budgetary issues at the City and state levels relating to education in Black Rock, the NRZ should focus on tackling areas of concern associated with minor budgetary gaps and relationships within the community, through the following recommendations:

32. IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AT BLACK ROCK SCHOOLS

- There has been significant new construction and renovation at Black Rock schools, but the playground at Black Rock School is still an issue of concern to the school community.
- A focus group at the Aug. 4, 2007 NRZ workshop described Longfellow K-6 School as looking “like a juvenile detention center.”

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Work through the existing Black Rock Block Watch. There's strength in organization. Contact Captain Leonard Samatulski for Block Watch program support information if appropriate but coordinate action with the Black Rock Community Council. Make sure block watch efforts include all sections of Black Rock.

33. INCREASE CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Provide every child in Black Rock with the opportunity to attend a pre-K program. Determining a budget every year for pre-k funding out of ‘whatever is left over’ in Connecticut's general fund will not

ensure sufficient funding for important programs each year. The Black Rock NRZ has an opportunity to be a leader in the State when it comes to advocacy along these lines.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Advocate for permanent set-asides for Pre-K education (possibly but not necessarily general funds).
- Determine what Connecticut is doing...and what it is not.
- Explore alternate funding sources, such as the Connecticut Lottery. See best practices of Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.
- Develop a white paper on the need for universal pre-k programming and distribute it to neighbors, legislators, city administrators and the governor's office.
- Important resources:
 - www.preknow.org
 - www.rules.sos.state.ga.us/docs/591/2/1/01.pdf
 - www.clasp.org/ChildCareAndEarlyEducation/Georgia.pdf
 - www.decal.state.ga.us
 - www.state.tn.us/governor/prek/govsplan.htm
 - www.preknow.org/resource/profiles/northcarolina.cfm
 - www.preknow.org/resource/profiles/connecticut.cfm

Advocates:

Governor Jodi M. Rell, State of Connecticut

Bill Graustein, William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund

John Rathgeber, Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA)

34. EMPHASIZE PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN BLACK ROCK

- Further current relationships between the schools and the Bridgeport Public Library, particularly with the Black Rock branch when it reopens after renovation.
- Initiate partnerships between the schools and local businesses (e.g., sponsorships and career days).
- Expand on current partnership with Burroughs Community Center to include transportation to and from after-school programs.
- Build strong relationships and promote synergy between Black Rock School, Longfellow School, Bridgeport Regional Vocational Aquaculture School, and St. Ann School.
- Work with the School Volunteer Association to seek volunteers to staff after-school programs at Black Rock School, Longfellow School, Burroughs Community Center, and the Bridgeport Public Library; volunteers to contribute their time and labor for playground improvements; and volunteers with particular expertise to design and operate after-school programs such as Pilates and Odyssey of the Mind.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Reach out to all Black Rock school principals with plans to approach Bridgeport Public library, local businesses, Burroughs Community Center. Ask what partnerships, support and/or resources would most benefit them.
- Identify those resources or the potential for developing them in the community.
- Approach Bridgeport Public Library, local businesses, Burroughs and other service providers with the schools' 'wish lists'.
- Plan an event to celebrate benevolence and support from participating organizations (including awards to business owners or other leaders in the charge).

Library Resources: City Librarian: Scott Hughes (203) 576-7777

Community Relations: Michael Bielawa (203) 576-7413

35. SEEK ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR GAPS IN EDUCATION

- Identify funding sources, including public support, grants, and other private funders.
- The funding will go to:
 - Increased hours of security and janitorial service at Longfellow and Black Rock Schools to allow for more after-school activities on site.
 - Reduced class sizes at both Longfellow and Black Rock schools.
 - Support of the libraries at Longfellow and Black Rock schools.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Approach the superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools with concerns. Jointly determine feasibility of changes to school programming if funding were available.
- Determine, with the help of the Superintendent of Schools how much funding would be needed in order to accomplish reasonable goals. (e.g. *Having determined with the Superintendent of schools that there are no impediments to extended security hours and janitorial service given union contracts, charter etc., it would cost \$xxxx per year to provide service for after school programs 100 days out of the year.*)
- Develop a campaign to raise \$xxxx to provide proposed services such that after school programs can flourish.
- Celebrate supporters of initiatives which require thinking ‘outside the box’.

Potential Supporters:

Superintendent of Schools, John J. Ramos, Sr., Ed.D.

Bridgeport Public Schools
45 Lyon Terrace - Bridgeport, CT 06604
Telephone: (203) 576-7302 Fax: (203) 576-8488
E-Mail: jramos@bridgeportedu.net

Bill Graustein, William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund
www.wcgmf.org/

John Rathgeber, Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA)
350 Church Street
Hartford, CT 06103
(860) 244-1900

kaufmanl@cbia.com – Lauren Weisberg Kaufman and
basantij@cbia.com – Jesmin Basanti serve in the educational policy department of CBIA

Ask about CBIA’s Education Foundation www.cbia.com/ed/Edfound.htm

36. SUPPORT KEEPING BLACK ROCK SCHOOL A NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

Within reason, support plans to keep Black Rock School as a neighborhood school, as opposed to plans to reassign Black Rock children to a larger school that may be built in the future, such as a charter school, magnet school, or theme school.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

- Approach the superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools (jramos@bridgeportedu.net or (203) 576-7302) with concerns. Determine what influences are driving the conversion of Black Rock School from neighborhood school to magnet school. (e.g. programming, funding, regional needs)
- Determine, based on initial discussion if maintaining the school as a neighborhoods school is financially and programmatically feasible and non-exclusionary. If so:
- The subcommittee of the NRZ Implementation Committee assigned to Education should gain support for keeping Black Rock School a neighborhood school among parents and other stakeholders. That support should be demonstrated by petition or letters and should present an argument for maintaining school size and programming.
- Presentations of that support should be made to the Board of Education, the Mayor and local legislators.

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X. Performance and Review Standards

The Black Rock NRZ Implementation Committee will engage in the quarterly public review of progress on Implementation Plan Action Items. Subcommittees will develop brief quarterly reports describing the activities of their group during the period, assistance required from other subcommittees, assistance required from NRZ Implementation Committee Leadership, from City of Bridgeport Staff and other supporters of the Plan.

Progress will be measured against proposed time-frames presented in the Plan. Revisions to the action items and the time-frame allotted to completion of these items may be revised or expanded by majority vote of the Implementation Committee.

Quarterly reports summarizing the activities of all subcommittees should be made available to cooperating neighborhood organizations (including but not limited to BRHA, BRCC, the Garden Club, the Little League, ACCA, Burroughs) as well as all Implementation Committee members.

A calendar of meetings for the operating year should be adopted and disseminated within thirty (30) days of acceptance of the Final Plan. The same should include quarterly update meetings.

The achievements of the year should be presented/celebrated at an annual meeting which encourages participation from all stakeholders.

XI. Appendices



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Appendix A. Bylaws

Black Rock Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Committee

BY-LAWS

Article I

Section 1. Name

The name of the organization shall be the Black Rock Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Committee, hereinafter referred to as Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee or The Planning Committee.

Section 2. Offices

The principal location of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall be in Black Rock neighborhood of Bridgeport, Connecticut. All meetings of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall take place within the Black Rock neighborhood of Bridgeport.

Article II

Section 1. Mission Statement

In accordance to Public ACT 94-240 of the Connecticut General Statutes, an Act to Establish the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall be responsible for formulating an NRZ Strategic Plan.

The primary mission of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee is to develop a unified sense of said community across the various neighborhoods of Black Rock. This will be done through the collaborative efforts of the residents and other stakeholders, with an emphasis on developing and protecting the unique business, entertainment, architectural, environmental cultural and artistic strengths of Black Rock. It should ensure that land use and development occur in such a manner as to place the highest values on people and the unique natural resources of the community and its quality of life, as well as honoring and preserving the historic nature of Black Rock.

This effort will include but not be limited to, representatives of businesses; non-profit organizations, health and other service providers; cultural and religious institutions; and organized community associations.

The plan will contribute to the long term betterment of the community, reflect community vision, and develop goals through a commitment to a realistic implementation.

This organization will not be affiliated with any political party, organization or group. Furthermore, the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall not endorse candidates for political offices.

Section 2. Boundaries

The boundary of the Black Rock Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) shall be the Neighborhood boundary of Black Rock Neighborhood, as defined by the City of Bridgeport. The Neighborhood Map with the boundary defined by the City is attached at the end as "Appendix A" and constitutes a part of these By-laws. Attached also is the mutual agreement for waterfront development as stated and defined in Appendix B "Neighborhood Land Use Cooperation Agreement"

Article III Membership

Section 1. Eligibility

Eligible members of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee include residents, owners of properties located in the neighborhood; individuals and representatives of businesses, cultural, educational, social service agencies, religious and citizen organizations located in the Black Rock neighborhood or have a significant impact on the Black Rock Neighborhood.

Article IV Meetings

Section 1. Notice of Meetings

It will be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee to distribute a written notice of the meetings to the members at least five days prior to each meeting.

Section 2. Quorum

At least one person more than 50% of the current Board membership must be present to constitute a quorum. More than half of those present for purpose of a quorum must currently reside in the neighborhood. *(this change voted & approved 12/24/07)*

Section 3. Regular Meetings

The Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall meet as needed to complete the development of the Black Rock NRZ Plan at a location within the neighborhood boundaries and at a time and date agreed upon by the members.

Section 4. Voting

Decision on any question shall be made by a majority vote of those members constituting a quorum (see Article IV; Section 2). There shall be no voting by proxy. Any member who has a personal, professional, business or other interest in any parcel of property that might be subject to the Strategic Plan shall be required to disclose said interest and shall reclude himself or herself from any vote thereon. All votes shall be recorded by Secretary of the Planning Committee, and together with minutes of meetings, shall be made available to the community-at-large.

Article V The Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee

Section 1. Membership

The Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall consist of twenty-one (21) persons. At least 11 of the Committee's members must be residents of the Black Rock neighborhood. In addition, the City may appoint a representative as a voting member to the Planning Committee as part of the 21 persons who shall comprise the committee. The composition of the Planning Committee shall be as follows:

- 11 Residents (P.A. 95-340 requires that majority of Committee members be residents)
- 3 Business Representatives
- 2 Representatives of Churches and Other Religious Organizations
- 3 Representatives of Community Organizations and Other Non-Profits
- 2 Representatives from the Public Sector, including the City's appointed representative.

With regard to resident members, individuals will be required to provide proof of residency within Black Rock (e.g., Driver's License, State Identification Card, Utility Bills, etc.).

Section 2. Eligibility and Representation

Resident Property Owners and Resident Tenants must reside within Black Rock. All other members of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee may reside outside of the Black Rock, as long as they represent a business, church or other religious organization, community organization or other non-profit, or public sector entity that is located within Black Rock or substantially impacts the Black Rock community.

Section 3. Election

Election of representatives to the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall take place within the Sixty (60 days) of the approval by the City of Bridgeport of a resolution designating the Black Rock community as an NRZ neighborhood pursuant to state statute.

a. A Nominating Committee will be convened by the By-Laws committee which consists of representation from the six sectors listed in Article V, Section 1. as well as members of the By-Laws Committee.

b. The Nominating Committee members will be asked to inform their constituency about the NRZ and solicit nominations. Candidates for the Planning Committee may self-nominate or be nominated by another person.

c. The nominations can be submitted by email or regular mail or brought to the subsequent meeting of the Nominating Committee by members of that committee. The goal of the nominating process is to maximize participation.

d. The Nominating Committee will review nominees and convene the persons nominated to explain the purpose of the NRZ and the duties and responsibilities of the members of the Planning Committee.

e. A slate of Planning Committee members will be prepared to present at the subsequent stakeholders meeting.

Section 4. Term of Office

Members of the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall serve for a period of one (1) year, or until such time as an NRZ Strategic Plan has been approved by the City and passed on to an NRZ Implementation Committee, at which time the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall be dissolved, whichever is shorter. If a planning committee member misses two consecutive meetings, he/she will not be able to continue in that position unless there are extraordinary circumstances, as deemed by a majority of the planning committee. A list of potential replacements from the nominating process will be kept in case replacements from the same represented group are needed. The Planning Committee will be responsible for the creation of the Implementation Committee when the Black Rock NRZ Strategic Plan has been approved by the City of Bridgeport at which point the Planning Committee will be dissolved.

Article VI

Section 1. Motions and Proposals

Proposals may be introduced to the Planning Committee by any stakeholder of the Black Rock NRZ.

Section 2. Amendments

Amendments to the By-laws may be proposed in writing to the Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee if at least three members of the Planning Committee request an amendment to the By-laws. Any amendment shall require a 3/4 vote of all Committee members to take effect.

Section 3. Parliamentary Disputes

In any dispute concerning interpretation of “By Laws” or operating procedures of the NRZ, the Secretary shall be considered “Parliamentarian” and defer to Robert’s Rules of Order for guidance. The agreement of 75% of those in attendance shall be necessary to overcome the application of Robert’s Rule of Order. *(this change voted and approved 12/24/07)*

Article VII Officers and Committees

Section 1. Name and Number

Since the purpose of the NRZ Planning Committee is to formulate a Strategic Plan for Black Rock, the only officers shall be a President, whose responsibility shall be to preside over meetings of the Committee, a Vice-President, who shall act in the President’s place in his or her absence, and a Secretary, who shall be responsible for a. maintaining records of the Planning Committee, b. recording minutes and votes, c. providing notice of

meetings to the Planning Committee and d. providing notice of public hearings or forums to the community at large. The offices of President, Vice-President, and Secretary shall be elected for one-year terms by a majority vote of the members of the Planning Committee.

Section 2. Subcommittees

The Black Rock NRZ Planning Committee shall consist of at least the following Subcommittees, each of which will be assigned tasks and meet according to a schedule determined by the whole: (1) Business and Economic Development; (2) Education; (3) Arts, Entertainment and Culture (4) Land Use, Development, and Historic Preservation; (5) Outreach and Communication; (6) Quality of Life, Environment and Public Safety.

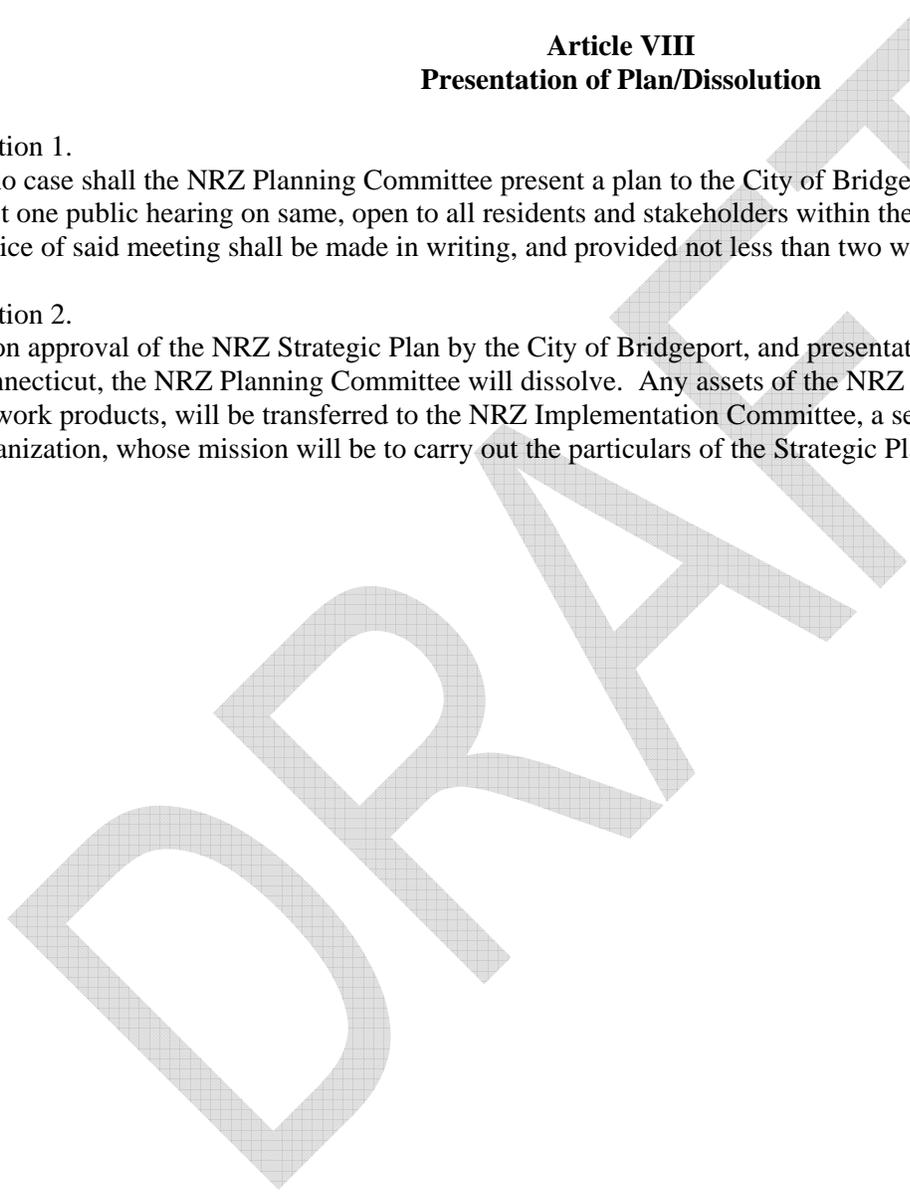
**Article VIII
Presentation of Plan/Dissolution**

Section 1.

In no case shall the NRZ Planning Committee present a plan to the City of Bridgeport without first holding at least one public hearing on same, open to all residents and stakeholders within the Black Rock community. Notice of said meeting shall be made in writing, and provided not less than two weeks prior to the hearing.

Section 2.

Upon approval of the NRZ Strategic Plan by the City of Bridgeport, and presentation of same to the State of Connecticut, the NRZ Planning Committee will dissolve. Any assets of the NRZ Planning Committee, including all work products, will be transferred to the NRZ Implementation Committee, a separate 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization, whose mission will be to carry out the particulars of the Strategic Plan.



Appendix B
Article II; Section 2 Boundaries
Neighborhood Land Use Cooperation Agreement

The West Side/West End, South End, and Black Rock NRZ's by way of by-laws shall agree to notify each other in the event of the receipt of any proposal from any entity, public or private which may reasonably cause any impact, be it visual, environmental or otherwise, to Black Rock Harbor, Ash Creek, the Rooster River, Burr Creek and/or Cedar Creek. Said NRZs further agree to share with each other any information obtained concerning said proposals and to endeavor to consult with each other before any application on such proposals may be scheduled for presentation to any land use or regulatory board(s) and commission(s).

For any development that impacts the waterfronts of Black Rock Harbor, Burr and Cedar Creeks it is the responsibility of the NRZ where the development is located to inform the other two NRZs before the potential development goes to any Legislative or decision making body about the potential development. Any available information must be shared. This responsibility to inform is contingent upon the agreement of the West End and South End NRZ committees to the preceding statement.

A charrette must be held to educate representatives from each of the three NRZs about rules, regulations and issues dealing with wetland and waterfront development.

An important ingredient of this boundary agreement is an arrangement regarding Black Rock Harbor, Cedar and Burr Creeks from the beginning of Black Rock Harbor the end of the Cedar Creek which stipulates as follows: (1) the area of Cedar Creek to be defined and included is the beginning to the end of Cedar Creek; (2) for any development that impacts the waterfronts of Black Rock Harbor, Burr and Cedar Creeks it is the responsibility of the NRZ where the development is located to inform the other two NRZ's before the potential development goes to any legislative or decision making body about the potential development. Any available information must be shared; (3) A Charrette must be held to educate representatives from each of the three NRZ's (i.e., Black Rock, West End/West Side, and South End) about rules, regulations and issues dealing with wetland and waterfront development; (4) the arrangement outlined above shall be included in the NRZ plans of the three participating neighborhoods.

Appendix B. Sources of Input

This NRZ Plan for the Black Rock neighborhood is informed by numerous sources of information and input, including:

- Burroughs Community Center
- Black Rock Garden Club
- Black Rock Homeowners Association
- Black Rock Community Council
- Black Rock NRZ Committee Members
- PT Barnum Residents Council
- 23 anonymous resident surveys

Additional stakeholders and businesses participating in the process included:

Advanced Auto – Phil Pasmeg
All That Glitters
Aura – Glenn Price
Avant-Tax – Marisol Moreno
Beverly Pizza House – Mike Sosnowsai
Black Rock Arts Center – Joseph Celli
Black Rock Banner – Rob Sullivan
Black Rock Castle Restaurant & Bar – Lena and John Smith
Black Rock Column – David Aldo
Black Rock General Store – Greg Bukobsky
Captain’s Cove – Bruce Williams
Cody Smolik
Daisy Young
Dish – Janet Habansky
Eddie Cassidy
H & H Bakery – Aldo Hernandez
Helen Antoniak’s – Helen Antoniak
Hemingway Custom Cabinetry – George Krawiec
Home on the Range – Joanne McGillicuddy and Steve Penne
Hurd Auto Sales – Vinny Carfo
John Lee
Joseph Formato
Julianne’s Wines & Spirits – Sid Patel
Kevin Simmons
Krauszers – Mark Weston
Matty’s Corner – Danny Roach
Phil Blagys
Port Coffeehouse – Kate Habansky and Jerry Bennett
Richard DeParle
ServiceMaster of Westport – Gabriel Balarezo
Suzanne Dreyer
Susie Vasler
Taco Loco – Miguel Tomasio
The Field – Patrick and Lisa Hogan
TMG, LLC – Mike Nevins
T-Mobile – Marcel Najar
Viale – Tom Vanghele

Appendix C. NRZ Planning Committee

Residents

Lori Baker
Dr. Kristine Demarco
Don Greenberg
Laura Hurwitz
John Lee
Suzanne Dreyer
Cody Smolik
Kraig Steffens
Phil Young

Small Business

Miguel Tomasio

Large Business

George Krawiec

Churches/Religious

Beth Anderson
Bishop Patrick Kelly

Nonprofit/ Community

Phil Blagys
Scott Hughes

Public Sector

Donna Curran
Angie Staltaro
Michael Nidoh

Appendix D. Articles and Communications

The **BLACK ROCK**
Neighborhood Revitalization Zone

INVITES

Workshop One:

When:

August 4th - Saturday
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Where:

Black Rock Arts Center
2838 Fairfield Avenue

Residents, business &
property owners to
participate in an
interactive
neighborhood workshop
to create a vision for
our community.

On Saturday, August 4, 2007 Community "Stakeholders"
will gather together to participate in the first of a series of workshops.

Strategic planning on a local level.

The Black Rock NRZ is a partnership between the community & city government to develop and implement a strategic plan for Black Rock.

Main Topics of Discussion

- Education
- Arts-Entertainment-Culture
- Quality of Life-Public Safety
- Land Use-Historic Preservation
- Transportation-Circulation-Parking
- Business & Economic Development

Workshop Line-up:

1. Analysis & Visioning - August 4th
2. Neighborhood Development - Sept. 15th
3. Design Charrette - October 6th

COME OUT AND GET INVOLVED!

For more information contact
203-612-4182
or visit
blackrockonline.org/blog/nrz-blog

BLACK ROCK

Neighborhood Revitalization Zone

NRZ

WORKSHOP #2

You are invited to participate in a neighborhood workshop to create a vision for our community.

When:

Saturday, September 15th
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Where:

Cathedral of Faith
2319 Fairfield Avenue
203-333-8080

Workshop #2 Agenda:

- Review the results from Workshop #1**
- Break out into focus groups on:**
 - Neighborhood Development**
 - Economic Development**

Strategic planning on a local level.

The Black Rock NRZ is a partnership between C.E.D.F., the community & city government to develop and implement a strategic plan for Black Rock.

Workshop Line-up:

- #1 Analysis & Visioning - August 4th**
- #2 Neighborhood Development - Sept. 15th**
- #3 Design Charrette - October 6th**

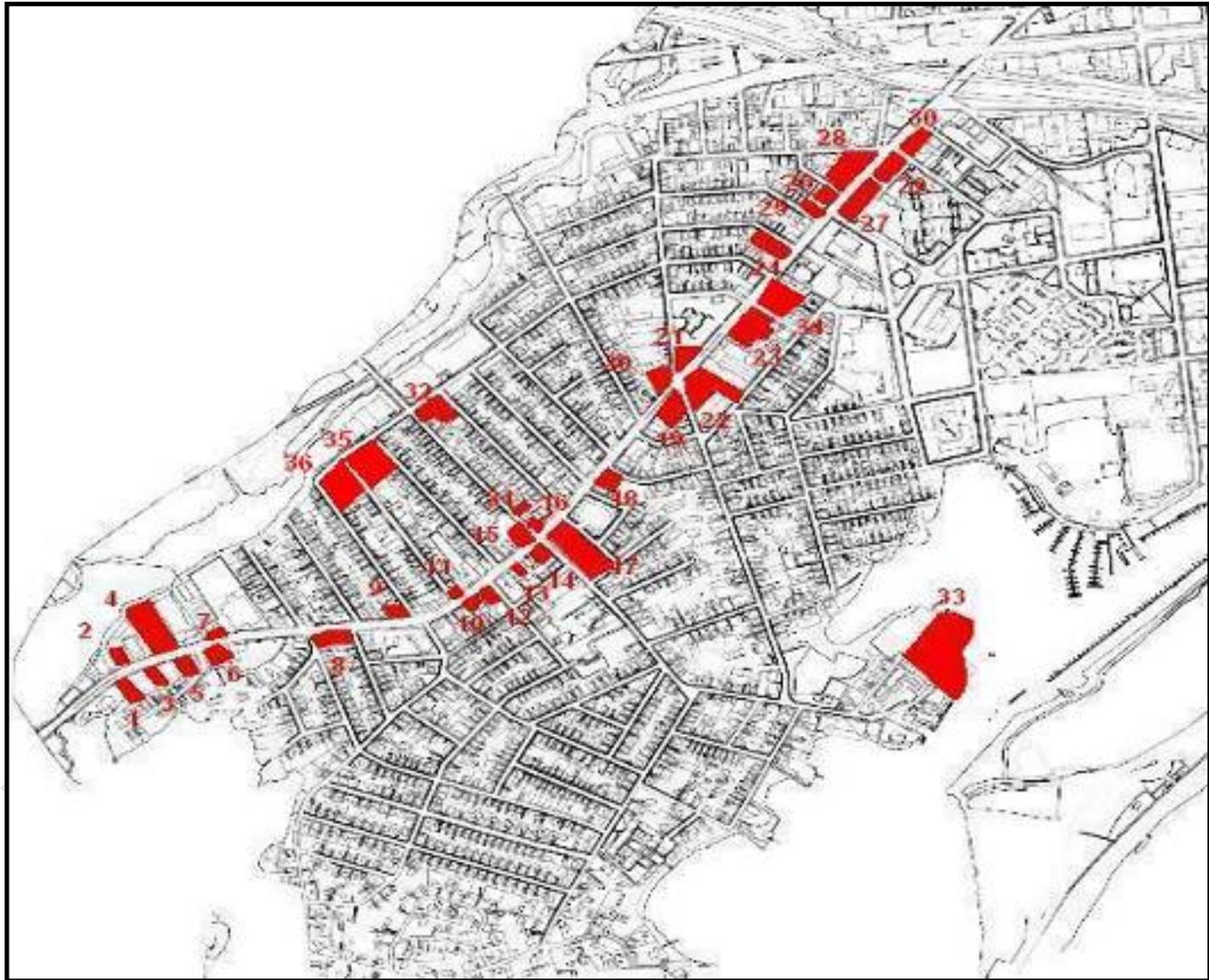
COME OUT AND GET INVOLVED!

For more information contact
203-612-4182
or visit
blackrockonline.org/blog/nrz-blog

Appendix E. High-Priority Development Opportunities

| # | Address | Current Use | Acres | Zoning | Owner | Assessed | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|-------|--------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---|--|
| | | | | | | Value | Notes | |
| 1 | 3399 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.21 | ORS | Papageorge George E | 67,550 | | |
| 1 | 3425 Fairfield Ave. | Avenue Café | 0.20 | ORS | Higher Levels LLC | 253,060 | | |
| 2 | 3400 Fairfield Ave. | Commercial | 1.18 | ORS | Rickard Realty | 841,808 | Hemingway is not under consideration; just the west side of the parcel. | |
| 3 | 3369 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.19 | ORS | Ash Creek Holdings | 86,870 | | |
| 3 | 3375 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.24 | ORS | Ash Creek Holdings | 74,800 | | |
| 4 | 3336 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 1.22 | ORS | Riverbank Landing, LLC | 354,830 | | |
| 5 | 3309 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.17 | ORS | Bepe LLC c/o | 52,650 | | |
| 6 | 3267 Fairfield Ave. | Commercial | 0.14 | ORS | Voroba Florence Living Trust | 106,330 | | |
| 6 | 3277 Fairfield Ave. | Parking lot | 0.14 | ORS | Voroba Florence R. | 52,340 | | |
| 7 | <i>Cannot find property information on tax assessment database or Bridgeport GIS. Not a "true" parcel.</i> | | | | | | | |
| 8 | 3129 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.16 | ORS | 3115 Fairfield Avenue LLC | 55,026 | Deparle? | |
| 8 | 3115 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.16 | ORS | 3115 Fairfield Avenue LLC | 55,827 | Deparle? | |
| 8 | 3135 Fairfield Ave. | Commercial | 0.26 | ORS | 3115 Fairfield Avenue LLC | 120,960 | Deparle? | |
| 9 | 3020 Fairfield Ave. | Residential | 0.11 | ORS | Deparle Properties Inc. | 135,940 | | |
| 9 | 3024 Fairfield Ave. | Residential | 0.07 | ORS | Deparle Properties Inc. | 134,890 | | |
| 9 | 3044 Fairfield Ave. | Residential | 0.07 | ORS | Deparle Properties Inc. | 134,810 | | |
| 10 | 2947 Fairfield Ave. | Residential | 0.16 | ORS | Raymond David C. | 129,710 | | |
| 10 | 2937 Fairfield Ave. | Residential | 0.17 | ORS | Gaal Jolan Orosz | 159,110 | | |
| 11 | 2948 Fairfield Ave. | Commercial | 0.23 | ORS | Morales John B. & Alida Morales | 259,550 | Former Mr. John's | |
| 12 | 2929 Fairfield Ave. | Spa / lounge | 0.18 | ORS | Fairfield Jetland LLC | 355,990 | | |
| 13 | 2871 Fairfield Ave. | Boarded up | 0.09 | ORS | Stevens David J. & Sonia | 101,570 | | |
| 14 | 2835 Fairfield Ave. | Subway / deli | 0.11 | ORS | Khamarji Nicholas | 159,810 | | |
| 15 | 2836 Fairfield Ave. | Parking lot | 0.61 | ORS | Bridgeport Redevelopment Authority | 584,360 | | |
| 15 | 2842 Fairfield Ave. | Black Rock Art Center | 0.53 | ORS | Bridgeport Redevelopment Authority | 143,000 | | |
| 16 | 2814 Fairfield Ave. | Matty's Corner | 0.19 | ORS | Stephney LLC | 190,050 | | |
| 17 | 2821 Fairfield Ave. | Apartments | 1.31 | RC | Bridgeport Garden Apartments LLC | 2,055,480 | | |
| 18 | 2705 Fairfield Ave. | Black Rock Library | 0.29 | ORS | City of Bridgeport | 258,540 | | |
| 19 | 2553 Fairfield Ave. | Krauszer's | 0.26 | ORS | Vav Inc. | 242,790 | | |
| 20 | 2550 Fairfield Ave. | Dunkin' Donuts | 0.51 | ORS | NKJC, LLC | 259,000 | | |
| 21 | 2468 Fairfield Ave. | Burroughs CC | 3.55 | ORS | Burroughs CC | 1,268,470 | Center is not under consideration; just the garden / field next to it. | |
| 22 | 2525 Fairfield Ave. | Church | 1.04 | ORS | Bishop S C Madison Trustee for United | 619,031 | | |

| # | Address | Current Use | Acres | Zoning | Owner | Assessed | |
|----|---------------------|------------------------------|-------|--------|-------------------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| | | | | | | Value | Notes |
| 23 | 2439 Fairfield Ave. | Ted's Bait & Tackle | 0.28 | ORS | Horvath Elizabeth Nagy & Jennie | 142,230 | |
| 23 | 2407 Fairfield Ave. | Hosanna Ministry Thrift Shop | 0.42 | ORS | 2407 Realty LLC | 309,960 | |
| 23 | 2423 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.35 | ORS | 2423 Realty LLC | 97,270 | |
| 24 | 2316 Fairfield Ave. | Boarded up | 0.44 | ORS | 16 Chestnut LLC | 247,380 | |
| 25 | 2288 Fairfield Ave. | Boarded up | 0.26 | ORS | Vaz Jose & Vaz Luis | 165,760 | |
| 26 | 2206 Fairfield Ave. | Residential | 0.11 | ORS | Ford Lucila O | 162,050 | |
| 27 | 2201 Fairfield Ave. | Liberty Motors | 0.46 | ORS | Castle Properties LLC | 182,980 | |
| 27 | 2175 Fairfield Ave. | Liberty Motors | 0.23 | ORS | Castle Properties LLC | 68,720 | |
| 27 | 2135 Fairfield Ave. | Liberty Motors | 0.23 | ORS | Fairfield Ave Investors LLC | 56,000 | |
| 28 | 2178 Fairfield Ave. | Hurd Auto | 0.24 | ORS | Carfo Vincent | 145,597 | |
| 28 | 2158 Fairfield Ave. | Auto | 0.33 | ORS | C Mass LLC | 128,950 | |
| 28 | 2128 Fairfield Ave. | Apartment | 0.17 | ORS | Orlando Street Investors Inc | 185,500 | |
| 28 | 2146 Fairfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.17 | ORS | Staurovsky Thesera A | 56,300 | |
| 29 | 2115 Fairfield Ave. | Mimi Dragone | 0.12 | ORS | Dragone Thomas L & Virginia Dragone | 215,780 | |
| 29 | 2125 Fairfield Ave. | Mimi Dragone | 0.12 | ORS | Dragone Thomas L & Virginia Dragone | 42,150 | Parking lot |
| 30 | 2093 Fairfield Ave. | Convenience store | 0.11 | ILI | Morales Narciso | 35,000 | |
| 30 | 2091 Fairfield Ave. | Mimi Dragone | 0.10 | ILI | Dragone Thomas L & Virginia Dragone | 256,470 | Parking lot |
| 30 | 2075 Fairfield Ave. | Auto | 0.14 | ILI | Dragone & Sons LLC | 120,470 | |
| 30 | 2073 Fairfield Ave. | Parking lot | 0.12 | ILI | Dragone & Sons LLC | 41,360 | |
| 31 | 680 Brewster St. | Vacant lot | 0.11 | RB | Stepney LLC | 47,950 | Former upholstery site |
| 32 | 872 Brewster St. | Parking lot | 0.20 | ILI | National Amusements Inc. | 63,970 | |
| 33 | 10 Brewster St. | Vacant lot | 3.00 | RB | Savage Joseph J Est | 475,060 | |
| 34 | 2345 Fairfield Ave. | Burnt-down residential | 0.11 | B1 | Jean-Pierre Luigi | 95,774 | Burned in Dec. 2007 |
| 35 | 562 Canfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.59 | ILI | City of Bridgeport | 66,660 | Borders Ash Creek |
| 35 | 598 Canfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.66 | ILI | City of Bridgeport | 73,190 | Borders Ash Creek |
| 36 | 636 Canfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 1.16 | ILI | City of Bridgeport | 115,010 | Borders Ash Creek |
| 36 | 660 Canfield Ave. | Vacant lot | 0.63 | ILI | City of Bridgeport | 70,180 | Borders Ash Creek |



Appendix F. NRZ Planning Subcommittee Reports

Arts Sub committee meeting Thursday October 25, 2007

An ideas session for enhancing the art scene in Black Rock

Attendees: Regina Winters, Suzanne Dreyer, Susan Breen Phil Blagys, Jin Hi Kim, Joseph Celli, Janet Habansky, Rachel Rockwell, Wendy Nylén, Peter Konsterlie

Mission of the Black Rock Arts and Entertainment area

to inspire and enliven the community through the arts and entertainment, to enhance the cultural, historic and economic health of Black Rock. To be accomplished through a range of arts and entertainment activities and initiatives, large and small, local and regional for the artist, students and patrons of the arts, the Black Rock community and visitors.

Ideas for a “TO BE” arts environment

Art Center* located in Black Rock that is well funded, managed, and utilized.

Art Center with a Black Box Theatre: a multi use space with appropriate room to present and offer dance, small theatre and music performances.

More, larger and special use Art Spaces:

pottery studio with kiln,
dance studio needs high ceilings and large depth and width floor space free of columns
black box theatre (music, theatre, dance performances, film and lectures)
gallery space
artist studios
workshop studio space for art classes (children to adults, beginner to professional classes)

Actively solicit temporary use art space. This would utilize “for rent” retail or commercial space for ad hoc art exhibits, small performances, workshops.

Street Art: develop a ten year plan to commission juried art (sculpture, building murals) from Ash Creek to and including under the I-95 Bridge.

First Friday Art Walk: great event. Continuously work to upgrade the number of and caliber of art vendors. With a long term hope of becoming a juried show.

Black Rock Arts Festival (similar to SoNo’s) a one day event including a Celebration of Arts parade. Encourage fantastic entries and float designs, possibly theme the parade vs float competition.

Package and Market a Black Rock Experience to attract visitors from surrounding towns. Sell how to spend an afternoon -include a walking tour of Black Rock Historic district leading to a scenic St Mary’s walk, bird watching on the Ash Creek and finish with arts and entertainment happenings, dining, and shopping the ethnic food markets on Fairfield Ave.

Campaign to improve Bridgeport’s Public Image – still perceived as an unsafe place to out-of-towners.

Arts and Technology Training Center: youth training for graphic and digital arts, video, film and sound editing and production. To provide skill development that could be transferred to multiple industries. Note: this a project planned by the Black Rock Art Center – should the lease be granted.

Artist Loft Space designate a percent of new condo development for artist lofts in Black Rock.

Create an Artists in Black Rock resource network (database) to tap into for collaborations, communications and special art projects.

Establish and sustain a **Black Rock Arts Fund**

Artist Collaboration: develop more collaboration between arts events, artists, and arts presenters in the area. This should be coordinated through an art center.

Cement role of Black Rock Art Center* (BRAC) as both a magnet and catalyst (out reach) to other arts and artists in Black Rock and immediate area.

The lease must be signed for The Black Rock Art Center in order to allow it to become the catalyst for cultural, educational and economic development.

The Art Center will provide cultural programs in film, music, dance and the visual arts, an Art & Technology Learning Center for students, a Japanese garden with a cafe, administrative offices for several organizations and a new parking facility for the community.

The Art Center will anchor Fairfield Avenue and will be available for use by a range of artists, arts organizations and community groups for a range of additional activities and interface with the Arts & Entertainment business community for smart growth of the area.

**Please recognize that the future of the BRAC lies solely in the discretion of an arbitrator –whose decision is legally binding- and whose decision is wholly independent of the desires of the community.*

Current Black Rock Arts and Entertainment

First Friday Art Walk
Black Rock Arts Center
Black Rock Writers Group
Acoustic Café
Weiss Gallery
Music events at churches
Public schools art classes
Movie Theatres on Brewster

Live Music at Restaurants and Bars: Nordon club, Captain’s Cove, Fairfield Ave bars

Restaurants/retailers with Gallery and Art Exhibits: Blood Root, Dish, Port Coffee, Home on the Range, Skateboard shop, Weiss gallery, Blood Root, 3 elementary schools in BR, Harborview Market, Burroughs Community Center

Black Rock as an Urban Oasis

I. Introduction

Black Rock can serve as a model for Bridgeport and other urban cities by creating a living environment that encourages people to enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds them. For this goal to be reached the Black Rock NRZ recommends the city of Bridgeport, in collaboration with neighborhood groups dedicated to conservation and quality of life issues and the State of Connecticut, embark on a multi-tiered effort that is focused on four principle areas. First, the natural environment must be given protection truly commensurate with its value. Second, multi-use parks and other green-space areas must be improved and programs that use these spaces integrated intelligently into the community. Third, the city should pursue an aggressive policy of tree planting, eco-friendly landscaping, and green building improvements. Fourth, Black Rock should become a model community for the support of alternative means of transportation including bike paths, shuttle access to local public transportation, and well maintained sidewalks along with public gathering areas in the commercial zones.

II. Environmental Protection

Black Rock is surrounded by two precious waterways, Ash Creek and Black Rock Harbor. Ash Creek is the only ecologically significant salt marsh in Bridgeport. It provides critical habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna including spartina sea grasses, shellfish, fish, and a plethora of birds. Despite significant sediment pollution, ash creek is thriving. The marsh acts as a powerful pollution control system, as do all salt-marsh wetlands, and it has significant aesthetic value. Who among the residents of Black Rock has not had the pleasure of watching a great blue heron glide by over the sea grass as the sun sets? The heron (and Osprey!) represent the top of a complex interconnected ecological web that can be appreciated in many ways and deserves to be protected. Black Rock Harbor is also a treasure steeped in a complex history as one of the best natural deep water ports along the coast from New York to Boston. Our harbor has played host to industry in the form of the Clipper Ship building trade and has served as a site of relaxation and leisure with the grand old George hotel. This rich history can help guide us to a more productive and beautiful Black Rock Harbor.

A. Specific action proposed for Ash Creek:

i. Adoption of a city ordinance that requires substantive review of any construction, such as docks and piers, built out into Ash Creek. A sample ordinance has been developed and is included as supplementary material to this document.

ii. Adoption of a conservation overlay for any proposed project that involves property adjacent to Ash Creek. This conservation overlay should address any issues of run-off control, non-point pollution remediation, erosion, and invasive species plantings.

Note: We also strongly recommend the formation of a Bridgeport Conservation Commission with an independent, elected Chair, to review as appropriate any and all development activities proposed for the city. The specific make-up and function of this commission should be based on best practices already established by many Connecticut cities.

iii. Support the planting of native species and low-impact landscaping along the outlet of Ash Creek and into the St. Mary's by the sea area. The current collaboration between the city and the Black Rock Garden club should be expanded and leveraged to achieve this goal.

iv. Designate the densely packed thicket of trees and brush at the beginning of St. Mary's as a wildlife habitat area and work with knowledgeable experts to maximize this small areas value as natural habitat and visual buffer.

B. Specific action proposed for Black Rock Harbor

i. Aggressively pursue the development of a linear park as part of the rational development of the "Burr Creek" property area. This linear park should be connected to Ellsworth Field.

ii. Develop a sensible plan for the upkeep and use of the "Seabright Beach" area. Provide signage that encourages awareness of the need to protect the dune habitat, appropriate waste receptacles, and small boat storage racks as appropriate

iii. Encourage limited development of the Harbor that is sustainable and focused on recreational boating.

iv. Work to address the sediment pollution, storm drain run-off issues, and to secure agreements with local polluters to compensate the local community in meaningful ways.

v. Require industrial facilities adjacent to the water to provide linear park access and to landscape adjacent to the harbor in a way that encourages access. (This would need to be done in conjunction with the West End NRZ proposal)

III. Parks and other greenspace issues

Park acreage in Black Rock is at a premium. We must aggressively work to protect and enhance the value of the green space already available and increase it where practical. We must also work to make the space we have more useful to all members of the community.

A. PT Barnum Park

The city should move quickly to create a more appealing and useful PT Barnum park that is focused on the needs of the immediate neighborhood. Specific improvements to accomplish this goal include a small child play area, permanent grills, a water play area, and an improved playing field for local sports activities. This work should be done in cooperation with community leaders already working to support local sports access such as Coach Sarsfield Ford, Jr., president of the Black Rock Little League.

B. Ellsworth Field

Consider a minimal widening of Ellsworth Ave along the edge of the park to alleviate the dangerously narrow street area when the fields are in heavy use. Establish a linear park connection with the proposed Burr Creek linear Park.

C. St. Mary's By the Sea

Work with local police to enforce parking and minimize activities not conducive to a family park area. Establish a plan for minimal development and protection of the sand-spit area at the outlet of Ash Creek. This plan should outline ideas for picnic areas, warnings for unsafe swimming areas (specifically the tidal race outlet which has very strong currents and heavy boat traffic), and consideration for encouraging the growth of natural vegetation.

D. Burroughs

E. Encourage the creation and protection of other green space

Street tree planting – Appropriately sized and properly planted trees that are encouraged to root deeply and will provide quality shade and shelter.

Fairfield Ave Landscaping – As above for trees, include a variety of shrubs and flowers to enhance the welcoming look of the Avenue.

Gateway landscaping

Capt. Cove Entrance Property

Consider developing a small linear city park area along the southwestern entrance to Captains Cove.

IV. Alternative Transportation

A. Black Rock Bike Path

Install signage and road markings identifying a Black Rock neighborhood bike path that begins at Ash Creek, loops around St Mary’s, through the historic district, and finally connects into the west end. The path should include a loop that encompasses the proposed new linear park at Burr Creek.

B. Sidewalks, Gathering space – Make Black Rock pedestrian friendly

C. Trolley Connection

Establish a trolley to provide local access to Black Rock destinations. This trolley will function as an easy way for visitors and residents of Black Rock to access the Black Rock commercial district and will also function as a convenient way for residents to access commuter transportation. The route should provide access to the new train station in Fairfield, the theatres, commercial properties along Fairfield Avenue (including the new Stop and Shop), Ellsworth field, Captain’s Cove, and St. Mary’s by the Sea. The frequency and specific routes should be worked out based on a thorough survey of neighborhood needs and traffic concerns.

Business and Economic Development Subcommittee

I. Establish the Black Rock as a Village District

- The village district will cover all of Black Rock, but focus on the commercial corridors, particularly:
 1. Fairfield Avenue, between Interstate 95 and Ash Creek
 2. Brewster Street, between the Town of Fairfield and Fairfield Avenue
 3. Wordin Avenue to Ocean Terrace to Captain’s Cove
- Village design guidelines will not override regulations associated with historic designations and will not apply to residences.
- Village design guidelines will cover new developments and renovation in the designated commercial corridors.
- The group overseeing this process will be a subcommittee formed from the NRZ implementation committee. The subcommittee will:
 - a. Create a roadmap for the process
 - b. Examine existing village district guidelines in towns such as Madison, East Haddam, New Canaan, Newtown, Ridgefield, and Coventry
 - c. Identify which documents need to be created
 - d. Identify what elements to include in the village design guidelines
 - e. Incorporate ideas as appropriate from the “Establishment of a Village Center” recommendation of the January 2000 Black Rock Corridor Redevelopment Plan
 - f. Identify whom to approach to enlist support (community stakeholders, city officials)
 - g. Include a professional architect in the process, as required by state law

II. Establish a Property Improvement Program

- Target blighted properties and properties generally in need of façade and other exterior improvement.
- Create incentives, particularly tax incentives, in order to attract new businesses or improve existing properties in Black Rock.
- The group overseeing this process will be a subcommittee formed from the NRZ implementation committee. The subcommittee will:
 - e. Target blighted properties and eyesores within the village district’s designated commercial corridors
 - f. Interview property owners
 - g. Develop strategies to attract and recruit new businesses that meet the needs of the community and provide added value to Black Rock
 - h. Develop a consistent and formal process for addressing blight and eyesores
- Establish a plan for improving neighborhood parks.

III. Establish Brewster Street as a Gateway to Black Rock

- Change the zoning to OR-S or mixed use for both sides of Brewster Street, between the Town of Fairfield and Fairfield Avenue.
- Incorporate ideas as appropriate from the “Brewster Street Improvements” recommendation of the January 2000 Black Rock Corridor Redevelopment Plan
- Install gateway features—such as monumental posts—symbolic to Black Rock.
- Brewster Street will be subject to the regulations and guidelines set forth in the establishment of the Black Rock Village District.

IV. Appoint a City Ombudsman Dedicated to Black Rock

- The ombudsman can either be elected or hired as city staff.
- The ombudsman can be an existing employee of the City of Bridgeport whose key constituency is Black Rock.
- The ombudsman will assist in the opening of new Black Rock businesses; be the information and communication liaison between the City and Black Rock residents and businesses; and help the community navigate the City's red tape.
- Funding for hiring an ombudsman is to be determined.

V. Support Code Enforcement and Law Enforcement

- Quality of life subcommittee may also address this issue
- Business owner feedback has also been to have a patrol on foot or on bike at all times in Black Rock—that might go here, or be more appropriate for Quality of Life
- Work with the police department and City officials to follow address violations of undesirable uses and illegal businesses, such as massage parlors and strip clubs.
- Work with the police department to address the problems of speeding, parking violations, and littering.

VI. Practice the Marketing and Recruiting of Business in Black Rock

- The group overseeing this process will be a subcommittee formed from the NRZ implementation committee.
- The group will research and develop methods of funding business and economic development measures in Black Rock, such as applying for grants and establishing user taxes in specific areas.
- Incorporate ideas as appropriate from the "Marketing & Promotion" recommendation of the January 2000 Black Rock Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

VII. Support Smart Growth and Transit-Oriented Development

- In anticipation of the future Fairfield Metro Center, develop businesses and types of housing that would appeal to the potential riders of the train.
- Support growth that would cut down on the number of cars driving through Black Rock, such as pedestrian-friendly retail and a Black Rock trolley.

VIII. Enlist the Town of Fairfield in the NRZ Implementation Process

- Invite Fairfield representatives to future discussions, as decisions pertaining to traffic and the new train station will affect our neighboring city.

Circulation and Access Subcommittee

From the outset of the first public workshop the subjects of Transportation, Circulation, Parking, and Gateways have evolved from one roundtable discussion to break-out into individual topics of major concern in Black Rock. Sub-committee: Phil Young, Gloria Wang, Laura Hurwitz

THE TOPIC:

Circulation and Access was the focus of this committee. The purpose was to compile and to distill further the reports and comments given at planning committee meetings, public workshops, and the Design Charrette.

The topic of Gateways is touched upon as it relates to supporting solutions for Circulation and Access, while Parking was relegated to the sub-committee on Parking & Municipal lots.

The areas of concern presented by citizens and stakeholders (to date), and in review of the workshop reports that underscore the above, much or all can be summarized in the following two areas of “needed” attention:

- Traffic congestion – ease of movement on the major thorough-fares in the commercial districts of Black Rock as well as all neighborhood streets and avenues that provide access to public areas (parks, marinas, etc.).
- Higher volumes of traffic (non-local) to/from the town Fairfield, the theatres and Fairfield shopping plazas, and expectations due to the new Fairfield train station development.

THE MAIN FOCUS AREAS:

Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street were the primary focal points of discussion to improve circulation and access. Brewster street is assuredly a major project unto itself and will also be a subject of discussion in the sub-committees of Economic Development, Gateways, Parking, etc. For the purposes of this committee Brewster Street is addressed from the perspective of “infrastructure” improvement.

THE CAUSE(s):

Much was said about illegal parking, insufficient parking, or the complete lack of (or lack of access to) off-street parking for residents, businesses, and business customers along the major corridors of Black Rock. Additionally, recommendations made that support the influence and action of needed or added law enforcement, can be applied to areas of concern in the residential areas of Black Rock as well.

THE RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS:

CIRCULATION:

1). Brewster Street: To improve circulation and expedite high traffic periods, especially with the anticipated impact of the new Fairfield Train Station development, the following recommendations are proposed:

- A. Re-configuring Brewster as a ONE WAY corridor from Canfield to Fairfield Avenue (in that direction). Additionally, re-configure the opposite ONE WAY returns on both Fox St. and Scofield.
- B. Re-configure the immediate parallel streets as ONE WAY - on each side of Brewster, possibly Fox and Scofield to run in the return direction.
- C. Widening Brewster Street – as per the recommendations of the 2000 BR Redevelopment Plan – REF: Action Area # 5; with no change to the parallel streets of Scofield or Fox.
- D. Re-Zone Brewster Street (see sub-committee on Economic Development)

E. Design and establish proper signage and streetscape at intersection of Brewster and Fairfield Avenue to direct and inform visitors.

F. Re-Assess and determine “best use” opportunities for the intersection of Brewster and Fairfield Avenue.

G. Design and establish proper signage at intersection of Canfield and Brewster Street so as to direct cinema audiences toward Fairfield Avenue businesses.

2). Parking & Traffic Rules Enforcement: A culprit of the circulation and access issues are parking and parking rules enforcement. The same for speeding and reckless often witnessed along the Fairfield and Brewster Street corridors. The recommendations are:

A. Improve signage for designated parking spaces and/or areas; and that the police department strictly enforce parking ordinances and rules.

B. Strict enforcement by the police department of speed limit laws and motor vehicle operating regulations.

C. That a new traffic light be installed at Fairfield Avenue and Martin Terrace.

3). Pedestrian Circulation:

A. Repair pedestrian sidewalks or add sidewalks where none exist and are warranted.

B. Repaint or paint cross-walks across the major corridors.

ACCESS:

The term access incorporates all of the concerns that have been said about circulation, parking, traffic speeds, etc. A solution to circulation and access issues is to improve public transportation. To look to the near future to existing technologies that will provide for more effective and efficient modes of moving people in and out of Black Rock. The following are the recommendations:

1). Trolley / Shuttle Line

A. Design and create a narrow gauge trolley line or shuttle bus “loop” through BR neighborhoods with access to: new Train Station, Library, Stop & Shop, Capt’s Cove Marina, Ellsworth Park and Showcase cinemas.

B. Research for the latest in engineering developments in transportation alternatives to automobiles and the ability to do so on small streets.

2). Bicycle Path: Follow through with an existing proposal for a shoreline bike path delineated on streets with paint and signage. Install Bike racks at points of interest.

3). Pedestrian Bridge:

A. A study be done for the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Ash Creek at Fox Street. To allow access to/from the new train station.

B. A study be done for the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Cedar Creek, west of Captain’s Cove to connect Black Rock to the West Side.

4). Gateways:

A. Fairfield Avenue at Fairfield town border (West Gateway)

B. Fairfield Avenue at West Side/West End of BPT border (East Gateway)

C. Brewster Street at Canfield (North Gateway)

| Workshop # 1 | Workshop # 2 | Design Charrette | Sub-committee review |
|--|---|---|---|
| Transportation, Circulation, Parking (8/04/07) | Traffic, Gateways, and Parking (9/15/07) | Circulation and Access (10/13/07) | Circulation and Access |
| <u>Note:</u> | <u>Note:</u> This focus group generated action items and issues requiring immediate attention in these areas: | <u>Note:</u> Below are the suggested improvements for circulation and access to, around, and departing BR. They are numbered in suggested priority: | <u>Note:</u> Circulation (non-pedestrian) as a specific topic evolved from traffic and parking discussions, and was a key topic at all three “workshops”. These discussions are reflective of past and existing conditions, and of a situation that will continue to escalate |
| Locations in Black Rock that created concern amongst attendees: Work Shop # 1 | >> Topic Progression in Workshop # 2 >> | >> Topic Progression in Design Charrette >> | >> Topic Progression in Sub-Committee >> |
| | | | Circulation |
| 1. The corner of Brewster Street and Fairfield Ave. (Proposed greater vigilance in ticketing) | 1. Brewster Street: <i>A recommendation for renewed attention be given to a 2000 (’97) Redevelopment Plan which addresses the widening of this street.</i> | 1. Brewster Street: <i>This topic was the most prevalent concern.</i> | 1) Brewster Street: To improve circulation and expedite high traffic periods, it is recommended that Brewster Street and potentially the streets that run parallel on each side (east/west) of Brewster Street be altered either by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Brewster as a one-way street from Canfield to Fairfield Ave. • Establish one-way returns (from Fairfield Ave. to Canfield) on Fox and Scofield Sts. |
| | A. Intersection of Brewster & Canfield requires redesign and streetscape upgrades to handle traffic flow to/from Showcase Cinemas. | A. Traffic congestion along the street between Canfield & Fairfield Ave. due to narrow street and there is “lack of off-street parking for residents” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (OR) Widen Brewster Street (as per the recommendation of the 2000 BR Redevelopment Plan – REF: Action Area # 5); no change to parallel streets. |
| | B. Proposal of a zoning change for Brewster St. – into a mixed-use corridor to link cinemas to Fairfield Ave. (restaurants and entertainment) | B. Volume of traffic to/from theatres & Fairfield shopping plazas; any construction at other two gateways increases congestion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-zone Brewster Street (see Econ/Dev. Committee recommendations) into mixed use. |
| | C. Signage at corner of Brewster & Fairfield to direct & inform visitors | C. New train station will create more traffic along this street; residents want street and intersections altered before station completion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and establish proper signage and streetscape to direct and inform visitors at Brewster and Fairfield Ave. |

| Workshop # 1 | Workshop # 2 | Design Charrette | Sub-committee review |
|--|--|--|--|
| | D. Assess and determine “best use” of the intersection of Brewster and Fairfield Ave. (development-wise) | D. Solutions include widening the street, creating “rear-yard” parking for each residence, free use of parking at Showcase cinemas, create new parking lots. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and determine “best use” of the intersection of Brewster and Fairfield Ave. |
| | E. Options & opportunities for the city-owner property that is current home of BR Arts Center. | E. # 1 Solution by consensus of group was to make the street one-way into Black Rock (Canfield to Fairfield Ave.); and reverse on Fox Street. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and establish proper signage at intersection of Canfield and Brewster to direct cinema audiences to Fairfield Ave. businesses. |
| | F. Signage (new) at intersection of Canfield & Brewster to direct cinema audiences to Fairfield Ave. businesses | F. In conjunction with “one-way” construction should be sidewalk and curb improvements and a formal gateway designation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sidewalk improvements to facilitate and enhance pedestrian circulation. |
| 2. The Field – parking congestion in evening. (Proposed greater vigilance in ticketing) | 2. Municipal Parking: <i>focus group said this topic should be a “sub-committee” to itself; therefore all details are excluded from this document</i> | 6. Parking Enforcement (Traffic): in this discussion parking focused on its impact on traffic flow. | <i>SEE Sub-committee Review for:</i> MUNICIPAL LOTS and PARKING |
| 3. New/Refurbish bus shelters and trash receptacles proposed at the intersection of Fairfield Ave. and Ellsworth St. | | | The topic of New/Refurbish bus shelters and trash receptacles should be part of the streetscape solutions discussion in another committee such as Quality of Life, Economic Development, or Safety. |
| General concerns regarding Transportation, Circulation, and Parking: | >> Topic Progression in Workshop # 2 >> | >> Topic Progression in Design Charrette >> | >> Topic Progression in Sub-Committee |
| 1. The expectation of major circulation issues should road renovations at the three primary gateways ; and to coincide with adequate and preventive planning | 3. Traffic | 6. Traffic (Parking Enforcement): <i>The topic was on traffic but included focus on the “culprits” such as the parking enforcement issue.</i> | 2). Parking & Traffic Rules Enforcement: <i>A culprit of the traffic and circulation issue is parking and parking rules enforcement. The same for speeding and reckless driving. The following are recommendations:</i> |
| | A. Parallel parking on Fairfield Ave. aggravates Fairfield corridor traffic; and limits visual access entering & exiting corridor to & from side streets | A. Congested street traffic due to illegal parking which creates dangerous for vehicles and pedestrians. | A. Improve signage for designated parking spaces/areas. That the police department strictly enforces parking rules. |
| | B. Proposal of new traffic light at Fairfield and Martin Terrace to control speeding on Fairfield corridor. | B. Traffic speed and reckless driving along Fairfield Ave.; commuters use street to avoid I-95 congestion. | B. That the police department strictly enforces speed laws and motor vehicle operating regulations. |
| | C. Create & Improve Pedestrian access to new Fairfield/BR train station: | | C. That a new traffic light be considered at the intersection of Fairfield Ave. and Martin Terrace. |

| Workshop # 1 | Workshop # 2 | Design Charrette | Sub-committee review |
|---|--|---|---|
| | 1. sidewalk repair | | 3). Pedestrian Circulation: Initial discussion of this subject centers on access to new train station. But the following recommendations apply to all public areas of Black Rock: |
| | | | A. Repair pedestrian sidewalks and repaint street cross-walks; and add sidewalks where needed |
| | 2. benches & resting plazas | | B. Install benches and resting plazas on corridor sidewalks |
| | 3. new foot-bridge across Ash Creek (to station) at Fox Street | | <i>For "foot-bridge" see Access below</i> |
| | >> Topic Progression in Workshop # 2 >> | >> Topic Progression in Design Charrette >> | |
| | | | Access |
| | | | Note: The term access incorporates all of the concerns that have been said about circulation, parking, traffic speeds, etc. The following are recommendations and or solutions toward solving these issues: |
| 2. Greater connection (access) from Fairfield Ave. to public open space and natural resources of Black Rock. | | 2. Trolley / Shuttle Line | 1). Trolley / Shuttle Line: |
| | | A. Design and create a narrow gauge trolley line or shuttle bus. "Loop" through BR neighborhoods with access to: new Train Sta., Library, Stop & Shop, Capt's Cove marina, Ellsworth Park and Showcase cinemas. | A. Design and create a narrow gauge trolley line or shuttle bus. "Loop" through BR neighborhoods with access to: new Train Sta., Library, Stop & Shop, Capt's Cove marina, Ellsworth Park and Showcase cinemas. |
| | | B. Narrow gauge tracks could ride in center of Fairfield Ave., and on smaller streets, installed on curb-side direction in one lane. | B. Research for the latest engineering developments in narrow gauge tracks that could ride in center of Fairfield Ave., and/or on smaller streets; installed on curb-side direction in one lane. |
| | | 3. Bicycle Path | 2). Bicycle Path: |
| | | A. One resident introduced an idea for shoreline bike path delineated on streets with painting and signage; could have its own "turf". Bike racks at points of interest and scenic views. | A. Follow through with a proposal for a shoreline bike path delineated on streets with painting and signage; could have its own "turf". Bike racks at points of interest and scenic views. |
| | | 4. Pedestrian Bridge | 3). Pedestrian Bridge(s): |

| Workshop # 1 | Workshop # 2 | Design Charrette | Sub-committee review |
|--------------|---|---|--|
| | | A. Urged construction of a pedestrian bridge over Ash Creek at Fox St. Allows access to train station and shopping; accessed by (proposed) trolley. | A. Propose further study for the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Ash Creek at Fox St. Allows access to/from new train station and shopping plaza; accessed by (proposed) trolley. |
| | | B. Another pedestrian bridge over Cedar Creek west of Capt's Cove marina connecting BR to the West Side. | B. Propose further study for an additional pedestrian bridge over Cedar Creek west of Capt's Cove marina connecting BR to the West Side. |
| | | | |
| | 4. Gateway Indicators: <i>the focus group suggested a need for design & development of prominent indicators at 3 major gateways to Black Rock.</i> | 5. Gateways: <i>were proposed at three locations; built as monumental posts on both sides of street; suggested icons were blue heron or light house.</i> | 4). Establish "official" Gateways: <i>were proposed at three locations; built as monumental posts on both sides of street; suggested icons were blue heron or light house.</i> |
| | A. Fairfield Ave. at Fairfield town border (West) | A. Fairfield Ave. at Fairfield town border (West) | A. Fairfield Ave. at Fairfield town border (West) |
| | B. Fairfield Ave. at West Side/West End BPT border (East) | B. Fairfield Ave. at West Side/West End BPT border (East) | B. Fairfield Ave. at West Side/West End BPT border (East) |
| | C. Brewster Street at Canfield | C. Brewster Street at Canfield | C. Brewster Street at Canfield (North) |
| | | | |
| | | 7. P.T. Barnum Park: <i>concerns were raised about improving conditions of the park. Corner of Bostwick and Wordin avenues..</i> | Should be part of separate sub-committee overview on Land Use, or Conservation |
| | | A. Its in poor shape with eroded soccer field and crumbling infrastructure. | |
| | | B. Due to its smaller scope of needs (to fix) it is a good NRZ starter project to boost "improvement momentum". | |
| | | 8. Ellsworth Park: | Should be part of separate sub-committee overview on Land Use, or Conservation |
| | | A. Residents urged expanding this park to adjacent vacant parcels (land) with latent development plans for some time. | |
| | | B. Park lacks adequate parking | |
| | | C. Lack of open space; activities are congested | |
| | | D. Expansion seen as a major asset to the neighborhood. | |

Public Safety Report
November 12, 2007

Submitted by: Phil Blagys

Concerns Expressed at Workshops/Charrette

- Illegal parking in general but especially on Ellsworth and at the “Subway” corner.
- Fairfield Ave, signage
- Inadequate training to firefighters and too few trucks.
- Air quality (we are not sure if its adequate-its not measured)
- Not enough police patrolling B.R.
- Speeding on Fairfield Ave. and side streets.
- Water quality-particularly in Ash Creek
- Drunk on Fairfield Ave. leaving bars
- Plan for sewage to handle the development
- Sufficient police presence, particularly patrols on foot and police presence at municipal parking

Other Thoughts:

Need for:

- Active block watches.
- Regular resident, business owner communication with police.
- Accurate communication of public safety issues to residents.
- Public safety seminars coordinated with the Bridgeport police department of community services.
- Biannual community meeting with the police chief.
- Regular meeting with elected officials.
- Coordinate of local efforts with city-wide initiatives.

Education Subcommittee

To The NRZ Planning Committee:

The education sub committee reviewed the notes from the various workshops and meetings to identify the educational areas that the NRZ can affect. Our criteria included areas of minor budgetary gaps that can be addressed that can be addressed via grants and changing or improving the relationships between various neighborhood-based entities. It was decided that the NRZ is unlikely to affect broader budgetary issues at city and state levels

The Following Items Were Identified To Be Included In The NRZ Plan:

1. Improve playground for Black Rock Schools (is the same needed at Long Fellow)
2. Access to full day pre-K programs for every Black Rock child
3. Greater partnership with Bridgeport Public Library (BPL), particularly the Black Rock Branch when it opens
4. Greater partnership with area business
5. Greater partnership with Burroughs community center to include transportation to/ from after school programs
6. Funding necessary staff at Black Rock Schools to allow for more after school activities on site, i.e., security guard, janitorial staff
7. Funding for reduced class sizes at both Longfellow and Black Rock Schools
8. Funding for school libraries at both Longfellow and Black Rock Schools
9. Build greater partnerships and synergy between all the neighborhood school: BRS, St. Ann's, Longfellow, and Aquaculture School
10. Increased community support in the form of volunteers to:
 - staff after school programs at BRS, Longfellow, Burroughs, BPL
 - labor for playground improvements
 - lend expertise to design and run after-school programs (Pilates, odyssey of the mind, etc)
11. Black Rock Schools to remain as a neighborhood school(vs. being assigned to a new larger school that may be rebuilt in the future)

Appendix G. Conservation Overlay Zone Requirements

Draft Requirements

The Zoning Ordinance of the City of Bridgeport should be amended to include language similar to that described below as adapted from similar language used in the Scenic Overlay Zone Regulations of Trinity County, California.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION OVERLAY ZONE “EC”

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION: To identify the areas of unusual scenic qualities which are unique to the City of Bridgeport and to provide the necessary degree of control on the placement of structures, development of roads and vegetative management within those areas.

B. APPLICATION OF THE OVERLAY ZONE:

1. The “EC” appearing after a zone abbreviation on land-use maps related to the City’s Zoning Ordinance indicates that the property so classified is subject to the provisions of this section in addition to those of the underlying zone.

2. Application of the “EC” overlay zone shall be based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- a. The areas lying within the 100 year flood plain of public waterways.
- b. The areas lying adjacent to and within 100 feet of coastal resources as identified in the City of Bridgeport’s Coastal Area Management Plan.
- c. Other such coastal resources as designated by the City of Bridgeport and the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

C. PERMITTED USES: All uses permitted in the underlying zone shall be permitted within the “EC” overlay zone; provided, however, that a Special Permit be required for those activities or developments indicated in paragraph D, and within only that portion of the parcel with the overlay “EC” zone designation.

D. SCOPE OF REVIEW: The scope of the Zoning Board of Appeals on special permits required by this section shall be limited to:

1. The location of buildings
2. The development of private and public roads and driveways
3. Decks, docks, wells or similar improvements accessory to the structures;
4. The removal of any vegetation

Appendix H. Black Rock Dock Ordinance

FINDINGS OF FACT

- C. It is recognized that lower Ash Creek, as defined as the tidal estuary from Eames Boulevard up to Brewster Street, also referred to as “the Creek”, is an asset to the community of Bridgeport as an ecologically significant estuarine water body containing valuable coastal resources. Valuable coastal resources within in this water body include, but are not limited to, significant areas of tidal wetlands, tidal mudflats and inter-tidal areas, rocky shorefronts, adjacent shoreline, scenic vistas, tidal waterways and estuarine embayments.
- D. It is recognized that lower Ash Creek , is unique with regard to adjacent tidal creeks in the region in that development of Connecticut’s coastal area has been extensive with the unmanaged proliferation of docks, and that the introduction of docks within Lower Ash Creek in a similarly unmanaged and unplanned fashion has the potential to adversely affect the estuarine system, by degrading its inherent scenic and environmental qualities. The unmanaged introduction of new docks within the watershed may lead to undesirable and unmanaged motor-boat traffic, which may not be suitable, desirable or beneficial to the environmental stability and intrinsic natural scenic quality of the estuarine system.
- E. It is recognized that the continued preservation of lower Ash Creek’s environmental and scenic qualities is directly linked to the quality of life within the City of Bridgeport. It is also recognized that the preservation of the scenic ad environmental qualities of lower ash Creek is directly linked to the revitalization and economic well being of the local community within the watershed. Therefore the continued preservation of lower Ash Creek’s environmental and scenic qualities will ensure the community’s continued position as a desirable place to live.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The intent of this ordinance is to provide a set of review guidelines to manage the future location of docks within the watershed, and therefore to ensure the continued preservation and function of the scenic and environmental qualities of the lower Ash Creek watershed in a manner that balances the right of property owners to utilize their waterfronts, with the recognized need to prevent adverse impact to the environmental and scenic values and characteristics that make the lower Ash Creek watershed unique, ecologically significant and important to the quality of life economic well-being and revitalization of the local Bridgeport community.

DEFINITIONS

Unless specifically defined in this section, words or phrases used in this chapter shall be interpreted so as to give them meaning they have in common usage and to give this chapter its more reasonable application:

JURISDICTION

- A. This ordinance will pertain to the construction, installation and replacement of any type of dock, or structure with a similar purpose, from the landward side down to the mean high water line.
- B. The adoption of this ordinance will not abrogate any other legislative or review process, including but not limited to other section of the City of Bridgeport Municipal Code, the State of

Connecticut Coastal Area Management statutes, the CT Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, and any and all federal regulatory programs including but not limited to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer regulatory permitting programs.

- C. Any docks already installed by the effective date of this ordinance will be considered 'grandfathered' in and therefore permitted, however any new proposed or substantially improved proposed docks within the same property boundaries or existing footprint will be subject to this ordinance.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The application shall provide at a minimum, the following information, documents and studies to the reviewing body:

- A. A site plan prepared according to A-2 survey standards showing location of proposed dock and coastal resources on and contiguous to the subject site, properties within fifty (50) feet of the subject site and names of property owners.
- B. A narrative description of the entire project with appropriate plans, design, timing and methods of construction.
- C. A proposed project schedule.
- D. Environmental studies or documents relating to the existing environmental character and proposed environmental impacts of the project.
- E. Environmental studies or documents relating to the existing scenic character and proposed scenic character as a result of the project.
- F. A written evaluation of alternatives.
- G. Any other relevant information as required to describe proposed activities to the reviewing body.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

The reviewing body may take the following factors into consideration during the review process:

- A. Existing environmental character and environmental quality of the Creek within the proposed area.
- B. Existing scenic character, scenic vistas and scenic qualities of the Creek within the proposed area.
- C. The relationship between the proposed dock and the future reasonable use of the dock.
- D. The environmental impact of the proposed dock and by the reasonable proposed use of the dock.
- E. Impacts to the scenic character, scenic vistas and scenic qualities due to the proposed dock and reasonable proposed use of the dock.
- F. The relationship between the short-term and long-term impacts of the proposed dock and reasonable proposed use of the dock, on the scenic and environmental characteristic of the Creek.
- G. Irreversible and irretrievable losses of scenic or environmental resources that would be caused by the proposed dock and by the reasonable proposed use of the dock.
- H. Efforts by the applicant to reduce, minimize, or mitigate any proposed impacts on the scenic or environmental qualities of the Creek.

BASIS FOR DECISION

- A. The reviewing body will use the “FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION” as a basis for their decision to permit or deny the proposed dock.
- B. The applicant will appear before the reviewing body in an administrative process to determine eligibility. The applicant will be able to answer questions in that forum.
- C. The reviewing body will make a decision within 65 days of receipt of the application or within 65 days of an administrative hearing, whichever comes last.

NOTIFICATION

- A. The applicant will be notified by certified mail within 15 days of a decision being rendered.

VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES

- A. The reviewing body shall have the authority to enact monetary penalties for any violation of this ordinance.

DRAFT

Appendix I. CT State Historic Tax Credits

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**CONNECTICUT HISTORIC HOMES
REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM**

A Catalyst for Renewal in Urban Neighborhoods

The Connecticut Historical Commission is pleased to provide information about the Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, which was established by Public Act 99-173, sections 34-37. The purpose of the program is to help stabilize urban neighborhoods by increasing homeownership, stimulating investment, and preserving the historic character of communities.

Attached is a fact sheet that explains what historic properties and rehabilitation work may qualify for the tax credits, and the program expenditure and ownership requirements. A copy of the legislation is also enclosed.

We look forward to working with government officials, business leaders, housing advocates, and homeowners to make this innovative program of benefit to residents in the 29 eligible towns. Applications will be available in early 2000.

**CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06106
(860) 566-3005**

**CONNECTICUT HISTORIC HOMES
REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM**

"Targeted Area" : Cumulative Listing by Town

| Town | Census Tracts |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Ansonia | 1252, 1253, 1254 * |
| 2. Bridgeport | Entire Municipality |
| 3. Bristol | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 4. Danbury | 2101, 2102, 2107 * |
| 5. Derby | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 6. East Hartford | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 7. East Haven | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 8. Enfield | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 9. Griswold | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 10. Groton | 7022, 7023 * |
| 11. Hartford | Entire Municipality |
| 12. Killingly | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 13. Manchester | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 14. Meriden | 1701, 1702, 1703, 1709, 1710 * |
| 15. Middletown | 5411, 5415, 5416, 5417 * |
| 16. New Britain | 4153, 4156, 4159-4163, 4166, 4171-4173 * |
| 17. New Haven | Entire Municipality |
| 18. New London | Entire Municipality |
| 19. Norwalk | 0434, 0437, 0438, 0440-0442, 0444, 0445 * |
| 20. Norwich | 6964, 6967, 6968, 6969 * |
| 21. Plainfield | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 22. Shelton | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 23. Stamford | 0201, 0214-0217, 0221-0223 * |
| 24. Torrington | 3101, 3102, 3103, 3108 * |
| 25. Vernon | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 26. Waterbury | Entire Municipality |
| 27. West Hartford | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 28. West Haven | partial - OPM urban/regional center |
| 29. Windham | Entire Municipality |

* indicates also partial - OPM designated urban/regional center

PUBLIC ACT 99-173
SECTIONS 34-37

HISTORIC HOMES REHABILITATION
TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Sec. 34. (NEW) As used in sections 34 to 37, inclusive, of this act, the following terms shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates another meaning:

(1) "Commission" means the Connecticut Historical Commission established under section 10-321 of the general statutes;

(2) "Historic home" means a building that: (A) Will contain one-to-four dwelling units of which at least one unit will be occupied as the principal residence of the owner for not less than five years following the completion of rehabilitation work, (B) is located in a targeted area, and (C) is (i) listed individually on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or (ii) located in a district listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, and has been certified by the commission as contributing to the historic character of such district;

(3) "Nonprofit corporation" means a nonprofit corporation incorporated pursuant to chapter 602 of the general statutes or any predecessor statutes thereto, having as one of its purposes the construction, rehabilitation, ownership or operation of housing and having articles of incorporation approved by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development in accordance with regulations adopted pursuant to section 8-79a or 8-84 of the general statutes;

(4) "Owner" means any taxpayer filing a state of Connecticut tax return who possesses title to an historic home, or prospective title to an historic home in the form of a purchase agreement or option to purchase, or a nonprofit corporation that possesses such title or prospective title;

(5) "Targeted area" means: (A) A federally designated "qualified census tract" in which seventy per cent or more of the families have a median income of eighty per cent or less of the state-wide median family income, (B) a state designated and federally approved area of chronic economic distress, or (C) an urban and regional center as identified in the Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan;

(6) "Qualified rehabilitation expenditures" means any costs incurred for the physical construction involved in the rehabilitation of an historic home, but excludes: (A) The owner's personal labor, (B) the cost of site improvements, unless to provide building access to persons with disabilities, (C) the cost of a new addition, except as may be required to comply with any provision of the State Building Code or the State Fire Safety Code, (D) any cost associated with the rehabilitation of an outbuilding, unless such building contributes to the historical significance of the historic home, and (E) any nonconstruction cost such as architectural fees, legal fees and financing fees;

(7) "Rehabilitation plan" means any construction plans and specifications for the proposed rehabilitation of an historic home in sufficient detail to enable the commission to evaluate compliance with the standards developed under the provisions of section 35 of this act; and

(8) "Occupancy period" means a period of five years during which one or more owners occupy an historic home as their primary residence. The occupancy period begins on the date the tax credit voucher is issued by the commission.

Sec. 35. (NEW) (a) The commission shall administer a system of tax credit vouchers within the resources, requirements and purposes of this act for owners rehabilitating historic homes or taxpayers making contributions to qualified rehabilitation expenditures. For tax years commencing on or after January 1, 2000, any owner shall be eligible for a tax credit voucher in an amount equal to thirty per cent of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures.

(b) The commission shall develop standards for the approval of rehabilitation of historic homes for which a tax credit voucher is sought. Such standards shall take into account whether the rehabilitation of an historic home will preserve the historic character of the building.

*all of
BPT-
see cover
sheet*

ALL BPT

(c) The commission shall, in consultation with the Commissioner of Revenue Services, adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 of the general statutes to carry out the purposes of sections 34 to 37, inclusive, of this act.

Sec. 36. (NEW) (a) Prior to beginning any rehabilitation work on an historic home, the owner shall submit a rehabilitation plan to the commission for a determination of whether such rehabilitation work meets the standards developed under the provisions of section 35 of this act and shall also submit to the commission an estimate of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures.

(b) If the commission certifies that the rehabilitation plan conforms to the standards developed under the provisions of section 35 of this act, the commission shall reserve for the benefit of the owner an allocation for a tax credit equivalent to thirty per cent of the projected qualified rehabilitation expenditures.

(c) Following the completion of rehabilitation of an historic home, the owner shall notify the commission that such rehabilitation has been completed. The owner shall provide the commission with documentation of work performed on the historic home and shall certify the cost incurred in rehabilitating the home. The commission shall review such rehabilitation and verify its compliance with the rehabilitation plan. Following such verification, the commission shall issue a tax credit voucher to either the owner rehabilitating the historic home or to the taxpayer named by the owner as contributing to the rehabilitation. The tax credit voucher shall be in an amount equivalent to the lesser of the tax credit reserved upon certification of the rehabilitation plan under the provisions of subsection (b) of this section or thirty per cent of the actual qualified rehabilitation expenditures. In order to obtain a credit against any state tax due that is specified in section 37 of this act, the holder of the tax credit voucher shall file the voucher with the holder's state tax return.

(d) Before the commission issues a tax credit voucher, the owner shall deliver a signed statement to the commission which provides that: (1) The owner shall occupy the historic home as the owner's primary residence during the occupancy period, or (2) the owner shall convey the historic home to a new owner who will occupy it as the new owner's primary residence during the occupancy period, or (3) an encumbrance shall be recorded, in favor of the local, state or federal government or other funding source, that will require the owner or the owner's successors to occupy the historic home as the primary residence of the owner or the owner's successors for a period equal to or longer than the occupancy period. A copy of any such encumbrance shall be attached to the signed statement.

(e) The owner of an historic home shall not be eligible for a tax credit voucher under section 35 of this act, unless the owner incurs qualified rehabilitation expenditures exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars.

Sec. 37. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of Revenue Services shall grant a tax credit to a taxpayer holding the tax credit voucher issued under section 36 of this act against any tax due under chapter 207, 208, 209, 210, 211 or 212 of the general statutes in the amount specified in the tax credit voucher. Such taxpayer shall submit the voucher and the corresponding tax return to the Department of Revenue Services.

(b) In no event shall a credit allowed under sections 34 to 37, inclusive, of this act, exceed thirty thousand dollars per dwelling unit for an historic home.

(c) The tax credit issued under subsection (a) of this section shall be taken by the holder of the tax credit voucher in the same year in which the voucher is issued. Any unused portion of such credit may be carried forward to any or all of the four taxable years following the year in which the tax credit voucher is issued.

(d) The aggregate amount of all tax credits which may be reserved by the commission upon certification of rehabilitation plans under section 35 of this act shall not exceed three million dollars in any one fiscal year.

Sec. 65. This act shall take effect from its passage, except that sections 34 to 38, inclusive, shall be applicable to taxable years commencing on or after January 1, 2000.

Appendix J. Meeting Notes

Public Meeting #1
Public Meeting #2
Design Charrette

DRAFT

Black Rock Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Process

Workshop#1
Black Rock Arts Center
Saturday, August 4, 2007

- 8:30** **Welcome and Introductions**
- 8:45** **Black Rock Analysis Report**
 Neighborhood Development
 Economic Development
- 9:15 – 10:00** **Questions/Comments**
- 10:00** **Break-Out Group Explanation**
- 10:15 – 11:30** **Break-Out Group Discussions**
- Group 1 - Business and Economic Development
 Group 2 – Arts, Entertainment, and Culture
 Group 3 - Quality of Life and Safety
 Group 4 - Land-Use, Zoning and Historic Preservation
 Group 5 - Education
 Group 6 - Transportation, Circulation and Parking
- 11:45 – 12:15** **Report Back**
- 12:15** **Wrap-Up**

ZONING, LAND USE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION in Black Rock

What encourages me about zoning land use, and historic preservation in Black Rock?

Clearly defined zones. The group felt strongly that clearly-defined commercial corridors and residential areas created appropriate relationships between zones in the neighborhood. Additionally, parks and outdoor recreational spaces are appropriately situated in the neighborhood. Walkable streets and outdoor spaces are generally maintained.

Location. Residents are pleased with the location of Black Rock as a Bridgeport neighborhood, its proximity to the waterfront (residents are particularly pleased with the ability of neighbors to launch boats locally), to Fairfield and to transportation routes. The group felt there is particular potential for neighborhood development embodied in the plans for the new train station.

Historic boundaries. Participants felt that the boundaries of the historic district were clear and adequate. The general nature of residential properties in the historic district has been successfully preserved. They have not yet seen an invasion of ‘McMansions’, etc. Participants also noted that residential development in the residential zones has often been manifested in the rehabilitation of existing structures – a practice which is preferred above demolition for new construction.

Community participation. The group was encouraged by the extent to which there is active community involvement on issues pertaining to land use.

Neighborhood scale. Participants were happy with the current scale of the neighborhood as defined by allowable uses. Residential and commercial streets are walkable and inviting.

Boards and Commissions. Members of the groups felt positive about the recent work of the Historic Commission.

Commercial development. Group members marveled that even with inconclusive plans for parking, the avenue is attracting ‘premium’ small business enterprises.

What discourages me about zoning, land use and historic preservation in Black Rock?

Zones. The group felt strongly that the abuse of the appeals process is evident in the frequency of zone changes and zoning variances. They also noted the inappropriate practices within defined zones as well as what seems to be a disregard for what was referred to as the ‘downstream’ implications of certain zoning allowances. Some thought the zoning boundary map used by city officials is antiquated and misrepresentative of current conditions.

Community participation. While community involvement is generally encouraged and received, some felt too many residents are apathetic.

Boards and Commissions. Members of the group felt the Historic District Commission needs to practice more diligence in regulation enforcement. With respect not only to boards, but also with respect to the community’s response to certain projects, there was a general feeling that many individuals with ‘reactions’ were either inadequately informed or unqualified to make assessments.

Neighborhood development. From a developer’s perspective, the inability to assemble sites for large development makes Black Rock unattractive to large developers.

Design Standards. Members of the group recognized the absence of specific design standards. Residents worried that this condition leads to a ‘shot gun’ approach to development

Traffic and Parking. Parking conditions seemed to be the number one impediment to successful growth in the commercial district. It was duly noted that traffic issues limit opportunities for growth and sustainable development.

Waterfront uses. Of specific concern was the proliferation of docks along Ash Creek.

Industrial zones. Group members were concerned that poor site maintenance in all zones, but particularly in industrial zones were bad influences on the neighborhood.

Commercial development. Group members were exceedingly interested in determining the highest and best use of properties along the commercial corridors as well as within the residential sections of the neighborhood.

What is our vision?

- Streamline zoning process
- Prevent zoning changes in the Historic District
- Appoint commissioners with competency/ merit or train them
- Educate citizens about land use
- Study highest/ best uses (define criteria)
- Implement design and signage standards
- Implement an approved and adequate traffic plan
- Implement an approved and adequate parking study- ensure its ability to support business

- Provide opportunities for upfront collaboration with residents
- Revitalize storefronts on Fairfield Ave
- Create a neighborhood ‘Center’
- Support/enforce historic district regulations
- Expand the neighborhood to the industrial zone
- Create retail corridor w/ proper infill

QUALITY OF LIFE in Black Rock

What encourages me about the quality of life in Black Rock?

- Black Rock is beautiful. Natural resources (foliage, water and wild life) that contribute to a uniquely pleasant quality of life.
- Improvements on Fairfield Ave. and the influx of locally-owned businesses
- A strong sense of community- neighborliness
- A friendly, welcoming atmosphere
- Black Rock is uniquely diverse and eclectic
- Accessibility- There is easy access to buses, the train and stores
- Community Pride
- The neighborhood is inclusive [socially]
- Its historic nature
- The sense of a strong commitment to ‘neighborhood’
- It is possible to walk to shops & restaurants
- Black Rock Arts – The Arts Center in particular
- Affordability
- New grass-roots organization – community participation in general

What discourages me about the quality of life in Black Rock?

- Noise from bars, residential parties
- Irresponsible dog owners fail in poop-pickup
- Docks in Ash Creek
- Litter
- Illegal parking in general but especially on Ellsworth and at the “Subway” corner
- Fairfield Ave. signage
- Inadequate training for fire-fighters and too few trucks
- Air Quality (we are not sure if its adequate – it’s not measured)
- Not enough police patrolling B.R.
- Speeding on Fairfield Ave. and side streets
- Water quality- particularly in Ash Creek
- Barbed wire and chain link on Fairfield Ave.
- Bars
- Drunks on Fairfield Ave. leaving bars
- Vehicles from Denser Housing on street in front yards
- Plan for sewage to handle the development
- B.R. Village- not mixed use

What is our vision for Black Rock relative to quality of life?

- Increase quality and quantity of open space
- Limit height of any new development
- Control development in the neighborhood
- Create/enforce setbacks
- Create “district specific” zoning + planning for B.R.
- Keep a “village” look to the Ave.
- Control signs
- Improve schools
- Center Arts & Culture in the community
- Develop a bike path from route 77 to cove
- Create a ‘dock free’ Ash Creek
- Control trash on Fairfield Ave. – add receptacles

EDUCATION in Black Rock

What encourages me about education in Black Rock?

- More recent focus on education concerns
- New construction/ renovation
- Emphasis in B.R. on small learning communities
- B.R. elementary becomes B.R. again (community pride)
- \$2 million increase of city funding
- B.O.E. has authority over council spending

What discourages me about education in Black Rock?

- Magnet schools are under-funded
- The City has ceased to increase funding
- A Questionable allocation of funds
- An impossible funding gap – There may never be resources to adequately address conditions in Black Rock
- Longfellow looks like a juvenile detention center
- Police arrests @ Longfellow
- B.R. K-6 needs improved playspace
- B.R. has no after-school program

What is our vision?

- Greater community involvement (within schools)
- Increased community partnership
- Young professional outreach/ support/ education
- Efficient use of funds
- Large private investment to cover funding gap
- Identify city funding responsibility
- Separate BOE budget from city budget
- Recognition of ESL & special needs funding
- Full day pre-K programs for every B.R. child
- Synergy between B.R. and St. Ann's
- Synergy between aquaculture regional magnet and neighborhood schools
- "advantage system" of fund allocation is too complex & poorly implemented
- Accountability of spending (superintendent?, city?, principal?, BOE?)
- Library tax, school district tax independent of city/state tax
- Security guard @ B.R.
- Pre-K through 12 model: the learning corridor in Hartford

ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT in Black Rock

Participants: Joe Celli, Cody Smolik, Mari Kolor

The group began by introducing themselves and explaining their affiliation with the Black Rock neighborhood. Joe Celli is the director of the Black Rock Art Center and Cody Smolik and Mari Kolor are both relatively new residents of Black Rock. The first issue that the group discussed was the existing resources and venues for art and entertainment in Black Rock. Participants then identified challenges that they saw in the Black Rock neighborhood. While some of the challenges were specific to the topic of arts, culture, and entertainment, the group also expanded into general community concerns that they had identified. The group then talked through encouraging signs when it came to arts in the Black Rock community. Potential remedies to the challenges surrounding arts, culture, and entertainment were discussed, but did not address solutions to the general community challenges because the group wanted to stay on the topic of arts, culture and entertainment.

Existing Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Venues in the Black Rock Community:

- Black Rock Art Center
- Movie theaters on Brewster Street
- Musical events at churches
- Acoustic Café
- Music and art at the Harborview Market
- First Friday ArtWalk event
- Burroughs Community Center
- Live music at bars, Norton Club, and Captain’s Cove

Encouraging Signs within the Black Rock Arts / Culture / Entertainment Scene:

- Black Rock is a place where suburban residents (from Fairfield and other neighboring cities) feel safe
- From talking to people, there is an undercurrent of local, untapped talent
- There is a diverse population who has quite a bit of talent
- Different groups are willing to work together/form partnerships
- There is a unique level of involvement and commitment in the community overall
- The train station will bring new businesses
- The positive effects of movie crews filming in the state and in Bridgeport will spill over to Black Rock
- City Councilwoman Donna Curran is pro-arts

Changes That Could Benefit the Arts in Black Rock:

- Give the art space a name that would welcome all types of artists/actors/musicians/etc.
- Community should tap into college students and college resources nearby
- Nonprofits and arts organizations should exhibit transparency with their funding sources
- Develop a five-year plan for arts in the community and Black Rock Art Center
- The community should form more partnerships, both with Black Rock organizations and with groups outside of Black Rock

Challenges for Arts / Culture / Entertainment in Black Rock and Possible Solutions:

| Primary Challenges | Remedies |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of ceramic studio/art class/dance class for all ages • Lack of a venue that fosters the independent creation of art • Lack of art space • Black Rock Art Center needs a lease • First Friday needs some work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to art teachers • Hold public art events in homes • Plan events around existing resources (get Burroughs involved, for example) • Help renovate the BR Art Center • Maintain consistency in holding events |
| Community Challenges | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise associated with nightlife and motorcycles • Zoning and the 1,500-foot alcohol exemption (area is zoned so that the city’s regulation that each alcohol establishment must have at least 1,500 feet between them does not apply) • BR seen as a place to get cheap beer • No police enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorcycles park on the sidewalk • Bars are open too late • Future traffic from the train station • Local politics • Lack of a gateway at Brewster Street • Smoking outside |

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT in Black Rock

Participants:

Beverly Balaz
Genevieve Barth
Rich Deparle
Gary Habansky
George Krawiec
Tom Mulligan
Phil Purdy
Lena Smith
Miguel Tomasio

The group introduced themselves and talked about issues that they faced as business owners in Black Rock and about the business and economic development climate in Black Rock. Specifically, the group talked about:

- **Identity.** The group identified that they liked the notion of being associated with Black Rock, compared with being associated with Bridgeport
- **City Staff Contacts.** Members of the group discussed at length their impression that there is not a staff member at City Hall who serves as a liaison for small businesses to help cut through red tape, and to help businesses that have a hard time finding their way through the processes, especially for building permits. Tom reinforced that Council members can help to serve this role.
- **Building Permits & Red Tape.** Members of the group noted that building permits take so long to secure that it is a significant deterrent for the smaller businesses who may not have the resources to wait for 6-9 months for the permitting process
- **Fit and Land Use.** Members of the group stressed the importance of identifying the ‘right’ business for the ‘right’ spot to find the highest and best use that will generate the strongest and most sustainable economic development in the long term
- **Pedestrian Village.** Members of the group articulated desiring to create a pedestrian village feel to the center of the Black Rock community
- **Train Station Connections.** Members of the group emphasized that the new train station will be an important part of the community, and the plan should start to take into account that development and identify ways in which that can be an asset to the neighborhood
- **Commercial Center.** Members of the group suggested that the economic center of the neighborhood should be at the intersection of Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street, but noted that significant work would need to be done at this intersection in order to make it have the ‘feel’ that they want the economic center to have
- **Parking.** Members of the group discussed at length the parking situation in the neighborhood. In particular, the group noted municipal parking does exist in close proximity to the businesses on Fairfield Avenue, but these parking lots are not well-signed so patrons rarely understand they can park there, or these lots are used for private purposes routinely. In addition, these lots are often unpaved (which does not match the sought-after look for the neighborhood) and are not well-signed. Additional new, creative parking solutions are needed. Ideas included angled parking on Fairfield Avenue, or creative parking solutions on the side-streets.
- **Identifying the Commercial Corridors.** Members of the group suggested that, in addition to Fairfield Avenue, the only other strong commercial corridor would be Brewster, and that that is not currently a commercial corridor but in the long term could be developed into one, particularly if the train station project moves forward
- **Land Use and Zoning.** Members of the group suggested that, in addition to the core commercial corridor, perhaps several other types of commercial areas that are in coordination with, but a little bit different from, the core (e.g., larger commercial uses, rather than storefront retail) along other portions of Fairfield Avenue.
- **Critical Properties.** Members of the group identified that, given where the core of the neighborhood would be developed and its proximity to I-95, the City takings near I-95 and the Black Rocks Arts Center are very important properties for the neighborhood.

The group discussed in detail what they saw as the vision for the community, and identified the following elements of their vision:

- Pedestrian-friendly design of the main commercial corridor, with a mixed-use development strategy
- The mixed-use strategy would focus on boutique retail and storefront uses on the ground level and a combination of professional services (legal, accounting, consulting, engineering, architecture, etc.) and residential uses on the upper floors.
- Consistent design and high-quality design standards
- Clear and appropriate signage
- Sufficient parking and clear direction and signage to designate the parking areas
- Sufficient police presence, particularly patrols on foot
- A mix of uses that is more diverse, reducing the number of bars (as distinguished from restaurants) and perhaps adding into the mix a bank, drugstore, health food store, jewelry shop, and/or toy store
- Employment of Black Rock residents
- Capturing the business of visitors who work in Black Rock but may live elsewhere
- Strong communication and camaraderie between businesses in the Village
- Strong liaison between the Black Rock neighborhood and City Hall for business owners who seek assistance
- Multiple corridors where:
 - The Village would extend from Ash Creek to Ellsworth
 - A larger-scale commercial area would extend from Ellsworth toward I-95 to foster employment with more jobs and larger uses more adjacent to the highway to prevent driving through the neighborhood
 - Transition to commercial uses in the currently-industrial zones from Fairfield Avenue north to the Fairfield line
 - Clear residential/parks/historic zoning in other areas

The group identified the following additional information which would help them better-understand and evaluate options related to the items discussed today:

- In discussing the possibility of creating a “Black Rock Village,” the group asked whether it is possible to secure an official Village designation and what is involved in this process.
- In discussing the vision for the neighborhood, the group also suggested contacting individuals involved in developing South Norwalk, Hoboken, and other neighborhood villages to determine what they went through to create the feel that they have created
- Ideas for other parking solutions.

TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION, PARKING in Black Rock

Locations in Black Rock that created concern among attendees:

- The Field – Parking congestion in the evening (the group proposed greater vigilance in ticketing)
- The corner of Brewster Street and Fairfield Avenue (the group proposed greater vigilance in ticketing)
- New/Refurbished Bus Shelters and Trash Receptacles proposed at the intersection of Fairfield Ave and Ellsworth Avenue
- New/Refurbished Bus Shelter and Trash Receptacles proposed at the Post Office stop

General concerns regarding Transportation, Circulation, and Parking

- The expectation of major circulation issues: Should the road renovations at the three primary gateways coincide without adequate planning to prevent these issues.
- Greater connection from Fairfield Avenue to public open space and natural resources of Black Rock

Black Rock Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Planning Process

Workshop#2
Cathedral of Faith
Saturday, September 15, 2007

- 8:30** **Welcome**
- 8:45** **Emerging Considerations Report**
 Neighborhood Development
 Economic Development
- 9:45 – 10:15** **Questions/Comments**
- 10:30** **Break-Out Group Explanation**
- 10:45 – 12:00** **Break-Out Group Work**

 Group 1 – Priority Development Opportunities
 Group 2 – Traffic, Parking and Gateways
 Group 3 - Quality of Life
 Group 4 – Special Districts
- 12:15** **Wrap-Up and Next Steps Discussion**

BLACK ROCK NRZ WORKSHOP #2 September 15, 2007

SPECIAL DISTRICTS in Black Rock – Sept. 15, 2007 NRZ Workshop

Participants: Edie Cassidy (recorder), Laura Hurwitz, Dorna Malcolm, Merrillyn Vanghele, Angie Staltaro

The group members began by introducing themselves and explaining their affiliations with the Black Rock neighborhood. With the exception of Angie Staltaro, all members are residents of Black Rock; Angie is City staff and lives close to the neighborhood.

The goal of the group was primarily to make a decision on the establishment of special districts in Black Rock, choosing to establish either a village district or design district, or both, or neither. A second goal of the group was to look at the one existing historic district in Black Rock and identify issues surrounding the district.

I. Village Districts vs. Design Districts

The group looked at the two kinds of districts and compared the two in the chart below:

| Village districts | Design districts |
|--|--|
| The community can decide on the elements to be included and what to regulate | The community can decide on the elements to be included and what to regulate |
| Can include commercial residential areas | Can include commercial residential areas |
| Is legislated by the state | |
| Included in the city’s zoning code | |
| Stricter | Less restrictive |
| Requires a regulatory body that is recognized by the city | Not necessarily recognized by the city in any official capacity |
| Implementation is more complicated | |
| Requires writing guidelines | Requires writing guidelines |
| More all-encompassing | |

II. Why designate?

The group identified why such a special district was necessary in Black Rock. Members identified the following reasons:

Commercial properties

- There are inappropriate uses of commercial space in Black Rock (e.g., massage parlors on Fairfield Avenue), and a special district would enable the community to determine which uses are appropriate.
- A special district—especially a “village” designation—would allow Black Rock to identify itself as a “destination” in itself.
- Special districts would give the Black Rock community control over what happens here.
- Environmental issues could be addressed to a certain extent.
- Regulating aesthetics would make the neighborhood more attractive.
- Official designations would make the process more transparent—if a business wanted to open in Black Rock, the business owner would be able to find out, at the very beginning of the process, the desires of the community and local restrictions instead of being confronted at a public hearing later on.
- Guidelines put into words what the Black Rock community desires for the neighborhood.
- Tree replacement plans would be part of the new guidelines.

Residential properties

- Residents would have a say in which type(s) of housing go in their neighborhoods and determining that, for example, an apartment complex in a neighborhood of single-family homes would be inappropriate.
- The community would be able to address compatibility of new construction and renovation in terms of size, architectural style, and the appropriateness of the proposed site.

- Tree replacement plans would be part of the new guidelines.

III. What do we want to regulate?

The group brainstormed elements to include in village district or design district guidelines:

- The mix of business in Black Rock
- Child- and family-friendly venues (e.g., new restaurants or open space)
- Design specifications (e.g., signage, sidewalks, traffic-related signage, market crosswalks)
- Merchants must maintain exteriors
- A specific number of trash receptacles every X number of blocks
- Designated smoking areas for bars and restaurants, not allowing patrons to crowd sidewalks when they smoke

IV. Concerns/Needs

Members of the group pointed out that one major roadblock in enforcing these regulations is that absentee landlords may not want to want to comply with them. The group wanted to make sure that the City of Bridgeport would have some punitive measures over such violators. Additionally, the group emphasized that the City would have to provide services/assistance associated with the district guidelines, such as trash pick-up for the mandated receptacles, and a City arborist to help with tree replacement plans. The group also recognized that most of the existing properties that would be in violation of the proposed guidelines would have to be grandfathered in, and that the guidelines would only apply to new construction or renovation.

The group discussed at length the pros and cons and agreed that the Village District would provide greater local control and have more influence, and therefore recommended proceeding with obtaining village district designation for Black Rock, favoring it over a design district.

V. Next Steps

Members identified these next steps in order to reach their goal:

- The planning committee, and perhaps other members of the committee, will assemble a subcommittee solely for the purpose of obtaining village district designation.
- The subcommittee will create a roadmap for the process, identifying stakeholders to get buy-in from, which City regulatory bodies to approach, and what kind of documents need to be created.
- As part of the Oct. 6 design charrette, identify which streets and neighborhood should be included in a village district.
- The consultant will assemble information on village districts for public dissemination. The information will include a “one-pager” about the districts, ordinances drafted by other Connecticut cities, and the State legislation that allowed for the creation of village districts.

VI. Historic Districts

Historic districts are a sensitive topic for many Black Rock residents. Residents have identified many issues relating to historic neighborhoods, such as: the multitude of historic homes in Black Rock that are beautifully maintained and yet do not have any sort of historic designation; some neighborhoods that are on a State or Federal historic registry but not the City’s and vice versa; the City’s perceived attitude toward historic districts, allowing for new uses that violate the existing zoning in historic districts and failing to enforce nonconforming properties. More discussion and study needs to be done of Bridgeport’s handling of historic districts, but the group identified these next steps, potentially to be discussed at the design charrette:

- Explore the expansion of the existing historic district, making sure that the Federal, State and local guidelines for such districts are consistent.
- Explore not allowing any zoning variances in historic districts
- Explore turning historic district streets to permit-parking only
- Work with the City to increase enforcement of the historic commission’s rules and regulations

Participants: Rich DeParle, George Krawiec, Phil Young, Don Greenberg, Frank Basler

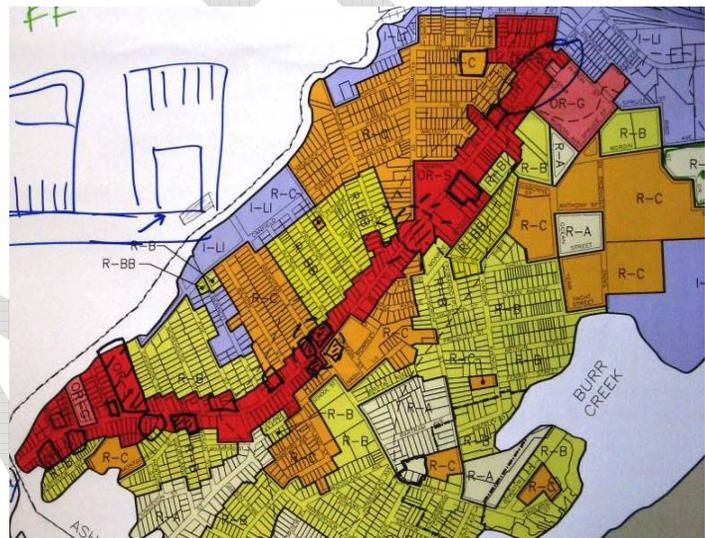
The group started to discuss the priority properties that should be developed and/or improved in the Black Rock neighborhood. Participants were asked to step back and conduct the discussion with the following assumptions:

(1) What properties do you think, regardless of ownership, are most critical to improving Black Rock’s image? And (2) What areas do you think are best suited for what kind of new development uses?

Item #1: Properties (regardless of ownership) are most critical to improving Black Rock’s image

The group discussed at length which properties were currently available, which properties were really important properties for the neighborhood, and which properties are blighted and need significant revitalization assistance. The group identified many of the high priority properties on a map as illustrated below, though it was recognized that the exact location of the properties should be double-checked to ensure accuracy. In short, the properties included:

- Lot next to Hemingway Furniture, with zoning approval for condominiums
- Corner of Fox and Fairfield Avenue
- Corner of Brewster & Bartram
- Former upholstery store on Brewster St
- Former Scruples bar location
- Former bait & tackle shop on Fairfield Avenue (believed to be for sale)
- Avenue Café site
- Parking lot near Avenue Café near Ash Creek
- Former Foundry site near Stop & Shop
- Whittier School site
- Former Dangerous Curves site on Fairfield Avenue
- Massage parlor on Fairfield Avenue
- Mr. John’s site near Bennett Street
- Condominium property near R-C zone
- Corner of Courtland and Fairfield Avenue
- Current Black Arts Center site, and all properties on the corner of Brewster and Fairfield Avenue, as it becomes a prime location within the neighborhood
- All properties on the corner of Ellsworth & Fairfield Avenue because that becomes an important gateway into the village district
- All properties near the Stop & Shop, to take advantage of that neighborhood asset and start to develop that area of the neighborhood to take advantage of the assets that exist there

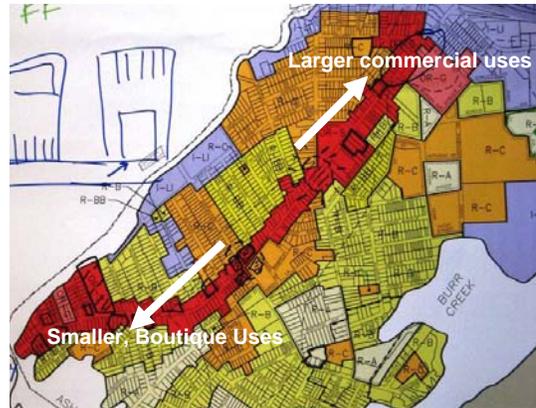


The group agreed that additional sites may need to be added after further time spent looking specifically for these elements in the neighborhood. Further, the group agreed that ownership IS an important consideration, and needs to be considered when deciding which properties make the final ‘high-priority’ list.

Item #2: Goals for Development Areas Within the Neighborhood

As the discussion unfolded, the group discussed what types of development they see coming into the neighborhood and identified that they see different scale and types of development in different parts of the neighborhood. As guiding principles, the group suggested that:

- Smaller, more boutique, unique, higher end and small retail shops and uses in the more southern and western portions of Fairfield Avenue, and larger uses and more of the chain stores in the northern and eastern portions of Fairfield Avenue.
- New development build upon the anchors that exist currently in the neighborhood
- New development supports the corner of Brewster & Fairfield emerging as the central point of their neighborhood, and potentially Ellsworth & Fairfield emerging as a secondary major intersection of commercial activity.
- New development should look to build connections with existing parking venues (e.g., at movie theaters)
- New development should maximize and encourage pedestrian uses



Item #3: Next Steps

Members identified these next steps in order to reach their goal:

1. Complete the list of properties that are high-priority for redevelopment
The Capstan Group volunteered to take the initial list generated today, add additional properties that were identified through other research, and draft a refined list for the Planning Committee to review
2. Identify the property owners associated with each of the high-priority properties
Rich DeParle agreed to assist with this item once the list is refined.
3. Identify if any plans exist or are in process for those properties
*Rich DeParle agreed to provide information about any plans that have been filed
Phil and the NRZ committee would work on the others*
4. Based on data, develop a “wish list” of properties and types of uses in Black Rock
*Some demographics of the area and of current patrons & visitors will be collected to inform this list
The NRZ Planning Committee will take the lead on this with significant community input*
5. Identify what restrictions, guidelines and incentives can be used to guide the new development in the neighborhood
It is understood that this would be heavily informed by any relevant documents in the 1997 Black Rock study and by the conversation occurring concurrently regarding the Bridgeport zoning code and the potential emerging village or design district
6. Identify opportunities for enforcement
It is understood that this would take shape after the others take place, and may include the formation of a new or existing 501(c)3 organization to oversee and guide the implementation of the NRZ Plan

The focus group studying Traffic, Parking, and Gateways generated action items, and issues requiring immediate attention, for the Black Rock community in the following areas: Traffic, Gateway Indicators, Municipal Parking, and Brewster Street Improvements.

Traffic

- The group members generally noted that corridor traffic is aggravated by parallel parking on Fairfield Avenue, which limits visual access of the corridor traffic by cars entering the corridor from its side streets.
- The group also proposed a new traffic light servicing the intersection of Fairfield Avenue and Martin Terrace, as the speed of cars through the corridor increases in this portion of the corridor.
- Regarding foot traffic, the group expressed desire to create/improve pedestrian access to the proposed train station. These proposed improvements include sidewalk repair, strategically located benches and resting plazas, and a new foot bridge proposed to cross Ash Creek at the end of Fox Street, where the creek narrows.

Gateway Indicators

- The members of the group expressed their desire for the design of prominent indicators of Black Rock's three primary gateways, currently. One gateway lies at the Fairfield border on Fairfield Avenue, and another at train trestle on Fairfield Avenue at the border of the West Side/West End NRZ. The third gateway lies at the Fairfield border on Brewster Street, providing the northern entrance into Black Rock from Fairfield. The decorative arch on Wooster Street in New Haven was mentioned as a comparable precedent.

Municipal Parking

(The group members believe there are enough parking-related issues in Black Rock to warrant the creation of a subcommittee focused on analysis and solution of these issues. This subcommittee, answering to the NRZ Planning Committee, could engage in direct conversation with the Engineering Department and Mike Nidoh to address the following issues.)

- Permit Parking was a proposed area of study in order to increase off-street parking.
- Signage to existing Municipal Parking lots to be improved and enlarged to encourage "Park Once" patrons
- Specific attention to Parking Proposal #1 of the 1998 Black Rock Corridor Study
- Attention to remainder of Parking Proposals of the 1998 Corridor Study
- Intersection at "The Field" restaurant on Fairfield Avenue
- Intersection at "Subway" on Fairfield Avenue
- Potential parking at the intersection of Fox Street and Fairfield Avenue
- Ellsworth Park parking issues
- Yellow Curb Painting (proposed along Fairfield Avenue between Ellsworth Street and Cortland Street)
- Appropriate warning signage for illegal parking activity.

Brewster Street

- Rich DeParle holds the 1997 Black Rock Redevelopment Plan (by Fletcher Thompson and AMS Consulting). This plan addresses the widening of Brewster Street by altering its southern length. This strategy was seen favorably by the group members and requires renewed attention by the NRZ.
- The intersection at Brewster Street and Canfield Street requires redesign with appropriate streetscaping upgrades to handle the traffic flow to and from Showcase Cinemas Bridgeport (Canfield Street).
- Proposed zoning change for Brewster Street into a mixed-use corridor to link cinema with Fairfield Avenue restaurant and entertainment district.
- Signage at intersection of Canfield and Brewster Street to inform cinema audiences (and others passing through the gateway) of the "Restaurant and Entertainment District" along Fairfield Avenue.
- Assessment of the highest and best use of the intersection of Brewster Street and Fairfield Avenue (including installation of appropriate directional signage). What are the options and opportunities for the city-owned property currently home of the Black Rock Arts Center?

Participants: Donna Curran, John Lee, Daisy Young, Kraig Steffens

Discussions in the Focus Group entitled Quality of Life listed a number of issues/constraints not emerging from a similar session in Workshop #1. Topics included: 1) Special Programs; 2) Open Space; 3) Commercial/Residential Interface; and 3) Responsible Government.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Arts Center

The group was in support of arts and cultural programs in the neighborhood. Donna Curran reported that approximately 15% of Black Rock residents are employed in the arts – highest such percentage of any other community in Bridgeport.

Programs for Youth

The Group discussed the dissipation of programming for neighborhood youth – particularly those in P.T. Barnum. One resident added the decrease in participation of P.T. youth in existing programs has everything to do with a lack of transportation for children and parents to events and programs.

Black Rock Harbor Sewage Treatment Plant

Apparently a regular occurrence in Black Rock is flooding of Black Rock Harbor as a result of the function (or malfunction) of the STP – unskilled labor rose as a part of the problem

Parent Training

Truancy, delinquency and other neighborhood ills might be addressed by programs geared toward training young parents, particular single mothers in parenting techniques.

OPEN SPACE

Maintenance of Seabright Beach

The group felt strongly that maintenances of public beaches in general left something to be desired.

Park Use and Amenities

Residents spoke particularly of the park adjacent to PT Barnum. They were unsure of how outside groups gained permission to use the park or how neighborhood children might participate in activities offered. Additionally, there was a desire to see certain amenities (sprinkler, grills, benches etc.) developed in the park.

Commercial Advertisement in Public Spaces

A concern was raised for the number of flyers and circulars posted or left for the taking in public places. They are often a source of litter in parks and other open spaces.

Air Quality

Residents felt strongly that information about air quality in the neighborhood has been inappropriately withheld. Neighbors wish primarily to be informed of precautions taken by industrial business to preserve air quality in the neighborhood.

Bike Path

John Lee shared a plan for a neighborhood bike path which might serve not only as a desirable public amenity but also as a connection between remote parts of the neighborhood.

Ask Creek Conservation

Residents would like to see a conservation overlay zone in the neighborhood and a local means of regulating the same.

COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL INTERFACE

Neighbors would like to see enforcement and limitations on the following:

- commercial vehicles in residential zone
- adult entertainment venues
- height/density of new development
- trash and litter

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Neighbors want local government to take responsible actions to preserve the neighborhood's quality of life. This would include among other actions:

- Enforcement of zoning and planning regulations
- Requirement of 'green' technologies in new developments

RESOURCES

The group identified resources available to assist them in developing solutions for the aforementioned issues as well as action items for implementation.

- Burroughs
- Harborview Chess Team **
- Garden Club
- Parks Department
- Housing Authority
- Donna Fuel (P.T. Organizer)
- BPT Conservation Commission (once activated)
- DEP
- WPCA
- BPT Redevelopment Agency

ACTION

Finally, Different members of the group committed to doing research or actually spear-heading implementation of action items going forward.

Community Action

- 1) Petition for Regulation of STP (Donna Curran, Daisy Young)
- 2) Nuisance Abatement Enforcement (Regina Winters)
- 3) Petition for Crime Statistics
- 4) Petition for Sign Reduction (John Lee)

Legislation

- 1) Conservation Commission
- 2) Draft Dock Ordinance (Kraig Steffens, Donna Curran)

Funding

- 1) Park Improvements (Kraig Steffens)
- 2) Bike Path (DPW) (John Lee)
- 3) Public Access to Water (Regina Winters)

The group discussion focused on looking at the scale of the entire neighborhood & how it connects with adjacent areas and within itself. In general neighbors who contributed to the discussion agreed with each other on what the main problems with access and circulation are in Black Rock. Although a number of ideas were proposed by the neighbors as solutions to the issues, their ideas were consistent.

Below the main ideas for improvements to the Black Rock neighborhood's circulation and access are outlined in their partial priority. Priority is based on the participants' consensus as well as those ideas that certain individuals strongly expressed.

1. Brewster Street

The most prevalent concern among participants was the traffic congestion along Brewster Street on the block between Canfield & Fairfield Avenues. Comments included residents who have incurred damage to their cars that are parked on Brewster Street by patrons of the local bars along Fairfield Avenue. Due to the lack of off-street parking on these blocks residents are forced to park on this narrow street.

Other comments showed that the street cannot handle the present volume of traffic as people head out Brewster Street to the movie theaters and Fairfield's shopping district. Concern was raised about the potential construction on the neighborhood's two other main access points: Fairfield Avenue at I-95 & Fairfield Avenue at Ash Creek. Construction at these two points would increase traffic immensely on Brewster Street.

The proposed construction of a new train station, hotel and shopping center nearby in Fairfield would also draw more traffic along Brewster Street. Although most residents did not know when the station would be built they want the street and its intersections to be altered to accommodate the traffic from this project.

Solutions voiced included widening the street, creating rear-yard parking at each property, allowing cars to park at an underutilized garage at the movie theater, demolishing a building to create a neighborhood parking lot and to make the street on this block one way towards Fairfield Avenue. The latter option seemed to have consensus and it included routing traffic in the opposite direction on Fox Street & Ellsworth Street, then returning to Brewster Street along Canfield Avenue. This would provide a formal gateway into the neighborhood from Fairfield.

Along with this traffic improvement, residents urged sidewalk and curb improvements and a gateway at the corner of Canfield Avenue to welcome vehicles as they enter the neighborhood. There were also concerns raised about the tight corners and crosswalks on Fairfield Avenue at Brewster Street and at the adjacent streets.

2. Trolley/Shuttle Line

One of the most exciting topics to participants was the creation of a narrow gauge trolley line or a shuttle bus. Both ideas include creating a loop through the neighborhood that would allow access to the following points of interest: new Fairfield train station, Public Library, Stop & Shop, Captain's Cove marina, Ellsworth Park and the movie theaters and shopping in Fairfield.

One participant mentioned the idea of a narrow gauge trolley line that could ride on tracks laid in the center of Fairfield Avenue and installed in one lane on the smaller streets it traverses. The trolley would have its electrical power conducted within its tracks.

3. Bicycle Path

One resident introduced a proposed shoreline bicycle path that would eventually link up with trails to the east and west. This path would be delineated in the streets through signage, street painting and at some point it might have its own turf. The path would allow a safe passage along the neighborhood's popular and scenic coast. Bike racks

were also suggested at locations along the path as well as near points of interest along Fairfield Avenue & Brewster Street.

4. Pedestrian Bridge

Residents urged the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Ash Creek at the foot of Fox Street. This bridge would allow access to Fairfield where there is existing shopping and a proposed train station. This bridge would also be accessed by a proposed trolley or shuttle line. Another site that was considered for a pedestrian bridge was over Cedar Creek west of Captain’s Cove marina, connecting Black Rock to the West Side Neighborhood.

5. Gateways

Gateways were proposed at three key locations: at Fairfield Avenue at I-95, Fairfield Avenue at the Ash Creek bridge and at Brewster Street & Canfield Avenue. The gateways were suggested to be monumental posts on either side of the street. Suggested icons to accompany gateway posts included a blue heron and a light house, both common sites along the water in Black Rock.

6. Traffic & Parking Enforcement

Major concern was raised about the amount of illegal parking that occurs on the neighborhood’s narrow streets. The illegal parking creates dangerous situations for vehicles and pedestrians and it also creates a congested and polluting visual experience.

Concern was also raised about the speed which vehicles travel along Fairfield Avenue between Ellsworth Street and I-95. Vehicles have been seen speeding between these points as they avoid highway traffic or are simply driving recklessly.

7. P. T. Barnum Park

Some concern was raised about improving the condition of the park at the corner of Wordin & Bostwick Avenues adjacent to the P. T. Barnum housing project. Presently it is in poor shape with an eroded soccer field and crumbling infrastructure. Due to the smaller scope of work needed to fix up the park, it would begin the momentum of getting improvements accomplished.

8. Ellsworth Park

Residents urged expanding this park to adjacent vacant parcels which have had latent development plans for some time. The park is lacking adequate parking and open space and its expansion would be a major asset to the neighborhood.

The emerging next steps for the circulation & access group were:

| Immediate | Longer term | Long term | Recommendation |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|--|
| ● | | | Improve the flow of traffic along Brewster Street between Canfield & Fairfield Avenues |
| | ● | | Provide a trolley/shuttle route that loops through the neighborhood |
| | ● | | Create a bicycle path through to connect with a future shoreline route |
| | | ● | Construct a pedestrian bridge across Ash Creek to access future train station and shopping |
| | | ● | Construct gateways on Brewster Street at Canfield Avenue |
| ● | | | Enforce existing traffic and parking regulations |
| ● | | | Improve the grounds at P. T. Barnum Park |
| | ● | | Expand the grounds and provide parking for Ellsworth Park |
| ● | | | Develop Streetscape plan that addresses street furniture, lighting, and landscaping |

The Priority Development Opportunities group had as a frame of reference a draft map identifying priority development parcels that were identified during the previous meeting, with the intent to prioritize the possible sites for future development and also to develop a “wish list” of the types of development the community envisions for the different portions of the neighborhood, as well as a list of considerations that should be taken into account when considering new development opportunities.

Overarching Goals. The following goals emerged from the conversations:

- Encourage mixed-use with active, pedestrian-friendly retail uses on the first floor and office/commercial/residential on the upper floors
- Cultivate the image of being a culturally-diverse neighborhood
- Cultivate the image of being a “green” neighborhood
- Cultivate the image of being an arts-focused neighborhood
- Preserve and cultivate the historic aspects of the Black Rock neighborhood

Design Considerations to Reinforce Goals. Community members discussed different design considerations that would be important to reinforce the goals for the development of Fairfield Avenue. Specifically, community members suggested that future design include transparent windows in retail stores, the installation of benches along Fairfield Avenue to encourage the pedestrian experience, the installation of gas light fixtures along Fairfield Avenue, the standardization of trash removal, and the installation of solar energy uses (e.g., LED traffic lights, solar panels).

Ideas for specific properties:

- *The Chimney’s* property was contemplated as an important property that is currently for sale on the market. Community members suggested that it could be used as a bed & breakfast, as a restaurant, or as condominiums.
- *The Black Rock Arts Center* was contemplated at length, with ideas including mixed uses, an art center, a location for art classes, a café, a Japanese garden, a dance studio, an art & technology training center, a location with soundproof rooms to provide private music lessons, or an art & instrument supply venue (e.g., Utrecht, Pearl’s art supply store).
- *Parking Lot behind Black Rock Arts Center* was contemplated as a location where additional parking may be viable.
- *Former Beverly Theater / Current U-haul Property* was contemplated (even though it is currently privately owned) as a good location for additional parking capacity.
- *Property on Burr Creek* for which high-rise condominiums were proposed was contemplated at length. Community members suggested that appropriate and exciting uses for the community could include condominiums at a lower level (e.g., three stories), a kayak rental location, a restaurant with a deck on the water, and a development that includes a waterfront walkway and/or public access to the water.

Implementation Considerations:

- Start a shuttle / trolley service that runs between Black Rock, downtown, and the main parking garages
- Develop and advertise Black Rock as a “green” village, with incentives for businesses to adopt green energy methods, have visible renewable energy sources (e.g., solar panels, LED traffic lights) and use UI utility program to come into homes to weatherize, and advocate for tax credits for passive/active solar system remodeling, geothermal systems, natural gas trolleys, recyclable trash collections

Wish List of Fairfield Avenue Development Uses

- Independent book store
- Paint store / Hardware store
- Seafood restaurant that sells fish
- Specialty market shops in a row (e.g., meat, cheese, bread)
- Market that sells produce & meat from local farmers
- Farmer's market
- Trader Joe's
- Specialty wine shop
- Bakery / café / dessert
- Bank
- Gas station
- Toy store
- Spa (legitimate) / fitness / bodywork center
- Jewelry store
- Indian restaurant
- Family-friendly restaurants
- Dance studio (e.g., teaching ballet classes)
- Community swimming pool
- Kayak / sporting goods rental
- Gift shop, with a local focus
- Cooperative arts shop
- Chauffeur service for elderly to Stop & Shop
- Additional retail with ethnic & cultural diversity
- Additional retail with unique wares (vs. chain stores)

NO INTEREST IN:

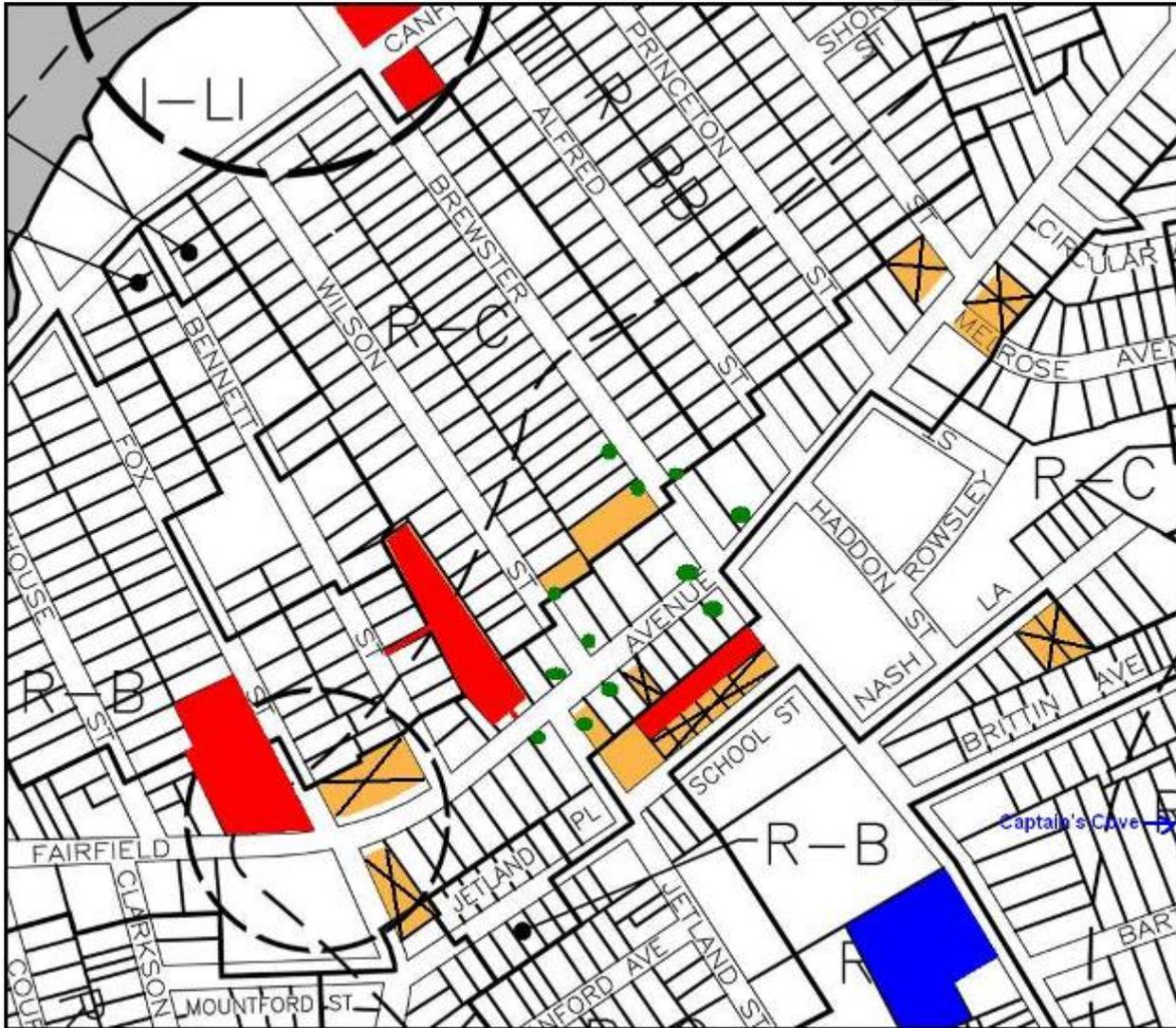
- Strip clubs
- Massage parlors
- Adult DVD stores
- Additional bars

The emerging next steps for the development opportunities group were:

| Immediate | Longer term | Long term | Recommendation |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|--|
| ● | | | Establish a liaison with the City to help local businesses & improve system (e.g., building permits) |
| ● | | | Remove the massage parlors, adult DVD stores, and strip clubs from the neighborhood |
| ● | | | Raise awareness of the type of development and standards of development sought for the neighborhood |
| ● | | | Identify owners of vacant lots and highly visible abandoned property |
| ● | | | Talk with owners of vacant lots and highly visible abandoned property about development plans |
| ● | ● | | Work with developers and property owners to focus on vacant lots and abandoned property |
| | ● | | Establish a façade improvement program and design guidelines |
| | ● | ● | Recruit businesses on the “wish list” to move to Black Rock |
| | ● | ● | Create incentives for businesses to be “green” |

MUNICIPAL LOTS and PARKING in Black Rock - Oct. 13, 2007 NRZ Design Charrette

The Municipal Lots and Parking group had as a frame of reference the “Possible Off Street Expansion Sites” map from the previous Black Rock Corridor Redevelopment Plan. Group members crossed off the lots that have since been built upon (for example, The Field restaurant was constructed on the site at Fairfield Avenue and Gilman), and highlighted in red the lots that are privately owned but are worth exploring for off-street parking, adding a few more potential parcels (Fairfield & Fox and movie theaters) to the map. After those actions, only the two existing municipal lots remained on the map: the former Black Rock Castle lot (Fairfield and Jetland) and the Black Rock Art Center lot (Fairfield and Brewster).



- Orange = current municipal lots
- Red = privately owned properties / lots
- Black = no longer available
- Blue = possible shared parking lots
- Green = “Park here” signs

The improvements and recommendations for parking that the group made were:

| Immediate | Longer term | Long term | Recommendation |
|---|-------------|-----------|---|
| Current Municipal Lots | | | |
| ● | | | Pave lots |
| ● | | | Keep the lots open 24-7 in conjunction with the next item |
| ● | | | Have a police presence at the lots, particularly throughout the night |
| ● | | | Improve signage at the lots—perhaps have banners with the lighthouses glowing in the dark |
| | ● | | Make fencing consistent, using the black wrought-iron fences that surround the Castle lot |
| ● | | | Install trash receptacles in the lots |
| ● | | | Open up access from Wilson Street to the Art Center lot |
| ● | | | Install signs with the giant “P” for parking (locations are in green on the map, above) |
| Black Rock Parking | | | |
| | ● | | Establish permit parking on residential streets so that residents stop parking in municipal lots |
| ● | | | Paint curbs, which will make it clear which areas are loading zones and will prevent parked cars from blocking lines of sight |
| | ● | | Explore shared parking with the school and Captain’s Cove |
| | ● | | Make sure signs are consistent and user-friendly (three particularly confusing signs are in front of Subway, in front of the Harborview Market, and by The Field) |
| Innovations / Plans / New Developments | | | |
| | | ● | Establish a community shuttle, which will be especially useful when the new train station is built |
| | | ● | Develop a parking plan for the Black Rock Library after renovation |
| | | ● | Explore the City’s purchase of the parcels, in red, to use as municipal lots |
| | | ● | Construct a two-level lot behind the Black Rock Art Center |



Façade and Streetscape Improvements: Community Generated List

- Well lit streets at night for safety and to encourage people to be out and about.
- Encourage the use of clapboard and brick



- More Green; More Plantings
- Gaslight lamps/planters (unified style)
- Sadistically cruel enforcement
- Chess tables and benches to encourage hanging on street
- Median Strip – appropriate and consistent plantings
- Signs for stores should have standards
- Get rid of roll heavy doors that say we are a scary hood
- Window signs should have standards
- Remove “Bus Stop” signage where routes abandoned
- Garbage cans at all bus stops

- Bus shelters at all stops
- Bus shelter in front of Post Office
- Prohibit chain link fence
- Attractive Bus Shelters (similar to the one across from Bridgeport movie theater [on Brewster/Canfield])



EXISTING



PROPOSED

| Short-Term | Mid-Term | Long-Term | Recommendations and Action Items |
|--|----------|-----------|---|
| General Streetscape Amenities and Improvement Items | | | |
| ● | | | Light sidewalks at night for safety and to encourage people to be out and about. |
| ● | | | Increase and maintain plantings |
| | ● | | Refurbish/replace pedestrian scale street lighting: consider gaslight lamps, pole-mounted planters, pole mounted banners (with unified style) |
| | ● | | Add benches and consider possible locations for outdoor chess/checker tables |
| ● | | | Improve median strip – appropriate and consistent plantings, better maintained |
| ● | | | Add and maintain trash receptacles at all bus stops |
| | ● | | Place attractive bus shelters at all stops (similar to the one across from Bridgeport movie theater on Brewster/Canfield) |
| | ● | | Add a bus shelter in front of the Post Office |
| ● | | | Remove “Bus Stop” signage where routes abandoned |
| ● | | | Add clear and consistent parking signs wherever appropriate. |
| ● | | | Promote outdoor commerce and retail street life |
| ● | | | Add more public trash receptacles, in general, and maintain them. |
| | ● | | Maintain/plant new umbrage that does not obscure business signage |
| ● | | | Establish a façade improvement program and design guidelines |
| ● | | | Maintain lively and seasonal storefront displays |
| ● | | | Oversee attractive displays and posters in vacant storefronts |
| Commercial Signage Improvement Recommendations | | | |
| | regulate | | Encourage consistent, quality signage design and placement |
| | regulate | | Remove or refurbish deteriorated or poorly positioned signage |
| | regulate | | Signage styling should complement architectural design and materials of the façade |
| | regulate | | Prohibit installation of signage on top of shingle roofs |
| | regulate | | “OPEN” signs maintained and improved |
| Commercial/Residential Façade Improvement Recommendations | | | |
| | regulate | | Preserve historic architectural details such as cornices, lintels, sills, and grates. |
| | regulate | | Discourage/Prohibit opaque façade windows and “hidden” storefronts |
| | regulate | | Encourage restoration and maintenance of brickwork and cedar clapboards |
| | regulate | | Encourage architectural ornament such as lentils and cornices wherever appropriate. |
| | regulate | | Encourage visually cohesive façade design strategies (design symmetry, complementary building materials, clearly indicated storefront entrances, consistent signage lighting, equal attention to second and third floor level façade design, attractive and maintained window displays, incongruous façade lines corrected) |
| | regulate | | Encourage architectural awnings, canopies, and marquees |
| | regulate | | Refurbish entryways, shopping windows and casework |
| | regulate | | Add clerestory windows above entryways wherever appropriate |
| | regulate | | Replace solid exterior security shutters with interior security screens |
| | regulate | | Antennas and satellite dishes removed or relocated |
| | regulate | | Encourage decorative metal fencing; replace chain link fencing with decorative fencing |
| | regulate | | Encourage the use of clapboard and brick |

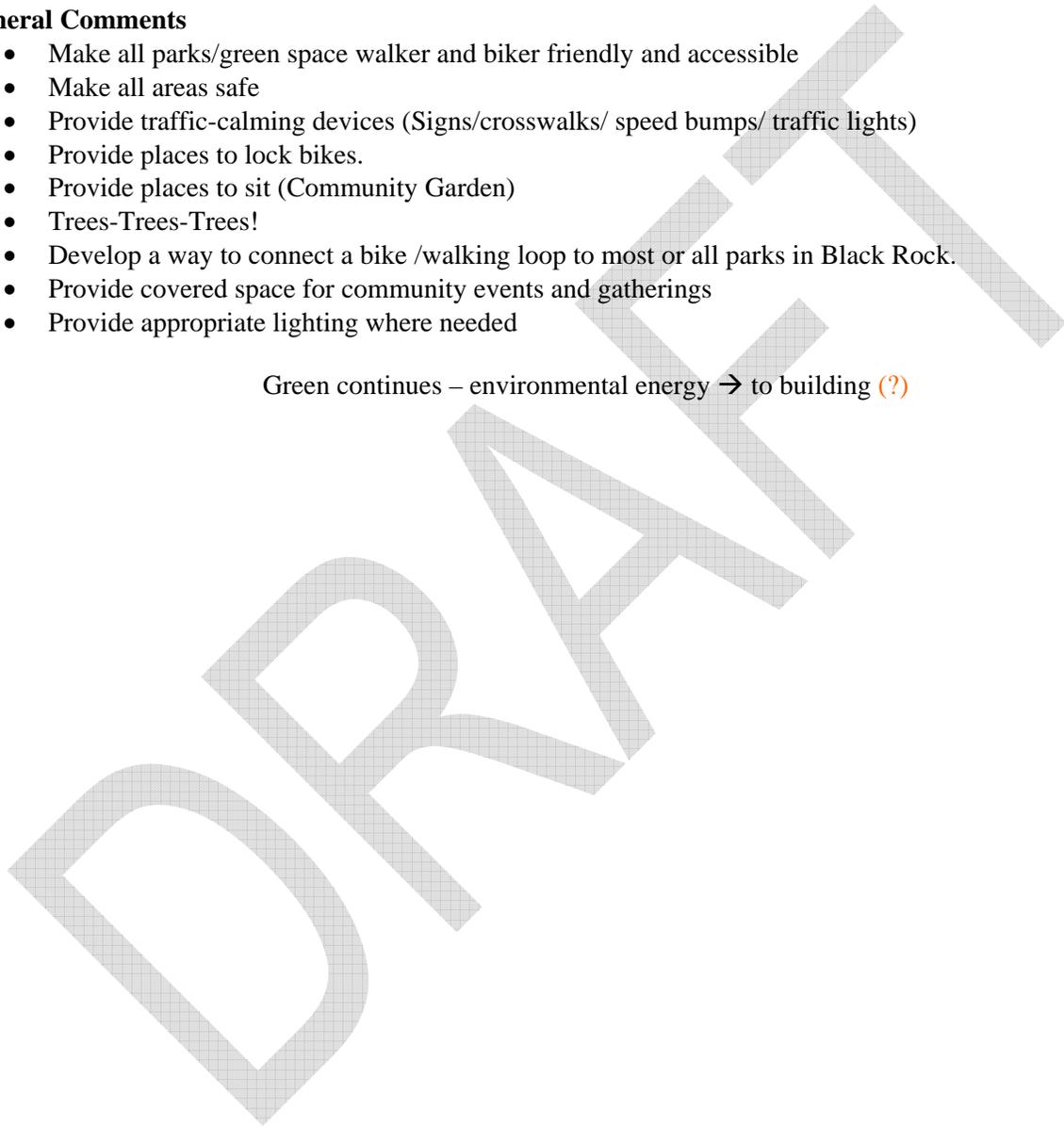
There was considerable input from residents and stakeholder on this broad topic. The basis for discussion was three-fold:

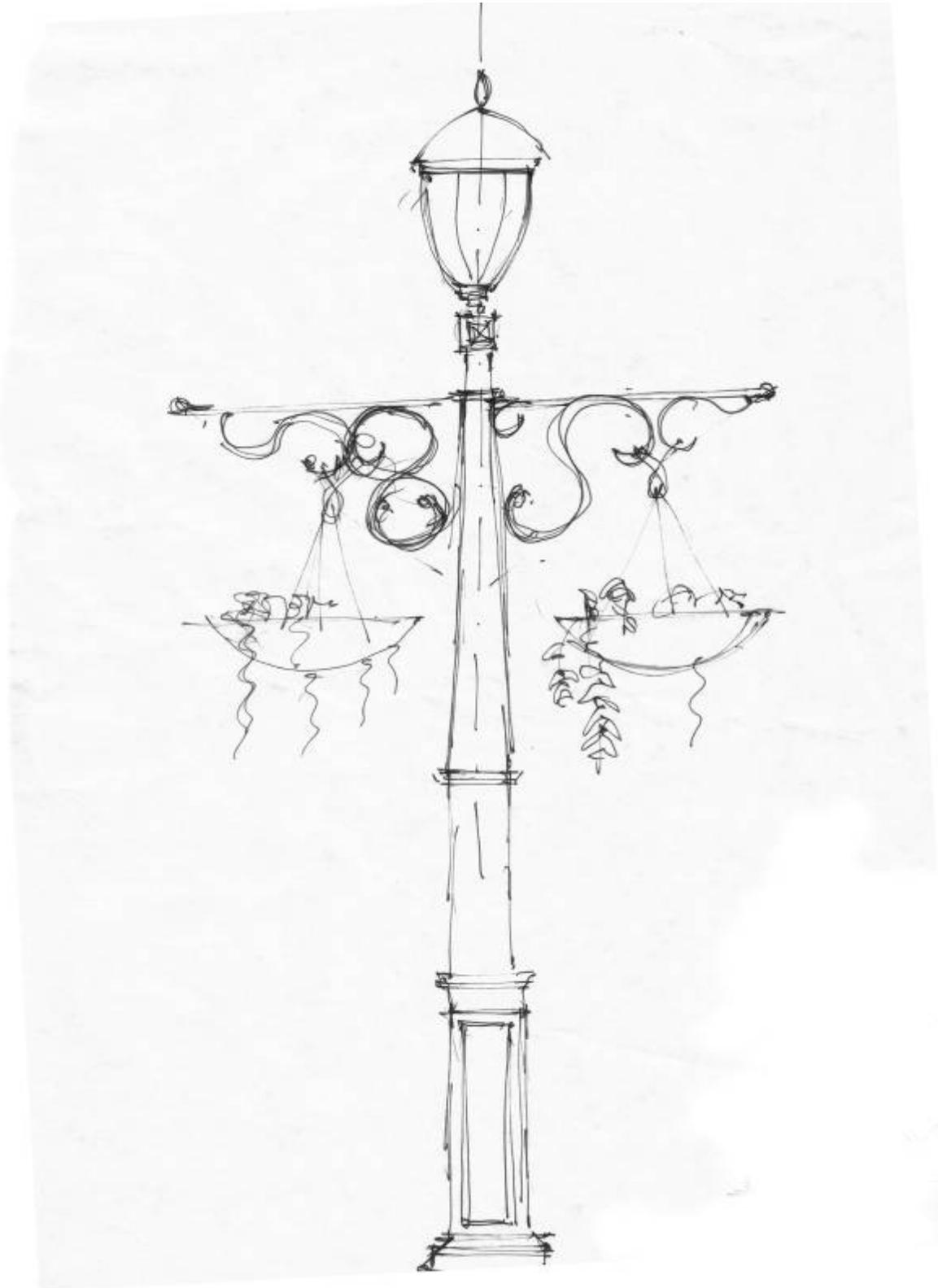
- 1) Optimizing the use of neighborhood parks and open space
- 2) Creating public access to the waterfront
- 3) Protecting natural resources and wild-life

General Comments

- Make all parks/green space walker and biker friendly and accessible
- Make all areas safe
- Provide traffic-calming devices (Signs/crosswalks/ speed bumps/ traffic lights)
- Provide places to lock bikes.
- Provide places to sit (Community Garden)
- Trees-Trees-Trees!
- Develop a way to connect a bike /walking loop to most or all parks in Black Rock.
- Provide covered space for community events and gatherings
- Provide appropriate lighting where needed

Green continues – environmental energy → to building (?)

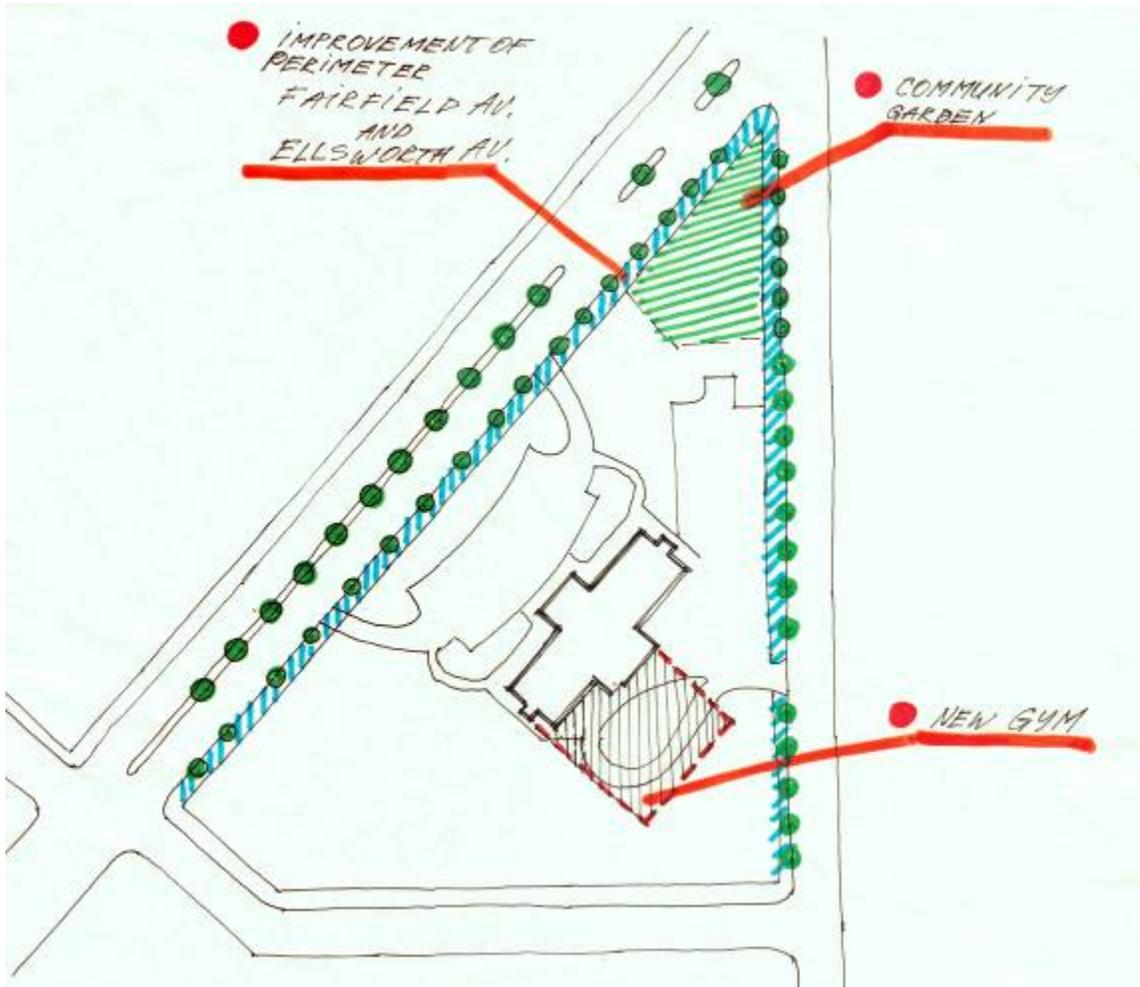




The group went on to consider specific open-space development opportunities.

Burroughs Community Center

- Area outside of fence – better shrubs
- Keep ... Fairfield Avenue corner as is – free play area



PT Barnum

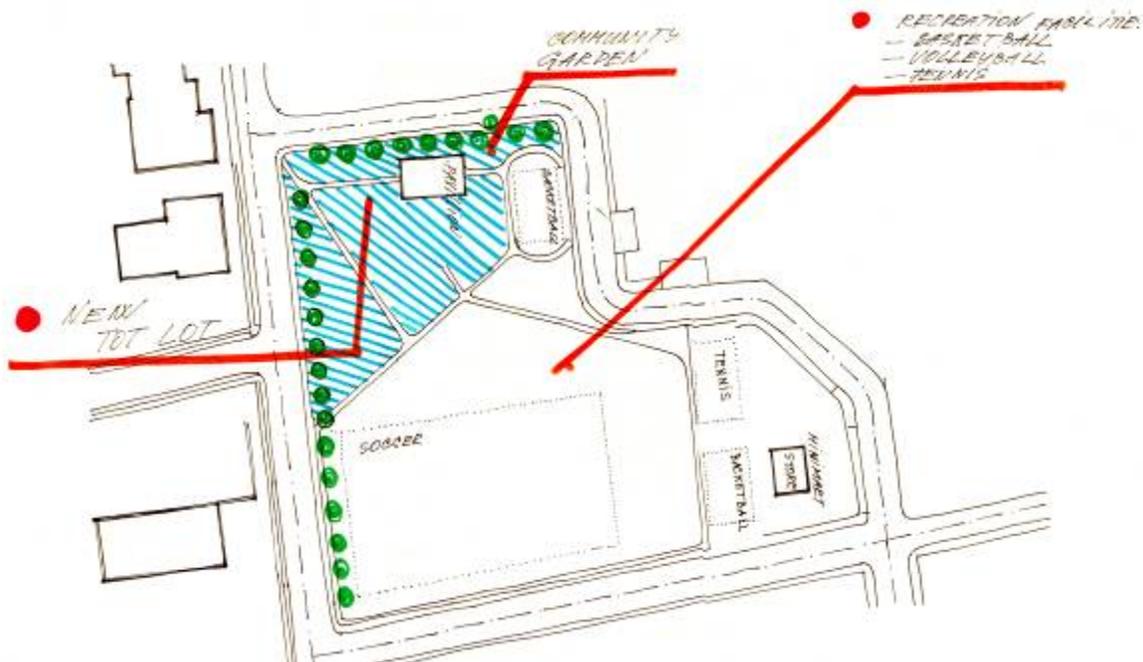
General

- Provide formal fields (including area beside Longfellow and Staff area) on Sat and after school for use by local children and have city give permits for use of the fields
- Develop one small building for toilets and washrooms as well as for stocking supplies
- Provide storage for sports equipment, tables, grills
- Provide multiple grills for general use
- Provide outdoor faucet or hose for sprinklers
- Provide a formal entryway to encourage dog walkers to leave the sidewalk for children (?)
- Place 'poop pick-up' signs
- Explanation of permitting process (particularly to residents) should be a high priority
- Provide staff for outdoor after school, sports, and casual pick-up play
- Provide benches for sitting
- Use soccer fields for BAYSO (?) 12-14 boys and girls
- Tot lot – sprinkler near pavilion
- Provide sprinkler – near where fire hydrant is

- Determine who owns land mini – mart is on (?)

Pavilion

- lights and picnic tables



Ellsworth Park Area

- Provide a Gazebo for concerts
- Deal with parking jams
- Provide bike racks to lock up bikes and to encourage riding vs. driving.
- Provide access to waterfront
 - Kayak, fishing, dock/pier
- Develop a linear park (like walking path @ St. Mary’s)
- Develop better play areas → appropriate for toddlers and baby swings (something like the sandcastle at Jennings (?) Beach)

St. Mary’s by the Sea area

Participants noted that the current area is a valuable habitat for birds including state-listed endangered species. Steps to preserve this resource are critical to the future of Black Rock. Certain treatments were identified as worthy of consideration:

- 1) Green space on the inside of the road.

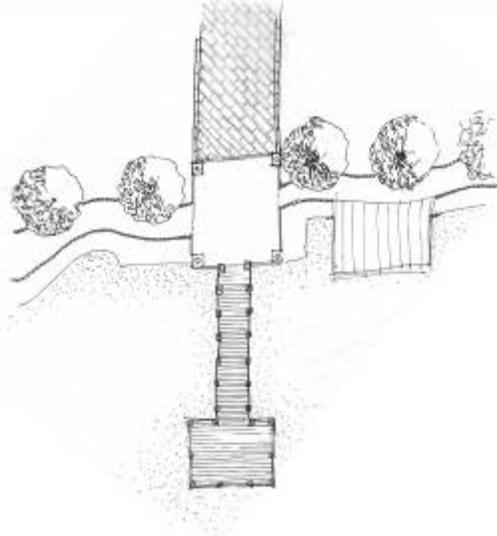
- 2) St. Mary's by the sea/fish creek linear park.
- 3) Planting should be careful and deliberate. Maximize habitat quality by introducing non-invasive species
- 4) Maintain quality of views (keep plantings low)

Also, certain amendments should be made to the existing land-use map in order to accurately reflect existing conditions:

- 5) Old battery road does not connect to Gilman Street.
- Please – **NO DOCKS** ever-
- 6) BBQ near tables with “Dangerous to Swim” signs. Kayak rack?
 - 7) Fitness trail system. (None close by)
 - 8) Bike racks connected to bike paths

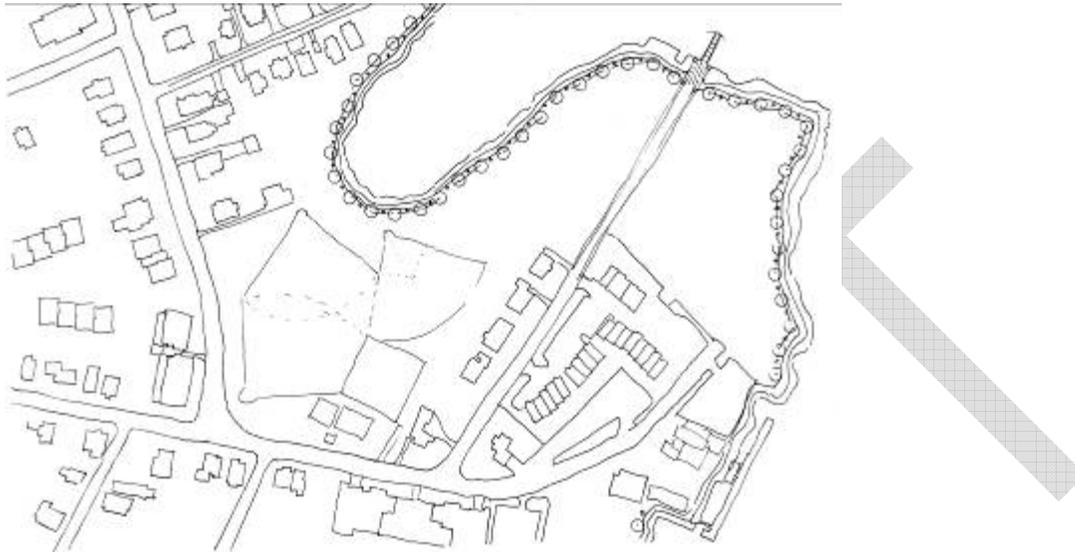
Sea Bright Beach

- Provide public beach access
- Provide small boat storage (i.e. Kayak racks)
- Regulate: signage use/ pooper scooper/ etc.
- Provide garbage pick-up
- Provide habitat protection (Signage)
- General clean-up
- Provide bike racks adjacent to bike path.



Burr Creek

Participants noted potential for development of a boat dock in conjunction with a walk/bike trail at the waterfront.



DRAFT

Finally, the group advocated for implementation of conservation overlays to regulate use and development of Black Rock’s waterfront and coast resources.

Conservation Overlay #1

Ash Creek

- 1) “NO” docks ordinance.
- 2) Invasive species rules.
- 3) Run off – surface construction regulations (i.e. Porous driveways and paths.)
- 4) National habitat areas.
- 5) Salt Marsh signage – Birds/shellfish/ plants of Ash Creek (Audubon Involvement for education seminars for public involvement. Site for looking at the birds. (i.e. Sherwood Island was there.)

Conservation Overlay #2

Black Rock Harbor

- 1) Pollutions load is heavy – sewage treatment plant industry.
- 2) Beaches need to be creatively developed and maintained.
- 3) Run – off protection as above.

Other Considerations

344 Brewster

- Put in a small pocket park.
- Garden Park?

“Edge” concerns

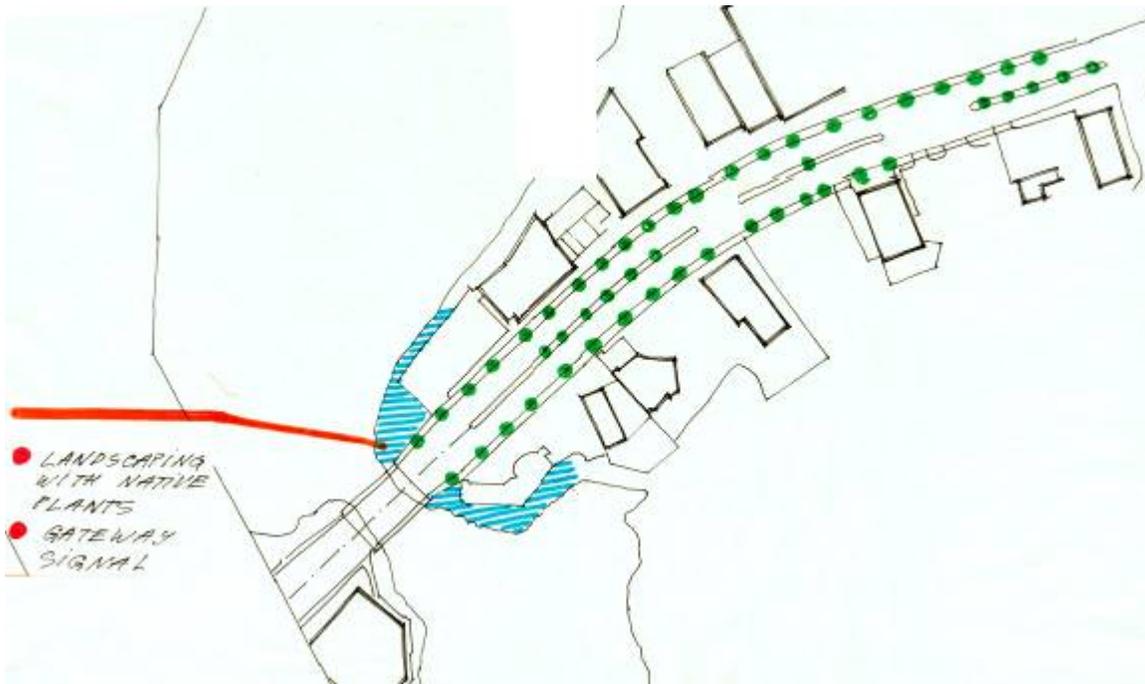
Stakeholders suggested that a major “greening” of industrial area just to the NE of Black Rock is needed. Suggestions for achieving this included:

- Ask for city to require tree plantings around Bridgeport Resco power plant.

**To this end, it was reported that the Black Rock Arts Center revealed plans to: develop a ‘Green’ roof, energy efficient HVAC system and a Japanese Garden

Gateways

Stakeholders felt strongly that improvements to the western gateway from Fairfield into Black Rock was critical. Individuals proposed streetscape, lighting and other improvements to mark this ‘destination’



Traffic Concerns

- Widen Brewster Street and provide one-way access.
- Repair Sidewalks
- Widen Street near Ellsworth Park
- Provide Shuttle Bus through neighborhood
- Slow down Fairfield Avenue Traffic

Maintenance of Esplanade

- Trees – Clean green.
- Flowers instead of trees.

| Immediate | Longer term | Long term | Recommendations |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|--|
| | ● | | Develop Conservation Overlays and Review Process for waterfront at Black Rock Harbor and Ash Creek |
| ● | | | Develop improvements to PT Barnum Park |
| | ● | | Develop improvements to Ellsworth Park |
| | | ● | Develop bike/walking path with appropriate connections (picnic areas, bike racks, boat docks and kayak launches) |
| | ● | | Develop Streetscape improvement plan to include sidewalk repair and lighting near public open spaces. |
| ● | ● | | Develop “Green” guidelines for future development |