



SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

**TESTIMONY OF MELVYN COLON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS NEIGHBORHOOD
ALLIANCE (SINA)
SUBMITTED TO THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 21, 2014**

***HB 5583, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT OF REAL PROPERTY TAXES BY
CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND HOSPITAL FACILITIES.***

The Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) is a partnership between Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College.

SINA's mission is to work cooperatively with community stakeholders to restore economic vitality and improve the quality of life for the benefit of the people who live, work, visit, study and play in the neighborhoods of South Central Hartford.

Created over 35 years ago, SINA was a pioneering partnership between the institutions in the south end. Since that time anchor institutions in cities across the country have followed the example of SINA by joining together to promote revitalization in their surrounding communities. As nonprofit institutions they feel a social obligation to invest in job creation, housing, health and other services, to support and strengthen schools and to promote economic development. Their investment is not made in the form of property taxes but it provides a much needed injection of targeted dollars to lift up their communities.

Hartford Hospital, the Children's Medical Center and Trinity College have invested \$16 million in SINA over the last 20 years to support economic development in the south end. This investment has resulted in numerous benefits to the community.

SINA's signature project, The Learning Corridor, a 16-acre campus that houses four magnet schools as well as gallery, performance and community spaces on what had been one of the most blighted and environmentally contaminated properties in the city, was the result of a partnership between Hartford Hospital, the Children's Medical Center, Trinity College and city and state agencies. The \$10 million that the SINA institutions invested in the Learning Corridor leveraged \$100 million in private and public funding. This project has garnered national attention as an exemplar of multi-anchor institution collaboration to support neighborhood revitalization and education in a very low income neighborhood.

Housing development continues to be a significant benefit of institutional investment.

Our early housing development efforts converted 12 abandoned vacant buildings and an occupied but blighted property into 83 affordable apartment units in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. Our current focus is on promoting homeownership in the neighborhoods. Our homeownership program has developed over 60 homes for working families in the greater Frog Hollow area. . Many of these homes are newly built on vacant lots while others are historic rehabs. Another hallmark program has been Hartford Hospital's Homeownership Incentive Program (HIP), which has provided employees of Hartford Hospital mortgage support for first time homebuyers purchasing homes in the south end of Hartford. Trinity College has also implemented a HIP initiative and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center will launch their program in April.

One important benefit of SINA's housing development activity is neighborhood transformation. In 2010, Colonial Street, a block away from the Learning Corridor, was characterized by vacant, structurally unsound properties, contaminated soil, and a zero percent homeownership rate. Institutional investment through SINA created 10 new homes for homeownership. The new working families brought greater income diversity to the community. The quality of life on Colonial Street has improved as residents report a greater sense of safety, security and community.

Because of the institutional investment in SINA, the City of Hartford now receives \$265,000 in property tax revenues that it would not have received had these properties remained abandoned. A significant but less measurable effect of this development is the sense of vitality and possibility that it restores to the neighborhoods.

SINA has invested in economic development in the past through job training and early support for the Spanish American Merchants Association (SAMA). We are currently engaged in an economic development planning process to identify new opportunities for investment that would restore economic vitality to the neighborhood and leverage the member institutions' purchasing and hiring activities.

Through SINA, the three partner institutions support educational achievement of Hartford public school students. Fifty five graduates of Bulkeley High School have received four year scholarships to attend college since 1997. A new program initiated in 2013 awards four scholarships to students attending Capitol Community College. The institutions are also important partners in planning and implementing the Hartford Public Schools annual STEM

Expo. They provide funds for prizes and science-themed entertainment. Employees at the hospitals and the College serve as judges during the event.

Compelled to pay property taxes, the partnership between the institutions would undoubtedly continue. However, it is unlikely that the member institutions would be able to continue to fund SINA's efforts to revitalize the surrounding neighborhoods. Community benefit would likely be more tightly focused on the mission of each institution. Support for housing development, economic development and college scholarships would no longer be economically feasible. The loss would go beyond money or housing units. The community would lose development capacity that it has built up over the last 20 years. It would leave Frog Hollow and surrounding neighborhoods without a viable community development entity. The residents of Frog Hollow and surrounding communities would bear a disproportionate burden as a result of this as there is little evidence that the city or the state would step in to make up for lost revenues or capacity.

Therefore, I urge your reconsideration of HB5583.

Exhibit A CONTRIBUTIONS BY CCMC, HARTFORD HOSPITAL AND TRINITY COLLEGE

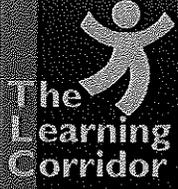
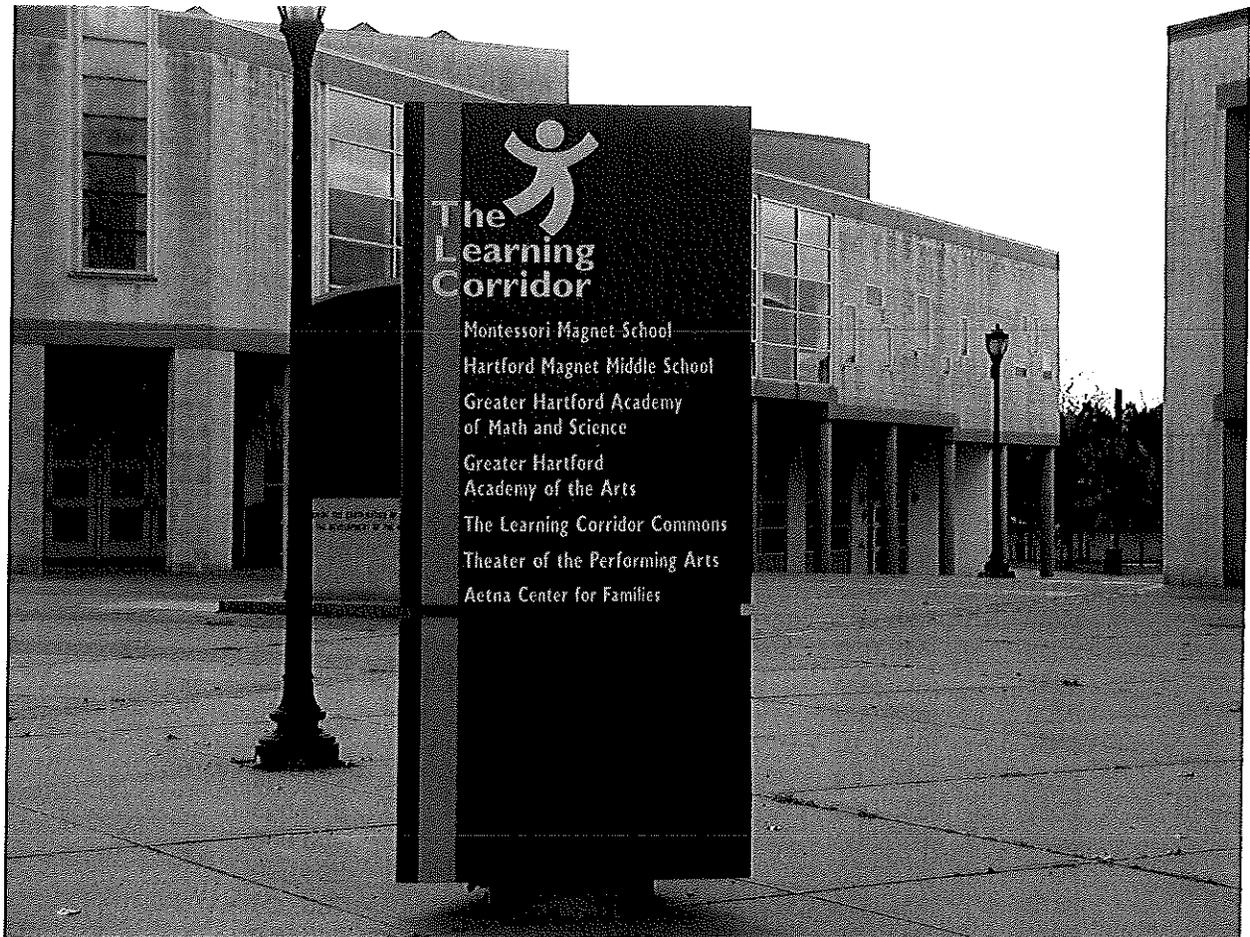
**SINA
MEMBERSHIP ASSESSMENTS
1994-2014**

CALENDAR YEAR	TOTAL	CCMC	Hartford Hospital	Trinity College	Institute of Learning	CPTV
MEMBER PAYMENTS, REGULAR AND SPECIAL						
1994	186,000		65,000	65,000	56,000	
1995	238,000	50,000	64,500	64,500	59,000	
1996	1,152,830	150,000	400,840	300,860	301,130	
1997	996,072	349,663	198,803	198,803	198,803	50,000
1998	1,023,800	255,950	255,950	255,950	255,950	50,000
1999	1,073,800	255,950	255,950	255,950	255,950	50,000
2000	1,074,000	256,000	256,000	256,000	256,000	50,000
2001	1,074,000	256,000	256,000	256,000	256,000	50,000
2002	1,030,000	245,000	245,000	245,000	245,000	50,000
2003	920,000	230,000	230,000	230,000	230,000	
2004	790,000	230,000	230,000	230,000	100,000	
2005	690,000	230,000	230,000	230,000		
2006	690,000	230,000	230,000	230,000		
2007	672,750	224,250	224,250	224,250		
2008	639,114	213,038	213,038	213,038		
2009	630,000	210,000	210,000	210,000		
2010	600,000	200,000	200,000	200,000		
2011	612,000	204,000	204,000	204,000		
2012	624,000	208,000	208,000	208,000		
2013	648,000	216,000	216,000	216,000		
2014	774,500	258,166	258,167	258,167		
TOTAL	16,188,866	4,472,017	4,651,498	4,551,518	2,213,833	300,000

THE LEARNING CORRIDOR ASSESSMENTS (INCLUDES VERNON ST. BUS GARAGE CLEANUP CORP.)

1996	475,693	79,282	79,282	237,847	79,282
1997	2,830,918		582,874	1,665,170	582,874
1998	5,278,994	1,376,557	1,004,510	1,893,417	1,004,510
1999	1,414,395	210,827	1	1,203,566	1
TOTAL	10,000,000	1,666,666	1,666,667	5,000,000	1,666,667

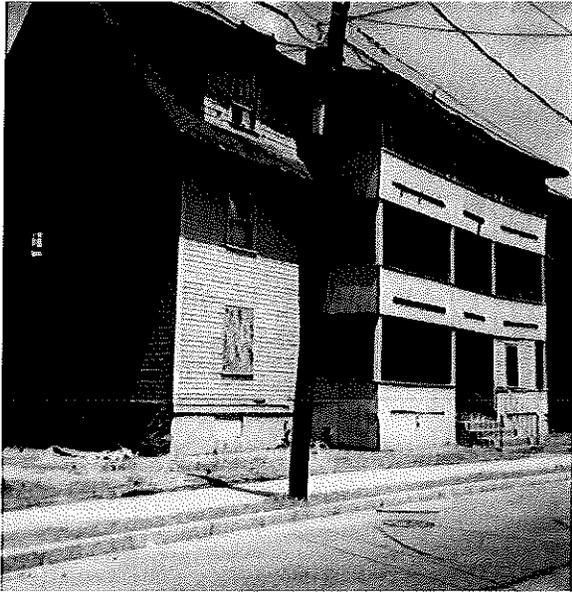
Exhibit B THE LEARNING CORRIDOR



The Learning Corridor

- Montessori Magnet School
- Hartford Magnet Middle School
- Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science
- Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts
- The Learning Corridor Commons
- Theater of the Performing Arts
- Actna Center for Families

Exhibit C COLONIAL STREET: BEFORE AND AFTER



Before Demolition



After Construction

