A model of collaboration between residents, the City of Chelsea, and Chelsea Neighborhood Developers.
From Distress to A Vibrant Gateway: A Community Action Plan For Chelsea's Bellingham Hill Neighborhood

Over the course of 2009 the City of Chelsea and Chelsea Neighborhood Developers partnered with residents of the Bellingham Hill section of the Shurtleff-Bellingham neighborhood to create a new vision for the area. Ideas for improving the neighborhood were generated by residents and by city and community leaders at a series of planning meetings; priority ideas were incorporated into the Action Plan. The Plan recognizes that sustainable improvement requires changes on many levels: in the built environment, in the neighborhood’s social networks, and in improvements to the economic opportunities available to residents. To be successful, the plan requires that its community partners -- Bellingham Hill residents, the City of Chelsea, and Chelsea Neighborhood Developers -- each commit to specific action steps. Partner representatives have each endorsed the plan and are ready to get to work to make this vision a reality. A full plan is available on request.

The Area:
The Northern side of Bellingham Hill is comprised of four streets: Bellingham, Grove, Marlboro, and Library, which run from Chelsea’s downtown up and over Bellingham Hill. The area is poised for change as residents, the City and COND have partnered to identify and address long-standing problems. Bellingham Hill was densely built in the early 1900’s to an era before cars were common. A significant portion of the housing is in disrepair; overcrowding and illegal apartments are common, and foreclosures are concentrated in this area. The narrow streets are clogged with cars, parking is limited, and infrastructure is in need of repair. Trash and crime reflect the blight of the neighborhood. Against this backdrop, the emerging Rox District, a new neighborhood built on the foundation of a former industrial area bordering Bellingham Hill, inspires hope among residents of Bellingham Hill about the potential for transformation in their neighborhood.

A Commitment to Improve:
The City of Chelsea and Chelsea Neighborhood Developers have focused their attention on this four-block corridor, believing that significant impact could be realized through strong community partnerships. Months of research and analysis laid the groundwork for a series of four neighborhood charrettes over the summer of 2009. Led by pro bono planners and architects from The Community Design Resource Center (CDRC), the four charrettes attracted over 97 residents and key neighborhood stakeholders, who together created this blueprint for revitalization.

Priorities For Redevelopment Included:
- Clean sidewalks and streets in good repair
- Plenty of parking
- Crime reduction to improve a sense of safety
- Traffic calming to slow speeding cars
- Great parks
- High quality places to live
- A strong sense of community
- Increased economic opportunity

The Process:

Charrette 1: Listening, June 9, 2009:
Residents articulated a vision for the future of their neighborhood drawing on what residents identified as its strengths: diversity, frequent and reliable public transportation, the adjacent Rox District and other new developments in the area.

Charrette 2: Testing Design Ideas, July 9, 2009:
CDRC tested design proposals that addressed concerns brought up in the first charrette; charrette participants provided more information to refine and focus the proposals.

Charrette 3: Listening to Financial Needs and Testing Ideas, July 22, 2009:
In a focused discussion about developing their financial assets, residents identified barriers to financial well-being (including knowledge, skills, and access to resources and jobs) and responded to proposals to address those needs.

Charrette 4: Establishing a Plan, September 15, 2009:
Participants engaged in a lively review of proposed solutions, and discussed their priorities.

The Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Residents</th>
<th>COND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Community Action Team meetings manage security on monthly basis.</td>
<td>Boz. Watch (can expand to other areas)</td>
<td>Neighbors report problems to police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>Traffic Calming Task Force</td>
<td>Traffic Calming Task Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash</td>
<td>Traffic Calming Task Force</td>
<td>Trash Calming Task Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Targeted code enforcement</td>
<td>Community Enhancement: team campaign to reduce trash/litter and increase recycling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks and Greenways</td>
<td>Highland Park redesign</td>
<td>Box District active playground and park design/build</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Resident-only parking</td>
<td>Advocate for shared parking in St. Rose lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Financial education and savings programs</td>
<td>Neighbor Circles fosters neighborhood leadership training programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>Offer opportunities for residents to use city policy through</td>
<td>Neighbor Circles fosters neighborhood leadership training programs</td>
<td></td>
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**NORTH BELLINGHAM HILL REVITALIZATION PLAN**

**The Plan**

- **Residents to meet with Church — Potential shared parking arrangement?**
- **Green Belt:** Improved public transportation connection, walkway and green space
- **Box District Park:** Community participation in design and construction
- **Security Camera**
- **Possible parking with recreation area**
- **CND Purchase/Rebuild**
- **Highland Steps:** Option 1 Trim trees/replace planting, Option 2 Explore opportunity for community planting/terrace/seating/or other re-use
- **Bellingham Hill:** Study potential green space/Explore alternate parking

**Bellingham Hill Revitalization Plan Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Short Term (1 year)</th>
<th>Medium Term (1-3 yrs)</th>
<th>Long Term (3-8 Yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Space</strong></td>
<td>- CBG/CND Green Highland Planning Process&lt;br&gt;- Box District Park</td>
<td>- Highland Steps and Bellingham&lt;br&gt;Green transformed into green district community space&lt;br&gt;- More street trees added&lt;br&gt;- Urban Forest/Community forestry&lt;br&gt;- Future Box District Park connection</td>
<td>- Green Belt Walking path&lt;br&gt;- More street trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traffic Calming</strong></td>
<td>- Traffic Advisory Group formed&lt;br&gt;- Speed limits lowered and enforced</td>
<td>- Bollards and raised curbs&lt;br&gt;- Added in key intersections*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parking</strong></td>
<td>- Enhanced resident-only parking throughout the neighborhood</td>
<td>- 144 parking lots on available parking lots&lt;br&gt;- Metered spots installed at 5 times</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trash</strong></td>
<td>- Trash Connection formed&lt;br&gt;- Comprehensive pilot program in Bellingham Hill corridor</td>
<td>- Public trash collection&lt;br&gt;- Curbide small and recycling education initiatives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td>- Surveillance Cameras installed&lt;br&gt;- Front Porch Light program</td>
<td>- Community Action Team facilitates neighborhood ownership&lt;br&gt;- More street lights installed</td>
<td>- More street lights installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing/Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>- Targeted Code Enforcement for BD&lt;br&gt;- CND purchases and rebuilds few distressed properties&lt;br&gt;- City Home Improvement loan programs established</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economic/Social</strong></td>
<td>- NeighborWorks, First Thursday district, CET provides opportunities for community engagement&lt;br&gt;- Financial Empowerment classes, DPA and other programs, and free tax prep offer economic support</td>
<td>- Family Economic Center opens&lt;br&gt;- Leadership training empowers more neighborhoods groups</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

*Schedule for these items subject to funding*

**Street Sections**

- Highland and Gerrish Existing Condition
- Box District Proposed Park
- Highland Steps Existing Condition
- Highland Steps Proposed Park
Special Thanks To...

CHELSEA RESIDENTS

Sandra Aguizulz
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Roy Avellano
Paula Barton
Brian Hanteberg

CDRC-Boston Mission Statement:

Assisting communities to envision and implement high-quality and sustainable designs.

About Chelsea Neighborhood Developers:

Chelsea Neighborhood Developers is a nonprofit community development corporation that believes that great neighborhoods empower families to grow and prosper. CND builds vibrant neighborhoods that foster connections among people and to place and that stimulate further investment in the neighborhood’s social fabric, economic life, and built environments. Board President Christian Calvo is a life-long Chelsea resident who founded a property maintenance business in the city. Christian says “CND does our part to make Chelsea’s multi-cultural neighborhoods vibrant. We build affordable and mixed-income housing. We help families to realize their economic dreams. And we bring residents together to participate in making our neighborhoods safe, clean, friendly and desirable.”