Blight to Beauty: 
Creating Neighborhood Assets 

LISC

Local Initiatives Support Corporation
November 19, 2013
Connecticut General Assembly
Planning & Development Committee – Anti-Blight Task Force

LISC
Local Initiatives Support Corporation

- National community development organization
- Created by Ford Foundation in 1979
- To support local initiatives to revitalize communities
  - Financial resources
  - Technical assistance
  - Public policy
- A national organization with local roots in Connecticut.
LISC Mission

LISC helps community residents create healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity — good places to live, work, do business and raise children.

Connecticut LISC Strategy

• The “Two Connecticuts”
  - very poor cities surrounded by high income, high cost suburbs and rural areas

• Dual strategy: cities & towns
  - Targeted investment in inner city neighborhood revitalization
  - Increase affordable housing for low and moderate income residents and families statewide
Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy

- Invest financial and technical resources to advance neighborhood development to:
  - improve quality of life
  - increase economic stability & opportunity
  - attract investment
  - restore economic value
  - reinvigorate local cultural and historic assets

Methodology

- Increase scale and impact of development
  - targeted, block-wide strategies
- Encourage comprehensive revitalization
  - address physical, social and economic development
- Engage local residents and partners
  - expand support and sustainability
- Promote policies and programs to support neighborhood revitalization
Transforming Blight

- Opportunity to convert problems to assets
  - housing, commercial and community facilities
- Essential to restoring quality of life
- Improves community safety
- Restores economic value to property and neighborhood
- Strengthens tax base
- Creates jobs and business opportunities
- Attracts reinvestment

How does LISC work?

- Provide technical and financial assistance to locally based development organizations
- Support planning assistance to identify and evaluate properties
- Invest in revitalization projects
  - predevelopment, acquisition & construction financing
- Develop tools and financing products to increase the scale of the work
  - Historic Homes Tax Credit
- Provide training to apply best practices
  - SafeGrowth, Community Safety teams
Examples – Common Themes

- Non-profit, community-based developers
- Targeted, block-wide strategies
- Multi-year commitments to a targeted area
- Re-use of historic assets
- Expansion of homeownership
- Use of local contractors and suppliers
- Mixed income development
- Convening of partners to strengthen comprehensive approaches
  - Community safety; parks; streetscapes

246-248 Sargeant Street - Hartford

Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance
8 Ashley Street - Hartford

Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance

Madison Smith Apartments - Stamford

New Neighborhoods, Inc.
20 Belden Street - Hartford

Corporation for Independent Living

Belden Street View
339 West Division St. – New Haven

Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven

26-28 Mortson Street - Hartford

Corporation for Independent Living
Mortson Street View

Policy Issues

- Effective use of property tax liens
  - Coordination of development & tax collection
  - Sales to investors losing properties
- Gap subsidy
  - Retreat from homeownership
  - Affordability vs. revitalization
- Preservation & expansion of tax credits
  - Housing Tax Credit Contribution (HTCC)
  - Historic Homes Tax Credit
- Support & technical assistance for interdepartmental blight teams
For more information:

- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
  - Hartford & Connecticut Statewide programs
    www.lisc.org; apereira@lisc.org; 860-525-4821

- Center for Community Progress
  - www.communityprogress.net

- SafeGrowth – community safety blog
  - Gregory Saville
  - http://www.safe-growth.blogspot.com

Thank you!