

# Community Development Corporations and Neighborhood Stability in Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neighborhood stability can be measured in a number of ways. The Center for Community Progress defines neighborhood stability as the “physical, economic or social features of the neighborhood that are associated with the preservation and potential increase in the value of a property-owner’s investment in a neighborhood.”<sup>1</sup> Destabilizing forces in a neighborhood include crime, vacant properties, and low resident confidence in the neighborhood. A stable neighborhood is not one that does not change, but one where residents can expect a high quality of life to be maintained. A stable neighborhood has streets that are safe and clean, homes that are well maintained, and landscaping that is kept in good condition. For urban neighborhoods with an older housing stock, a high proportion of renters, and owners with insufficient capital (or motivation) to maintain their housing units, these features of a stable neighborhood are often missing.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are not-for profit, community-based organizations formed to provide investment capital and other support to neighborhoods suffering disinvestment and related challenges.<sup>2</sup> Among other things, CDCs can “fill the gap” in financial capital available for housing revitalization in areas not adequately served by the private market, providing and/or assembling public and philanthropic funding for housing construction and rehabilitation. The hope is that targeted CDC investments will encourage other homeowners and rental property owners in the area to invest in their properties and thus catalyze broader improvement in the neighborhood’s quality of life.

This study investigated the effects of CDC housing revitalization programs in Hartford and New Haven, CT on neighborhood stability.<sup>3</sup> Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, this study sought to connect the observed impacts in Hartford and New Haven with the literature on revitalization in formerly industrial cities. Data on three key indicators of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.communityprogress.net/increasing-neighborhood-stability-pages-240.php>

<sup>2</sup> <https://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/cdcs/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> The three CDCs studied were Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) and Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) in Hartford and Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) in New Haven. See page 8 for more details on the CDCs studied.

neighborhood stability (property values, owner occupancy rates, and vacancy rates) were collected for the time period spanning 2000 to 2019. Street conditions were observed by a Google Street View “windshield survey” of the CDC focus areas; conditions were observed in 2011 and again in 2019 using the time capsule feature on Google Street View.<sup>4</sup> The collected and observed data were contextualized through informal interviews with housing program leaders at each of the CDCs.

Based on the data examined, this study supports four conclusions. First, when viewed in the context of the literature on urban decline, and specifically decline in formerly industrial cities (or “legacy cities”), it became clear that Hartford and New Haven possess advantages over most other legacy cities in their efforts to spur neighborhood improvement. Second, those working in CDCs to improve homeownership opportunities in Connecticut cities need to rethink the methods, goals, and measures of homeownership programs as the data indicates little impact from such programs on homeownership levels, as opposed to broader indicia of neighborhood improvement. Third, the impact of housing revitalization on property values and street conditions depends significantly on the neighborhood context, specifically the property values in surrounding neighborhoods. Fourth, investments in housing revitalization by CDCs and other community-focused programs must be spatially targeted and sufficiently concentrated to produce measurable results.

#### *a. Advantages of Hartford and New Haven*

Discussions of the “Rust Belt” cities of the Northeastern and Midwestern United States are commonplace in the urban studies literature, with Detroit as the quintessential example. Hartford and New Haven are often lumped into the declining Rust Belt city narrative. Alan Mallach’s 2018 book *The Divided City* provides a detailed account of the landscape of the legacy city, Mallach’s term for the older, formerly industrial cities. There are, however, key differences between Hartford and New Haven and other Rust Belt cities. For one, there is significant wealth

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<sup>4</sup> A windshield survey is a survey method whereby a researcher observes a neighborhood from a moving vehicle. Google Street View is a tool offered by Google where images captured by cameras on Google vehicles are compiled on Google Maps. This tool provides the ability to study streets anywhere in the world from a computer and also provides the ability to compare street conditions over time using the time capsule feature.

surrounding Hartford and New Haven. Not only are these cities surrounded by affluent suburbs, Connecticut is also one of the richest states in the country. Hartford and New Haven are also geographically small compared with most other legacy cities. Because cities in New England did not generally annex surrounding towns in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as many cities did elsewhere in the United States, the boundaries of Hartford and New Haven have not changed in centuries. While this creates challenges in maintaining an adequate property tax base to fund urban services, it has the advantage of concentrating the impact of public and philanthropic investment in housing improvement. Hartford and New Haven also both have neighborhoods that are stable or even thriving, further reducing the geographic area that requires investment from government, non-profit, or other entities to promote stabilization of the neighborhoods.

These facts paint a relatively hopeful picture for Hartford and New Haven, but are also a call to action. We in Connecticut cannot point to their status as declining industrial cities as an excuse for a deteriorating housing stock within two of the state's flagship cities. The scale of urban decline in Connecticut is relatively small, there is capital within the state to address urban decline, and there are still thriving industries in Hartford and New Haven. This is not to say that the problem of a declining housing stock and distressed neighborhoods in Hartford and New Haven is a simple one to solve, but that it is a worthwhile project to pursue. Improving the quality of life in Connecticut's urban neighborhoods is an attainable goal.

#### ***b. Rethinking Homeownership Methods, Goals, and Measures***

Increasing homeownership is an important goal of all three CDCs examined in this study. Owner occupancy did increase in CDC-targeted areas at a rate faster than each city overall (or, in most cases, decreased at a slower rate than each city overall) in two out of the three CDC focus area census tracts in Hartford and two out of the five CDC focus area census tracts in New Haven. Where there were homeownership gains, however, they were very slight. Overall, the CDCs were unable to demonstrate measurable improvements in owner occupancy rates. Given the broad dip in homeownership after the 2008 housing crash, CDCs faced an uphill battle to fight in increasing owner occupancy rates over the study period of 2000 to 2019.<sup>5</sup> It may be that

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<sup>5</sup> United States Census, data access via Social Explorer

there were too many forces working against increasing owner occupancy over this time period, but this finding raises questions regarding the efficacy of CDCs’ current approaches to increasing owner occupancy in urban neighborhoods.

***c. The Impact of Housing Revitalization on Property Values and Street Conditions Depends on the Neighborhood Context***

After examining median home sales values for the years 2001, 2010, and 2019, this study concluded that the property value and street conditions changes that can be expected as a result of CDC housing revitalization projects depend on the neighborhood context, specifically the property values in surrounding neighborhoods. The table below summarizes the hypothesized impacts of housing revitalization in different neighborhood contexts. Section 3 of this report, the discussion of findings, goes into more detail about this finding in the context of Hartford and New Haven.

| <b>Surrounding Property Values</b>   | <b>⇒</b> | <b>Outcome of CDC Housing Revitalization Projects on Property Values</b>              | <b>Outcomes of CDC Housing Revitalization Projects on Street Conditions</b>  |
|--|----------|---|--|
| High/Low Property Value Increases: A CDC Focus Area with low property values located near a neighborhood with high property value increases. | ⇒        | CDC focus area sees property value increases <i>lower than</i> the surrounding area   | CDC focus area likely to see noticeable improvement in street conditions and visible spillover effects of housing projects on nearby houses      |
| Moderately Strong Property Value Increases: A CDC Focus Area surrounded by a neighborhood with moderately strong property value increases    | ⇒        | CDC focus area sees property value increases <i>in line with</i> surrounding area     | CDC focus area likely to see noticeable improvement in street conditions and visible spillover effects of housing projects on nearby houses      |
| Low Property Values Increases: A CDC Focus Area surrounded by a neighborhood with low property value increases                               | ⇒        | CDC focus area sees property value increases <i>greater than</i> the surrounding area | CDC focus area less likely to see noticeable improvement in street conditions and visible spillover effects of housing projects on nearby houses |

***d. Investments in Housing Must Be Spatially Concentrated in Order to Produce Results at the Neighborhood Level***

CDC investments in housing must be spatially concentrated in order to produce results at the neighborhood level. This means that a CDC cannot renovate one or two houses on a block and expect to see the entire block change. The findings of this study indicate that, especially in the most distressed neighborhoods, a CDC must rehabilitate a significant portion of the housing stock in order to see measurable results at the neighborhood level. This finding is in line with the findings of a previous study of the impact of community development block grants (CDBG) focused on housing, which found that CDBG spending must be sufficiently spatially targeted in order to see measurable results.<sup>6</sup>

Rehabilitating a few houses on a block may benefit the families who live in those newly improved residences, but it is unlikely to have an impact on the stability of the street or neighborhood as a whole. This study used census tracts as the unit of measurement for neighborhoods. Three percent was set as the threshold for the amount of housing that must be rehabilitated in a census tract in order for it to be plausible that the housing rehabilitation efforts had a measurable impact at the neighborhood level. More information on the methods for determining sufficient spatial targeting and the three percent threshold are discussed in the research methods section of this paper.

**2. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS STUDIED**

Community development corporations (CDCs) are key actors in bringing investment to urban neighborhoods that have experienced capital flight and physical decline (*i.e.*, have been “disinvested”). CDCs are non-profit organizations that work to improve the neighborhoods they

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<sup>6</sup> Galster, G., Walker, C., Hayes, C., Boxall, P., & Johnson, J. (2004). Measuring the impact of Community Development Block Grant spending on urban neighborhoods. *Housing Policy Debate*, 15(4), 903–934. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2004.9521526>

are based in. CDCs bring leadership, long-term commitment, and local knowledge to property development. This strengthens real estate development efforts and makes them more effective at stabilizing neighborhoods. CDC-led revitalization has been noted to have many tangible benefits, including lower tax delinquency among homeowners who purchase homes from CDCs.<sup>7</sup> In order for CDC projects to improve an entire neighborhood, however, the hope is that CDC housing investments will create a domino effect in the area.

The three CDCs studied were the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) and Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) in Hartford, and Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) in New Haven. Each of these CDCs engages in the building (SINA's focus) or rehabilitation (NINA and NHS's focus) of homes in urban neighborhoods. While SINA and NINA focus on the neighborhoods adjacent to their anchor institution sponsors, the work of NHS is spread across low-income neighborhoods throughout the city of New Haven. NHS has rehabilitated the most homes out of the three CDCs, with nearly three hundred homes renovated since 1979.

Much of the housing stock in many of Hartford and New Haven's neighborhoods requires significant repairs. Many homes require so much investment in repairs that a homebuyer who purchases the home and makes all necessary repairs will have put more money into the house than it is worth. CDCs solve this problem through "gap financing," *i.e.*, the use of public funding, private grants, and other targeted capital (such as low-income housing or historic preservation tax credits) to fill the gap between the sale price of the home and the price to acquire and rehabilitate the home. SINA, for example, spends an average of \$350,000 to build a new two-family home and then sells the home for between \$260,000 and \$270,000. Their funding streams fill the \$80,000-\$90,000 "gap" between the selling price and the amount spent to build the home.<sup>8</sup> Dean Iaiennaro, Director of Real Estate Development at SINA, reports that the homes are of better quality than can be found on the private market in the area. The homes are

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<sup>7</sup> Yasuyuki Fujii. *Spotlight on the Main Actors: How Land Banks and Community Development Corporations Stabilize and Revitalize Cleveland Neighborhoods in the Aftermath of the Foreclosure Crisis*. Housing Policy Debate. P. 296-315. Volume 26, Issue 2. 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Iaiennaro, Dean. Personal Conversation with the author. March 2020.



Energy Star certified, have efficient furnaces, and are so well insulated that homeowners will not hear any street noise.<sup>9</sup>

| CDC  | City          | Year Founded | Focus Area                   | Number of Homes Completed* | Institutional Partners  | Programs  |
|------|---------------|--------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| SINA | Hartford, CT  | 1977         | South Central Hartford       | 61                         | Trinity College, Hartford Hospital, Connecticut Children's Medical Center | Cityscape Homes (home building program), Cityscape Apartments, Homeownership Incentive Program (HIP), Walk to Work, Education & Health, Community Strengthening (neighborhood cleaning, service awards, volunteer programs) |
| NINA | Hartford, CT  | 2004         | North Central Hartford       | 24                         | The Hartford, Aetna, St. Francis Hospital, Webster Bank                   | Home rehabilitation, Homeownership Incentive Program (HIP), Asylum Hill Walking Tours   |
| NHS  | New Haven, CT | 1979         | Several Clusters Across City | 290                        | N/A   | Home rehabilitation, homeowner education, garden and rain garden installation and maintenance, volunteer programs, non-profit real estate services through HOC realty   |

\*Number of structures, not number of units

<sup>9</sup> Iaiennaro, Dean, Conversation with the author (March 2020).

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

#### *a. A Note on Correlation and Causation*

Measuring the potential stabilizing effects of CDCs is difficult given the multiplicity of factors affecting the real estate market in urban neighborhoods. This paper discusses the correlation between changes in indicators in neighborhood stability in census tracts in Hartford and New Haven, but does not seek to prove any causal relationship between CDC projects in these neighborhoods and the changes observed.

#### *b. Qualitative Methods*

This study sought to combine quantitative data on median home sales values, owner occupancy rates, and vacancy rates with qualitative data from street conditions observed by a digital windshield survey and gathered from interviews with those working on housing revitalization projects within the CDCs. The windshield survey was conducted using Google Street View. A sampling of streets in each of the CDC focus area census tracts (FACTs) was observed as captured by Google in 2011 and 2019. Street conditions, including the presence of litter, landscaping, and graffiti, and home conditions, including visible deferred maintenance, visible home improvements, and overall appearance of homes were reviewed. The focus of the windshield survey was on observing noticeable changes on the streets between the Street View in 2011 and 2019. Special note was taken of positive changes on the street between 2011 and 2019, such as improved landscaping, home improvements on structures adjacent to CDC projects, and whether the CDC project homes were upkept.

#### *c. Census Tract Selection*

This study used census tracts as the measuring unit for neighborhoods. Census tracts provide a reliable, universal unit of measure for neighborhood-level data, but they are sometimes drawn in ways that include both wealthy and poor areas or that do not the local understanding of neighborhood boundaries. They are also sometimes not small enough to capture the changes

effected by CDC housing investments. Nevertheless, because of their universality and the relative ease of acquiring data at the census tract level, census tracts were chosen as the unit of analysis for neighborhoods. Census tracts were selected based on the areas in which the three CDCs work in Hartford and New Haven. In addition to the CDC focus areas, additional tracts were selected to provide comparison cases.

SINA housing programs include its home building and renovation program, called “Cityscape Homes,” and a homeownership incentive program (HIP) it administers for employees of their three partner institutions (Hartford Hospital, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, and Trinity College). Between Cityscape Homes and the HIP program, SINA’s projects touch nearly all of the South Side of Hartford. Census tracts where either program was active, even if just one home was bought through the HIP program, were selected for this study. The exception is census tract 5025, where one HIP home was sold. It is located in the South Meadows neighborhood of Hartford, a mostly a commercial and industrial area with few residential properties. Because it is not a primarily residential area, it was excluded from the study.

NINA’s primary program is its home renovation program, though it occasionally builds new homes in Asylum Hill as well. NINA, like SINA, administers a HIP program. Twenty-two HIP grants have been awarded to employees from The Hartford, Saint Francis, and Aetna through NINA. The Hartford HIP grants were available for homes purchased throughout the city, Saint Francis grants were available for homes in the Asylum Hill and Blue Hills neighborhoods, and Aetna grants were available for Asylum Hill and Frog Hollow.<sup>10</sup> Most of the neighborhoods that NINA’s HIP covers were included in this study, with the exception of the Blue Hills neighborhood, located in northwestern Hartford, which is a relatively stable middle class neighborhood and therefore not facing significant disinvestment. The vast majority of NINA’s work has been focused in census tract 5246. NINA has renovated a handful of homes in census tracts 5031 and 5033, so those tracts were included as well for comparison purposes. To provide further comparisons in the north central part of Hartford, several census tracts surrounding census tract 5426 were selected.

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<sup>10</sup> Johnson, Ken. Via personal email communication. August 21, 2020.

Census tracts in New Haven were selected based on the areas in which NHS has renovated homes. This selection of census tracts represents a wide range of New Haven neighborhoods, since NHS has worked in a majority of New Haven’s neighborhoods.

The home building and renovation programs of the three CDCs, along with the homes sold through SINA’s HIP program, were also mapped with a census tract map layer to determine how many homes in each census tract received CDC investment.<sup>11</sup> This map aided in determining which census tracts may have had a sufficient level of CDC investment to plausibly account for changes seen at the census tract level.

*d. Tables*

**Hartford Investments by SINA and NINA by Census Tract**

|         | <b>Neighborhood</b> | <b>Investment Type</b>    | <b>Number of HIP</b> | <b>Number Homes Built or Rehabilitated</b> |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 5027    | Barry Square        | SINA Home build/rev & HIP | 3                    | 33   |
| 5028    | Frog Hollow         | SINA Home build/rev & HIP | 1                    | 28   |
| 5246    | Asylum Hill         | NINA Home build/rev       | 0                    | 20   |
| 5033    | Asylum Hill         | NINA Home build/rev       | 0                    | 2  |
| 5031    | Asylum Hill         | NINA Home build/rev       | 0                    | 2  |
| 5026    | Barry Square        | SINA HIP                  | 3                    | 0  |
| 5049    | Behind the Rocks    | SINA HIP                  | 1                    | 0  |
| 5045    | Behind the Rocks    | SINA HIP                  | 3                    | 0  |
| 5048    | South West          | SINA HIP                  | 11                   | 0  |
| 5247    | South West          | SINA HIP                  | 4                    | 0  |
| 5003    | Barry Square        | SINA HIP                  | 1                    | 0  |
| 5002    | Barry Square        | SINA HIP                  | 1                    | 0  |
| 5024    | South End           | SINA HIP                  | 2                    | 0  |
| 5023    | South End           | SINA HIP                  | 2                    | 0  |
| 5043    | Parkville           | SINA HIP                  | 1                    | 0  |
| 5042    | West End            | Comparison case           |                      |  |
| 5245.02 | West End            | Comparison case           |                      |  |
| 5017    | Clay Arsenal        | Comparison case           |                      |  |
| 5035    | Upper Albany        | Comparison case           |                      |  |

<sup>11</sup> View the map at:  
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1SoLFfpPhEpt16qz0GoCSbmBhukUB1v2U&usp=sharing>

### **New Haven Investment by NHS by Census Tract** <sup>12</sup>

| <b>Census Tract</b> | <b>Neighborhood</b>  | <b>Number of Homes Built or Rehabilitated</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1403                | The Hill             | 4   |
| 1404                | City Point           | 10  |
| 1405                | The Hill             | 8   |
| 1406                | Dwight               | 11  |
| 1407                | Dwight               | 32  |
| 1408                | West River           | 25  |
| 1409                | Edgewood             | 16  |
| 1410                | Westville            | 1   |
| 1413                | West Rock            | 3   |
| 1414                | Beaver Hills         | 46  |
| 1415                | Newhallville         | 41  |
| 1416                | Dixwell              | 24  |
| 1418                | Newhallville         | 11  |
| 1420                | Downtown             | 1   |
| 1423                | Fair Haven           | 3   |
| 1424                | East Rock/Fair Haven | 6   |
| 1425                | Fair Haven           | 3   |
| 1542                | West Haven           | 1   |
| 1655                |                      | 3   |

#### ***e. Sufficiently Spatially Concentrated Investment***

Previous studies of investment in distressed neighborhoods makes clear that spatial concentration of investment is needed to see change on a neighborhood level.<sup>13</sup> This means that

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<sup>12</sup> NHS reports that they have renovated slightly fewer than 300 homes. Adding up the totals here results in a total of 249 renovated homes. This discrepancy is due to multiple housing units being listed under a single address in some cases. For example, in some instances, four townhomes were renovated on one street, and listed on one address line. This study is using the number of structures renovated, rather than the number of units, and therefore a row of four townhomes was counted here as one structure.

<sup>13</sup> Galster, G., Walker, C., Hayes, C., Boxall, P., & Johnson, J. (2004). Measuring the impact of Community Development Block Grant spending on urban neighborhoods. *Housing Policy Debate*, 15(4), 903–934. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2004.9521526>

organizations like CDCs that invest in urban neighborhoods must complete a sufficient number of projects within a limited geographic area in order for those projects to materially impact the surrounding neighborhood. For example, if a CDC renovates one home in a one square mile neighborhood, it is unlikely to create any measurable impacts on the neighborhood level. If a CDC renovates twenty homes in a one square mile area, however, it is more likely that positive impacts will be visible at the neighborhood level.

The census tracts studied generally contain between 1,000 and 2,000 housing units. Conceptually, one would not expect that a homeownership incentive program that has sold one, two, three, or four homes in a given census tract would make a big difference on the neighborhood conditions in across tract. One could reasonably expect, however, that if the sixty most blighted homes and lots in that neighborhood were transformed into the sixty best homes in that neighborhood, broader positive impacts would be observed.

For example, in southern Hartford, census tract 5027 contains 292 structures.<sup>14</sup> In census tract 5027, SINA has built or renovated 33 homes (many of them two-family homes). One would intuitively expect that building or renovating 33 homes in a neighborhood with approximately 292 residential structures could impact the neighborhood's stability, since these homes make up more than 10% of the neighborhood.

Such common sense observations can guide us to areas where CDC investments have been sufficiently spatially targeted to be expected to correlate with broader improvements in neighborhood stability. These approximations do not tell us whether a CDC's spatial

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<sup>14</sup> This number was arrived at through the following calculation. Census tract 5027 had 1,338 occupied housing units in 2018. Of those units that were rented (roughly 87% of the units), 10.2% were 1-family units, 27.3% were 2-4 family units, and 62.5% were 5+ family units.

$$\begin{aligned} 1338 \text{ times } .102 &= 136.48 \\ 1338 \text{ times } .273 &= 365.27 \text{ divided by } 3 = 121.76 \\ 1338 \text{ times } .625 &= 167.25 \text{ divided by } 5 = 33.45 \\ \text{Total approximate structures} &= 291.69 \end{aligned}$$

This is a low-end estimate of the number of residential structures in the neighborhood, since some buildings have far more than five units, but helps to provide a rough estimate to lay out the conceptual framework to determine sufficient spatial targeting.

concentration of investment is sufficient to meet its specific goals for neighborhood stabilization and improvement, but rather provides a “reality check” in considering whether changes seen at the census tract level can reasonably be attributed to investments made by the CDC.

This method of assessing spatial concentration indicates that the SINA projects constitute more than 10% of the housing units in census tracts 5027 and 5028. This model further estimates that the NINA projects constitute approximately 5.7% of the housing units in census tract 5246. Accordingly, although it cannot be demonstrated as scientific certainty on the basis of this study, it seems reasonable to conclude that the SINA and NINA projects in those neighborhoods are sufficiently spatially concentrated to produce census tract-wide impacts.

By contrast, NHS projects are spread out across New Haven. There are only two census tracts where their projects constitute more than 5% of the housing structures in the neighborhood- tracts 1408 and 1414. Census tracts 1407, 1415, and 1416 had more than 3% of the housing rehabbed by NHS, and will also be included as NHS focus areas. All other census tracts with NHS projects had less than 3% of their housing renovated by NHS. The census tracts that constitute CDC focus areas will be starred on the data tables that follow for readability.

#### **4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

For the purposes of this study, three census tracts in Hartford and five census tracts in New Haven were designated as “CDC focus areas” based on the investment activities of the CDCs. The CDC focus area census tracts (“FACTs”) had at least 3% of their housing structures rehabilitated by a CDC. The methods for determining the FACTs are discussed in greater detail in the methods section of this paper. The following was found to be true of property values, owner occupancy rates, and vacancy rates in the FACTs compared to the cities overall:

- Property values increased at a faster rate than the city overall in three out of three CDC FACTs in Hartford and one out of five FACTs in New Haven.

- Owner occupancy increased at a rate faster than the city overall (or decreased at a slower rate than the city overall) in two out of three FACTs in Hartford and two out of five FACTs in New Haven.
- Vacancy decreased at a faster rate than the city overall in none of three FACTs in Hartford and two out of five FACTs in New Haven.

Comparing FACT performance to the cities overall is useful to understand the comparative strength of neighborhoods. However, in order to determine whether CDC investment raised property values above what they would have been absent CDC intervention, it is necessary to compare FACTs to adjacent neighborhoods. This provides for a more granular comparison between the FACT and nearby areas in the city than a citywide comparison allows. This is particularly helpful in Hartford, where property values are relatively stagnant in the southern part of the city and increasing at a comparatively fast rate in the central and northern central parts of the city. FACTs were determined to have seen property value increases greater than they would have absent CDC intervention based on how their property value increases compared with their surrounding area. The SINA FACTs are hypothesized to have seen property values higher than they would have without CDC intervention because the FACTs saw property value increases that were higher than the rest of southern Hartford. In contrast, NINA's FACT saw property value increases in line with or less than the increases in surrounding census tracts, which makes it more difficult to determine whether NINA's investments spurred greater increases in property values. neighborhoods across the city of Hartford are seeing property value increases for a variety of reasons, including home renovations led by CDCs, school renovations, and other reasons not explored as part of this study.

New Haven is a very different real estate market from Hartford. While Hartford's median home sales value increased about 11% between 2001 and 2019, New Haven saw a nearly 50% increase in median home sale value. Several factors likely account for this difference: New Haven is less than a two-hour train ride away from one of the hottest job and real estate markets in the world, New York City, and is home to one of the world's top universities, Yale University. New Haven is seeing very strong property value increases throughout the city. While property values did increase at least as fast as the state of Connecticut overall in the census tracts with the



highest number of NHS renovations, they increased at a slower rate than the city of New Haven overall. This is likely because the FACTs in New Haven are in neighborhoods located in the more distressed areas of the city, while other areas of the city are attracting higher-income residents able to invest in and improve distressed properties.

The SINA FACTs show the greatest property value increases above what the area would likely have seen absent CDC intervention when compared with the NINA and NHS focus areas. The rest of southern Hartford saw lower property value increases than the SINA FACTs, which supports the inference that SINA's investments have, at a minimum, contributed to property value improvements in its target areas. By contrast, it is difficult to infer that NINA and NHS investments in their respective FACTs contributed to higher property value increases than would have occurred absent CDC intervention in the face of strong property value increases in nearby neighborhoods.

Notwithstanding, SINA's postulated performance in generating higher property value increases than surrounding neighborhoods', the NINA and NHS FACTs showed more obvious improvements in the quality of street conditions as compared with the SINA area.<sup>15</sup> Based on the windshield survey, immediate spillover effects to nearby homes were easier to locate in the NINA and NHS FACTs than in SINA's. Additionally, the NINA and NHS FACTs had better street conditions at the neighborhood level than the SINA FACTs. This may indicate that CDCs working in areas with overall strong real estate markets will be more effective at creating positive outcomes in street conditions, such as landscaping, home maintenance, and streets free of trash, while CDCs in areas with weaker real estate markets will be more effective at increasing property values, but will have a harder time improving street conditions in the neighborhood.

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<sup>15</sup> This finding generated the question of whether the SINA area had lower property values than the NINA and NHS areas prior to 2000. To answer this question, property values for the FACTs were reviewed from 1980. The SINA area property values were in line with or had greater property values than the NHS and NINA areas in 1980, with the exception of one NHS tract that had higher property values than the SINA tracts. One hypothesis to explain the lower level of street conditions improvement in the SINA area is that there has been little investment in the neighborhood outside of SINA, while other organizations have contributed more to revitalization efforts in the NINA and NHS areas.

In New Haven, where a number of census tracts are seeing very high property values increases, one would not expect that the distressed areas that NHS is working in would see higher property value increases than the nearby skyrocketing areas. Rather, one would hope to see moderate property value increases combined with increases in positive street conditions. In an area like the SINA neighborhood, located in the southern part of Hartford, where there have been low property value increases area-wide, one would hope that the CDC investments would show higher property value increases than the surrounding area. North central Hartford, surrounding the NINA focus area, has seen overall moderately strong property value increases. Here, the CDC FACT is following the trend of the nearby neighborhood with moderately strong property value increases. The findings of this study lead to the hypothesis that the following results would be seen in different neighborhood contexts:

| <b>Surrounding Property Values</b>   | <b>⇒</b> | <b>Outcome of CDC Housing Revitalization Projects on Property Values</b>              | <b>Outcomes of CDC Housing Revitalization Projects on Street Conditions</b>  |
|--|----------|---|--|
| High/Low Property Value Increases: A CDC Focus Area with low property values located near a neighborhood with high property value increases. | ⇒        | CDC focus area sees property value increases <i>lower than</i> the surrounding area   | CDC focus area likely to see noticeable improvement in street conditions and visible spillover effects of housing projects on nearby houses      |
| Moderately Strong Property Value Increases: A CDC Focus Area surrounded by a neighborhood with moderately strong property value increases    | ⇒        | CDC focus area sees property value increases <i>in line with</i> surrounding area     | CDC focus area likely to see noticeable improvement in street conditions and visible spillover effects of housing projects on nearby houses      |
| Low Property Values Increases: A CDC Focus Area surrounded by a neighborhood with low property value increases                               | ⇒        | CDC focus area sees property value increases <i>greater than</i> the surrounding area | CDC focus area less likely to see noticeable improvement in street conditions and visible spillover effects of housing projects on nearby houses |

A 2005 study by the Urban Institute (UI) examined five CDC target neighborhoods across the United States.<sup>16</sup> The study determined that two out of the five neighborhoods saw property value increases above what they would have absent CDC intervention. The UI study in combination with this study provide strong evidence that property values will not increase above what they would have absent CDC intervention in all neighborhoods where CDCs work, even if there are other effects from the work of the CDCs, such as improved street conditions.

***a. The Comparative Advantage of Hartford and New Haven and the role of CDCs in Building on the Cities' Strengths***

One might expect property values to be declining in many neighborhoods in formerly industrial cities, or “legacy cities,” as Alan Mallach calls them in his book *The Divided City*, with dwindling demand for housing over time in many of such cities’ neighborhoods.<sup>17</sup> Hartford and New Haven, however, saw property values increase at a rate at least as fast as the state of Connecticut as a whole from 2000 to 2018, with certain neighborhoods increasing at rates far higher than the state’s median home value increases by census tract. Property value increases in Hartford and New Haven have been more the norm than the exception over the past two decades.

Both cities have the advantage of being located in Connecticut, one of the wealthiest states in the country. They both have strong institutions, notably Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven, and a thriving insurance industry, three major hospitals, and several smaller institutions of higher education in Hartford, including Trinity College, the UConn Hartford campus, and the University of Hartford. New Haven has had significant wealth brought into the city by Yale University. Trinity College alum Jacob Miller described the impact of Yale on housing in New Haven in an unpublished thesis, writing, “Since very early in New Haven’s history, Yale’s faculty has been comprised of industry leaders and innovators in the fields of science, politics, art, literature and economics. These members of the City created upscale neighborhoods, resulting in the microcosmic suburban sections of neighborhoods like Westville

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<sup>16</sup> Mallach, Alan. *The Divided City*. Island Press. 2018. Page 193.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

and East Rock.”<sup>18</sup> Hartford, for its part, became known as the “insurance capital of the world” after insurance companies began establishing headquarters in the city in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> Although Hartford has lost some white-collar jobs over the past half century, it still retains its core industry of insurance. Four of the top six employers in the Hartford region are insurance companies.<sup>20</sup> Three of these four insurance companies- The Hartford, Travelers, and Aetna- are located in central Hartford. In New Haven, Yale University is the largest employer, demonstrating how both cities have retained their most important employers even as many other comparably sized Northeast and Midwest cities lost the employers that anchored their regions.

Despite the strengths of these cities, they still have neighborhoods that struggle with low owner occupancy rates and large numbers of houses with deferred maintenance. Both cities have weak property tax bases, due in part to a high proportion of tax-exempt public and not-for-profit landholdings, leading to poor street maintenance and underfunded social services. CDCs are helping to build and encourage more attractive and affordable housing in these cities, helping to alleviate the problem of a decaying housing stock. One study indicates that homes built or renovated by CDCs are sold to owners who are unlikely to be tax delinquent, helping these cities to strengthen their struggling tax bases.<sup>21</sup> For example, Dean Iaiennaro reports that the houses and apartments that SINA has built or improved generate about \$500,000 per year in taxes for the City of Hartford.<sup>22</sup>

The conditions for revival are present in both cities: they benefit from proximity to the financial and commercial centers of New York City and Boston, have their original urban fabric (*i.e.* houses are reasonably close together with numerous central, walkable shopping streets scattered throughout the city) largely intact, and are surrounded by affluent suburbs with healthy real estate markets.<sup>23</sup> “Density, culture diversity and vitality, linking and intersecting the whole gamut of urban activities within a fine-grained spatial matrix, are seen as the key to urban

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<sup>18</sup> Miller, Jacob. Subprime Disaster Capitalism in New Haven. American Studies Senior Thesis. April 25, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> <https://connecticuthistory.org/aetna-helps-make-hartford-the-insurance-capital-of-the-world/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.metrohartford.com/doing-business-in-hartford-ct/site-selection/largest-employers/>

<sup>21</sup> Yasuyuki Fujii. *Spotlight on the Main Actors: How Land Banks and Community Development Corporations Stabilize and Revitalize Cleveland Neighborhoods in the Aftermath of the Foreclosure Crisis*. Housing Policy Debate. P. 296-315. Volume 26, Issue 2. 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Iaiennaro, Dean. Personal Conversation with the author. March 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Mallach page 108-111.

renaissance,” write Amin and Graham in their article *The Ordinary City*.<sup>24</sup> In a similar vein, Mallach writes of the key elements needed for a city to revitalize, asserting that: “Cities need to maintain their *urban* character—their density, their diversity of buildings, and people, and their mixture of uses and activities—to thrive.”<sup>25</sup> Hartford and New Haven have largely maintained their density despite industrial decline. Their low vacancy rates compared with other legacy cities are evidence of retained residential density. More broadly, Connecticut is one of the wealthiest states in the country and both cities lie surrounded by relatively wealthy suburban areas—indicating a level of continuing economic vitality in the urban cores of Hartford and New Haven.

Despite these assets, Hartford and New Haven still have struggling neighborhoods and suffer from low owner occupancy rates. There are certainly numerous factors influencing the continued distress of some neighborhoods in both cities, but the old and decaying housing stock is certainly a deterrent for prospective buyers. Many homes in the neighborhoods are older, have only one bathroom, are smaller than today’s buyers prefer, and require more investment in improvements than their current market value will justify.<sup>26</sup> This is where CDCs can make the difference. CDCs have funding to fill the gap between the investment needed to rehabilitate a home and the home’s worth. They build new homes that appeal to modern buyers or rehabilitate old homes with modern, energy efficient finishes that will meet the needs of potential buyers. The decayed housing stock is one of the larger obstacles in revitalizing these two Connecticut cities and the CDC model may be a partial solution.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Amin, Ash and Graham, Stephen. *The Ordinary City*. The Royal Geographical Society. February 17, 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Mallach page 108.

<sup>26</sup> Mallach page 7.

<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that CDC funding streams often require the homes built and improved by CDC to have deed-restrictions tied to income.

***b. Nation and State Level Data***

The overall picture of property values and owner occupancy in the United States over the past two decades provides important context for looking at property values and owner occupancy in specific Connecticut neighborhoods. The following chart shows the median home value (in 2018 dollars) for the United States and the state of Connecticut from 2000 to 2018 and the owner occupancy rate for both geographies.

|     | Median Home Value |           |           |              | Owner Occupancy |        |        |              |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------------|
|     | 2000              | 2010      | 2018      | Change 00-18 | 2000            | 2010   | 2018   | Change 00-18 |
| CT  | \$234,835         | \$342,215 | \$272,700 | 16.12%       | 66.80%          | 69.20% | 66.30% | -0.50%       |
| USA | \$163,478         | \$217,448 | \$204,900 | 25.30%       | 66.20%          | 66.60% | 63.90% | -2.30%       |

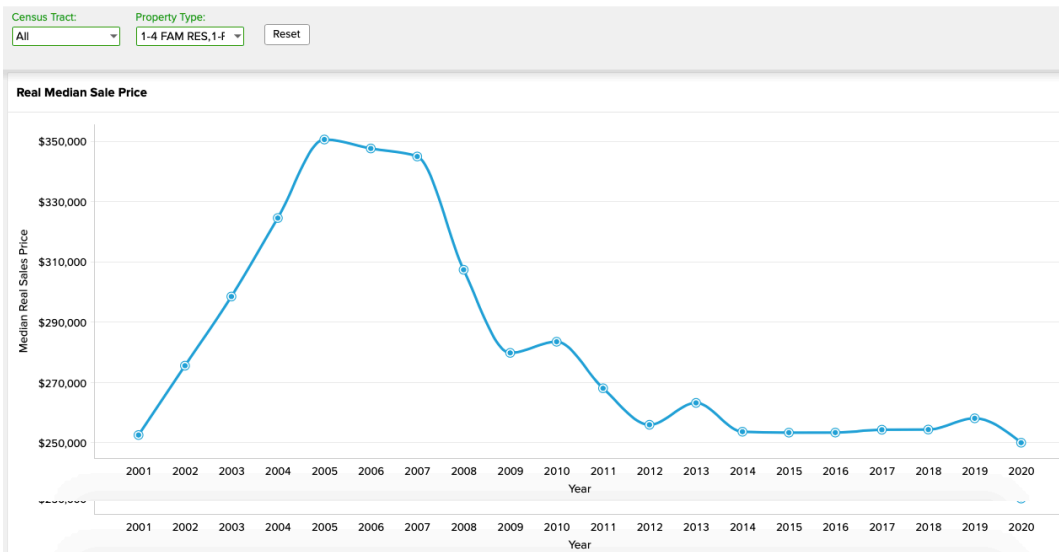
Connecticut’s median home value was 43.64% higher than the country as a whole in 2000.<sup>28</sup> Home values in the state and country bloated in the housing bubble of the mid-2000s.<sup>29</sup> By 2018, home values in the United States had risen to 25.3% above their 2000 values, while Connecticut’s home values increased to 16.12% above their 2000 values. Connecticut’s median home value, though still higher than the United States as a whole, experienced stagnation compared with the rest of the country in the years following the Great Recession. As the foregoing table indicates, the percentage of owner occupants has decreased across in the United States over the past two decades. Owner occupancy increased slightly during the housing bubble and has decreased to below 2000 levels in Connecticut and the entire United States. This means that fewer people own their home. Home ownership has become less accessible in the nation as a whole, Connecticut included.

<sup>28</sup> A home is defined as a structure, not a unit, for the purposes of this paper.

<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates were used to collect the 2010 data. The ACS 5-year estimates for 2010 are an average of the values between 2006 and 2010, thus the numbers for 2010 encompass the most inflated years of the housing bubble.

## Connecticut Median Residential Sales Values, 2011-2020 <sup>30</sup>

### Warren Group Sales Data

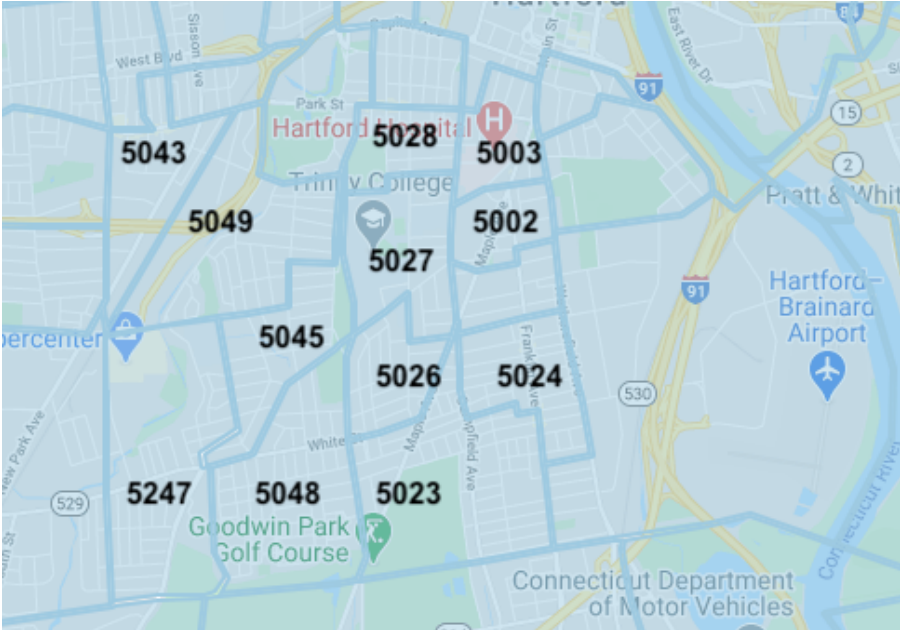


### *c. Hartford Property Values*

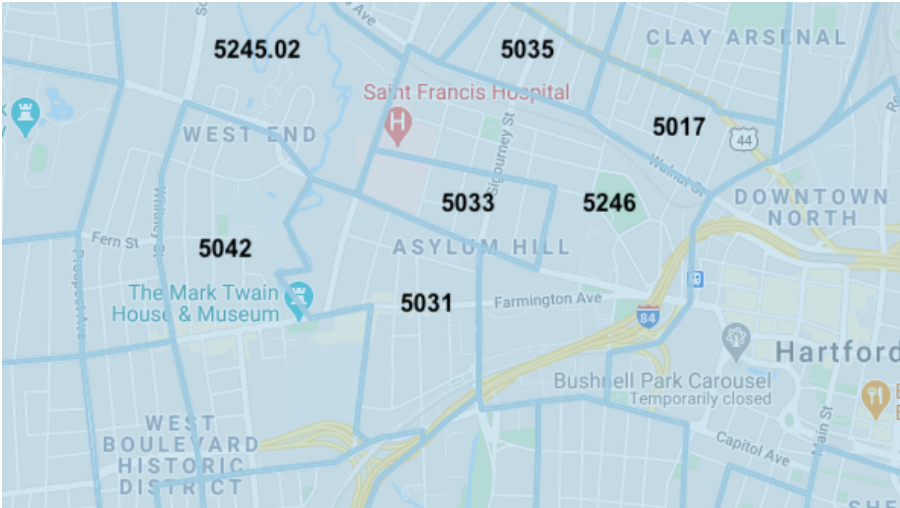
As part of this study, median home sales values, owner occupancy rates, vacancy rates, and median household income were collected for the CDC focus areas and comparison areas. The median home sales values were collected for the years 2001, 2010, and 2019. All other data was collected for the years 2000, 2010, and 2018. This section goes into a detailed examination of these numbers, as well as presents the results of a Google Street View windshield survey of neighborhood conditions.

<sup>30</sup> Data gathered by the Warren Group; access provided by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. Accessed June 10, 2020.

**Map of Southern Hartford Census Tracts**



**Map of North-Central Hartford Census Tracts**





## **Median Home Sale Value for Residential Properties in Hartford, 2001-2019 <sup>31</sup>**

| Tract               | Neighborhood        | Sales Price 2001 | Sales Price 2010 | Sales Price 2019 | % Change |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------|
| 5027*               | Barry Square        | \$163,012.33     | \$191,481.60     | \$233,000.00     | 42.93%   |
| 5028*               | Frog Hollow         | \$129,832.83     | \$57,093.14      | \$217,000.00     | 67.14%   |
| 5246*               | Asylum Hill         | \$117,498.71     | \$43,566.46      | \$190,000.00     | 61.70%   |
| 5033                | Asylum Hill         | \$135,603.71     | \$189,724.89     | \$180,000.00     | 32.70%   |
| 5031±               | Asylum Hill         | \$133,828.36     | \$161,031.93     | \$128,750.00     | -3.79%   |
| 5026                | Barry Square        | \$192,260.78     | \$172,157.77     | \$229,500.00     | 19.37%   |
| 5049                | Behind the<br>Rocks | \$137,045.76     | \$152,248.37     | \$147,500.00     | 7.63%    |
| 5045                | Behind the<br>Rocks | \$145,701.28     | \$162,144.51     | \$152,000.00     | 4.32%    |
| 5048                | South West          | \$172,389.14     | \$174,500.05     | \$164,900.00     | -4.34%   |
| 5247                | South West          | \$147,143.87     | \$155,761.79     | \$147,450.00     | 0.02%    |
| 5003±               | Barry Square        | \$216,388.04     | \$244,485.43     | \$234,107.27     | 8.19%    |
| 5002                | Barry Square        | \$163,012.33     | \$125,897.69     | \$152,000.00     | -6.76%   |
| 5024                | South End           | \$152,914.22     | \$178,540.49     | \$159,250.00     | 4.14%    |
| 5023                | South End           | \$178,880.78     | \$204,364.15     | \$179,900.00     | 0.06%    |
| 5043                | Parkville           | \$139,832.83     | \$132,924.53     | \$151,400.00     | 8.32%    |
| 5042                | West End            | \$238,026.85     | \$338,752.61     | \$387,000.00     | 62.59%   |
| 5245.02             | West End            | \$472,375.10     | \$638,272.00     | \$386,500.00     | -18.18%  |
| 5017                | Clay Arsenal        | \$38,949.85      | \$96,619.16      | \$197,450.00     | 406.93%  |
| 5035                | Upper Albany        | \$115,406.96     | \$102,474.86     | \$201,500.00     | 74.60%   |
| City of<br>Hartford |                     | \$141,229.26     | \$140,536.95     | \$157,750.00     | 11.70%   |

± The median sales price listed for 2001 in census tract 5031 is actually from 2002. The 2010 median sales price in census tract 5003 is actually from 2011. The 2019 median sales price in 5003 is actually from 2016. These were the closest years available for those years in those census tracts.

All dollar amounts are in 2020 inflation adjusted dollars.

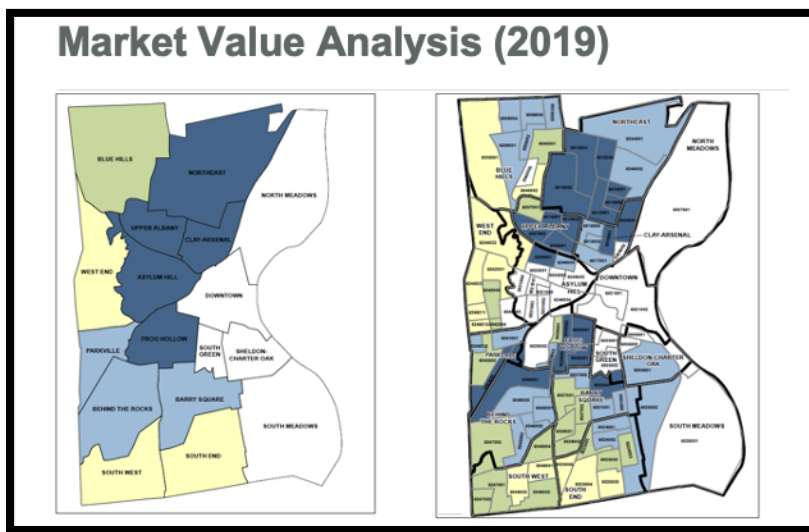
A \* represents a CDC focus area census tract (FACT)

The SINA focus area, census tracts 5027 and 5028, is located in between its three partner institutions, Hartford Hospital, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, and Trinity College.

<sup>31</sup> Data gathered by the Warren Group; access provided by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. Accessed June 10, 2020.

Property values increased in this area at a rate faster than the city overall and faster than the rest of southern Hartford. Property values in census tract 5027 increased 42.93% and property values in census tract 5028 increased 67.14%.

NINA’s home building and renovation activities occurred primarily in census tract 5246. Census tract 5246 contains part or all of the campuses of its partners, The Hartford, Aetna, and St. Francis Medical Center. This census tract showed strong increases in property values, with a 61.70% increase between 2000 and 2018. The CDC focus neighborhoods in Hartford all saw property values much higher than the Hartford median property value increase of 11.70%.<sup>32</sup>



<sup>33</sup> Colors: (1) Dark Blue = Distressed; (2) Light Blue = At Risk; (3) Green = Functioning; (4) Yellow = Strong ((5) White = Insufficient Data).

The SINA FACTs saw property values increase more than census tracts where SINA administers its HIP program. The HIP census tracts cover most of the southern part of the city. Interestingly, parts of the southern half of the city that are generally considered some of the most stable neighborhoods in the city saw lower, or only slightly higher, average increases in property values. The tracts with high owner occupancy (>50%) out of those studied include 5023, 5048, and 5247. These three census tracts are located in the South West neighborhood and the South End neighborhood. These areas are considered to be stable because of the high owner occupancy rate, the generally attractive housing stock, and their possessing many streets pleasantly lined

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.chfa.org/about-us/county-profiles-dashboard/>

<sup>33</sup> Settlemyer, Laura. Presentation to Professor Sean Fitzpatrick’s Public Management Course. Trinity College. October 22, 2019.

with mature trees. In a 2019 market value analysis commissioned by the City of Hartford's Blight Remediation Team, the South West and South End neighborhoods were two of the four neighborhoods in the city found to have either "functioning" or "strong" housing markets.<sup>34</sup> In two of the three high owner occupancy census tracts in southern Hartford, property values increased at a slower rate than the city's average. This shows that the areas that are considered the most stable in Hartford are not the areas seeing the largest increases in home value in the city. In fact, some of the areas that are seeing the largest increases in home value in the city are located in areas classified as "distressed" on the 2019 market value analysis.

A Google Street View walk through the SINA neighborhood reveals that the homes SINA has renovated over the past two decades remain well maintained. Despite the attractive homes and landscaping of the SINA homes, many other properties in the neighborhood are in need of repair.



*Figure 1 The two Jefferson Street homes seen in the above picture were sold by SINA in 2001 and 2002. Nearly two decades later they are still well maintained.*

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<sup>34</sup> Settlemyer, Laura. Presentation to Professor Sean Fitzpatrick's Public Management Course. Trinity College. October 22, 2019.



Figure 2 Adjacent to the two SINA homes pictured above are two homes that are moderately well maintained, but could use some upgrades and maintenance. There are only a few vacant or blighted homes on Jefferson Street, a testament to how far it has come.

Writes Iaiennaro:

Twenty years ago, Jefferson was in tough shape. The corner of Broad and Jefferson was pretty much a bunch of vacant lots on which there was previously about four large multi-family brick buildings which were demolished by the city (I think). There were also maybe two vacant lots on the street and some vacant, blighted homes. We rehabbed maybe four houses and built four new homes. As I remember, when we built the new homes on the corner of Jefferson and Broad, it was a real test as to whether they would sell or not. Eddie Perez who was at SINA at the time told me to build them and I said you had better be willing to move the SINA offices there because I did not think they would sell. It was a really tough area at the time, lots of gang, drug and prostitution activity. Of course, the houses did sell and Eddie deserves the credit for the fact that he had the vision.”<sup>35</sup>

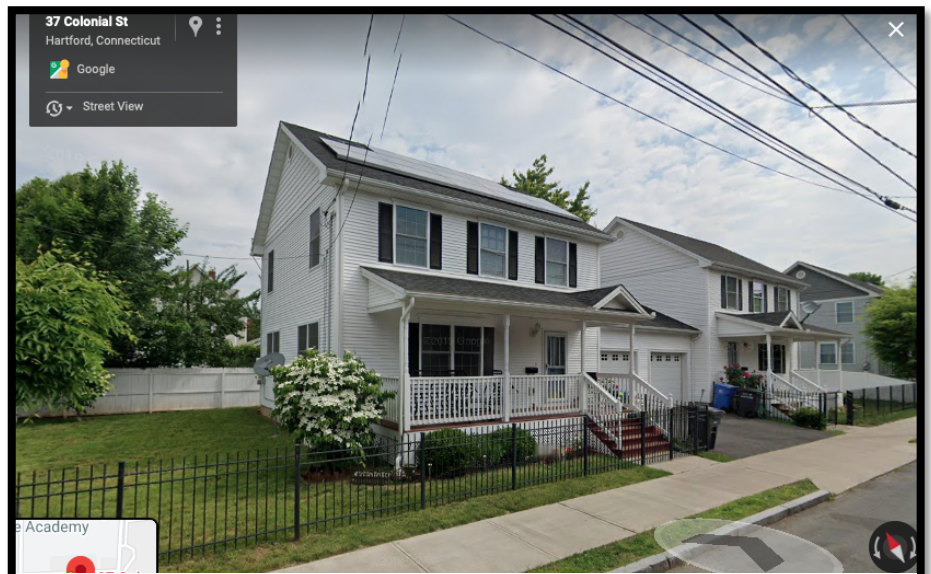
Iaiennaro also reported that when SINA began its Cityscape Homes program, they sold their two-family homes for between \$150,000 and \$175,000. As of 2020, they sell the two-family homes they build and renovate in the neighborhood for \$260,000-\$270,000,<sup>36</sup> providing further evidence of SINA’s success in the neighborhood.

<sup>35</sup> Iaiennaro, Dean. Via email communication with the author. July 22, 2020.

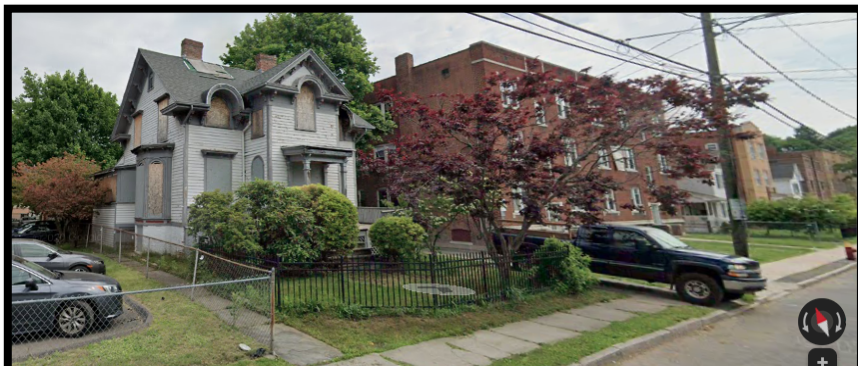
<sup>36</sup> Iaiennaro, Dean. Personal Conversation with the author. March 2020.



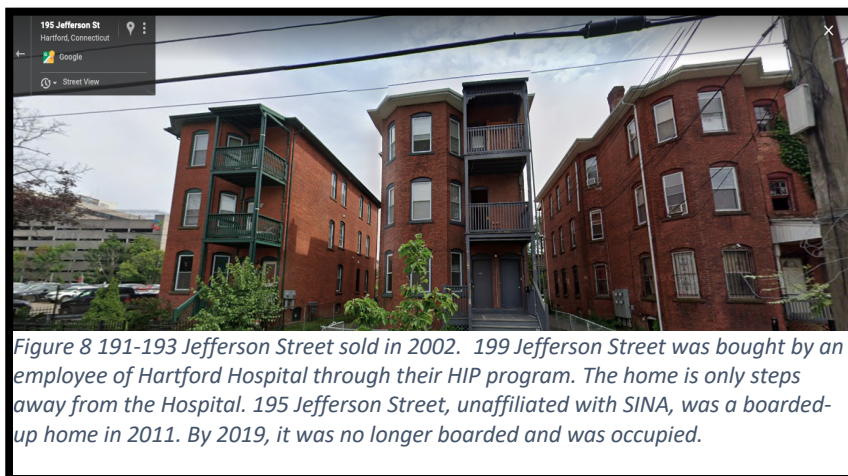
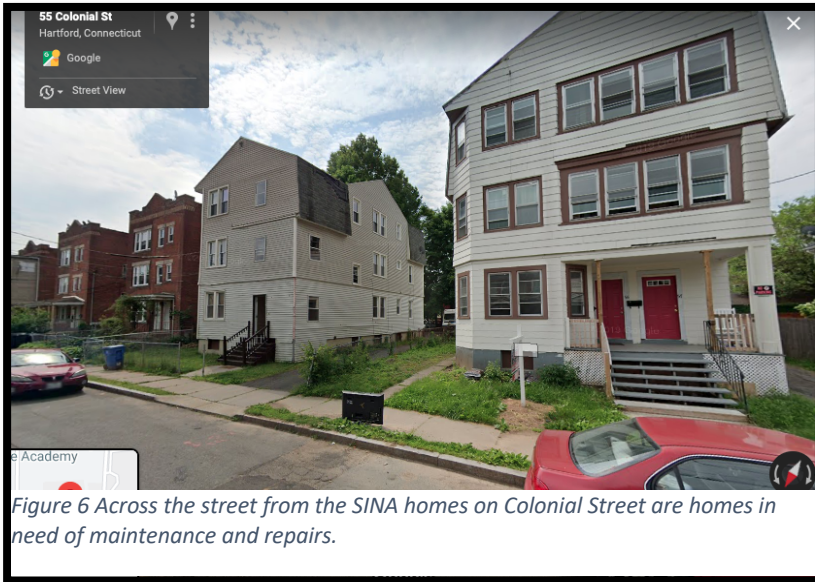
*Figure 3 This home at 51 School Street was sold by SINA in 2011. It was well maintained as of this Google Street View capture in 2019.*



*Figure 4 These two adjoined homes on Colonial Street sold in 2012/2013. They were still well maintained as of this capture by Google in 2019.*



*Figure 5 On School Street, this house sits vacant and blighted one building away from SINA's 51 School Street home shown above.*



A look at nearly any home sold by SINA in the past twenty years on Google Street View reveals a well-maintained home and landscaping. Whether the care of the SINA homeowners is

spilling over to neighbors of SINA’s homes is questionable. Aside from the SINA homes, many homes in the neighborhood are in need of updates and repairs, the streets could use repaving, and there is trash on many streets. Though there are a couple of examples of potential spillovers depicted in this section, it took careful observation of many homes in the neighborhood before a spillover to a nearby house was found. It appears from the windshield survey that most nearby houses are still in need of repair as of 2019. Not surprisingly, a 2019 survey by the Trinity College Center for Hartford Engagement and Research (CHER) revealed the top concerns of residents about the neighborhood surrounding the college (roughly the focus area of SINA’s home renovations) as wild traffic, lack of cleanliness, lack of street maintenance, noise/parties, and lack of home maintenance.<sup>37</sup>

From a windshield survey perspective, it is clear that SINA is filling a gap in well-maintained, affordable homes in the neighborhood, but the extent to which SINA’s efforts are spilling over to encourage homeowners and others to invest in the neighborhood is unclear. This does not mean that there are no spillovers happening—just that they are not widespread enough

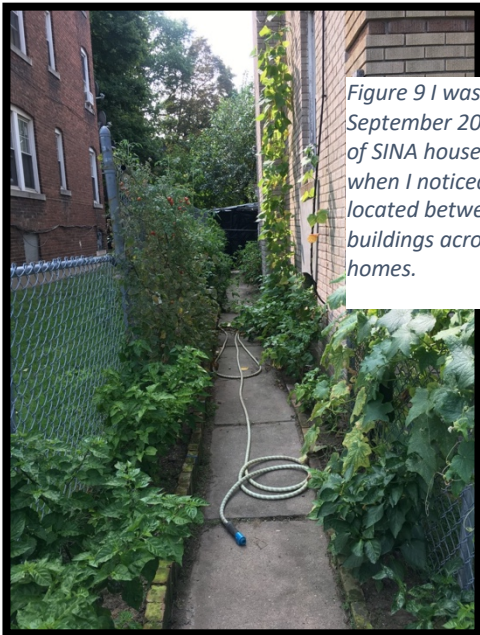


Figure 9 I was walking down Colonial Street in September 2020 to take the photo of a couple of SINA houses seen on the cover of this report when I noticed this garden. The garden is located between two four story apartment buildings across the street from several SINA homes.

to impact the number of homes in the neighborhood in need of significant repair. In some isolated cases, though, it seems that SINA’s investments are encouraging neighbors to repair their homes, as can be seen with the home pictured and described above at 195 Jefferson Street.

A significant change in census tract 5027 during the period studied was the opening of the Learning Corridor in 2000. As Trinity College professors Kevin Sullivan and

James Trostle have written:

The Learning Corridor is a 16-acre campus that includes four interdistrict magnet schools: an early childhood and elementary grade Montessori school; an arts, science, and

<sup>37</sup> Brown, Megan and Silva, Mabel. *Trinity’s Relationship with the Hartford Neighborhood: Results from a Community Resident Survey*. Trinity College Center for Hartford Engagement and Research. October 7, 2019.

math middle school; a high school arts academy; and a high school academy of math and science. The schools, together with a multipurpose theater, substantial community space, neighborhood family center, and Boys and Girls Club, were built on a recovered urban brownfield that had previously been an abandoned bus garage.<sup>38</sup>

The positive impact of improved public schools as part of an institution of higher education's neighborhood strategy is most well demonstrated by the University of Pennsylvania's (Penn's) West Philadelphia Initiative's (WPI) K-8 school.<sup>39,40</sup> WPI was started by Penn in 1996 to address safety, vacancy, and disinvestment in the neighborhood surrounding the university. As part of the initiative, Penn sponsored a K-8 school that children of residents in the catchment area can attend. The subsection of the WPI's geographic target area that allowed residents to enroll their children in the WPI school saw larger increases in home values than the WPI target area as a whole.<sup>41</sup> Though it would be impossible to ascertain what portion of the property value appreciation in the SINA focus area is due to home rehabilitation versus the development of the Learning Corridor, one would expect the development of the Learning Corridor to positively impact property values in the neighborhood based on the literature. Iaiennaro reports that homes SINA sold on Brownell Street, which borders the Learning Corridor, sold before SINA had finished building them. Homes elsewhere in the neighborhood can take up to two years after they are finished to sell.<sup>42</sup>

Shifting to the northern part of the Hartford, NINA's focus area of Asylum Hill has seen strong increases in property values since 2001. NINA's focus tract, 5246, saw property values increase 62.70% from 2001 to 2019. Twenty out of twenty-four of NINA's home building and renovation projects were in this census tract. Roughly half of NINA's projects sold between October 2006 and July 2011. From a windshield survey perspective, neighborhood conditions in this census tract were good in 2011 and continue to be good in 2019. Most houses appear fairly

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<sup>38</sup> Sullivan, Kevin B. and Trostle, James A. *Trinity College and The Learning Corridor: A Small, Urban Liberal Arts College Launches a Public Magnet School Campus*. Metropolitan Universities. Vol. 15, Issue 3. P. 89-102. 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ehlenz, Meagan M. Neighborhood Revitalization and the Anchor Institution: Assessing the Impact of the University of Pennsylvania's West Philadelphia Initiatives on University City. *Urban Affairs Review*. Vol. 52(5) 714-740. 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Iaiennaro, Dean. Personal Conversation with the author. March 2020.



well-maintained, with decent landscaping. NINA's projects from 2011 to 2019 helped to further beautify this neighborhood. In addition to NINA's home projects in this neighborhood, beginning in 2011, Sigourney Square Park underwent a \$700,000 renovation funded by the City of Hartford.<sup>43</sup>



Figure 10



Figure 11 A NINA home at 51 Ashley Street that sold in 2014. Shown in the upper photo in 2011 and lower photo in 2019. The home became an attractive addition to the street after NINA's renovations.

There were particularly strong property value increases between 2001 and 2019 in the census tracts surrounding NINA's focus area. Tracts with large increases in property values

<sup>43</sup> Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association. *Friends of Sigourney Square Park*. [https://asylumhill.org/committees/friends-of-sigourney-square-park/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1597690746.5217459201812744140625](https://asylumhill.org/committees/friends-of-sigourney-square-park/?doing_wp_cron=1597690746.5217459201812744140625)

surrounding the NINA FACT include census tract 5017, 5035, and 5042. Property values in census tract 5017 have increased steadily since 2013, when median home sales were \$98,672.02 to 2019, when median home sales were \$197,450.00. The census tract saw astronomical property value increases from 2000 to 2018, with a 406.93% increase in median sales price over the time period studied.

Located in the middle of this census tract is the former Quirk Middle School campus, which underwent extensive \$55 million renovations after closing in 2010.<sup>44</sup> The Global Communications Academy opened in the school building for the 2013-2014 academic year.<sup>45</sup> A walk down the street on Google Street View's time capsule function provides an anecdotal look at how the streets surrounding the newly renovated school changed between 2011 and 2019. Vacant homes had been renovated, crumbling porches repaired, and exteriors repainted. On nearby Chestnut Street, four new homes were built and sold in 2016.<sup>46</sup> The neighborhood is not without vacant houses and buildings as of 2019. On Edwards Street, bordering the front entrance of the Global Communications Academy, several vacant houses and lots still stand. Nevertheless, it appears that the school renovation made a big difference in augmenting home values in the neighborhood.

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<sup>44</sup> Hart, Andy. First Day of School is this Monday, August 30. HartfordInfo.org. August 26, 2010.

[http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/documents/education/htfd\\_news\\_082610.asp](http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/documents/education/htfd_news_082610.asp)

<sup>45</sup> De la Torre, Vanessa. Hartford Police to Remain at Former Quirk West Building. Hartford Courant. October 19, 2012. <https://www.courant.com/community/hartford/hc-xpm-2012-10-19-hc-hartford-quirk-west-1020-20121019-story.html>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.trulia.com/p/ct/hartford/53-55-chestnut-st-hartford-ct-06120--2177059864>



Figure 12 87-89 Williams Street borders the Global Communications Academy campus. In 2011, prior to the school's reopening, it was a boarded up, fire damaged home.



Figure 13 A view of 87-89 Williams Street in 2019. The home was being actively restored to its former beauty.



Figure 14 This home on Williams Street bordering the Global Communications Academy campus was boarded up in 2011.



As always, it is difficult to attribute positive property value trends to any one particular improvement project, but it is indisputable that Asylum Hill and its surrounding areas have seen strong property value increases in recent years. Based on this data, it is *not* clear that the neighborhoods where CDCs are renovating homes are seeing property values increase at a faster rate than their surrounding neighborhoods, even though they are seeing property values increase at a faster rate than the city overall. Though the SINA neighborhoods saw property value increases that were higher than the rest of southern Hartford, NINA's focus area saw property value increases in line with or less than the increases in surrounding census tracts. Multiple neighborhoods across the city of Hartford are seeing property value increases for a variety of reasons: home renovations led by CDCs, school renovations, and other reasons not explored as part of this study. For those interested in seeing the city succeed, this is a harbinger of hope—there are multiple strategies that have been proven to successfully spark investment and revival in Hartford neighborhoods.

*d. New Haven Property Values*

**Median Home Sale Value for Residential Properties in New Haven, 2001-2019**<sup>47</sup>

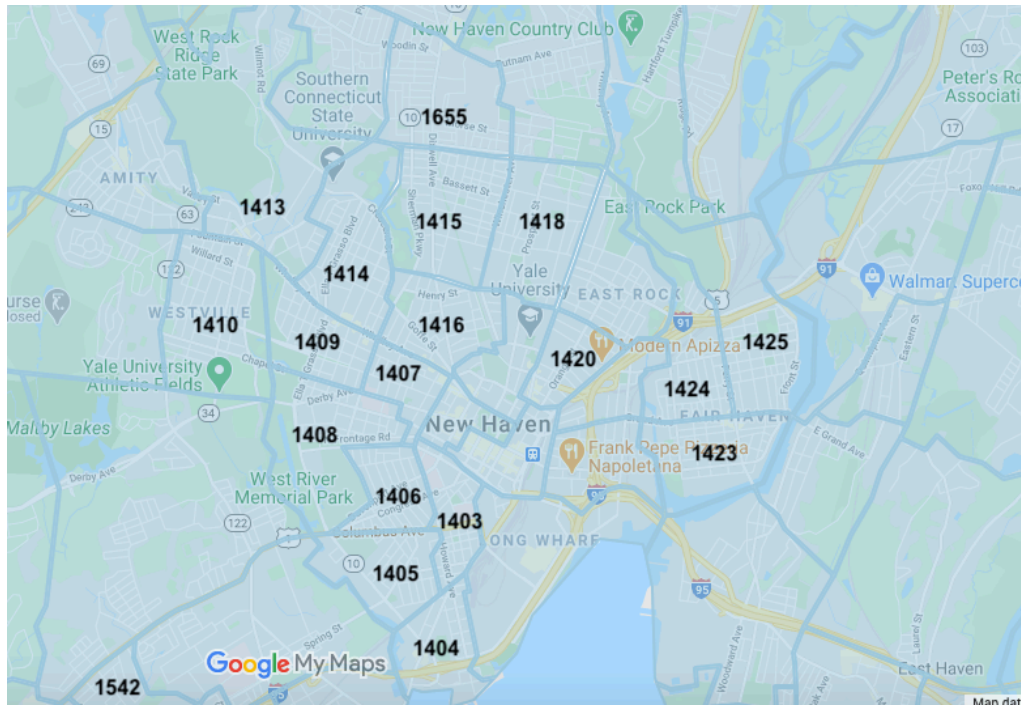
| Tract             | Neighborhood         | Sales Price 2001 | Sales Price 2010 | Sales Price 2019 | % Change |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------|
| 1403              | The Hill             | \$146,422.58     | \$38,062.09      | \$155,250.00     | 6.03%    |
| 1404              | City Point           | \$150,029.04     | \$84,907.74      | \$183,600.00     | 22.38%   |
| 1405              | The Hill             | \$104,587.55     | \$47,431.22      | \$172,000.00     | 64.46%   |
| 1406              | Dwight               | \$161,569.74     | \$128,825.54     | \$172,500.00     | 6.77%    |
| 1407*             | Dwight               | \$141,373.52     | \$248,867.52     | \$166,000.00     | 17.42%   |
| 1408*             | West River           | \$160,127.15     | \$69,595.07      | \$190,000.00     | 18.66%   |
| 1409              | Edgewood             | \$178,375.88     | \$222,516.84     | \$292,500.00     | 63.98%   |
| 1410              | Westville            | \$224,105.88     | \$337,419.86     | \$320,000.00     | 42.79%   |
| 1413              | West Rock            | \$133,367.16     | \$121,213.12     | \$225,000.00     | 68.71%   |
| 1414*             | Beaver Hills         | \$218,551.92     | \$179,184.62     | \$254,200.00     | 16.31%   |
| 1415*             | Newhallville         | \$123,341.19     | \$105,366.47     | \$140,000.00     | 13.51%   |
| 1416*             | Dixwell              | \$115,405.96     | \$225,444.70     | \$176,786.00     | 53.19%   |
| 1418              | Newhallville         | \$122,619.89     | \$1,022,406.33   | \$1,040,000.00   | 748.15%  |
| 1420              | Downtown             | \$266,878.59     | \$482,510.21     | \$510,000.00     | 91.10%   |
| 1423              | Fair Haven           | \$123,773.96     | \$80,281.73      | \$219,000.00     | 76.94%   |
| 1424              | East Rock/Fair Haven | \$108,194.02     | \$74,953.04      | \$200,000.00     | 84.85%   |
| 1425              | Fair Haven           | \$128,750.89     | \$124,140.98     | \$216,300.00     | 67.10%   |
| 1542              | West Haven           | \$176,248.06     | \$221,345.70     | \$197,000.00     | 11.77%   |
| 1655              |                      | \$155,727.26     | \$169,464.14     | \$183,000.00     | 17.51%   |
| City of New Haven |                      | \$122,619.89     | \$146,392.66     | \$183,600.00     | 49.73%   |

While Hartford’s median home sales increased about 11% between 2001 and 2019, New Haven saw a nearly 50% increase in median home sale value during the same period. Factors which may account for this difference include the fact that New Haven is less than a two-hour train ride away from one of the hottest employment and real estate markets in the world and is home to one of the world’s top universities. The huge increases in property values in some New Haven neighborhoods can most likely be attributed in large part to Yale University, its affiliated medical center, and its proximity to New York City.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Data gathered by the Warren Group; access provided by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. Accessed June 10, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Breen, Thomas. On the Brink of a “Bigger City.” The New Haven Independent. January 3, 2020.

## Map of New Haven Census Tracts



With the exception of one of the four NHS FACTS, the NHS neighborhoods saw an overall lower increase in property values than the city overall. Since NHS works in the more distressed neighborhoods of New Haven and other neighborhoods in New Haven are seeing such large increases in property values, likely driven by Yale and private market demand, it is not surprising that the census tracts NHS focuses on saw lower increases in property values than the city overall. These census tracts all still saw property values rise at a rate equal to or higher than the state of Connecticut's average property value rise of about 16%.

NHS conducted three neighborhood surveys three times over the past decade to collect qualitative data about their impact in the Newhallville neighborhood. Stephen Cremin-Endes, Director of Community Building and Organizing at NHS, summarized:

In analyzing our results across three different survey periods, we found modest improvements in nearly all areas, including individuals' perceptions of the safety and quality of the neighborhood. Our observation surveys also found that the physical conditions improved on almost every block: trash was less prevalent, tree-trimming and lighting had improved, and there was greater evidence of pride in one's home. We have

also done some analysis of the real estate market, including the geographic distribution of property values and ownership throughout the neighborhood.<sup>49</sup>

For example, NHS renovated four houses on West Division Street in New Haven between 2009 and 2012. The homes themselves are beautiful, but it is also heartening to see that houses neighboring the NHS houses showed improvements made after the renovations as well. The observations on this study's windshield survey support NHS's street observation surveys indicating that street conditions improved in the NHS focus areas.



Figure 16 Between 2011 (this photo) and 2019 (below), this home on West Division Street got new trees planted in front of the driveway and a fresh coat of paint on the porch.



Figure 17

<sup>49</sup> Cremin-Endes, Stephen. Grant Application to NeighborWorks America. June 30, 2020. Provided to the author August 11, 2020.



*Figure 18 After the home shown on the right of the photograph above was renovated by NHS, the adjacent house got a new tree planted. The house two doors down got a fresh coat of paint and a new decorative street lamp. Photo above is from 2011. Photo below is from 2019.*



*Figure 19*



*e. Hartford Owner Occupancy and Vacancy*

The uphill battle faced by those seeking to increased homeownership in low income communities is clear: homeownership has remained stagnant for decades in Hartford and New Haven. The Great Recession only exacerbated the problem, nationwide. Most of the census tracts studied in Hartford and New Haven had median household incomes in 2018 that were around half or less than half of their respective county’s median household incomes, of \$72,321 for Hartford county and \$67,128 for New Haven County. As Smith wrote in his study of the impacts of Indianapolis CDCs on property values, “An income deficiency of this magnitude prohibits the creation of homeowners from the existing population and suggests that CDCs will need to recruit buyers from outside the neighborhood.”<sup>50</sup> The CDCs attempt to combat this difficulty by selling homes at below market rates, but many potential buyers from the neighborhood may still have difficulty accessing home ownership. These difficulties provide at least a partial explanation for why CDCs have had difficulty increasing owner occupancy in Hartford and New Haven.

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<sup>50</sup> Smith, B. C. (2003). *The impact of community development corporations on neighborhood housing markets: Modeling appreciation*. *Urban Affairs Review*, 39(2), 181–204.

## **Owner Occupancy and Vacancy in Hartford, 2000 to 2018**

| Tract     | Neighborhood     | 2000           | 2010           | 2018           | 2000-2018              | 2000   | 2010   | 2018   |
|-----------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|           |                  | Owner Occupied | Owner Occupied | Owner Occupied | Owner Occupancy Change | Vacant | Vacant | Vacant |
| 5027*     | Barry Square     | 11.00%         | 4.88%          | 13.30%         | 2.30%                  | 10.80% | 15.40% | 15.00% |
| 5028*     | Frog Hollow      | 5.10%          | 13.37%         | 5.00%          | -0.10%                 | 16.80% | 24.20% | 21.50% |
| 5246*±    | Asylum Hill      | 12.70%         | 9.14%          | 10.23%         | -2.47%                 | n/a    | 5.10%  | 18.60% |
| 5033      | Asylum Hill      | 5.30%          | 8.22%          | 3.40%          | -1.90%                 | 18.50% | 38.80% | 15.20% |
| 5031      | Asylum Hill      | 9.90%          | 11.79%         | 20.20%         | 10.30%                 | 11.90% | 18.50% | 19.60% |
| 5026      | Barry Square     | 30.40%         | 27.30%         | 29.20%         | -1.20%                 | 5.60%  | 9.20%  | 6.00%  |
| 5049      | Behind the Rocks | 37.40%         | 42.50%         | 34.60%         | -2.80%                 | 6.40%  | 12.80% | 8.30%  |
| 5045      | Behind the Rocks | 32.40%         | 28.80%         | 26.20%         | -6.20%                 | 8.70%  | 9.20%  | 10.10% |
| 5048      | South West       | 65.30%         | 71.20%         | 62.36%         | -2.94%                 | 3.30%  | 4.00%  | 5.80%  |
| 5247±     | South West       | 50.35%         | 64.10%         | 60.10%         | 9.75%                  | 11.00% | 5.50%  | n/a    |
| 5003      | Barry Square     | 10.30%         | 9.10%          | 4.50%          | -5.80%                 | 12.30% | 6.50%  | 14.30% |
| 5002      | Barry Square     | 11.80%         | 10.50%         | 16.20%         | 4.40%                  | 13.00% | 31.10% | 14.40% |
| 5024      | South End        | 21.90%         | 19.90%         | 24.30%         | 2.40%                  | 7.10%  | 12.80% | 11.20% |
| 5023      | South End        | 46.50%         | 53.70%         | 50.40%         | 3.90%                  | 4.30%  | 4.10%  | 14.60% |
| 5025      | South Meadows    | 28.00%         | 18.20%         | 25.30%         | -2.70%                 | 9.00%  | 11.70% | 8.60%  |
| 5043      | Parkville        | 20.10%         | 20.20%         | 19.40%         | -0.70%                 | 9.20%  | 10.80% | 14.40% |
| 5042      | West End         | 10.40%         | 21.90%         | 9.10%          | -1.30%                 | 8.50%  | 17.90% | 10.10% |
| 5245.02 ± | West End         | 29.50%         | 44.40%         | 40.60%         | 11.10%                 | 11.85% | 10.80% | 9.30%  |
| 5017      | Clay Arsenal     | 11.40%         | 0.00%          | 14.10%         | 2.30%                  | 12.30% | 42.20% | 14.30% |
| 5035      | Upper Albany     | 22.60%         | 12.20%         | 12.20%         | -10.40%                | 22.00% | 26.60% | 24.40% |
| City      | Hartford         | 24.60%         | 25.80%         | 23.80%         | -0.80%                 | 11.20% | 16.10% | 14.80% |

± Census Tract 5246 did not exist in 2000. It is roughly a combination of census tracts 5032 and 5034 from the 2000 census.

Census tract 5247 did not exist in 2000. It is roughly a combination of census tracts 5046 and 5047 from the 2000 census.

Census tract 5425.02 did not exist in 2000. It is roughly a combination of census tracts 5036 and 5044 from the 2000 census.

*The 2000 numbers presented are an average of the data from the 2000 census tracts.*

Of the three CDC focus area census tracts in Hartford (5027, 5028, and 5246), two saw owner occupancy decrease between 2000 and 2018 and one (5027) saw a slight increase. The cities of Hartford and New Haven saw small decreases in owner occupancy between 2000 and 2018. The owner occupancy rate in Hartford was 24.6% in 2000 and 23.8% in 2018. The owner occupancy rate in New Haven was 29.6% in 2000 and 27.6% in 2018. Though increasing owner occupancy is an important goal of the CDCs, “it is really hard to move the needle on owner occupancy,” as Iaiennaro put it.<sup>51</sup> Shifting owner occupancy rates at the neighborhood level may be an uphill battle for CDCs, given that owner occupancy in Hartford has not budged since the 1940s.<sup>52</sup>

While most census tracts studied in Hartford did not see significant increases in owner occupancy, census tract 5031 did particularly well, with a 10.3% increase in owner occupancy between 2000 and 2018. Though it looks as if census tract 5247 also saw a nearly 10% increase in owner occupancy, this tract was formed at the 2010 census as a combination of two census tracts—one with a higher owner occupancy level in 2000 than the other. The apparent increase can likely be attributed to the combining of the two tracts rather than an actual substantive increase in owner occupants in the area.

One might expect that the census tracts that saw significant median home value increases might also see increases in owner occupancy and median household income, but this does not appear to be the case in the areas studied in Hartford. Census tract 5246, for example, where NINA focuses, saw increases in median home value, but decreases in owner occupancy and median household income. Census tract 5027, a SINA focus tract, saw increases in home value and owner occupancy, but decreases in median household income. SINA’s other focus tract, 5028, saw increases in median home value and median household income, but a decrease in owner occupancy. It is therefore difficult to correlate the work of CDCs with a trend in increasing owner occupancy or median household income in an area.

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<sup>51</sup> Iaiennaro, Dean. Personal email to author. May 26, 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Walsh, Andrew. “Hartford: A Global History.” *Confronting Urban Legacy*. Ed. Chen, Xiangming and Bacon, N. p. 35.

The city of Hartford saw a 3.6% increase in vacancy rate between 2000 and 2018. The SINA focus area saw vacancy rates increase at a slightly higher rate than the city overall. The vacancy rate for the NINA focus area was not available for 2000, but increased a substantial amount, 13.5%, between 2010 and 2018. Housing vacancy increased across the country after the 2008 financial crisis and is not a problem unique to legacy cities. Though Hartford's vacancy rate is considered high (the threshold for high vacancy is 12%), Hartford is doing better than most small sized legacy cities.<sup>53</sup> As Richard Florida observed in a review of Alan Mallach's 2018 report on vacancy in American cities, "Vacancy is a much bigger problem in legacy cities than it is in magnet or Sunbelt cities. The vacancy rate was roughly 17 percent in small legacy cities and 15 percent in large legacy cities in 2010, compared to 11 percent in Sunbelt cities and just 7 percent in magnet cities."<sup>54</sup> In typical legacy cities like Flint, Michigan, Gary, Indiana, and Cleveland, Ohio, more than 50% of the census tracts had hyper-vacancy (vacancy more than 20%) in 2010.<sup>55</sup> The vacancy rates in the census tracts studied in Hartford and New Haven were generally lower than 20% in 2010, demonstrating the relative strength of these cities compared to other legacy cities.

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<sup>53</sup> Florida, Richard. *Vacancy: America's Other Housing Crisis*. Bloomberg CityLab. July 27, 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-27/the-disturbing-rise-of-housing-vacancy-in-u-s-cities>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

*f. New Haven Owner Occupancy and Vacancy*

**Owner Occupancy and Vacancy in New Haven, 2000 to 2018**

| Tract     | Neighborhood         | 2000           | 2010           | 2018           | 2000-2018      | 2000   | 2010   | 2018   |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|
|           |                      | Owner Occupied | Owner Occupied | Owner Occupied | Owner Occupied | Vacant | Vacant | Vacant |
| 1403      | The Hill             | 24.50%         | 11.40%         | 24.00%         | -0.50%         | 19.00% | 20.30% | 20.10% |
| 1404      | City Point           | 36.40%         | 29.60%         | 32.90%         | -3.50%         | 10.70% | 10.50% | 15.10% |
| 1405      | The Hill             | 30.30%         | 34.00%         | 30.20%         | -0.10%         | 19.60% | 16.30% | 14.70% |
| 1406      | Dwight               | 23.00%         | 26.50%         | 23.50%         | 0.50%          | 22.20% | 24.60% | 11.90% |
| 1407*     | Dwight               | 8.00%          | 7.80%          | 7.90%          | -0.10%         | 9.20%  | 4.90%  | 11.00% |
| 1408*     | West River           | 20.60%         | 19.90%         | 18.00%         | -2.60%         | 14.40% | 17.70% | 10.70% |
| 1409      | Edgewood             | 20.60%         | 18.20%         | 18.80%         | -1.80%         | 9.40%  | 12.10% | 15.60% |
| 1410      | Westville            | 52.30%         | 55.80%         | 48.70%         | -3.60%         | 6.70%  | 7.90%  | 7.20%  |
| 1413      | West Rock            | 15.60%         | 22.20%         | 12.30%         | -3.30%         | 15.90% | 15.00% | 5.70%  |
| 1414*     | Beaver Hills         | 45.20%         | 42.80%         | 45.50%         | 0.30%          | 9.60%  | 7.00%  | 12.60% |
| 1415*     | Newhallville         | 34.10%         | 28.30%         | 25.80%         | -8.30%         | 16.80% | 19.80% | 15.50% |
| 1416*     | Dixwell              | 20.20%         | 25.00%         | 14.80%         | -5.40%         | 19.40% | 19.90% | 11.80% |
| 1418      | Newhallville         | 26.90%         | 28.90%         | 23.80%         | -3.10%         | 9.50%  | 11.50% | 5.30%  |
| 1420      | Downtown             | 17.40%         | 21.70%         | 20.80%         | 3.40%          | 6.90%  | 12.50% | 15.80% |
| 1423      | Fair Haven           | 23.00%         | 32.90%         | 20.20%         | -2.80%         | 12.80% | 9.80%  | 11.50% |
| 1424      | East Rock/Fair Haven | 23.80%         | 31.70%         | 17.20%         | -6.60%         | 12.30% | 24.80% | 16.00% |
| 1425      | Fair Haven           | 28.30%         | 20.40%         | 23.40%         | -4.90%         | 12.80% | 10.10% | 7.60%  |
| 1542      | West Haven           | 38.30%         | 47.70%         | 39.60%         | 1.30%          | 7.90%  | 11.30% | 12.30% |
| 1655      |                      | 47.80%         | 48.60%         | 44.50%         | -3.30%         | 8.80%  | 7.70%  | 13.60% |
| New Haven | City                 | 29.60%         | 31.60%         | 27.60%         | -2.00%         | 11.00% | 13.10% | 11.29% |

Between 2000 and 2018, owner occupancy decreased by 2.00% across the city of New Haven. The NHS focus areas were no exception to this overall decrease. This matches up with the overall 2.30% decrease in owner occupancy in the United States as a whole, though it is higher than Connecticut’s 0.50% decrease. Vacancy increased in census tracts 1407 and 1414, but decreased in census tracts 1408, 1415, and 1416. Like in Hartford, this study did not reveal any trends in owner occupancy increases in the CDC focus areas.

New Haven had lower vacancy in 2018 than Hartford, and its vacancy rate fell below the 12% threshold for high vacancy. The city saw an uptick in vacancy after 2008, but its vacancy rate fell to only 0.29% higher than its 2000 rate by 2018. The New Haven vacancy rate is

significantly lower than that of either small or large legacy cities and is comparable to that of Sunbelt cities. Vacancy rates decreased in three out of the five NHS focus tracts and increased by less than 3% in the census tracts that saw vacancy increases. The vacancy rates in the city, combined with strong increases in property values in most of the city's neighborhoods, speak to the overall strength of the New Haven real estate market.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Strong increases in median home sale values and low vacancy rates in comparison with other legacy cities paint a relatively hopeful picture for Hartford and New Haven. These cities are geographically small when compared with legacy cities outside of New England. They have affluent suburbs and proximity to the financial and commercial centers of New York City and Boston. They still have lower median home values, lower owner occupancy, and lower median incomes than the state overall, and therefore creating safe and attractive, yet affordable housing, should continue to be a priority in these cities.

CDCs are well positioned to fill the gap in safe, attractive, and affordable housing in urban neighborhoods, though they may need to reconsider tactics for increasing owner occupancy. The windshield survey examination revealed that homes renovated by CDCs in Hartford and New Haven appear well-maintained decades after being sold by the CDCs. The windshield survey also revealed that are indications in some neighborhoods that homes near CDC projects were fixed up after the CDC project took place. It is important to remember that improving the quality of life in distressed neighborhoods is important even if the area does not show measurable signs of revival. Making a place better for the people who live there is in some cases even more important than attracting new residents or money to the neighborhood. SINA, NINA, and NHS create homes that are in most cases nicer than those that can be found on the private market, especially in a low- to mid-price range.

This study's findings on the impacts of CDC-led housing revitalization projects on property values and street conditions can provide a framework for CDCs to understand and predict the impacts they may have on their neighborhoods. This study predicts that a CDC FACT located near an affluent neighborhood or near a neighborhood that is showing very high property value

increases will see property value increases that are lower than the surrounding area. A CDC FACT surrounded by neighborhoods that are seeing moderately strong property value increases will see property value increases that are in line with the surrounding area. Finally, a CDC FACT surrounded by neighborhoods seeing weak property value increases will see property value increases that are higher than the surrounding area.

These findings of variable outcomes also extend to street conditions in FACTs. This study predicts that a CDC FACT located near an affluent neighborhood, near a neighborhood showing very high property value increases, or surrounded by neighborhoods showing moderately strong property value increases, street conditions will show noticeable improvement. This study predicts that a CDC focusing on an area surrounded by neighborhoods that are seeing weak property value increases will have difficulty improving street conditions.

CDCs face the question of whether to choose a target area that is experiencing decline located on the edge of an upward trending neighborhood or to invest in an area where there is little or no other investment. These findings suggest that a CDC target area located close to an upward trending area may not see significant property value increases as a result of CDC investment, but may see other forms of improvement, such as improved street conditions. A CDC that focuses on an area of the city that is receiving little other investment may have more success generating property value increases that are above average for the area, but may have more difficulty improving poor street conditions.

Further research on this topic could productively take several routes. Studies of the outcomes of CDC housing projects in additional cities could confirm, deny, modify, or expand upon the hypotheses of this study with respect to the ways in which CDC housing investments impact neighborhoods located in different urban contexts. Nearby cities such as Bridgeport, CT, Worcester, MA, and Providence, RI could provide particularly fruitful additional comparisons that could further the study of these hypotheses.

This study did not look at the complex of other impacts CDCs could be having in their neighborhoods. CDCs could be influencing crime rates, health and education outcomes, pride in

one's neighborhood, and more. Further studies could look into these additional indicators of neighborhood stability through review of crime, health, and education data, and qualitative interviews with neighborhood leaders and residents. This study was also limited by examining data at the census tract level. CDC impacts may be more apparent at the street or block group level. Assessor's data can be used to measure property value changes street by street, and qualitative interviews as well as further street-level windshield surveys could reveal differences in outcomes street by street.

Finally, additional research on the efficacy of present strategies promoting home ownership in low income urban neighborhoods might shed light on positive externalities not captured in this study, suggest that different measures of neighborhood improvement should replace that metric, or recommend new strategies for promoting homeownership.