

KEYS TO THE CITY

WHAT IS — OR SHOULD BE — HAPPENING IN HARTFORD'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Blue Hills

University of Hartford continues celebration of its 50th graduating class. Construction kickoff of \$21 million first phase of the university's arts center at old Cadillac site set for June 18. Rebirth of prominent corner good for neighborhood. University High School of Science and Engineering on Mark Twain Drive delayed; officials hope for late summer groundbreaking.

Upper Albany

St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center finishes \$4 million conversion of factory building into laundry facility on Homestead Avenue. Empty lot at Vine and Greenfield streets sprouts two homes courtesy of Christian Activities Council. Neighborhood groups seeking \$500,000 for system of security cameras along avenue; keep fingers crossed.

Clay-Arsenal

The Greater Hartford YMCA is halfway to fundraising goal, thanks to corporations and the generous Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. When the Y hits 75 percent, it will begin construction on the \$9.3 million building at Albany and Brook. President/CEO Kevin Washington hopes for a fall groundbreaking.

Northeast

New bus shelters are installed. Banners are up. New trees are planted and new street lights are mounted. Officials and residents to celebrate new Main Street with a ribbon-cutting at Terry Square on June 14. Architects preparing renderings of the new Kelvin D. Anderson community center.

North Meadows

Auto dealerships putting it in gear. CarMax opened a year ago; Harte Subaru opened a new store over the winter. Harte Nissan and the Hartford Toyota Superstore are both expanding. Rezoning just completed to bring a major retail development to Edart and former Advo sites; project still in early stages.

West End

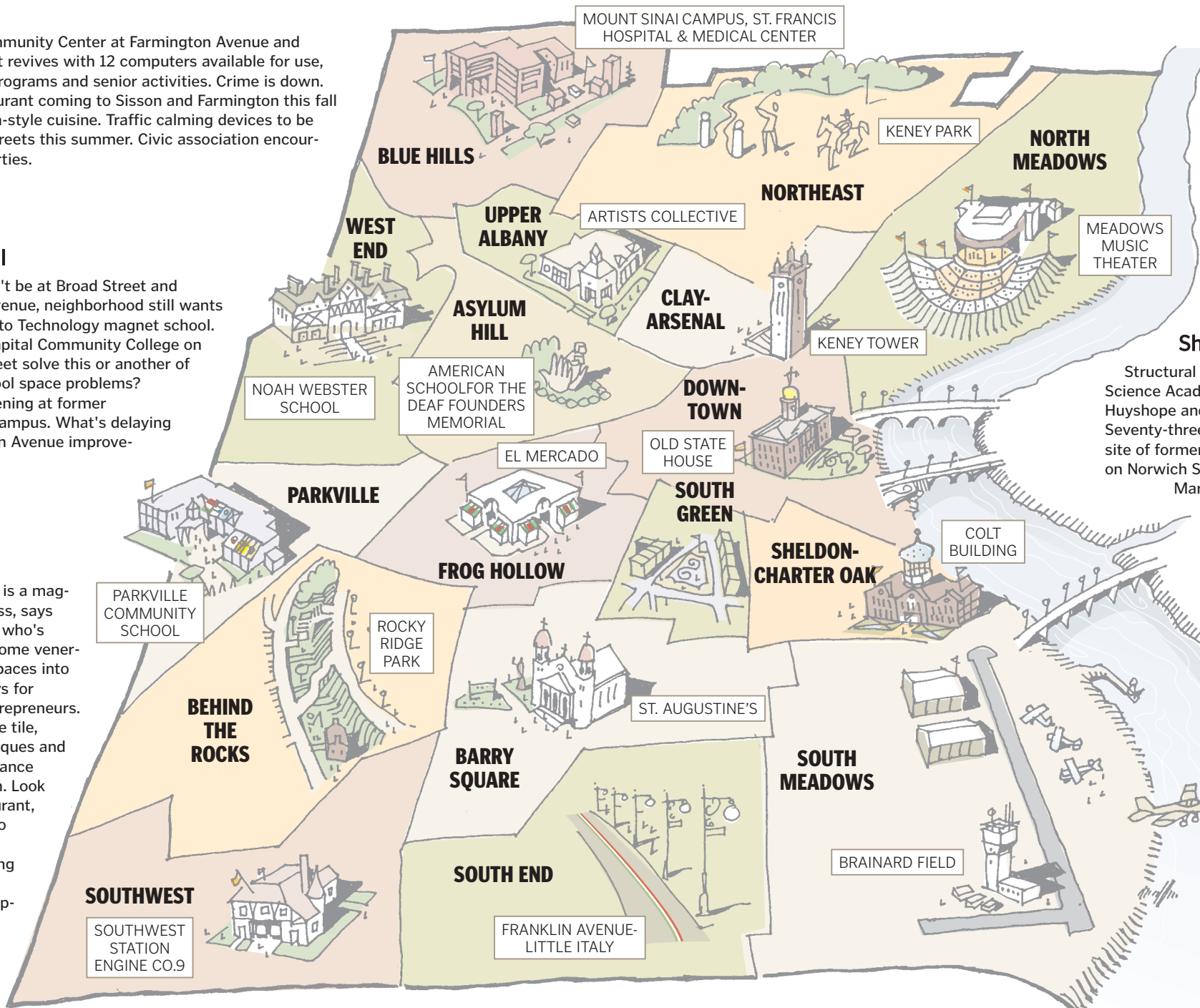
West End Community Center at Farmington Avenue and Denison Street revives with 12 computers available for use, after-school programs and senior activities. Crime is down. Another restaurant coming to Sisson and Farmington this fall with American-style cuisine. Traffic calming devices to be installed on streets this summer. Civic association encourages block parties.

Asylum Hill

Though it won't be at Broad Street and Farmington Avenue, neighborhood still wants the Pathways to Technology magnet school. Can former Capital Community College on Woodland Street solve this or another of the city's school space problems? Nothing happening at former MassMutual campus. What's delaying the Farmington Avenue improvement project?

Parkville

Neighborhood is a magnet for business, says Carlos Mouta, who's transformed some venerable factory spaces into trendy quarters for designers, entrepreneurs. He'd like to see tile, plumbing, antiques and high-end appliance stores move in. Look for new restaurant, Barca Tapas, to open soon. Permits pending for Pope Commons shopping center. National tenants interested. Work visible by September.



Downtown

Library renovation almost done, finally. Looks great. On Buckingham Street, 11 townhouse apartments being renovated into nine condos; first one ready for sale, says developer Carlos Mouta. He also owns the former Municipal Cafeteria, where Tinker's Seafood will open a restaurant later this year.

Sheldon-Charter Oak

Structural steel is up at the new Sports Science Academy magnet school at Huyshope and Wawarme avenues. Seventy-three spanking new homes at site of former Dutch Point project. South on Norwich Street, eyesore C.B.L. Food Market, owned by a Glastonbury resident, still casts a pall.

South Meadows

Although area remains significantly light industry, business owners launching campaign to promote the South Meadows as a retail shopping, eating and playing district. City helping the cause with free shuttle bus service from downtown. Public Works installs rumble-strip material on Murphy Road that prevents drag-racing cars from gaining traction. No traction, no action.

Hartford's Neighborhoods And Their Landmarks

ILLUSTRATION BY PHIL LOHMAN / SPECIAL TO THE COURANT • TEXT BY COURANT EDITORIAL STAFF WRITERS

Frog Hollow

Sounds of summer on Park Street: Mr. Softee truck, salsa music, laughter. Street lamps, new sidewalks, fresh facades invite life on the street. Progress on Lyric Theater. A whopping 110 tons of debris removed. Vintage movie house awaits conversion to library/cultural center. How about it, governor, mayor? Time to rescue this 1919 gem.

Behind the Rocks

Trinity isn't sending reps to community meetings anymore; the college needs to reconnect with neighborhood. But the city connected recently by foreclosing on abandoned two-family at 232 Hillside and auctioning off the druggie sanctuary. Thanks to HART for pushing this test case of anti-blight ordinance.

Southwest

Warm weather makes residents think more about safe, quiet streets. Neighbors would like to see police cruisers on regular patrol, not just passing through on calls. Families and Friends of Forster Heights Park getting organized with bylaws, officers and good involvement from residents. Looking to city for funding to improve the park.

South End

Shuttle service links conventioners and other potential patrons to neighborhood's wide menu of restaurants; two vans staffed by Hartford guides provide added security and aid five nights a week. Ribbon-cutting for expanded Metzner Center set for June 15. Renovations to start soon for senior center at 850 Maple Ave.

Barry Square

Beautiful light fixtures, brick walks and street trees give Maple Avenue a cosmopolitan look. Welcoming triangle with plantings, pavers ready for installation. New businesses, cafes, Peruvian restaurant pop up. Wellness center for seniors out for bid, ready by November. Cleanup volunteers fill a dumpster with trash. Shine on.

South Green

Plaza Mayor developers expect to have financing package in place within three weeks, in time for a July groundbreaking on the twin condominium towers. Let's hope so. And while they're at it, could city please finish the renovation of the South Green itself?