

COMMUNITY SERVICES



City of New Haven
John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor

Community Services

OVERVIEW

Community services in New Haven address both core municipal functions and a range of specific assistance programs consistent with the needs of urban areas. This section looks mainly at physical development with the goal of improving services in a manner complementary to other recommendations found in this document.

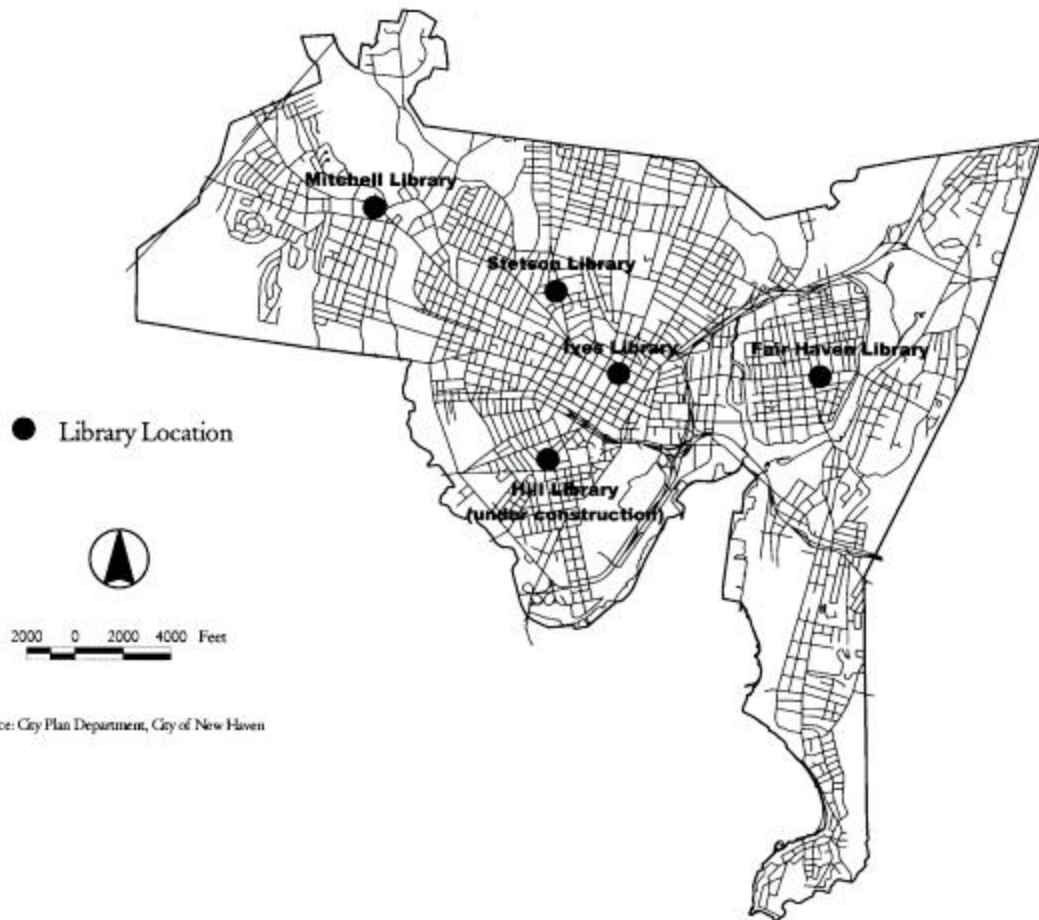


Figure 9.1: Public works in New Haven.

NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The New Haven Free Public Library consists of four branches: the Main Branch at 133 Elm Street; the Fair Haven Branch at 182 Grand Avenue; the Mitchell Branch at 37 Harrison Street; and the Stetson Branch at 200 Dixwell Avenue (see Figure 9.2). In FY 2001, library circulation was 208,241 and there were 160,857 reference questions. By way of comparison, the number of reference questions is up 36% from 1995.

Figure 9.2: Map of Libraries



Source: City Plan Department, City of New Haven

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The Main Library, at 133 Elm Street, was re-purchased by the City in the late 1980's. In 1990, the Library was re-opened to the public following a \$14.5 million renovation and expansion. Cass Gilbert's 1911 neo-Georgian building was restored and expanded by 65,000 s.f., bringing the overall size of the building to 103,000 s.f. The renovation and expansion was designed by the New York firm of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates.

The Mitchell Branch, which was recently renovated and expanded to include a Technology Access Center, reflects the next generation of library services. The planned Hill Branch, at Washington Avenue and Daggett Street, includes traditional reading rooms, a community meeting room, a "Family Place" location, an Internet Café and a youth activity center. Also, the Library is looking for a new location on the east shore.

As the central branch in the system, the Main Library has by far the most extensive collection, consisting of 311,150 volumes. A local history room, a large business collection, non-profit resources, a performance / community space and reference area also are located at the main branch. All branches have audio visuals, children's books and adult reference areas. The Fair Haven Branch has a large collection of Spanish language books. Fair Haven and Stetson have Technology Access Centers.

Although the existing branches, including the planned Hill Branch, cover a substantial portion of the city's population, there is a significant gap in service in the lower East Shore. Although the area is well served by other community services, including Police, Fire and Parks, there are no library services south or east of the Fair Haven Branch on Grand Avenue. Figure 9.2 illustrates this gap in service, lends further support to proposals for another branch library.

NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The New Haven Board of Education operates the largest public school system in south central Connecticut. As of October 31, 2001, there were 21,417 students in the system. Of these, 39.4% are in grades kindergarten through fourth grade. Another 30.7% are in the middle school grades (5-8) and 24.2% are in the high school grades (9-12). The largest number of students in any single grade is 1,811 in the 9th grade. The largest school in the system is Wilbur Cross High School (1,371 students), followed by James Hillhouse High School (1,163 students).

By race and ethnicity, the school population is largely minority. In the 2000-01 school year, 57.5% of all students enrolled were Black, non-Hispanic; 29.4% were Hispanic; 11.6% were White; and 1.5% were Asian American. The magnet school population continues to grow, with over 800 out-of-district students now attending New Haven Public Schools.



Figure 9.3: Additions and renovations to Edgewood School.

Capital Improvement Program

The public school system is now entering Phase II of a substantial capital improvement program. The “schools master plan” started in 1996 and was formally approved in 1998. The plan includes an analysis of building facilities (originally prepared by Jeter, Cook and Jepson and later updated by Fletcher Thompson, Inc.) and enrollment projections (prepared by HC Planning Consultants and Planimetrics.).

The need for improved / enlarged facilities is documented in both the facility and enrollment analyses. In fact, enrollment in 2001 has exceeded consultant projections. In 1996, projected enrollment for 2001 was to be between 18,742 (low estimate) and 19,261 (high estimate). Actual October, 2001 enrollment was 21,417 - over 2,000 students higher than predicted. Higher enrollment is due in part to the growth of the magnet school programs, which attract students from New Haven and surrounding communities.

The school construction program recommends reconstruction and/or new construction of 43 facilities at a capital cost of \$1.03 billion. Of the Phase I projects, several are complete: Hill Regional Career High School (new construction), Edgewood School (renovation/addition), Lincoln-Bassett School (renovation/addition), Conte West Hills (renovation/addition), Clarence Rogers (renovation), Katherine Brennan (renovation/addition) and Betsy Ross Arts Magnet School (new construction). In addition, Aquaculture, Wilbur Cross and Hillhouse are substantially complete with new and renovated facilities. A new citywide athletic fieldhouse was recently constructed on the Hillhouse campus.

School Construction is seeking new sites for construction of three schools: Cooperative Arts Magnet School, Worthington Hooker School (portion) and Jepson Magnet School. The Commission's guidance regarding the site selection process is as follows:

Cooperative Arts Magnet School. Cooperative – 9-12 high school - is currently located at 444 Orange Street, the former St. Mary's High School. The building is approximately 67,000 s.f. and is configured for a liberal arts-based curriculum. Cooperative, as an arts program, requires several performance spaces and production studios. The proposed program recommends 167,000 s.f. in a central location. While the land area to build such a school can vary from two to four acres, centrally-located options are limited. The City Plan Commission advises that site selection take care to preserve existing and potentially-viable downtown or Long Wharf commercial property and strongly encourages joint use options, such as (a) joint venture on the Yale University or proposed Gateway College Campus; (b) platform space over the railroad east of State Street; and/or (c) space sharing and mixed use development opportunities.

Worthington Hooker School. Worthington Hooker – a preK-8 school – is currently located at two sites: 180 Canner Street and 804 State Street. The latter site is leased. The proposed program recommends a new school for the upper grades and renovation of 180 Canner Street for lower grades. In

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March, 2002, the Commission prepared an Advisory Report for the acquisition of two sites, Whitney Life Center at 691 Whitney Avenue and Red Cross at 703 Whitney Avenue, as the first option for Worthington Hooker. Please refer to Advisory Report 1315-01 for full details on the Commission's recommendation.

Benjamin Jepson Magnet School. Jepson is located at 375 Quinnipiac Avenue in 51,000 s.f. building. The proposed program recommends a school of approximately 100,000 s.f., which is beyond the carrying capacity of the current site. Given the scarcity of vacant, ready-to-develop land in the East Shore, Fair Have Heights or Quinnipiac Meadows area, site selection is difficult. Moreover, there is interest in the neighborhood and on the part of the city, to keep the school in this area. With that in mind, the Commission recommends that site selection accomplish one or both of the following physical development objectives: (a) address blighting conditions of high vacancy or poor physical condition in the residential and/or commercial sector or (b) use a small portion of large vacant tract, turning the majority of the site to Parks for open space preservation (similar to Bishop Woods model).

NEW HAVEN ANIMAL SHELTER

The New Haven Animal Shelter is located at 81 Fournier Street. The facility is the largest in the Connecticut, with approximately 65 dog runs and sufficient smaller space to handle approximately 85 animals at any one time. The facility generally operates at capacity and annually serves 2,000 dogs and cats. The age and size of the facility (7,983 s.f.) are not suitable to handle current volume. The Commission recommends completion of a needs assessment and consideration of an on-site renovation / expansion program in support of the Humane Commission's work.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The New Haven Department of Police Service is a full service community police agency consisting of 472 police officers and 170 civilian employees. Of the sworn officers, approximately 80% are assigned to one of the city's ten policing districts. There is at least one police substation in each district. A second neighborhood facility is located in certain locations, such as the satellite at the Housing Authority's Quinnipiac Terrace development.

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In the last decade, crime is down in the United States, Connecticut and in New Haven. The rate of decline in New Haven outpaces state and national trends: For the decade, total UCR (uniform crime reporting system), which includes the seven “Part I” crimes of murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, larceny and auto theft, was down 19.8% for the nation, 37.2% for the state and 55% for the city. For New Haven, the most dramatic decreases were in burglary (-67.6%), forcible rape (-67.3%) and in motor vehicle theft (-63.3%). Overall, the decline in violent crimes (-57.6%) is similar to the decline seen in property crimes (-54.4%).

The Commission notes the value as well of quality of life crime enforcement, including traffic law. Certain police services are particularly valuable to the sound physical development of the city. These services are Community Policing, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design and Illegal Dumping Patrols.



Figure 9.4: Police patrols at New Haven Harbor.

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Community Policing. Beginning in the early 1990's, Police Services was one of the first municipal police departments to adopt contemporary community policing strategies. Subsequent pages illustrate the change in major crimes since that period. Each district now includes a District Manager and neighborhood patrols (pedestrian, bicycle and automotive beats). Mounted patrols and motorcycle units are also utilized.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. The 2001 Strategic Plan of Police Services is organized around three major goals and a number of strategic objectives. Of note, the plan places substantial emphasis on the plan's discussion of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design or CPTED. CPTED includes a wide range of crime prevention techniques based on the appropriateness of design and construction of physical spaces. From a planning perspective, implementation of the appropriate techniques will improve the quality of new development and enhance its public enjoyment.

Illegal Dumping. Illegal dumping is an appalling violation of the public trust lands of New Haven and is inimical to the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. The city is vulnerable to illegal dumping due to the presence of three rivers, numerous open spaces, tidal wetlands and vehicle bridges. The efforts of the Police Department, Parks Department and Livable City Initiative are essential to halting illegal dumping.

The Commission notes the long-term need for a new or renovated police headquarters. While the Union Avenue site has served the department well, the facility does not have to be sited here and additional options may be explored.

FIRE SAFETY

The New Haven Fire Department is among the nation's oldest professional fire departments, providing both emergency services and support for civil defense. The department also operates C-Med (Central Emergency Medical Dispatch), the agency responsible for providing communications services in support of emergency medical and other public safety services in the South Central Connecticut Region.

Civil Defense support services include management and staffing of the Emergency Operations Center; coordination of emergency activities by the City and external agencies; and participation in federal and state emergency planning response programs. These activities are heightened in light of domestic security needs.

The Commission recommends appropriate attention to port security. The Port of New Haven is largest in Connecticut, handling approximately 50% of the state's petroleum needs. Both the US Coast Guard identified the port for enhanced security and Connecticut DOT as part of 2002 security assessments. There are several pressing needs, including a standardized credential process and an enhanced, coordinated video surveillance system. In addition, the Commission notes the regional functions of the Fire Training Facility. Over time, improvements to the facility should be supported on this basis.

GENERAL GUIDANCE ON NEW FACILITIES

The Commission offers the following general guidance in the siting of new community facilities:

- In terms of size and scale, new community facilities should be designed to be compatible with the neighborhood and the surrounding environs.
- New community facilities should be integrated into the pedestrian fabric of a neighborhood, allowing functional access for walkers and bikers.
- In designing new facilities, the existing network of public streets and buildings should be retained and/or restored in order to enhance neighborhood-based circulation and to avoid super-block oriented construction styles.

UTILITIES

In general, the City of New Haven is well serviced for gas, electricity, telephone and cable. Rarely do major development projects impact the level of service in the City. The deregulated environment, however, has changed the landscape dramatically. The Commission notes the increased demand for public space by many new and existing service providers. Enhanced management of the public space – including appropriate compensation to the municipality – is necessary.

The following providers service the city:

Natural Gas	Southern Connecticut Gas Company 60 Marsh Hill Road, Orange, CT
Electric	The United Illuminating Company 159 Church Street, New Haven, CT
Telephone	SBC Communications 10 Wall Street, New Haven, CT
Cable	Comcast Cable 630 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT

While specific street-by-street information indicates adequate coverage, the Commission notes certain concerns related to fiber optic / broadband service, gas transmission, electric distribution and electricity production.

Fiber Optic and Broadband Services. For New Haven to be competitive in the new economy, adequate fiber coverage is essential. The Commission notes that many companies have telecommunications facilities in the city. However, a comprehensive map of fiber coverage could not be obtained. (Wireless telecommunications facilities are tracked by the Siting Council.) The Commission recommends statutory amendments to require companies provide this information for economic development purposes.

Gas Transmission. The emergence of natural gas as a cleaner, domestically produced fuel benefits the environment and national energy policy. According to ISO New England, natural gas-fired electric energy is projected to increase from 16% in 1999 to approximately 45% in 2005. The dramatic increase has affected both the price and distribution of natural gas in the region. The higher cost likewise affects fleet conversions

to cleaner-burning natural gas. The Commission recommends continued work on statewide policy to manage natural gas resources.

Electric Production. While natural gas is being used in new power plant construction, many of New Haven's facilities – even dual-generation ones – continue to run on oil. New Haven provides far more energy to the grid than is consumed locally. Harbor Station – a so-called Sooty Six facility – and the proposed restart of English Station raise environmental justice and public health issues. The Commission notes that, in light of air pollution and climate change issues, conversion to renewable power sources must be accelerated. The Commission further encourages on-site generators, such as those found at Yale University, Yale-New Haven Hospital, Simkins Industries, Southern Connecticut State University and St. Raphael's Hospital to also purchase / convert to renewable power sources. Recent fuel cell initiatives at the WPCA and at Yale's Science Hill campus are important and timely steps in this direction.

Electric Distribution. In Downtown, the Commission notes the interconnected system provides redundancy and service coverage in the event of power outages. The balance of the city is provided basic electric service similar to that found in surrounding towns. A map of the interconnected area is shown in Figure 9.5. The interconnect has several notable missing elements, including the Coliseum site and the George / Crown Street area. If these areas develop in a more intensive fashion (as recommended in this comprehensive plan), then the interconnect should be expanded to include these areas. Due considerations should be given to including major arterials (eg. Whitney Avenue) in the interconnect as well.

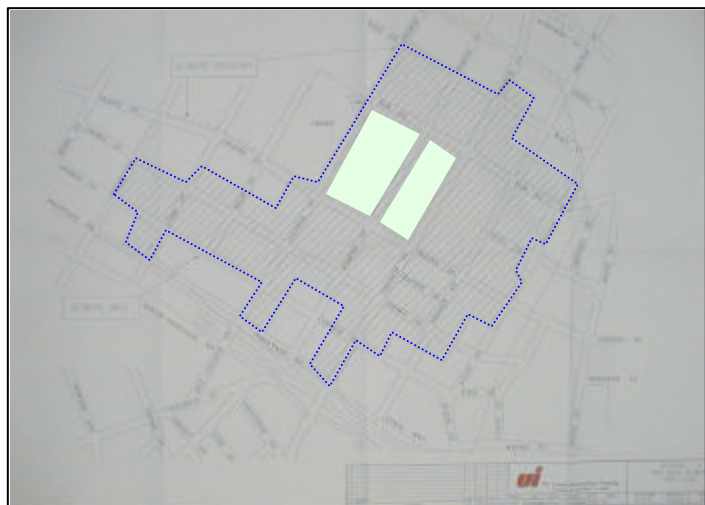


Figure 9.5:
United Illuminating Company's map of the Downtown interconnect.