

**Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area
Main-Third Street Corridor
Plan Overview**

NEIGHBORHOOD & GEOGRAPHIC AREA

- Boundaries Defined – Main to Third and Union to Buck
- 130+/- acres

The following information is from the assessing records

- 423 lots of which 361 (85%) are residential
- 732 total units
- 189 single family houses
- 172 multifamily properties which represents 543 units
- 29 commercial lots
- 15 vacant lots
- 4 nonprofit organizations – Bangor Y, CHCS, Shaw House & Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
- 2 parks – Davenport & Second St.
- 2 churches
- 1 fire station

The following information is from the Census American Fact Finder (2006-2010 5-year estimates) for Census Tract 6

- Demographic Data to include:
 - Population – 2,279 which is 7% Bangor’s population
 - Household area median income is \$25,405
 - 70% of households are Low to moderate income
 - 91 families and 563 individuals are living below poverty level
 - 251 or 21% receive Social Security, 469 or 38% receive public assistance or food stamps
 - 91% of units are occupied and 10% are vacant
 - 73% of units are renter occupied
 - 27% of units are owner occupied
 - 98% of the houses were built prior to 1978 and 91% before 1940
 - Me. Dept. of Labor estimated 2010 unemployment rate for the target area at 11.7% with Bangor at 7.5% and the State at 7.9% for the same time frame
 - Police calls – Nov. 2011-Feb. 2012 four month period - 1,400 calls for this area

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- 2 Public Neighborhood Meetings
- Direct invitations mailed to over 300 property owners
- 2 neighborhood residents also hand delivered 150 invites door to door and businesses
- Advertised in newspapers, local radio and TV and the City's website and local access channel
- 90 persons at the first meeting with 76 owners/residents
- 65 persons at the second meeting with 56 owners/residents
- Nonprofit agencies, housing providers, staff from the Bangor Y and Bangor Housing Authority and landlords and realtors also attended
- PowerPoint presentation giving an overview of the NRSA and the plan being created
- Neighborhood page set up on our website that allows people to sign up for email blasts, complete the survey, watch the public meetings and see notices etc.
- A listserv was created to notify people of progress, updates and important dates pertinent to the NRSA. Currently 88 people have subscribed.
- Report a Problem Tool was added to the neighborhood page on the website for people to have a direct way to report any problems that need to be addressed (street lights out, potholes in the road, large trash or debris issues etc.)
- Audience input recorded to survey questions
- Surveys handed out and also on the website
- All public comments and survey responses were recorded and divided up amongst appropriate departments for comments. (See below for department survey responses/actions)

ASSESSMENT

- Economic Conditions
 - Unemployment level for the target area was 11.7%
 - 34 businesses located in the target area
 - 1,147 people employed at these businesses
 - 6 service, 4 insurance/real estate, 4 restaurants, 3 contractors, 3 retail, 2 financial, 2 health, 2 shelters, a daycare, a trucking company, a publisher, a civic organization and a government entity
- Access to Capital
 - Conventional financing from banks & credit unions
 - City's Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program
 - Maine Stream Finance – Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) providing credit and financial services to underserved populations – first time homebuyers, refinancing and micro business loans
 - Eastern Maine Development Corp. (EMDC) a secondary lender – micro loans, business loans and SBA 504 loans for start ups, expansions, equipment, working capital or real estate.

- CEI is a private, nonprofit Community Development Corporation and Community Development Financial Institution that provides financing and support for job-creating small businesses, natural resources industries, community facilities, and affordable housing.
- Housing
 - Rents: 838 units paying rent
 - Less than \$200 - 13 or 1.6%
 - \$200-\$299 - 3 or .4%
 - \$300-\$499 - 45 or 5.4%
 - \$500-\$799 - 519 or 61.9%
 - \$1,000 - \$1499 - 26 or 3.1
 - Home prices: 344 owner occupied
 - Less than \$50,000 - 29 or 8.4%
 - \$50,000-\$99,999 - 60 or 17.4%
 - \$100,000 - \$149,999 - 113 or 32.8%
 - 150,000 - \$199,999 - 107 or 31.1%
 - 200,000 - \$299,999 – 13 or 3.8%
 - 300,000 - \$499,999 – 22 or 6.4%
 - Housing quality
 - A preliminary assessment was completed in the winter of 2011 and nearly 100 buildings were identified as having property maintenance issues
 - Issues included: structural obsolescence and dilapidations, lack of maintenance and illegal dumping
 - Property maintenance issues affect property values but more importantly negatively impact public safety and the livability of the neighborhood
 - Lower property values makes selling homes difficult in this area
 - Neighborhoods with lower property values also creates a tax shift to other neighborhoods where property values are higher and they make up the difference
- Availability of Economic Development or other community services
 - Penobscot River Redevelopment Project reclaimed the riverfront, revitalized the downtown and created a one mile long waterfront public recreation and open space with walking and biking trails, performance venues and a 12 acre public riverfront park
 - Connectivity for the residents to this area is a vital component for this plan
 - Over \$15 Million in private investment in rehabilitation and reuse of formerly vacant buildings for residential, restaurants and professional office space
 - \$131 Million private investment in 110,000 square foot gaming facility, 150 room hotel, restaurants, retail space and 1,500 space four story parking structure which created approximately 500 jobs with a \$15.6 million annual payroll
 - A new \$65 million, 202,257 square foot Arena and Convention Center with seating for 8,050 people will be completed in 2013

- A Policy One research study shows the new arena will generate \$26 million annually in new spending in the Bangor region and support over 1,000 jobs in the regional economy
- Opportunities for Economic Development improvement
 - Identifying unmet demand for specific types of facilities or services
 - Identifying potential sites for businesses to encourage reuse of vacant buildings (i.e. the Movie Gallery building – this was a suggestion from the audience at the neighborhood meeting)
 - Identify any visionary or potential projects that have been unable to get off the ground due to lack of funding
 - Work with Entrepreneurs and Start Up businesses by offering resources and connections to meet their needs
 - Identifying Community Organizations that are ready and available to assist with economic development efforts

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Identify areas of need that residents will embrace to improve their economic opportunities – (i.e. offer job fair resources, plan and schedule trainings for resume writing, interview skills etc.)
- Work with businesses to identify needs for training or skilled workforce
- Create linkages for residents based on employment and organizations offering services
- Performance Measures
- Set goals and anticipated results for the implementation of the plan

FUNDING

- Once the plan is approved by HUD subsequent CDBG Annual Action Plans must describe the program resources that may be used in the targeted neighborhood
- FY12 CDBG approach is using this area as the “priority” for line items such as residential rehabilitation loan program, acquisition, demolition and public infrastructure etc.
- Once the work with the consultant is completed with a final concept plan then the items will be prioritized and funded to the greatest extent possible each year
- Grants will also be explored to further leverage funds for this neighborhood
- Private Investments will also be sought in regards to both housing and commercial development opportunities

Performance Measures

- Physical Improvements:
- Number of properties investing and improving the physical buildings and lots
- Clean up days – tracking amounts collected (i.e. Earth Day approx. 20 people collected over 40 bags)

- Tracking infrastructure improvements and costs (i.e. streets, sidewalks, streetlights etc.)
- Track the assessed values of properties
- Track the number of identified properties by Code as having property maintenance and/or code issues and those that are addressed and corrected
- Economic Empowerment:
- Number of new businesses
- Number of new jobs created
- Reduction of the unemployment rate
- Reduction of families needing public assistance
- Tracking training programs and numbers participating

Problems with Plan Implementation

- Keeping resident interest throughout the length of the project because it is such a large area and will take several years to complete
- Identifying additional funding sources in a climate where funding is being continually reduced
- Ensuring that investments within the neighborhood will bring about needed structural changes that will continue into the future and not invest funding to continue the same environment that is the current issue
- NIMBY sentiments

City Department Responses and/or Plan Contributions

PLANNING DEPT.

- Lighting – Documentation of existing light locations, fixture type and illumination levels
- Sidewalks – Using the existing conditions inventory establish a priority pedestrian routes plan and direct sidewalk construction and repair to those locations in the greatest need
- Streets – Using prior analysis revisit the details of one way streets and parking limitations based on street width
- Zoning & Land Use – Evaluate existing conditions as to the existing land use and future land use policy and make adjustments as warranted based on comments from the public sessions
- Feature Mapping – Develop existing conditions plans, topographic and utility plans

CODE DEPT.

- Assess conditions of properties (building codes, life safety, property maintenance and land use)
- 100 buildings preliminarily identified with property maintenance issues
- Enforcement of City's building, life safety, property maintenance and land use codes
- The creation of a rental registration program is being explored to give Code the ability to annually inspect rental units which will eliminate and reduce life safety and sanitary issues that have seemed to increase. This will help the Code office to become more proactive than reactionary in their approach to improving the rental units and in turn the neighborhood.

ENGINEERING DEPT.

- GIS Mapping – Is in the process of updating mapping of City Infrastructure and this strategy area will move near the top of the priority list
- Lighting – Using lighting inventory assessment of minimum light levels and prepare a better plan to illuminate sidewalks
- Streets – Main Street between Dutton and Patten along with Buck Street from Main to Third is scheduled to be resurfaced during the 2013 construction season. Working to develop cost estimates to remove utility poles and install upgraded sidewalks and street lighting.
- Sewer & Drains
 - Sanitary sewage and surface drainage flowing into 160+/- year old pipes
 - City Sewer Crews are evaluating conditions of existing pipes with CCTV
 - Evaluating options to rehabilitate or separate the combined sewer systems
 - Review vacant parcels and parks as possible storage areas for surface runoff or underground storage tanks

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPT.

- Waterfront – (noise, overflow parking, public restrooms and keeping green)
- Concerts – A sound engineer will be hired to analyze the activity of the Waterfront and develop a long term solution
- Parking – Better market alternatives such as Pickering Square Parking Garage
- Public Restrooms – Temporary fix include restroom facilities on the Waterfront and Harbor Masters Building. Long term plan will include constructing a permanent restroom and concession facility on the waterfront when funding allows.
- Second Street Park – improve the park, lighting and linkage to the Waterfront
- In 2009 a new play structure with safety surfacing and a flood light was installed in Second Street Park. There is a path/trail from Second St. to the Shaw's loading area – access Waterfront by crossing Shaw's property. Lighting on the trail will be reviewed to ensure functionality and appropriateness.
- Teen/Recreation Center – Because Parks & Rec Center is close along with the Bangor Y efforts will be focused on continued programming at the Center. P&R have attempted a variety of summer teen programs and continue an early teen program in the summer.
- Green Space at the Southern End
- There is little to no City owned parcels on that end of the project area. However, there is an expanded Waterfront green space opportunity behind the river side end of Lincoln St. that expands back in a northern direction toward Railroad St. That access included signaled pedestrian crossing at Buck St., Shaw's and Railroad Streets.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPT.

- Sidewalks – Installing curbing in all areas where sidewalks need to be reconstructed
- Streets – Will rate the pavement condition and develop a paving schedule. Evaluate drainage and making improvements needed with the repair of the streets.

CITY FORESTER

- Identify trees that are obscuring existing street lights
- Create a tree replanting program to remove the spreading nuisance trees

POLICE DEPT.

- Abandoned Properties – Squatters
- PD does not have any legal rights for action without consent of the owner. In many of these situations the ownership is not clear and PD has no authority. When it is clear and PD has authority to act, enforcement action will be taken as deemed appropriate by responding officers.
- Vagrants in halls of buildings – are addressed on an as needed basis by the PD. Property owners are encouraged to contact the PD when such incidents occur.
- Unsafe – better security – more police patrolling
- Any amount of crime can lead to a perception of unsafe streets and neighborhoods
- Changes can be made to reduce the perception of being “unsafe” – better lighting, presence by the PD and general face-lift of the area
- Loiterers behind Rite Aid – Movie Gallery
- Loitering on private property is not enforceable by the PD except when the property owners post notices advising that it is prohibited and authorizes the PD to act on their behalf to remove them. If a disturbance rises to the level of a violation of the law from then the PD may address the specific issue
- Dogs – barking, defecating, vicious
- Complaints involving domestic animals are handled by the Animal Control Officer, if they are not on duty then a police officer responds. The PD attempts to gain voluntary compliance of owners in controlling barking dogs before any legal action is taken. Dogs defecating on other’s property are a difficult matter for the PD to address – ordinances should be reviewed to determine if they appropriately address such matters.
- Crime-Drugs-Prostitution-Juvenile Delinquents-Vandalism-Thefts
- Addressing unruly residents through the newly proposed Disorderly Properties Ordinance will assist the City in reducing crime.
- PD efforts will include diligent attempts at apprehending criminals through an omnipresence and through covert investigations in concert with the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency and the Department’s Special Enforcement Team
- Sex Offenders
- The PD keeps track of registered sex offenders and enforces violations of the restrictions and requirements imposed upon them. When warranted, arrests are made.
- Police Officers must and will enforce laws that prohibit crimes against registered sex offenders.

- Better Tenants – Landlords held accountable – absentee Landlords
- The City is developing a “Disorderly Properties” Ordinance. This ordinance will address issues of disorderly activity by tenants, guests, landlords and their employees. The intent of the ordinance is “to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the City of Bangor by eliminating proliferation of properties harboring occupants who disturb the peace and tranquility of their neighborhoods.”
- A Neighborhood Watch Group has been formed and with continued efforts to promote a community involvement approach to problem solving, it is expected that additional crimes will be reported which is expected to result in a higher rate of enforcement action. The West Side Watch group also created pamphlets to notify the residents of their existence and to invite other residents to get involved to help address this neighborhood and community issues.

Process & Next Steps

The consultant has been chosen and negotiations have taken place. This will be approved and finalized by the end of August.

The old parking and street plan that was created in the 1990s will be reviewed for that area to see what the idea was for street parking and one way streets etc.

Working with the consultant and reviewing the many plans and traffic studies that have been completed, staff will assist with creating a comprehensive infrastructure plan that will address the streets, sidewalks, lighting, sewer/water, connectivity and landscaping etc. This information will then be prioritized by need by street and will be scheduled for funding annually and included in the City’s Annual Action Plan.

In addition to the infrastructure component, there will also be areas for job creation identified. This could include business start up classes, specific target categories to assist existing businesses or identifying needed services for the neighborhood and recruiting for them.

The overview of the plan was presented to the neighborhood in a PowerPoint on Thursday April 26th at 6pm at the Doughty Auditorium. Departments were on hand to speak about their roles with the plan and what items their departments will be contributing.

This will be a long range project and could take 3 to 5 years to complete depending on the amount of work identified from the plan that the consultant and staff create. The City is prepared to allocate some of their CDBG funding each year to address the needs of this neighborhood and create a comprehensive revitalization approach.