

Westville Village Renaissance Alliance (WVRA)

SWOT Analysis & Goal Setting - February 24, 2009

WVRA Board of Directors

STRENGTHS

Westville Village - the district	WVRA - the organization
Great signature events	Great signature events
Committed, engaged prop. owners, residents, bus. owners, stakeholders	Committed, engaged prop. owners, residents, bus. owners, stakeholders
Natural amenities: West Rock, River, Park	WVRA organized, energetic, track record, has the confidence of the community
Location: accessible, visible, geographically distinct	
Working artists & craftspeople	WVRA dedicated to partnerships, collaboration, sponsoring activities
Neighborhood traditions: spectator sports, events, farmers market, etc.	
	Power of community is recognized, politically engaged
Highly resourced community: \$\$, energy, dedication, intelligence, connections, etc.	
Westville Village: a traditional Main Street	
Independently owned & operated businesses	
History/Heritage of Westville	
Farmers Market: enlivening public space	
Image of Westville: quaint, desirable neighborhood	
High traffic count: 26k per day	
Existing interesting retail mix	
Density, compactness of neighborhood	
Institutions: schools (pre K-post grad), houses of worship, post office, fire house, library, daycare	
Diversity of housing: age, price point, style	
Proximity to downtown New Haven	
Power of community is recognized, politically engaged	

WEAKNESSES

Westville Village - the district	WVRA - the organization
Lacking merchant engagement	Lacking merchant engagement
Uneven engagement of stakeholders: residents, students, customers, citizens, etc.	Uneven engagement of stakeholders: residents, students, customers, citizens, etc.
District lacking sense of welcome, comfort, arrival	
Lacking crosswalks, wayfinding, signage, ped. safety	
Vacancies: significant real estate; retail & residential	
Inconsistent business hours	
Public space poorly maintained, sidewalks in poor condition	
District lacking brand, image weak, website doesn't market the district	
Bar-based night life	
Urban decay, blight at margins of district	
Lack of visual / physical connectivity	
Not a destination: not enough of any one thing, what's here is not "packaged"	
Lacking retail / entertainment anchor	
Jarring visual elements, lack of cohesion	
Vehicle challenges: circulation, parking, etc.	
Lack of central communications, PR function	
Disengaged & absentee property owners	
Traffic <i>through</i> district, circulation problems	
City regulatory function: is it transparent & fair? suburban zoning in urban context	
Floodplain restrictions: impediment to development	
Not enough service business: "home-town downtown"	

OPPORTUNITIES

Westville Village - the district	WVRA - the organization
Current economic downtown: now's the time to master plan, engage partners	Current economic downtown: now's the time to master plan, engage partners
Vacant & developable space: buildings, parcels	College student energy, welcome their engagement
Yale Bowl, Tennis Center: tie-in to district activity	Engage ConnDOT
College student energy, welcome their engagement	Engage seniors, students
Wintergreen, if well managed and filled	Build partnerships: SCSU, City, etc.
Engage ConnDOT	Engage our culturally diverse citizenry: customers, future business owners, etc.
Engage seniors, students	SBDC partnership: small business assistance
Build partnerships: SCSU, City, etc.	Potential volunteers: less money, more time?
Growing pedestrian, bike and transit opportunities	
Linkages with Market New Haven	
Capture customers from surrounding suburbs that lack their own downtown	
Engage our culturally diverse citizenry: customers, future business owners, etc.	
SBDC partnership: small business assistance	
Empowerment Zone, under-resourced neighborhood	
Trends: buy local, authentic, sustainability, green technology, people staying closer to home	
Traffic count: 26k per day	
Regionalism: how can it benefit our district?	
Market niche: coordination of arts, small business	
Investment vital to overall health of community	
3 public schools in neighborhood coming back online	
New interfaith coalition in Westville	

THREATS

Westville Village - the district	WVRA - the organization
Vacancy rates, especially at key properties	WVRA significant funding from state being cut
Unengaged & unpredictable landlords	WVRA lacking a fund development plan
ConnDOT...	
Long-standing businesses struggling	
Wintergreen is only at 60% occupancy right now	
Westville Village a target for social services because of density	
Lack of credit, cash-flow	
Crime, public safety: real & perceived	
The economy: unemployment, foreclosures	
Lack of businesses succession planning	

WVRA DRAFT GOALS 2009

- 1) Brand Westville Village Renaissance Alliance (WVRA) as the advocate, partner, master planner, coordinator and manager of Westville Village.
- 2) Enhance and promote the image of Westville Village to attract and engage residents, visitors and businesses.
- 3) Engage existing businesses and assist them to better serve their customers; identifying opportunities for them to expand, and identify an appropriate mix of new and compatible uses in Westville Village properties.
- 4) Foster and activate an urban village environment that is attractive, vibrant and pedestrian-friendly.