

From the Executive Director
David MacDonald

2022 will be a year of growth and action for AHNA

AHNA is beginning the New Year with the recently completed Neighborhood Strategic Plan and a busy agenda for 2022. The AHNA Board of Directors have reviewed the Strategic Plan and identified 8 key projects that will create the foundation needed to achieve the goals in the Strategic Plan. We urge you to attend the General Meeting at 6:15pm via Zoom. Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4521915370?pwd=aG9OUHINMIVXSZWVaRUlsSEFaZnJSQT09>
Meeting ID: 452 191 5370 Passcode: 897273

AHNA's mission statement is that we empower and connect residents and stakeholders to improve the quality of life in Asylum Hill. Many of the goals in the Strategic Plan require collaboration among our stakeholders and residents. The 8 projects for 2022 include the Food Composting project, Farmington Avenue Improvement project, Blighted Building inventory, Asylum Hill Tree Canopy Assessment, Improving Access to Human Services for our residents, Displaying Art on Farmington Ave., Installing Cameras near crime "hot spots", and funding to complete the Comet Diner restoration.

We had 74 volunteer residents and stakeholders involved in the Strategic Planning process. We will need lots of volunteer support to achieve the goals in our plan. If any of these projects interest you, please reach out (exdir@asylumhill.org) to me to get involved. Below is a summary of each project.

Food Composting Project: Hartford spends millions each year disposing of food waste. Environmental activists in AHNA propose a better way, composting. Food composting reduces green-house gas pollution and will save the city millions if it were done citywide. Food composting is a demonstration project that will provide a better model for disposing of food waste. The project will sign up residents for composting, volunteers will pick up the food scraps, and deposit them in composting bins that will be located at each community garden in Asylum Hill, so that garden waste can also be composted. Each garden will then have free compost for use in the gardens.

Farmington Avenue Improvement project: The state has authorized \$7 million to complete the Farmington Avenue streetscape project. The Strategic Plan calls for AHNA to support economic development along Farmington Ave. This project will work with our merchants to identify more ways to help support their businesses there.

Blighted Property Inventory: To assist the city's efforts to reduce blight in our neighborhoods, AHNA will develop and maintain a definitive list of all the blighted properties in Asylum Hill.

Tree Canopy Assessment: The Strategic Plan sets out a goal of having a 30% tree canopy by 2032. AHNA and Knox will partner to complete a comprehensive assessment of our existing tree canopy, identifying where and how many trees should be planted to maintain a healthy tree canopy of 30% in Asylum Hill.

Improving Human Service Access for our residents: Asylum Hill is blessed with many social service non-profits, as many as 70 different agencies. We have found that many residents are not aware of all these services. Even service providers don't know about all the services available in Asylum Hill. Therefore, this project will identify all services in Asylum Hill, especially youth services. AHNA will work with these providers to better publicize the services to residents and stakeholders. There are discussions about forming a council of the non-profits in Asylum Hill to better coordinate services and referrals.

Displaying Art on Farmington Ave: Another idea for improving Farmington Avenue is to display the art of local artists at locations along the Avenue. This project is connected to the City's new DominGO program to close streets to traffic for one Sunday a month, starting on June 26th with Farmington Ave. This is to encourage pedestrians, bicyclists, skateboarders, etc. to come out for events and activities. AHNA and our partners will organize activities and Art displays that promote Asylum Hill as a great place to live and work.

Installing Cameras near crime "hot spots": Increased crime during the pandemic has been a big concern of many people in Asylum Hill. The Public Safety Task Force has recommended more cameras that can assist HPD in locating and arresting criminals. AHNA will collaborate with HPD and our residents to determine where cameras should be located.

As you can see, AHNA has a big work plan for 2022. It may be a lot of work, but completing these projects is essential so that we are ready and positioned to tackle the next goals in the plan. We will need your help to accomplish these important goals. Thanks to the Hartford's communication team in producing a video that describes our vision for Asylum Hill. Please view it at <https://www.asylumhill.org/strategic-plan.html>. I believe this is going to be a great year for AHNA and Asylum Hill. We hope you will join us.