



Heart of Orange Neighborhood Plan Orange, NJ

Submitted to the
Department of Community Affairs
By HANDS, Inc.
April, 2010



FORM NP-1, page 1: Cover Page for Submission of a Neighborhood Plan

Neighborhood: Heart of Orange
Eligible Municipality: Orange

Legislative District: 27
Mayor: Eldridge Hawkins

Name of Nonprofit Organization Applying: HANDS, Inc
Name and Title of CEO/Executive Director: Patrick Morrissy

Address: 15 South Essex Ave.
City: Orange State: NJ Zip Code: 07050
Charity Registration Number: 376200-03

Contact Person: Robin Gordon
Contact Person's Address: 15 South Essex Ave., Orange, NJ 07050
Phone: (973) 678-3110 Fax: (973) 678-0014 E-Mail: robin@handsinc.org

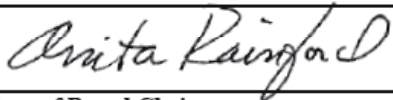
What is the time period for this Neighborhood Plan? 8 years
(The time period must be at least 2 years, and no more than 10 years)

Did you partner with another organization to develop the Neighborhood Plan? ☒ Yes (complete page 2)
☐ No

Corporate Sponsor (If applicable): Provide information on the corporation that has committed its support to the Nonprofit organization. Must be incorporated in the State of NJ.

Company Name: _____
Address: _____
Contact Person (including title): _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

Certification: To the best of my knowledge and belief, the data in this application are true and correct.
The governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document.

Anita Rainford	HANDS, Inc. Board Chair
Name 	Title
	April 9, 2010
Signature of Board Chairperson	Date

FORM NP-1, page 2: PARTNERING ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Please provide the following information for each organization with which you partnered in developing the Neighborhood Plan. Copy and attach additional sheets if necessary.

Name of Partnering Organization: University of Orange
Contact Person (including title): Mindy Thompson Fullilove, M.D., Director of Organization
Contact Person's Address: 501 Central Ave.
City: Orange State: NJ Zip Code: 07050
Phone: (201) 562-3066 Fax: (212) 305-4868 E-Mail: mf29@columbia.edu

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

The University of Orange worked with HANDS staff to plan envisioning meetings, host a Placemaking Conference and bring Michel Cantal Dupart, the renowned French urbanist to consult on the plan.

Name of Partnering Organization: First Presbyterian Church in Orange
Contact Person (including title): Anthony Mark Lamort, Minister of Music
Contact Person's Address: 420 Main Street
City: Orange State: NJ Zip Code: 07050
Phone: (973) 678-1719 Fax: E-Mail: lunires33@aol.com

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

The First Presbyterian Church helped host envisioning sessions including the Kick-off Luncheon and the Placemaking Conference.

Name of Partnering Organization: Family Success Center Orange
Contact Person (including title): Madeline Corredor, Family Coordinator
Contact Person's Address: 170 Scotland Road
City: Orange State: NJ Zip Code: 07050
Phone: (973) 677-2500 Fax: (973) 677-2551 E-Mail: mcorredor@familyconnectionsny.org

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

The Family Success Center hosted a series of envisioning meetings.

Name of Partnering Organization: First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County
Contact Person (including title): Reverend Darrell Berger, Minister
Contact Person's Address: 35 Cleveland Street
City: Orange State: NJ Zip Code: 07050
Phone: (973) 674-0010 Fax: E-Mail: dberger361@gmail.com

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

The First Unitarian Universalist church of Essex County hosted a series of envisioning meetings.

Section 2: Executive Summary

“Because of its walking access to four train stations, Orange, NJ, is a city for the 21st century.”

—Michel Cantal-Dupart, April 3, 2009

The Heart of Orange Plan proposes to create a vibrant urban village, with a range of housing choices, closely connected to small businesses, commerce, public facilities, parks and transit. This planning process was led by the University of Orange, at the request of HANDS, Inc, a community development corporation (CDC) headquartered in Orange, NJ. Guided by input from a broad range of neighborhood residents and city leaders, and inspired by the vision provided by Michel Cantal-Dupart, this plan was designed to create a distinctive center for Orange.



The planning process documented that the Heart of Orange has remarkable assets: a rail station, one of the busiest Main Streets in New Jersey, historic institutions and businesses, beautiful civic parks and monuments, and residents who are deeply attached to the Heart of Orange and the whole city.



The planning process also documented that the fabric of Orange’s center, pulled apart by the elevation of the Erie Lackawanna Railroad (now NJ Transit) tracks as well as by the construction of Interstate 280, has undergone a slow and steady deterioration. A number of key buildings, including the Orange Memorial Hospital and the First Presbyterian Church, are in limbo. Vacant and abandoned properties have increased and begun to pull apart the residential areas, and this is aggravated by the foreclosure crisis.



The City and its leaders are well aware of the difficult situation and much is being done to change the situation, including the redevelopment of the Walter G. Alexander Homes, improvements to the Orange Train Station and the construction of much-needed new housing.

Based on a sound understanding of the area’s assets and challenges, and an assessment of the current efforts at revitalization, the Heart of Orange Plan proposes 21 interconnected initiatives including catalytic real estate and public projects. At the

center of the plan is the emergence of a new concept of “City Island,” the land in between Route 280 and the train tracks. Beautification flowing out from City Island will rejuvenate the whole neighborhood. The projects include large public spaces, historic restoration, vacant property

rescue and a new redevelopment area. They encompass housing, commercial, mixed use and educational uses. As a package, they represent the rebirth of the Heart of Orange.

The Heart of Orange plan will be led by HANDS, Inc., a community development organization with more than 20 years experience in redevelopment. HANDS has successfully led another NRTC Project, the Valley Arts Project, which has brought new vigor and interest to a section of Orange and West Orange that was abandoned by the relocation of factories. HANDS has the vision, capacity and experience to lead this plan to fruition.

Section 3: Neighborhood description and statement of need

A) Describe the neighborhood

Located at the center of Essex County, New Jersey, the densely populated City of Orange Township is contiguous with East Orange, West Orange and South Orange. The city is a multi-ethnic center, attracting large numbers of young immigrant families, interested in its urban amenities and welcoming atmosphere. The city has a long and distinguished history as a home for recreation, industry and culture. Its Main Street is one of the busiest in the state, lined with historic buildings and a colonial-era graveyard. Its main park, Orange Park, is a beautiful facility with a duck pond, ball fields, a children's playground, and formal gardens. The city's future is linked to its easy walking access to four train stations on NJ Transit's Morris and Essex Line, and to the large former hospital site, ready for adaptive re-use.

Despite the existence of a multifaceted public transportation network, access to an ample employment base and strong community support, Orange is listed in the New Jersey Municipal Data Index as one of the most distressed communities in the state. The central part of the city, what we are calling the "Heart of Orange," is a distressed part of the city, with higher rates of poverty, housing vacancy, unemployment, and other markers of difficult circumstances. It is bounded by Main Street to the North, Scotland Road to the West, Central Avenue to the South and Oakwood Avenue to the East.

This neighborhood, Main Street and just south of Main, is the historic center of the city, and it has always a place for working people to live. Many worked at nearby factories, such as the Rheingold Brewery. Orange was not exempt from the segregation of the times, and the Heart of Orange was subdivided by race, with African Americans east of Center Street and Euro-Americans, largely Italians, to the west. A warm neighborly atmosphere counterbalanced the uncertainties of life in a poor urban area. The interdependencies of the people were supported by a large number of churches, settlement houses, and small businesses. Union Baptist Church and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church were the two major churches serving the residential area, while the churches on Main Street, including the First Presbyterian Church of Orange, served the larger area of the Oranges.

Residents of the area suffered from two major urban renovations. The first was in the early 1920s when the railroad bed was raised, and a series of tunnels replaced the street-level connections. The railroad bed was never ameliorated to blend with the surrounding area. The second was the building of Route 280, which ran through the center of the area, taking hundreds of homes and many businesses. Although 7 bridges link the north and south sides of the city, the unmediated access roads create a visual "no go" zone in both directions. The neighborhood suffered, but the businesses on the eastern side, the old heart of the Black "East Ward," have suffered most. Essex Avenue, the heart of "Little Italy," has held up a little better, perhaps

because it is on an access path to the highway. The Heart of Orange, which suffered from the closing of the Rheingold plant in 1976, was further setback by the closing of the city's two hospitals, St. Mary's in 1996 and Orange Memorial in 2004. Over the years, many homes and businesses have been lost, and vacant lots left behind.



The collapse of the interior of the Heart of Orange has had a dramatic effect on Main Street. Its shoppers are mainly the residents of the north of Orange who are in walking distance of its stores. The wealthy southern section of Orange does not cross the deteriorating center, but rather shops in South Orange or at the area malls.

Despite these many losses and the slow crumbling of the urban fabric, people retain a love of and devotion to the area. Phil Serrani's Sanitary Bakery and Woody's Home for Services are just two of the historic businesses that serve the area and help to maintain its urbanity. The Heart of Orange is a place full of wonders, ranging from the Colonial-era cemetery to Mt. Carmel's gold steeple, from yummy cookies to wonderful Jamaican food. Its long history, interesting ethnic mix, urban amenities and future possibilities make the area a strong candidate for careful renovations.

B) Describe the need for neighborhood revitalization

According to the 2000 Census report, Orange had 32,868 residents living in a 2.2 square mile area. The median income for the city was \$32,868. Unemployment stood at 6.8% of the population. Approximately 15% of the families and 19% of the individuals were living in poverty. A substantial fraction had less than a high school education, 27.8% in the 2000 census and 24.5% in the 2006 ACS. A substantial proportion of the population – 31% -- was foreign born. More than a quarter of the people spoke a language other than English, and 15% reported limited proficiency in English. In all, 23 ethnicities were reported by people living in Orange.

These statistics changed somewhat by 2006, according to the American Community Survey data from 2006-2008. At that time, the population was noted to 31,556, with a median income of \$41,913. Unemployment had risen to 8.6%. The number of families in poverty had risen to 16.6%, while the number of individuals in poverty had fallen slightly to 18%.

The housing stock of Orange was largely built before 1960 – 61% in the 2000 census – and it was predominantly rental units (70%). Though ownership had risen to 11.6% in the 2006 ACS, so had vacancies which were noted to be 11.6%, up from 6.2%.

Against this backdrop of a poor city with low education and many foreign-born citizens, the area

in the Heart of Orange is notable for more distress on every measure. As shown in the table, the Heart of Orange is younger – median age of 29 years as compared to 32.5 – and substantially poorer than the city as a whole – median household income of \$27,824 compared to \$40,852. There are more families in poverty and people unemployed, as well.

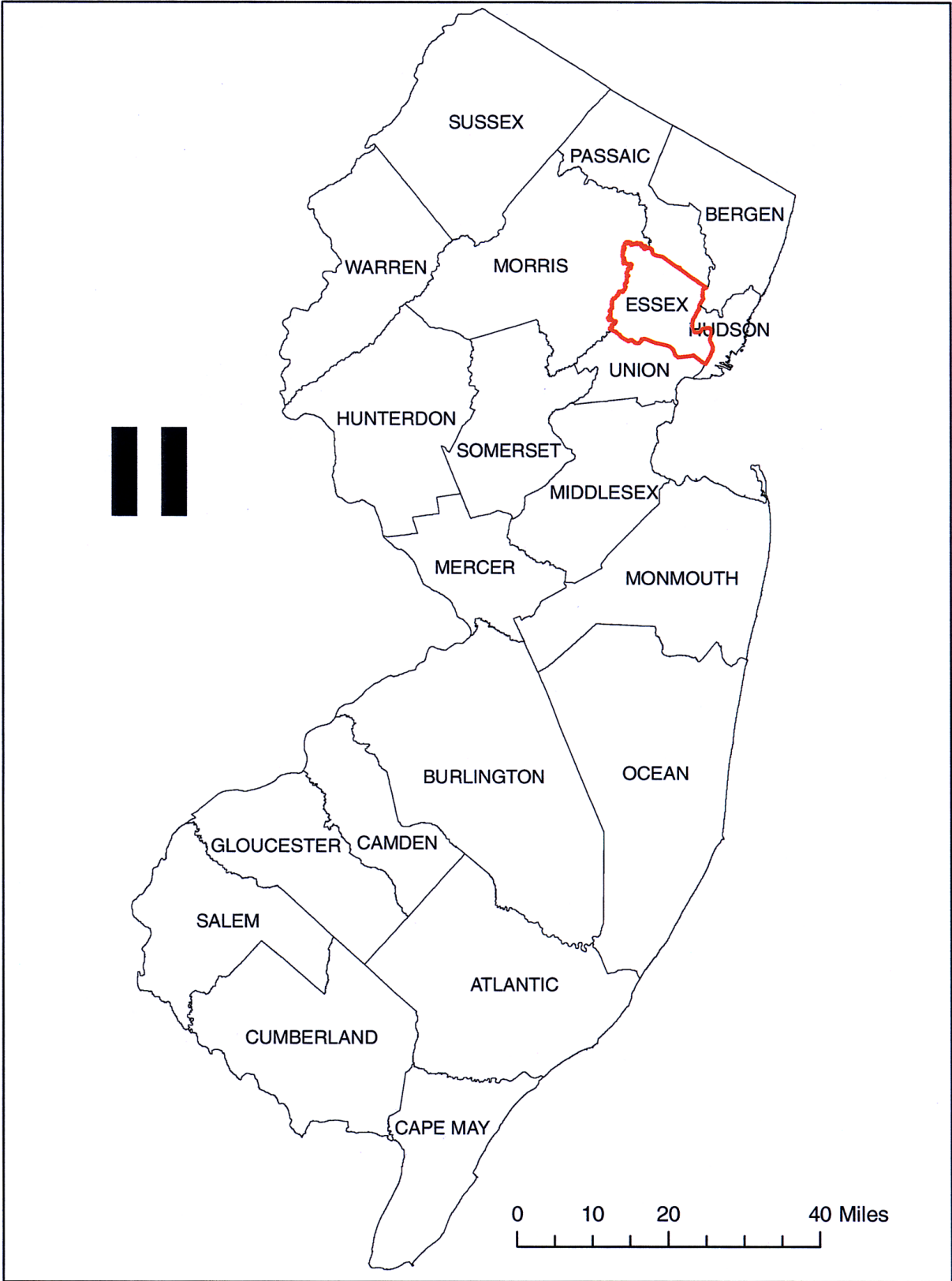
People are living in relatively difficult circumstances. The housing stock of this area of the city is older, 76.6% of units were built before 1960, as compared to 61% in the city overall (2000 census). Much of the housing stock is in poor condition. Even the sharp rise in the vacancy rate noted for the city understates the problems that have sprung up in Heart of Orange because of the recession and the foreclosure crisis. A sharp spike in problem properties – those that have been abandoned and are becoming a strain on the neighborhood – has been noted.

HANDS conducts a periodic survey of all problem properties in the city. Over a twelve year period of strategic, targeted investment, the total number of such properties had fallen. The number is now rising again due to foreclosure crisis. The 2009 problem property survey found that there were 57 problem properties in the Heart of Orange. This is more than the total number of such properties reported for the whole city in 2007.

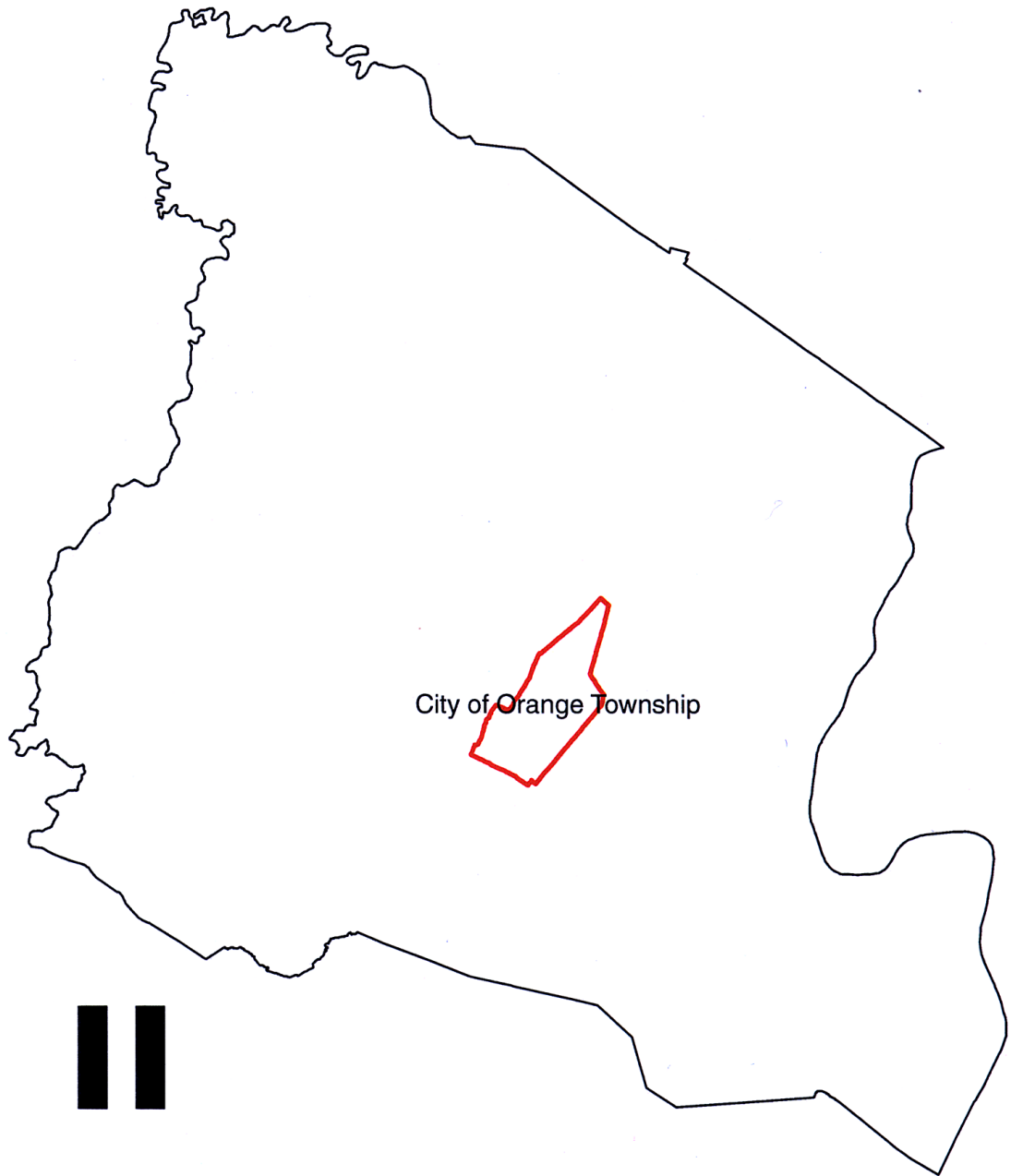
The following maps are included to place the Heart of Orange in its local context:

- New Jersey, showing Essex County
- Essex County, showing Orange
- Orange, showing Heart of Orange
- Heart of Orange boundaries
- Heart of Orange Census Tracts
- Heart of Orange Zoning Boundaries
- Heart of Orange Neighborhood Plan Map Showing Landmarks and Projects

Essex County New Jersey



City of Orange Township

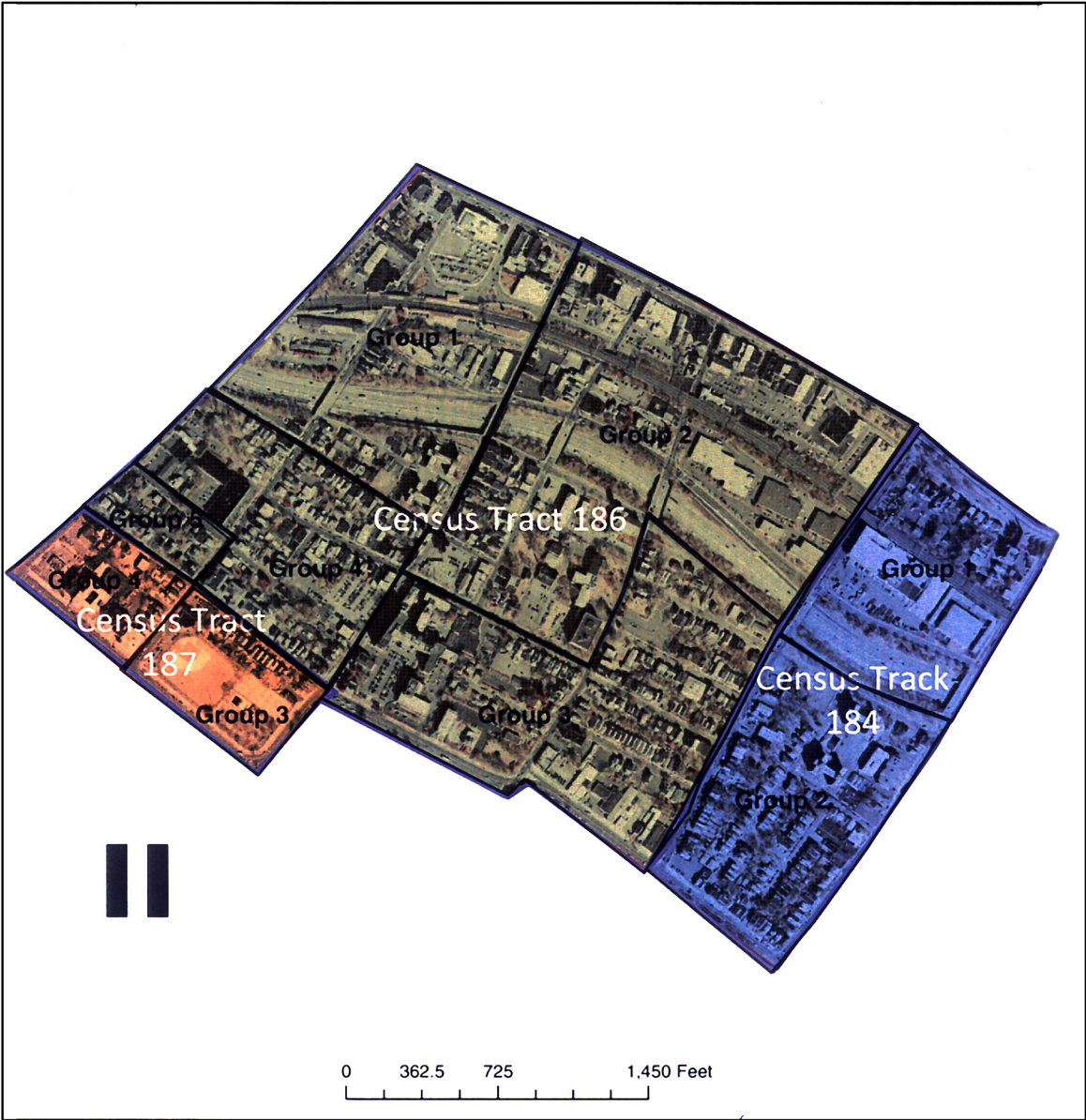


0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

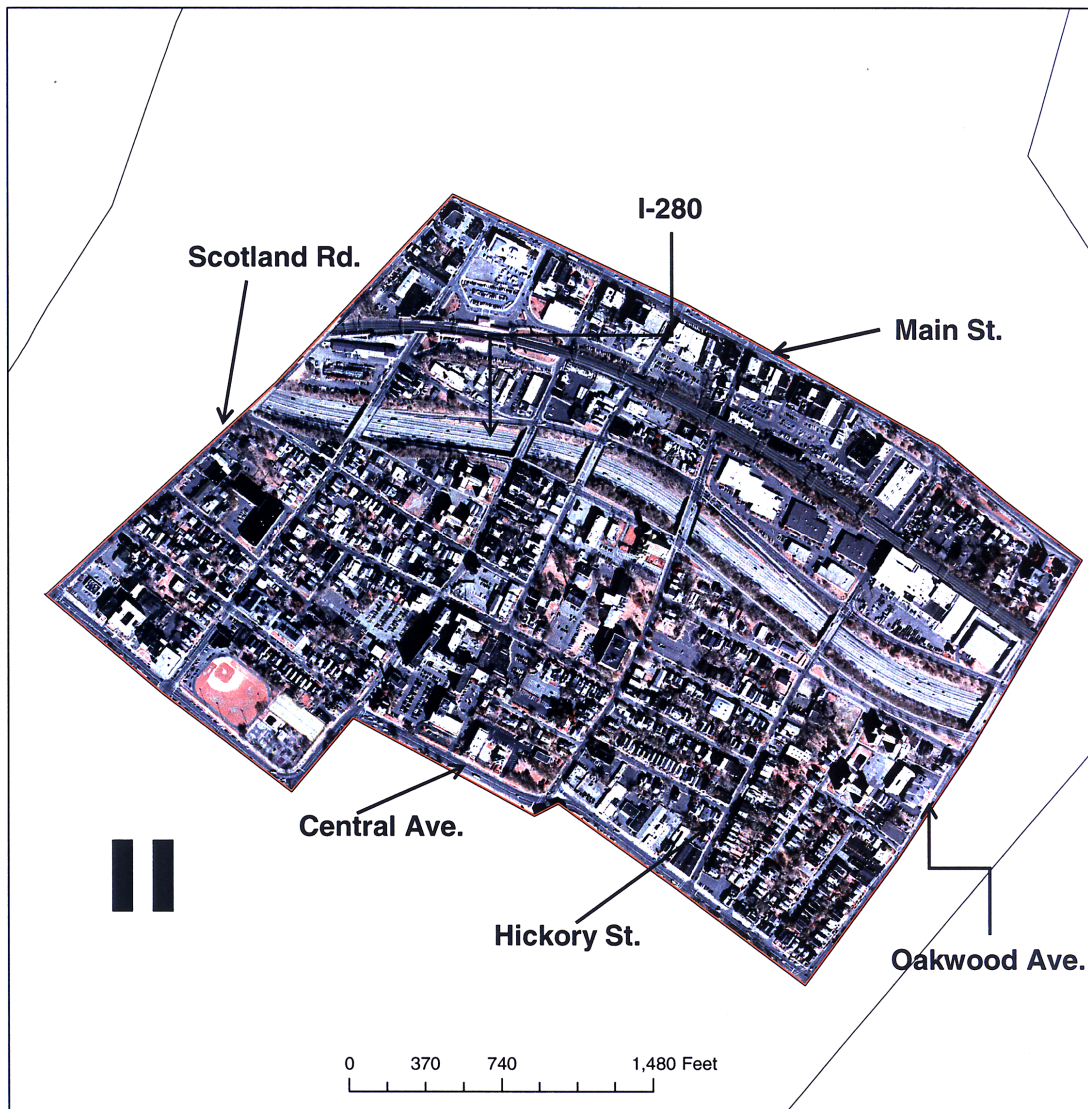
City of Orange Boundary with Heart of Orange Outlined Within



Heart of Orange Study Area
Census Tracts 184, 186, and 187



Heart of Orange Study Area



ZONING MAP CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP

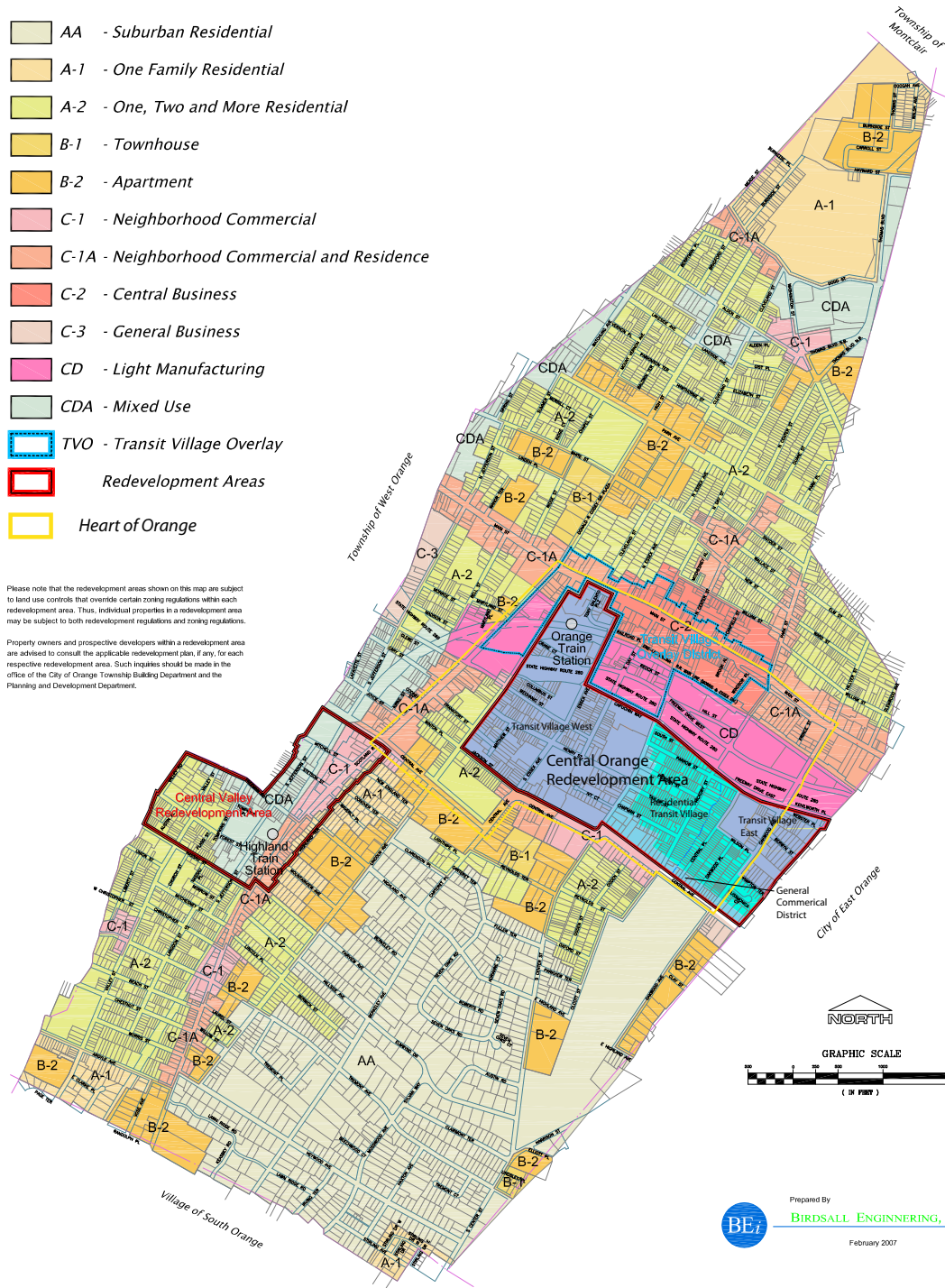


ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

- AA - Suburban Residential
- A-1 - One Family Residential
- A-2 - One, Two and More Residential
- B-1 - Townhouse
- B-2 - Apartment
- C-1 - Neighborhood Commercial
- C-1A - Neighborhood Commercial and Residence
- C-2 - Central Business
- C-3 - General Business
- CD - Light Manufacturing
- CDA - Mixed Use
- TVO - Transit Village Overlay
- Redevelopment Areas
- Heart of Orange

Please note that the redevelopment areas shown on this map are subject to land use controls that override certain zoning regulations within each redevelopment area. Thus, individual properties in a redevelopment area may be subject to both redevelopment regulations and zoning regulations.

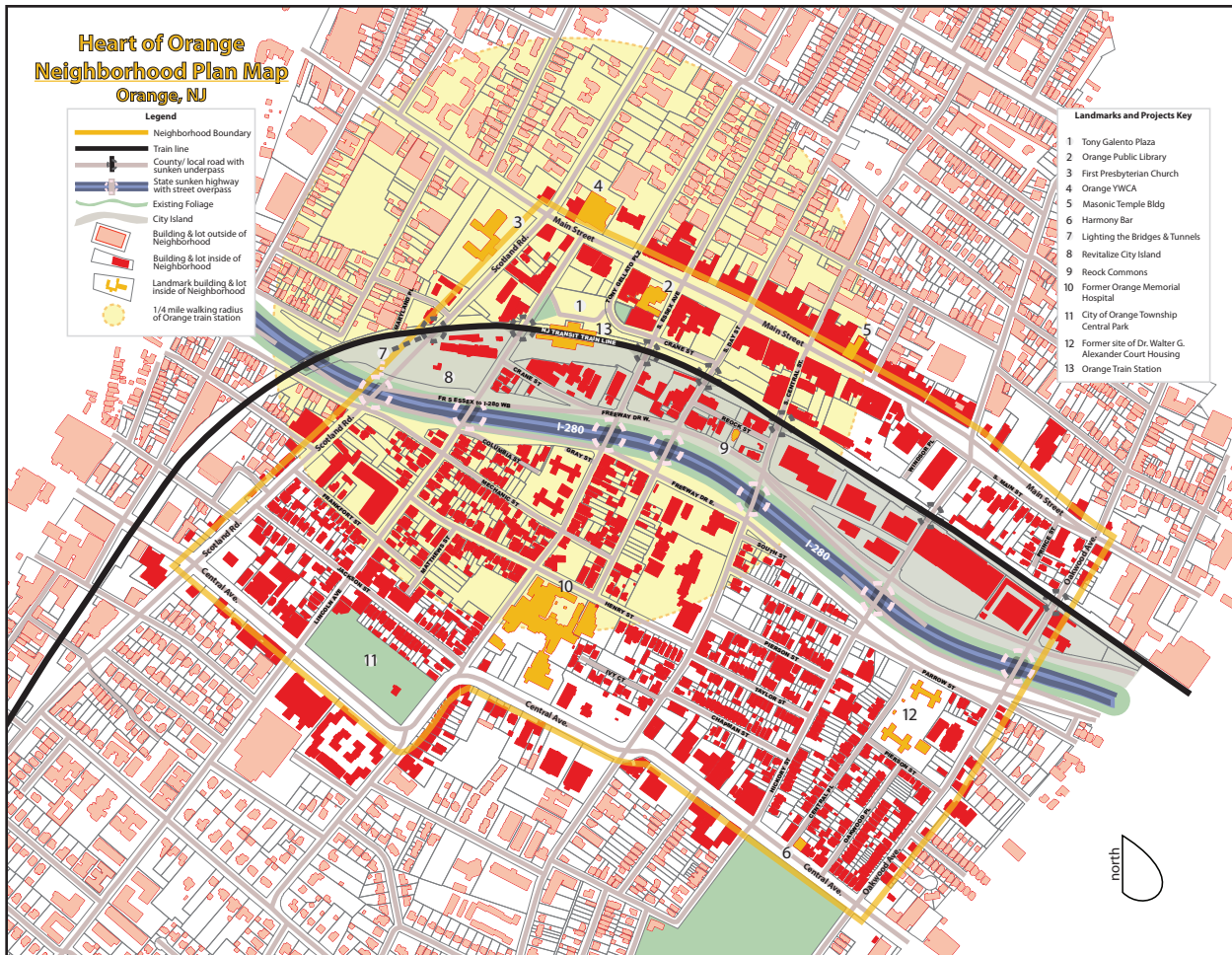
Property owners and prospective developers within a redevelopment area are advised to consult the applicable redevelopment plan, if any, for each respective redevelopment area. Such inquiries should be made in the office of the City of Orange Township Building Department and the Planning and Development Department.



Prepared By
BIRDSELL ENGINEERING, INC.

February 2007

RICHARD W. MOODY, P.E.
CITY ENGINEER
B.L. 100.0000000000000000



C) Evidence that at least 50% of households are of low and moderate income

There are approximately 2,272 households in the target area, which account for 20% of those in the City of Orange as a whole. The median income for these households in 1999 was \$27,824 as compared to \$35,759 for Orange and \$44,944 for Essex County at large. Of the households, within the targeted neighborhood, 24.26% reported income below the poverty line, 52.73% reported income below the median income. Separating the households further into family and non-family households; 21.5% of family and 31.6% of non-family households reported income below the poverty line, 50.38 percent of family and 53.25% of non-family households reported income below the median income, and 28.88 percent of family and 21.65% of non-family households reported income between the median and poverty line. On average, in 1999, these poverty estimates were 6% greater in the Heart of Orange than in The City of Orange and 10% greater than Essex County.

According to the information provided by the 1990 and 2000 Census total population increased, within the Heart of Orange, by 14%; in comparison the City of Orange and Essex County, had population increases of 10% and 2% respectively. When examined by race/ethnicity, the population of the Heart of Orange in 1999 was 8% Caucasian, 63% African American, 25% Hispanic, 1% Asian and .7% other. A reported 2% of the population was more than one race. The median age of the populations of Essex County, the City of Orange and the Heart of Orange was 35, 33 and 29 respectively. Data, collected from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey for the City of Orange indicates that 34% of the total population has a high school diploma, 40% has some college, and 9% has graduated from college.

In comparison with estimates from the 1990 census, the percentage of high school graduates increased six percentage points, the percentage of people with some college has increased 19 percentage points and the percentage of people with a bachelor's degree has decreased by seven percentage points. In the target area, 2000 census data reports, approximately 31% spoke a language other than English. Of those 2073 people, 70% reported that they speak English less than "very well." There are 1143 people, 55% of those who speak a second language, who are living in linguistically isolated households. Coupled with the rates of educational attainment, the linguistic isolation of a significant percentage of the Orange population indicates a lack of development and an overwhelming need for investment.

	2000 Census Data (see notes)				2006-8 ACS
	Tract 184	Tract 186	Composite	City	
Total population*	2,557	4,730	7,287	32,868	31,556
Population Characteristics					
Median age (years)*	29.0	29.8	29.4	32.5	32.2
Proportion of population aged under 18*	34.0%	28.8%	30.6%	30.3%	27.5%
Proportion of population aged over 60 years*	11.6%	13.4%	12.8%	14.5%	14.0%
Proportion of households headed by single women*	41.1%	30.8%	35.9%	26.3%	22.3%
Economic Characteristics					
Median household income***	\$26,051	\$29,596	\$27,824	\$40,852	\$41,913
Proportion of families below poverty rate***	21.5%	26.7%	24.1%	15.4%	16.2%
Proportion of individuals below poverty rate***	23.6%	30.2%	26.9%	18.8%	18.0%
Proportion of labour force unemployed***	8.9%	8.4%	8.7%	6.8%	8.6%
Proportion of individuals over 25 without high school degree**	32.0%	36.9%	34.5%	27.8%	24.5%
Housing Characteristics					
Total housing units*	949	1,519	2,468	12,665	12,963
Owner-occupied (% of total units)*	23.1%	19.8%	21.1%	23.8%	25.2%
Renter-occupied (% of total units)*	64.7%	73.7%	70.2%	70.0%	63.2%
Vacant housing units (% of total units)*	12.2%	6.5%	8.7%	6.2%	11.6%
Proportion of total units built prior to 1960****	76.9%	76.4%	76.6%	61.0%	64.6%
Note: Source tables for 2000 census data are as follows: * DP-1: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (based on full census) ** DP-2: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics (based on sample data) *** DP-3: Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics (based on sample data) **** QT-H4: Physical Housing Characteristics (based on sample data) For composite figures, blue denotes simple average.					

Section 4: Proposed Strategies and Activities

A) The Vision Statement for the Heart of Orange

To create a distinctive and vital urban center that has diverse housing and job opportunities, supports mass transit-oriented development and maintains safe pedestrian linkages among the City's natural, architectural and economic resources.

Heart of Orange Outcomes and Specific Activities

Outcome	Activity
1. Develop City Island	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change the image of Orange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish “gateways” at each end of Main Street, Tony Galento Plaza and Central Ave. 2. Redevelop and expand Tony Galento Plaza <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a commercial anchor at Tony Galento Plaza (pub) • Develop a major mixed-use development on city land 3. Create a downtown parking solution 4. Green the Heart of Orange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Heart of Orange Parkways • Light the bridges and tunnels • Promote gardens for businesses, homes and vacant spaces 5. Revitalize City Island with pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand on Reock Commons
2. Stabilize and revitalize the Heart of Orange	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create foreclosure prevention task fore 2. Address problem properties through the City's Quality of Life Task Force 3. Return properties to use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop vacant residential properties • Restore historic properties and institutions, including the YWCA and the Library • Build Churchview Homes and Grand Central Senior Housing
3. Expand economic activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a workers' center 2. Create a small business task force 3. Develop green jobs 4. Enhance the use of undeveloped commercial spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create downtown living and working 5. Restore historic commercial properties
4. Promote lifelong learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance educational opportunity for students of all ages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand on the community school initiative 2. Develop the commitment to education 3. Create the Learning Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a space for The Learning Center
5. Promote health and wellness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a wellness center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a wellness center 2. Promote walking and biking 3. Promote the history of hospital and health care in Orange 4. Establish a farmers' market and local food production 5. Expand recreation opportunities

Outcome 1: Develop City Island

B) Outcome

Orange has been rated poorly when compared to nearby wealthy suburbs. People have mistakenly thought of Orange as a second-rate suburb. The Heart of Orange plan is designed to focus on Orange's assets as an urban center, ideally organized for 21st century living in a compact, walkable, transit-oriented urban space. The goal is to change the image of the city in the next five years. "City Island" is at the center of that strategy.

Michel Cantal-Dupart pointed out that the railroad tracks and Route 280 disrupt the center and neither route has been properly managed to create an attractive center. He called this area "City Island." City Island includes both the "island" inside the two routes and the "banks" of the "rivers." The transit center of the city – including the principal train station – is in this City Island Area.

C) Strategy

The strategy is to beautify and enhance existing assets that are perfectly suited to the 21st century. This strategy will focus on enhancing public space and celebrating local history.

D) Description of activities or methods

The Heart of Orange plan will highlight the city's transport center, develop the "Heart of Orange Parkway," and celebrate the history of the city. The measureable outcomes are: number of buildings on City Island, number of trees on city island and the city's approval rating according to a survey of city residents (for more detail, see Projected Outcomes Form).

Activity 1.1: Change the image of Orange to "*The urban village of the 21st Century*"

Working with ORNG Ink and residents and businesses of the area, we will develop logos, banners, contests and other devices for celebrating a new image. We will also lead area clean-up to remove trash, and work with the City of Orange to ensure that maintenance of the whole City Island is top-notch.

Tasteful "gateways" at each end of Main Street, Tony Galento Plaza and Central Avenue can add to the sense of place.

Activity 1.2: Redevelop and expand Tony Galento Plaza

Numerous reports, and the advice of a number of experts, converge on the central role of the Orange Train Station in determining the future of the city. As the city turns from car to transit-oriented, the beauty, welcome and strong connection of its train station are key to uplifting the whole area. The train station should be strongly connected to buses, bicycle paths and pedestrian routes. It should have adequate access to automobile parking, shared with Main Street merchants. Thus people can arrive and leave by many modes of transport. The train station and Main Street should be visually connected. In addition, the pathways from the train station should be clear and welcoming. The City of Orange has applied for over \$600,000 in funds to upgrade this plaza, replacing street trees and reorienting pedestrian and vehicular movements.

The Heart of Orange plan will contribute to the development of the train plaza by developing “Tony’s Place” in Tony Galento Plaza. This pub will be placed in one of the station’s historic waiting rooms, which is now closed. The pub will enhance the hospitality and welcome by making the train station a place to “meet and greet.”

In addition, a mixed-use development on city land is proposed for the area. Michel Cantal-Dupart’s drawings showing how this might happen in phases are shown on the next pages.

Activity 1.3 Create a downtown parking solution

There is currently a Parking Management Plan that is creating surface public parking behind the shops on Main Street. For the long-term, as more commuters become attracted to the Orange Station, more evening shoppers and diners come to the downtown and there is more downtown living, developers and others have suggested that a parking deck serving both the train station and Main Street will be required.

Activity 1.4: Green the Heart of Orange

Orange Park is a major asset of the city, but much of the Heart of Orange lacks green and looks shockingly brown and barren on satellite maps. Greening the Heart of Orange will enhance the area’s charm and is an excellent way to protect and develop the natural resources of the area.



To accomplish this goal, The Heart of Orange project will develop the “Heart of Orange Parkway” which will link Orange Park with other parks and sites, including Central Playground, the historic burial ground at First Presbyterian Church, the train plaza with its beautiful World War I monument, Military Commons, and the “banks” of the railroad tracks and Route 280. The “parkway” will be created by using green sidewalks to link the public spaces, thereby giving a sense of coherence to the many fragments of the area. Inappropriate barriers will be removed to enhance flow.

Plant trees - Main Street, like the other commercial corridors, has very little tree canopy. Trees are an essential element of dignified and ecologically sound urban centers. Planting trees requires a program, as trees need to be selected with care for variety and hardiness, protected from many sources of harm, and given adequate water and food. Trees are a fundamental part of the Parkway.

Link Historic sites and monuments -The Heart of Orange Parkway will link four existing sculptures – the three war monuments and the statue of the Virgin Mary at Mt. Carmel Church – and add two new ones. These new statues will honor the industrial history of the city, celebrating

its past and future as an urban center.

Install Distinctive lighting - Installing lights on the bridges and in the tunnels will make these potentially intimidating places fun to traverse. The lighting of bridges and tunnels is an exciting way to transform spaces, and it can be done in many artistic ways that link to arts and culture in the surrounding areas. The Heart of Orange project will also use the design process to raise the profile of the city, and garner positive support.

Create Gardens - Gardens can be a low cost way to improve the beauty of an area. The Heart of Orange is visibly lacking in tree cover, when viewed on Google satellite images. The Heart of Orange gardening initiative will: 1) help individuals improve the look and functioning of their home gardens; 2) support the planting of trees throughout the area; and 3) identify vacant lots for community gardens.

Activity 1.5: Revitalize City Island

Cantal-Dupart identified the area between Route 280 and the train tracks as “City Island,” an area that was disturbed by changes to the rail line and the building of the highway, but never set to rights. This area is characterized by a littered and forlorn look. Yet its proximity to the train station makes it a key site for transit-oriented development. The first development in this area is the new Reock Commons, which is new loft-style housing, and includes a fitness center. A wellness center is proposed for an adjoining lot along Freeway Drive North. Additional development in the City Island area would help to overcome the rupture in the center of the city caused by the transit lines.

The City Council recently designated all properties adjacent to Reock Street as an Area in Need of Redevelopment. The area boundary is the NJ Transit Right of Way, S. Day Street, Freeway Drive and S. Essex Avenue. A plan to eliminate the underlying zoning for the area (CD or Light Manufacturing) and establish Transit Village District zoning should be approved by the Planning Board in 2010.

Outcome 2: Stabilize and revitalize the Heart of Orange

B) Outcome

Currently, the residential streets in the Heart of Orange are in poor condition, with many vacant lots, and troubled properties. The Heart of Orange plan is designed to stabilize properties and improve the look and feel of the area.

C) Strategy

The strategy will be to prevent foreclosures, attract buyers for vacant homes, and beautify vacant properties that are in transition.

D) Description of activities or methods

The Heart of Orange plan calls for a foreclosure prevention program, a vacant/problem property program, and will coordinate area-wide gardening activity. The measureable outcomes are: the

number of foreclosures and the number of properties restored (for more detail, see Projected Outcomes Form).

Activity 2.1: Create Foreclosure Prevention Task Force

Crucial to the Heart of Orange plan is the prevention of foreclosures. Orange is deeply affected by the foreclosure crisis sweeping the nation. It is estimated that 600 homes may go into foreclosure. This would reverse redevelopment gains made over the past 15 years. The Foreclosure Task Force will require active participation by City Hall but could be staffed by nonprofit organizations and volunteers. The Task Force will identify people who are at risk of losing their homes and coordinate services. When homes can't be saved, the Task Force will help people relocate, and will get the homes back on the market and back into productive use.

Activity 2.2: Address Problem Properties Through the City's Quality of Life Task Force

In the past, Orange benefited from the work the Community Problem Property Task Force. At present, the City has a Quality of Life Task Force. It is essential that the Quality of Life Task Force work closely with all partners to identify and address problem properties.

Activity 2.3: Return Properties to Productive Use

Vacant properties are a drain on the city's functioning and loss to its tax roles. Returning properties to use is an urgent necessity. The recent sudden increase in the number of vacant homes requires a focused effort to acquire, rehabilitate and reoccupy those properties before they become vandalized and further drive down neighborhood quality of life and property values. This includes many initiatives, including redeveloping vacant properties, building Churchview Homes, and renovating the YWCA Main Street facility and key historic properties. Affordable homeownership options are needed for first time homebuyers and through programs like the Teacher/Cop Next Door and Live Where You Work.

Outcome 3: Expand economic activity

B) Outcome

Orange has lost many of its traditional industries, and a substantial number of its residents lack skills for highly technical jobs. The Heart of Orange plan is designed to rebuild the local economy and stimulate lifelong learning to ensure that residents can enter and remain in the workforce.

C) Strategy

The strategy will be two-fold. On the one hand, the Heart of Orange plan will support the development of new industry and other businesses in the area, and on the other hand it will improve workers' ability to connect to jobs through developing their skills and by easing connections to employment.

D) Description of activities or methods

The Heart of Orange plan will develop a workers' center, a lifelong learning center, a small business support task force, and green jobs. The measureable outcomes are: the creation of the

Workers Center, and the creation and maintenance of the Small Business Task Force (for more detail, see Projected Outcomes Form).



Activity 3.1: Create a workers' center

Orange hosts many workers who engage in day labor. They wait on particular corners of the city for employment with contractors or individual homeowners who drive by. This unregulated labor market poses many problems. There are no protections for the workers, and few for employers. The congregation of men on sidewalks can undermine the peaceable and welcoming air of a neighborhood. Many who are aware of the situation, including the Chief of Police, have proposed the establishment of a Workers Center that would serve as a hiring hall for day or casual labor. The Heart of Orange plan will organize a Workers' Center Committee, which will lead the effort to develop such a center. Included in the work of the committee will be visits to other cities which have such workers' centers, and the development of connections to groups and individuals that can help to fund the center, teach English as a Second Language, and offer other kinds of job-related development.

Activity 3.2: Create a small business support task force

Orange has incentives to investors, for example, the Urban Enterprise Zone, but these have yet to overcome all the obstacles that face startups, especially those that are small. Established businesses can also face challenges when they need to change course or expand.

The Small Business Support Task Force will identify obstacles and work with city officials and others to smooth the way for more efficient development.

Activity 3.3: Develop Green jobs

It is widely agreed that the world has to make a transition in the way in which we use energy. This means that many methods of operating have to be revised. The skills to turn "gray" buildings "green" are needed everywhere. The creation of a local skilled workforce for accomplishing this greening of the city means that the dollars to come to Orange for this transformation will stay in the city and benefit its residents.

The Heart of Orange plan will begin this process by establishing a weatherization program. This program will train local residents to weatherize buildings. The program will also seek funds to help the city and residents weatherize their establishments.

Activity 3.4: Enhance the use of underdeveloped commercial spaces

Orange has many kinds of spaces are also ideal for downtown living and working but are underutilized at the present time. For example, spaces on the upper stories on Main Street have little activity. The proximity to the train station makes this a potential resource for artists and others in the metropolitan area.

Activity 3.5: Restore historic properties and institutions

Orange has many historic properties that have significance in Orange's struggle for equality. The restoration of such properties creates continuity between the past of the city and its future,

and creates visible symbols that past struggles for equality are guiding future development. The Heart of Orange plan “Living History” project will restore such properties. In addition, Orange is home to many outstanding examples of America architectural history. The sensitive preservation and restoration of these gems adds to the richness, attractiveness and historic context of the Heart of Orange.

Outcome 4: Promote Lifelong Learning

B) Outcome

The people of Orange need sound basic education and access to new knowledge and skills to keep pace with the rapid changes in our technological society.

C) Strategy

The strategy of the Heart of Orange plan is to create a lifelong learning center that will serve the needs of all residents.

D) Description of activities or methods

The Heart of Orange plan will create an environment for learning by getting all residents excited about opportunities to enhance their knowledge. This will include: supporting basic education for all students and providing opportunities for continuing education for adults. The measureable outcomes are: improved scores for public school students and the creation and maintenance of the Learning Center (for more detail, see Projected Outcomes Form).

Activity 4.1: Enhance educational opportunity for students of all ages

Economic instability and residential upheaval have undermined the functioning of the Orange school system, which struggles to educate young people balancing many kinds of instability. The schools cannot manage so much instability without the support of other kinds of resources for youth. The development of community schools in Orange is an example of putting stabilizing institutions and organizations in place that can support the functioning of the schools. The Heart of Orange project envisions many other kinds of activities, including after school activities, summer activities, and internships and other learn-while-working opportunities. The newly launched Central Campus Community School is a promising initiative that will demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach.

Activity 4.2 Develop the commitment to education

Communities that understand the value of education and have a commitment to it are more likely to flourish in the 21st century. Therefore, the Heart of Orange plan will help to generate citywide enthusiasm for education at all levels and for everyone.

Activity 4.3: Create The Learning Center

Given the rapid pace of technological change, no one can afford to stop learning, even those with advanced degrees. The kind of learning that are essential vary from long courses of study to 15-minute updates. The learning is enhanced by the creation of an environment that honors and celebrates education across the lifespan.

The Heart of Orange plan will establish a center for lifelong learning, under the umbrella of the University of Orange. The University of Orange is a free university that offers courses taught by area residents, responding to local needs. The University has the ability to connect to other training and educational organizations for more formal courses. The Heart of Orange plan, by creating a center for lifelong learning, will begin to create the citywide enthusiasm for education that will support all of the city's educational institutions.

Outcome 5: Promote health and wellness

B) Outcome

Orange has been a hospital center for 100 years and has an important history of delivering health care. The Heart of Orange plan will build on this history by 1) creating an urban center for active living, which many consider to be the foundation of wellness, and 2) by promoting the development of businesses that support health and wellness.

C) Strategy

The strategy is to enhance access to wellness services, in the context of a built environment designed for active living.

D) Description of activities or methods

The Heart of Orange plan will create a wellness center, promote walking and biking, highlight the history of hospitals in Orange, establish a farmers' market and encourage people to grow their own food, and expand recreation activities including the restoration of the area's pools and the creation of a disc golf course. The measureable outcomes are: increase in walking for area residents and the establishment and maintenance of a farmer's market (for more detail, see Projected Outcomes Form).

Activity 5.1: Create a wellness center

Orange's outstanding experience as a hospital center creates a legacy of people with commitment to and skills for patient care. This legacy, because it is human capital, is separate from the legacy of the buildings of the hospitals. Turning this legacy to good effect is a major goal of the Heart of Orange plan. Already in the Heart of Orange, there are several efforts at creating wellness, including the nursing home at St. Mary's and the fitness center at Reock Commons.

The Heart of Orange plan will develop a wellness center.

Activity 5.2: Promote walking and biking

Transit-oriented development is successful if people get out of their cars and start to use self-powered and public transit. The transition from car-oriented to transit-oriented living can be slow. Interventions to encourage walking and biking are helpful to speed up the process.

The Heart of Orange plan will organize many kinds of outdoor activities that encourage people to enjoy moving in the public spaces of the city.

Activity 5.3: Promote the history of hospitals and health care in Orange

As we noted above, Orange has an important history as a hospital and health care center. This history is not well known, however, nor are the skills the area residents have well appreciated.

The Heart of Orange plan will organize exhibitions, storytelling and other kinds of events to share this history with the citizens of the area.

Activity 5.4: Farmers' market and grow-your-own food

One of the fundamental characteristics of cities is an engagement with the sources of nourishment. This has been weakened in recent American history by the growth of agribusiness and the expansion of trade. The obesity and diabetes epidemics have encouraged people to take a new interest in the kind of food they eat, as well as the sources of their food.

The Heart of Orange plan will promote the farmers' market and help people establish their own food gardens.

Activity 5.5: Expand recreation opportunities

With two parks and two pools in the area, the Heart of Orange has been a center for recreation for the city. As part of making the Heart of Orange a lively, active center, the development of recreation facilities is major activity.

The Heart of Orange plan will support the development of existing recreation facilities and the development of new ones, including a disc golf course.

E) Officially-adopted plans governing the neighborhood

"Orange is the New Green"

The City of Orange Master Plan adopted in 2006 promoted the City of Orange as the new green. Orange is one of over 280 NJ communities participating in Sustainable New Jersey, a certification program for municipalities in the state that want, "...to go green, control costs and save money, and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term." (www.sustainablejersey.com)

Little Italy

The western section of the Heart of Orange was historically an Italian neighborhood and still features Italian restaurants, bakeries, and social clubs. This area was designated "Little Italy" with the plan of creating a distinct destination neighborhood.

Central Orange Redevelopment Plan

The Central Orange Redevelopment oversees projects in the Heart of Orange area in three districts: Residential Transit Village, the Transit Village District West and a General Commercial District. The Central Orange Redevelopment plan was modified in 2009 to be consistent with the Transit Village program of smart growth.

The Heart of Orange Plan is consistent with the Central Orange Redevelopment Plan and will support its smart growth goal by enhancing the public's use and enjoyment of public spaces, thus promoting bike and pedestrian travel, and reducing reliance on cars.

Replacing the Alexander Homes

The Orange Housing Authority has developed a plan¹ for demolishing the Walter G. Alexander

¹ There is no longer a "HOPE VI Redevelopment Plan" although the area is still technically called the
Sec4:30

Public Housing Complex and replacing it with a mixed-income development. The Housing Authority has selected an architect to design the new buildings. They have an approved demolition plan. Demolition will start as soon as funds are raised. The plan is to construct 165 units of low and moderate income housing. Home ownership will be encouraged.

The Heart of Orange Plan, and in particular the focus on enhancing residential areas, is consistent with the Housing Authority's goal to replace older buildings with new construction, more appropriate in design to the two-story houses in the area.

The Transit Village Designation

The city was the 20th in the State of New Jersey to receive "transit village" designation. Orange has East and West Transit Villages, both in the Heart of Orange area. On the city's website, the transit village is described as follows:

The Transit Village initiative designates municipalities with a bus, train, light rail station or a ferry terminal that have embraced a Smart Growth vision. That vision includes opportunities for growth and economic revitalization; a commitment to compact, mixed-use development; a strong residential component including affordable housing; and jobs, restaurants, arts and entertainment and preservation of a rich architectural character within walking distance of a passenger transportation facility.

The program encourages growth in New Jersey towns where infrastructure and public transit already exist. Studies have shown that an increase in residential housing options within walking distance of a mass transit station increases transit ridership to a greater degree than any other type of development. The Transit Village initiative seeks to bring more housing, businesses and people into communities with mass transit stations.

The benefits of Transit Village designation include the state's commitment to municipal redevelopment, eligibility for New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Transit Village grants, priority status for state funding, technical planning assistance, and coordination by state's Transit Village Task Force including, in addition to NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, the Commerce and Economic Growth Commission, the Council on the Arts, the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Economic Development Authority, the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the Office of Smart Growth, Main Street New Jersey and the Redevelopment Authority.

The City has applied for \$600,000 in funds for beautification of the Tony Galento Plaza as part of its Transit Village designation. The creation of mixed-use development, to be built on city land, is a major strategy for the area.

The Heart of Orange plan supports the goals of the Transit Village by emphasizing development of attractive public spaces around the Orange Train Station and better utilization of upper stories.

The Main Street Program

Orange, NJ, is a part of the state's Main Street program. In support of the development of Main Street, the city contracted with JGSC Group to conduct an in-depth evaluation of Main Street, Central Avenue, and Scotland Road and to offer strategies for economic development. The JGSC Group commented:

There is a need for physical unity in this city that has been divided by barriers imposed by the railroad more than a century ago and by an interstate highway nearly 50 years ago. It has become impossible for the residents south of the interstate to reach Main Street on foot and this has contributed to their feeling of isolation from the downtown and their impulse to shop elsewhere. The city needs to create linkages to overcome the physical divide...

We identified two great needs of this city that could be resolved with a single stroke. Orange has need for a sizable public space that could accommodate public celebrations, host outdoor events, and facilitate downtown socializing. The city needs a public square. In addition the city needs to bring together the downtown train station with commerce on Main Street. Currently visitors arriving to the downtown train platform have no way of knowing where Main Street is, or that its shopping and dining opportunities even exist. Similarly, visitors shopping on Main Street have no idea that the train station sits one block behind the Post Office. We propose to resolve both of these needs with the creation of a public square in the area that is now public and Post Office parking and deliberately connect this area with retail and outdoor dining that flows into Main Street. (JGSC Community Insights Report)

The Orange Main Street Program will be hiring an executive director by the end of 2010. The City of Orange will be using funds from the Transit Village designation to install wayfinding signage in and around the downtown and train station area. These kinds of initiatives will support the Main Street Program.

The Heart of Orange Plan is interested in facilitating connections to Main Street. The Heart of Orange project will work closely with the leader of the Main Street Program in carrying out shared projects.

Urban Enterprise Zone

The Urban Enterprise Zone designation offers significant benefits to businesses in the location, as well as to shoppers. The UEZ program provides dollars for planning and development and coordination of activities. The UEZ program will provide funding to promote economic development and create jobs. Some of the projects envisioned are: improving streetscapes, making façade improvements, organize cooperative marketing, and making investments in businesses.

The Heart of Orange Plan, which promotes business development and attraction of new enterprise to the area, is consistent with the goals of the UEZ. The UEZ program may be helpful in developing the plan to light the city's bridges and tunnels and in greening the Heart of Orange. It can also provide support to initiatives for supporting small businesses and supporting job seekers.

Section 4 Revised Appendix

Developing on City Island

Isolated between I-280 and the elevated railroad tracks, this area is deteriorated and underutilized. Its condition widens the disconnect between the neighborhood just south of I-280 and Main Street. Yet, it is ideally located for transit friendly development, just a short walk from the Orange train station. Connecting the two recently completed Reock Commons buildings to the station with additional mixed-use development would create a model “transit village” development.

Action required: The City of Orange should immediately begin to prepare for the return of a normal housing market and pave the way for market-rate and mixed-income development on City Island.

A review of the Central Orange Redevelopment Area should be undertaken to ensure that adequate zoning changes have been proposed and that provisions for public spaces, amenities and needed commercial services are zoned for.

Designation of Redevelopers will be required. Tax abatement action by the City Council will be necessary to create opportunities for market-rate redevelopment.

Private investment required:

Equity: \$6,000,000

Loan funds: \$40,000,000

Timeline

2010 Redevelopment Review in Action

2011 Request Redeveloper Proposals

2011 Select Redevelopers

2011 Acquire first parcels

2012 Begin construction on Phase I

15-15 Redevelop Phase II



This high-quality development has had a dramatic effect on the image of the city presented to travelers arriving on Route 280

Redeveloping Tony Galento Plaza

The large public space adjacent to the Orange NJ Transit rail station is a rare asset- a large vacant parcel at a large prominent entrance to the city – its rail station. It needs to be reconfigured to connect it to the commerce on Main Street. In addition to becoming an attractive plaza for pedestrian use, and a physical and visual linkage to Main Street, it needs its own businesses that will create a natural flow for commuters toward Main Street. A mixed-use development is envisioned.



Michel Cantal-Dupart and JGSC identified the plaza as the top priority for development of public spaces. It is a point of entry to the City of Orange and is ideally located just behind Main Street. Cantal-Dupart suggested broadcasting music through the plaza as a means to signal both a mood of public celebration and a hint of the diversity that is Orange.

Action required:

Public funds required: To be determined

Private investment: To be determined

1 Music in public places is not all that common. There is a wonderful park in Birmingham, AL, dedicated to the Temptations and their music is played there.

Timeline

- 2010 Phase I street improvements and signage
- 2010 Develop concept plan
- 2010 Solicit RFP/RFQ from Redevelopers
- 12-12 Acquire initial properties
- 2012-13 Construct first new building(s)
- 2013-15 Construct Phase II

Creating a commercial anchor at Tony Galento Plaza

The large public space adjacent to the Orange NJ Transit rail station needs a means to connect it to the commerce on Main Street. In addition to becoming an attractive plaza for pedestrian use, and a physical and visual linkage to Main Street, it needs its own businesses that will create a natural flow for commuters toward Main Street. Right now there is nothing that attracts westbound evening rush commuters to stay awhile. The initial anchor could be housed in the now vacant and boarded westbound waiting room. See photo.



It was suggested during the Heart of Orange study that the waiting room building could easily accommodate a pub, where evening commuters arriving in Orange would stop for a drink and/or a meal before heading home. After a drink or two, maybe they would buy take-out food at one of the nearby eateries or flowers for their spouse. Additionally the planners heard that because the property is state owned, an inexpensive liquor license could be issued to the pub operator. Given attractive terms, an investor operator may be willing to make the needed renovations in exchange for a long-term lease of the building. The lease by the County of Essex of the Highlawn Pavilion in the Eagle Rock Reservation is a successful nearby example.

Action required: NJ Transit approval and lease execution. Attract a private investor/operator.

Public funds required: none

Private investment: \$400,000 (est.)

Timeline

11-11 Secure agreement with NJ Transit

12 Solicit Owner Operator

12-12 Buildout former station

2012 Open “Two Ton Tony’s Pub”.

Redevelop vacant residential properties

To preserve the residential blocks in the Heart of Orange, homes now vacant due to foreclosure, need to be acquired, rehabilitated if necessary and sold to new owner occupants. Financial support for this labor-intensive development work is needed. Bank financing is difficult to obtain. Some properties will require public subsidy, which is scarce. A recent house-by-house survey revealed 57 vacant residential properties within the Heart of Orange area.

Action required: Acquisition of 20-25 properties.
City action under the Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act.

Public funds required: \$2 million in public subsidy
(e.g. federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds)

Private investment required:

Equity: \$600,000

Loan funds: \$3,000,000

Timeline

2010	Create comprehensive vacant property strategy.
2010	Designate up to 40 properties in official Abandoned Properties List.
2010- 11	Acquire and redevelop first properties with NSP 1 and 2 funding.
13-13	Convey properties to redevelopers as housing market returns.



Create downtown living and working

To give the downtown an extended business day and increase the tax base, the now vacant, upper floors of Main Street buildings and adjacent streets need residential and commercial occupants. A successful example is the rehabilitated Chronicle Building on Essex Avenue with a restaurant on the first floor, a commercial photographer on the second and a residential loft on the third. While there are building code restrictions that may prevent some buildings from becoming residential and the market for commercial office is currently weak, there may be potential for creating work space for artists, designers and others working in the “creative economy”. Inexpensive space near the train could attract them.



Action required: Develop a strategic plan that will create one or two pilot projects and demonstrate the feasibility to other downtown property owners. Examine what zoning and code changes may be needed to accommodate upper floor development.

Public funds required: \$2,000,000

Private investment required: Equity: \$500,000
Loan funds: \$5,000,000

Timeline

- 11-11 Create zoning overlay and review rehabilitation code to encourage development above street level.
- 11-11 Create incentives for property owners to convert vacant space.
- 13-13 First wave of properties are developed.

Restoring historic properties

Within the Heart of Orange there are buildings that are strongly associated with Orange's history – and they have fallen into disrepair. The most prominent are the YWCA and the Orange Public Library on Main Street.

There are other important buildings, like the former Masonic Temple building on Main Street, which is one of the most distinctive historic buildings in the city. Its first floor façade has been “modernized” and its upper stories neglected.

The Harmony Bar on Central Avenue is another example of an historic building. Remembered as the 1958 birthplace of Citizens for Representative Government, a pioneer civil rights organization, the Harmony Bar was a watering hole for black men and women during the period of Orange's segregation. Important black leaders like Paul Robeson and Coleman Young stopped by the Harmony during their visits to the city. The property needs to be both historically popularized and physically restored. An exterior and interior facelift could be combined with the display of memorabilia from CRG's early struggles and victories.

Action required: Use the Harmony Bar site or another similar property as the pilot project to demonstrate feasibility.

Public funds required: \$30,000-\$50,000

Private investment required: Equity: \$100,000
Loan funds: \$600,000

The YWCA Facility on Main Street deserves special mention here. It has served thousands of youth and adults each year until its closing in 2005, following a breakdown of the building's swimming pool drain system. The building has reopened, but with an abbreviated program and no aquatic activities. A capital campaign is being launched by the YWCA to modernize and improve this important facility.

Funding will support the upgrade and renovations of an indoor pool facility with locker rooms and fitness center bringing them into compliance with today's industry standards. Funding will also upgrade the kitchen facility to accommodate classroom instruction, and the gymnasium,



outdoor playground and dance studios for modern activities to promote healthy living and safe play for children and families throughout the service area.

Public action required: Joint partnership with the City of Orange Cultural Affairs Department

Public funding required: \$100,000

Private funding and contributions: \$1,200,000 (est.)

Timeline

11-11	Conduct historic review of properties.
11-11	Research available assistance for property owners.
2011-2012	Rehabilitate first property.

The Learning Center, a lifelong learning facility

The 3.21 acre First Presbyterian Church site on the corner of Main Street and Scotland Road is currently being offered for sale by the Presbytery. It is an exceptional property, ideally suited to be a lifelong learning facility. It has two large meeting rooms – the sanctuary and the chapel – several medium meeting rooms and 70 small classrooms. In addition it has a gym and a commercial kitchen.



A possible solution to preserve the historic structure and realize its potential as a major resource for the city is to develop market rate/affordable housing in the adjacent parking lot. The building could have a parking deck to accommodate on-site and commuter parking. Apartments would be less than five minutes walking distance from the Orange train station and have views of New York City and the Valley. The building could help support the wide range of programming that could take place at the learning center to the benefit of the neighborhood.

Action required: Attract developers and future tenants. Redevelopment designation and zoning

Public funds required: \$1,000,000

Private investment required: Equity: \$2,000,000
Loan funds: \$10,000,00

Timeline

2010	Develop Memorandum of Understanding with the Newark Presbyterian Church to proceed with a redevelopment plan.
12	Create proposed mixed-use site plan and necessary zoning changes.
13	Designate site as Redevelopment Area.
12-12	Secure site plan and Redevelopment Designation.
2012-15	Build out improvements and new construction.

Downtown commuter/shopper parking solution

A parking Management Plan has been launched which is acquiring and developing surface parking behind buildings on Main Street.

As the demand intensifies, a long -term solution is likely to require more intensely developed space to accommodate more cars. Montclair, NJ had developed three parking decks in its downtown area and South Orange is identifying a location for its first and maybe second deck.



Two underutilized privately owned parking lots on Center Street adjacent to the railroad tracks are ideally located for commuter shopper parking. A parking deck on this site could accommodate at least 150 parking spots that can be doubly utilized – commuters during the day and shoppers in the evenings and on weekends.

Action required: Redevelopment designation and acquisition

Public funds required: \$4,000,000 (e.g. bond issue)

Timeline

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 11-11 | Designate site and create public action needed for acquisition. |
| 12-12 | Acquire land |
| 2013-15 | Secure financing and build deck |

Churchview Homes

This prominent site along Freeway Drive East across from Mount Carmel Church is owned by HANDS and has zoning approvals for four new two-family homes. The site once had two abandoned houses which burned two years ago. New development on this highly visible site along the edge of the scar caused by the interstate highway construction will send a strong signal and reclaim the highway's edge.



Action required: Raise public subsidy. Build and sell homes.

Public funds required: \$645,000

Private investment required:

Equity: \$50,000

Loan funds: \$750,000

Timeline

11-11 Secure subsidy for affordable homeownership

12-12 Build and sell project

Lighting the Bridges and Tunnels

Michel Cantal-Dupart pointed out that there are seven bridges in the Heart of Orange, and a similar number of tunnels. The town is well-supplied with connectors but they are not as attractive as they could be (below left). He proposed that we light the bridges and tunnels. He also suggested that we hold an international competition to get world-class lighting designs. This design competition will be guided by a local community planning process. The “Shop Orange/Home for the Holidays” banner posted on Lincoln Avenue during the holiday season in 2009 (see below right) gives us an excellent idea of how attractive this will be.



Action Required: Design and install lighting on the Heart of Orange bridges and tunnels.

Public Funds: TBD

Private Funds: TBD



Timeline

- 11-11 Develop conceptual plan and secure public “buy-in” to the concept
- 12-12 Design and execute at the pilot location to attract additional public support
- 16-16 Design the installation at additional sites, fundraise and execute installation.

Section 5: Projected Outcomes

FORM NP-2: Projected Outcomes Form

Neighborhood Plan Outcome	State Plan Goal	NRTC Objective	Indicator	Data Source	Evaluation
Develop City Island	1, 2, 3, 4	2, 4	1) Number of buildings on City Island 2) Number of trees on City Island 3) City's approval rating	1) City records 2) City records 3) Heart of Orange survey to be conducted by HANDS	Compare pre and post ratings of each of the measures to establish that development – including buildings and greening of the area – took place.
Stabilize and Revitalize the Heart of Orange	1, 6	2, 4	1) Number of foreclosures 2) Number of properties restored	1) County filings 2) HANDS records	1) Compare pre/post filings 2) Number of properties restored
Expand Economic Activity	3	1, 2, 3	1) Establishment of workers center 2) Establishment of a Small business task force	1) HANDS records 2) HANDS records	1) Center created 2) Taskforce is functioning
Promote Lifelong Learning	3	1, 2, 3	1) Improvement in scores of public schools 2) Establishment of a Learning Center	1) state test scores 2) HANDS records	1) Compare pre/post 2) Center in operation
Promote Health and Wellness	3	1	1) Rates of Walking 2) Establishment of a farmer's market	1) survey of people walking by the bridges and tunnels 2) HANDS records	1) compare number of walkers pre and post 2) farmers market in operation

Section 6: Estimated Financial Requirements

FORM NP-3: BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Projected Activities Budget

Use the following format to provide a projected budget for the activities proposed in the Neighborhood Plan. Please copy and attach additional sheets as needed. An example has been provided.

Proposed Project	Estimated Cost	Sources of Funding	Uses of Funding	Role of Lead Organization and Partners
Developing on City Island	\$46,000,000	Equity Loans	Land acquisition, development and construction	HANDS
Redeveloping Tony Galento Plaza	TBD	TBD	Public space acquisition and improvement	HANDS
Creating a Commercial Anchor at Tony Galento Plaza	\$400,000	Private investment	Rehabilitation of historic train station building	HANDS
Redeveloping vacant residential properties	\$3,600,000	Equity Loans	Acquire and rehabilitate vacant housing	HANDS
Creating downtown living and working	\$7,500,000	Public Private	Rehabilitation of uppers floors in existing commercial buildings	HANDS
Restoring historic properties: Harmony Bar	\$750,000	Public Private	Exterior and interior renovations	HANDS
Restoring Historic Institutions: YWCA	\$1,300,000	Public Private	Renovate and upgrade facilities including pool and fitness center	YWCA
Creating the Learning Center	\$11,000,000	Equity Loan funds	Acquisition and rehabilitation of the former church property	HANDS
Downtown/commuter parking solution	\$4,000,000	Bond issue	Construction of new surface lots and potentially a parking deck	City of Orange
Lighting the Bridges and Tunnels	\$1,600,000	tbd	Design and install lighting on the bridges and tunnels	HANDS ValleyArts

Section 7: Organization Information

FORM NP-4 ORGANIZATION PROFILE

I. Organization Characteristics

Name of Organization:	Housing and Neighborhood Development Services, Inc. (HANDS)
Annual Operating Budget:	\$1.66 million
Date of Incorporation:	January 31, 1986
Purpose for which the organization was originally formed:	HANDS was founded by a group of clergy and community leaders in 1986 who wanted to ensure that the neighborhood of Orange and East Orange remain good places to raise a family.
Current Mission Statement:	The stated mission of HANDS is still to “ensure that the neighborhoods of Orange and East Orange remain good places to raise a family”. HANDS is committed to the revitalization of neighborhoods.

II. Population Characteristics

Geographical area(s) served by the organization:	Urban Essex County with a primary focus on Orange and East Orange
Clientele served by the organization:	
Age	All
Ethnicity	All
Income Characteristics	Low and moderate income families

III. Programming Characteristics

Briefly describe the primary services provided by the organization. Please include the number of clients served and/or number of units produced and/or managed in the last fiscal year.	
Real estate development (affordable housing and mixed-use development) 42 units	Community organizing 500+

IV. Organizational Staffing Characteristics

Please complete the following for your organization as a whole:	
Total Number of Staff Positions:	8
Number of Occupied Positions:	8
Number of Vacant Positions:	0
Number of Volunteers:	48

B) Describe the organization's financial resources, including the names of funding sources. Also, indicate whether or not the organization has received funds from the Department of Community Affairs in the past five years. Indicate the award amount, the DCA program name and the current status of the grant.

HANDS Financial Resources for Operations

Below is a general overview of the diverse financial support HANDS currently has developed. These sources are renewable and stable.

Corporate Support:

HANDS receives corporate support from numerous financial institutions whose goals include support of community reinvestment in their service area. HANDS' affordable housing development and first-time homeowner preparation aligns with their goal to support non-profits providing these services.

Foundation Support:

HANDS has received significant foundation support this past year relating to foreclosure intervention and community stabilization. HANDS work aligns with the mission of a few other foundations that support community development work. HANDS is seeking additional foundation support for our latest foreclosure intervention efforts.

Government Support:

HANDS receives government grant support from the State of New Jersey for affordable housing production and economic development projects. The County of Essex grant supports our real estate development projects. Substantial operating funding comes through NeighborWorks America and Local Initiatives Support Corporation. As a chartered affiliate of NeighborWorks America, HANDS receives operating support, capital grants and organizational support including staff training. The State of New Jersey Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (currently a 100% corporate tax credit) has become a source of project funding for development in the Valley neighborhood and also includes funding for programming components for revitalizing the neighborhood.

Events:

HANDS holds an Annual Community Leadership Awards Event that draws over 300 people to honor local leaders. The cost of attendance is kept very modest to encourage community involvement but sponsorships are solicited and acknowledged in an ad journal.

Individual Support:

HANDS receives limited individual donations but has a few special friends who support our community efforts through annual contributions and through employer matching gift programs.

In-Kind Support:

HANDS is expanding resource development through in-kind support. We seek donations in the areas of technology that keeps us current and supplies that can be used by our partners providing arts programming.

Earned Income

A source of funding has been earned income from real estate development. HANDS earns developer fees from the sale of rehabilitated and newly constructed housing. Another aspect is earnings from the joint venture partnerships created to develop some of our larger projects involving vacant former industrial sites. We receive rental income from our mixed-use properties where we will retain ownership of retail space and residential apartments. Our latest economic development tool is a social entrepreneurial venture in a restaurant/music venue.

Funding from DCA:

- Office of Housing Advocacy Grant recipient for over five years; FY 10 grant awarded for \$84,500
- Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program – First approved Neighborhood Plan in the State for the *Plan to Revitalize the Valley Neighborhood of Orange and West Orange, NJ*; Completed and closed one project and two projects with construction complete. One active project and a second one awaiting approval.

C) Describe the relationship between the organization's services and the needs of the neighborhood. Explain how your organization accomplishes its community building initiatives, how community residents are involved and how your work is communicated to the constituency. Provide evidence of involvement with the community, including examples of both formal and informal relationships and other community organizing activities.

Community building

HANDS has always viewed its neighborhood-change work as directly tied to community building and that differs in some important ways from community organizing. Community building goes beyond the exercise of leadership and power and is aimed at engaging more people in the life of the community around them and making the environment one that is more compatible to raising a family and defining a neighborhood of choice. HANDS' first project in 1986 was a day long international festival called *HANDS Orangefest '86*. A parade with four high school bands drew 4,000 people to the festival site on Scotland Road in the Valley. All day long, performers from around the world entertained people, a small circus, a giant flea market and international food vendors added to the festival atmosphere. This was an essential community building activity that began to define a new spirit for Orange and launched HANDS as a serious and capable participant in the life of this small city.

ValleyArts programs and initiatives

Responding to a combination of identified needs including the declining non-residential tax base, underperforming public schools and a general lack of positive identity for the Orange Community, the HANDS-led *ValleyArts* program stepped up to begin meeting those needs. With input from residents, business owners, public officials, artists and other community stakeholders, HANDS has developed a comprehensive, strategic revitalization plan, the centerpiece of which is *ValleyArts*, a community-based collaborative that is infusing the Valley neighborhood with arts-related programs, activities and retail operations. *ValleyArts* programs include summer

arts employment for teens, youth arts institutes, training and entrepreneurship opportunities for adults with disabilities, artist residencies, beautification and public art projects, cultural events, community leadership development and more.

Create affordable arts spaces

The Valley is strategically located on the urban/suburban dividing line. The creation of affordable art spaces is designed to both create additional affordable housing and retail opportunities but also to establish and maintain a critical mass of arts energy in the Valley. HANDS set a goal of creating 100 affordable arts spaces – retail, studios, live/work and program space that will attract people from both sides of the dividing line.

Continue to create affordable homeownership

Responding to the very low homeownership rate and rising property values, HANDS continues to focus on developing affordable homeownership. Development and a strong regional market are already accelerating property values. HANDS will continue its core program to develop affordable homes for first time buyers. The recently initiated Cornerstone Homes project will develop new, scattered site, one- and two- family homes and HANDS will continue to rehabilitate the remaining problem properties for affordable homeownership.

Subprime mortgage crisis and HANDS intervention

HANDS has established a regional response to the destabilizing effects of the sub-prime crisis with an initiative called Operation Neighborhood Recovery. HANDS purchased 47 mortgages held by one lender which resulted from a real estate scam in urban Essex County that was fueled by easy mortgage money. These properties were all deteriorated and most were unoccupied. A few were occupied by tenants.

HANDS raised the capital and purchased the 47 mortgages in order to maintain and preserve the properties, clear the titles and convey them to responsible developers including HANDS. HANDS is partners with four CDCs in urban Essex County to act as redeveloper for 24 of the properties. Other properties will be transferred either directly to first-time homebuyers or to responsible developers/contractors. Eight properties require demolition and the lots will be redeveloped along with municipal housing development plans already in place.

Citywide comprehensive planning

With the clear establishment of the Central Valley Redevelopment Plan within the core of the Valley Revitalization Initiative, the time came for HANDS to gather partners and assist with a broader comprehensive plan for the City of Orange (pop. 33,000).

Preparing the Heart of Orange plan is a move in that direction as well as broader citywide initiatives like Bridging the Digital Divide, Lifelong Learning, career opportunities for young people.

OrangeWorkz – a community collaborative which includes City of Orange council members, HANDS, business owners and community members that have laid the groundwork to provide jobs and career education for youth.

Expanding community leadership

The goal of “making Orange the ideal urban village of the future” by the end of 2010 will obviously require strong leadership. To that end, HANDS wants to partner with others to create a “Leadership Institute” the likely location is within the University of Orange. Plans and discussions are underway to make that happen.

D- E) Organizational capacity and development and service delivery capacity

HANDS is a mature organization with a capable staff and Board that enjoys a solid reputation in the community development field. Its work has been recognized by several state and national organizations. As HANDS has expanded its leadership role in Orange, the skills required have expanded. Two clear examples are the property management role resulting from commercial development and Brownfields remediation resulting from development of industrial sites.

Staff

HANDS is led by its Founder/Executive Director Patrick Morrissy and its Housing and Economic Development Director, Wayne Meyer. Between them they have 65+ years of community development, finance, construction and urban planning experience in the private, public and nonprofit sectors. Both men were chosen for the national *Achieving Excellence Program* at Harvard University.

Homebuyer education

The HANDS HomeBuyers Club is designed to prepare low and moderate income homebuyers for successful homeownership. Organized around chapters that meet twice month over a six-month period, the HBC approach relies not only on education but an atmosphere of mutual support as potential homebuyers all face similar challenges to budgeting, credit cleanup, saving for a down payment and resisting running up additional debt while they prepare to buy a home. Virtually all buyers of HANDS homes are HBC graduates and many HBC graduates buy other homes as well.

A new partnership with NJ Citizen Action now provides counseling and homebuyer preparation for 30+ families per year.

Development expertise

HANDS’ has successfully completed the redevelopment of 108 residential properties and four mixed use and commercial properties.

Brownfield remediation

One large contaminated industrial site has been cleaned up and is ready for development with a second larger site nearly complete. Four additional sites within the Central Valley Brownfields Development Area now have environmental clearance.

Project financing

HANDS has successfully tapped most of the available subsidy programs for creating affordable homeownership and enjoys good working relationships with those subsidy providers.

Joint venture partnerships

HANDS has executed three joint venture agreements for development of 400+ residential units and neighborhood commercial space.

Banking relationships

HANDS has borrowing relationships with PNC Bank, Commerce Bank, Bank of America as well as CDFIs – NJ Community Capital, The Reinvestment Fund and LISC.

Financial strength

HANDS has steadily expanded and diversified its sources of funding and progressively increased earned income as a share of total income. HANDS has market equity of well over \$1million in its real estate in addition to Net Assets of \$1.6 million.

Board of Directors

The HANDS Board combines deep roots in the community with community development banking and public policy experience.

Planning

HANDS staff has a wealth of practical community planning experience that it brings to its relationship with the community and with City Hall.

Business Planning

For 10 years, HANDS has operated from a business planning model, constantly updating its market and community assessment and setting annual SMART goals for each element of its neighborhood change strategy.

Community Organizing

For years, HANDS has been engaging resident leaders as active partners in advocating for change and comprehensive planning. The Community Problem Property Task Force and *ValleyArts* are two successful results of that work.

Leadership development

Forty-one active residents who desired to hone their leadership skills enrolled in the HANDS Leadership Institute for classes that focused on Goal development.

Communications

HANDS regularly produces communications for our supporters, stakeholders and partners in the form of a newsletter, e-mail “postcards” and the HANDS Annual Report (which acknowledges our supporters). A brochure gives a quick snapshot of the organization. The HANDS website (www.handsinc.org) provides background information and up-to-date information on upcoming programs and events and recognition of our work.

Public policy

HANDS leadership recognizes that systemic approaches are required for deeply rooted community development issues. That approach includes changing public policy. HANDS has successfully reformed two state subsidy programs to make them more compatible with

attacking the issue of scattered site abandoned properties. In addition, HANDS helped to lead the campaign that resulted in passage of the Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act, giving dramatic new powers to municipal governments for dealing

7f) Capacity of partners

YWCA

Ninety three years ago, the Young Womens Christian Association of the Oranges was chartered with 1200 original members and a building located at 19 High Street in Orange, New Jersey. Since 1914, the YWCA of Essex & West Hudson has been at the forefront of innovative programming for women, girls, and their families. The YWCA will be responsible for its renovation of their building.

Private developers

There are private developers working in the Heart of Orange, for example Scott Groves, the group which has developed Reock Commons. They will be developing on City Island. They have demonstrated their ability to design a project, obtain funding, and build the project.

ValleyArts

ValleyArts is the leading organization of the Valley Arts District. Its essential role is to establish and maintain a network between all the organizations, businesses and community members of the Valley Arts District by creating opportunities for collaboration and partnership. ValleyArts' commitment is to inspire, encourage and promote art in the community, while celebrating art as a catalyst for growth and development and nurturing interaction with the local community through the implementation of educational programs. To this end ValleyArts facilitated the development of a youth driven Art and Design Studio called ORNG Ink in the summer of 2008. ORNG Ink has grown since then, providing workshops, classes and arts engagement for over 100 youth participants and acquiring a new studio space at the Ironworks building in the heart of the Valley Arts District. Our summer program is a key component to furthering the ORNG Ink vision of providing Orange youth with creative educational opportunities that promote self-learning, positive and articulate communication skills, leadership, confidence, and tangible skill and knowledge in the areas of Arts, Culture and Community development. This summer program will focus specifically on modeling, teaching and implementing new methods of idea generation and execution in the aim of equipping students with solution building tools applicable in any arena of life.

ValleyArts Achievements

- ❑ The district's first curated art show, Uncharted Territory, ran throughout the month of May 2009 in two venues, attracting national and international attention to the visual artists working and living in the area.
- ❑ The neighborhood's annual poetry and music festival, VAMP-09, held in June 2009, attracted hundreds of fans from all over northern New Jersey.
- ❑ The family-friendly Open Studio Stroll and Hamstock weekend in October 2009 brought hundreds of new people in to the neighborhood.
- ❑ The acclaimed theater company Luna Stage opened Studio Luna and produced several readings, performances, and one-acts featuring nationally renowned actors such as Andre

Braugher and Frankie Faison.

- ❑ The [murmur] recorded oral history project launched in September 2009 to great public and press acclaim.
- ❑ Inaugural of the first monthly Art Loop a collaborative event between local art organizations, artists and galleries in the Valley Arts District.

Section 8: Participatory Planning Requirements

The Process

A preliminary process, which helped develop the planning grant application, was started in the Spring of 2008. Activities included visits with planners and area residents, conversations with local leaders and reviews of important existing plans.

The official Heart of Orange planning process began in January 2009 and brought together residents, religious leaders, property owners, representatives from City Hall, business owners, non- profit organizations, the police department, others who serve the neighborhood and leading experts in urban planning. The area was mapped, walked and documented in photographs and video. All stakeholders had the opportunity to participate in creation of the plan on the internet, on questionnaires and at a series of events held throughout the area. People were informed about the planning process through mailings, emails, web announcements, flyers and through outreach to community leaders. Upon completion of the plan the plan was made available for review in many locations around the city, on the internet and at a community forum.



The Heart of Orange Questionnaire

In order to gather people's ideas about the Heart of Orange, we developed a questionnaire, which was given to participants at the beginning of every envisioning session. We collected questionnaires, and the tabulated answers are included in the appendix.

Kickoff Luncheon

The Heart of Orange planning process began with the Heart of Orange Kickoff Luncheon attended by representatives from City Hall, non- profit organizations, the police department, local religious leaders, business owners and residents. The event was held in the First Presbyterian Church. Attendees at the luncheon completed the Heart of Orange questionnaire.

The Heart of Orange Logo by ORNG Ink

To begin the process of envisioning, we asked ORNG INK, a youth design group, to create a logo that would raise the key questions. The divide created by Route 280 and the shape of the puzzle helped people get the major issues to be discussed in the planning process. This statement of the problem, which emerged from youth's design work, was an original contribution to the planning process by young residents of Orange.



Heart of Orange Placemaking Conference

On April 4th, we held a placemaking conference at the First Presbyterian Church. We invited all stakeholders, as well as people interested in the city of Orange, to join us for a day of examining the area and proposing solutions. Seventy-nine people participated in the day. They explored the Heart of Orange in small groups, and participated in collective discussion about the potential solutions. Notes of the day were added to the lists of proposals collected from the questionnaires.



Michel Cantal-Dupart

Renowned French urbanist, Michel Cantal-Dupart joined the planning process for three events: a tour with project advisors and city leaders, the Placemaking Conference, and a lecture, summing up his findings, at the Orange Memorial Library. Cantal-Dupart's recommendations helped to put in perspective how to create a transit-oriented city by beautifying the Orange Train Station Plaza. He also emphasized that need for a "cultural" urbanism, one that helps people understand the joy of urban living, rather than relying on a "real estate" urbanism that is focused simply on developing places for rent or sale. One of Cantal-Dupart's suggestions for reconnecting the North and South ends of the city was to light the bridges and tunnels.



Envisioning Meetings

In addition to the Placemaking Conference, three envisioning sessions were held: Unitarian Universalist Church on Cleveland Street, the Family Success Center on Scotland Road (Spanish-speaking), and at the home of Patricia Fullilove on Heywood Avenue (southside residents). The questionnaires and discussion at these events were tabulated with those collected at the kickoff luncheon and conference.

Friday Night Lights: Visit to Leni Schwendinger

Leni Schwendinger is an internationally renowned lighting designer who designed the lighting for the Port Authority Ninth Avenue Bridge, among other major commissions. She welcomed a group from Orange to her studio and gave a lecture about the use of lights to create atmosphere, decorate desolate areas, and recreate the feeling of being in well-known spaces. Then the group toured the Port Authority site and she explained what she had done to create the new look there. This lecture/

tour helped the group to understand how lighting might be used for the bridges and tunnels of Orange.

Planning presentations: JGSC Group on Main Street and CTA Plan for Military Commons

The JGSC Group was retained by the City of Orange to advise about Main Street. They presented their findings during the Heart of Orange planning process. Their emphasis on the need for a plaza and their highlighting the problem of the north-south disconnection was helpful in considering projects that would complement what they proposed for Main Street. Members of the JGSC Group attended the Placemaking Conference. In addition they made their surveys of 300 residents accessible to us. Community Technical Assistance (CTA) worked with approximately 30 local youth to create a vision for Military Commons, a park in the Heart of Orange. They created a plan for a sculpture park and their ideas were incorporated into the plan for the Heart of Orange Parkway.

