

A Brief History of Access and the Miller-Bridge St. Neighborhood

1870s - 1950s

The **railroad tracks** which cut through the neighborhood, the **Arrigoni bridge** which spans above the neighborhood, and **Route 9**, which bounds the neighborhood to the east **are all built**, effectively cutting Miller and Bridge Streets off from the rest of Middletown. The neighborhood demographics shift from predominately Irish to Swedish, and then to Italian.



From a commemorative booklet entitled "The Middletown-Portland Bridge" August 6, 1938, Wikipedia



Alfredo's Restaurant in 2004, taken by 63vwdriver on Flickr

1950s - 60s

Alfredo Maturo Jr. Establishes "Alfredo's Riverside Restaurant."
 Mount Hope Baptist Church is established at 115 Bridge Street.
 The 1964 Redevelopment Agency issues the first study which determined the neighborhood "unsuitable for residential use."

1998 - 99

The North End Action Team (NEAT) and Yale Urban Design Workshop conduct a survey of the neighborhood and conclude that **"the Miller and Bridge Street neighborhood [cannot] be viable without improved access."** They make 4 design suggestions for improved access. The Redevelopment Agency determines these options "not feasible," and opts instead to buy out and demolish the neighborhood, citing persistent "blight" and "unhealthy conditions including noise and air pollution" which, again, make it "no longer suitable for residential purposes." They also cite potential future plans for a State DOT project which would seize the entire neighborhood through eminent domain. In the time being, they make no changes to neighborhood access.



Photograph of gardens and basketball court at 18 Miller from Redevelopment Agency meeting power point 10/18/2005

2000s

In 2000 the Middletown Common Council Adopts the Redevelopment Agency's demolition plan. Before 1997, the city only owned the public park on Miller Street. By 2004, they had acquired 11 properties - 7 through foreclosure and 4 through purchase.



This map, from the Redevelopment Agency's 2007 report, shows private property in red and city property in green. All structures (represented in orange) in the green zones are demolished during phase 1 of the Redevelopment Plan.



City of Middletown Redevelopment Committee releases an evaluation of the Miller-Bridge redevelopment plan.

The Redevelopment Agency comes to two conclusions: They can either scrape together more money from Section 108 (which has a yearly loan cap of 100,000 dollars), the Common Council general fund (cap of 500,000), and go to a referendum for bond funding, or formally call off the plan. To this day, it is unclear what decision the Redevelopment Agency chose.

2007-08

They report that though the city now owns almost 50% of the properties in the area, the project is incomplete and has had a "mixed" record in addressing the original issue of inaccessibility. The original funding provided through section 108.

In 2008, the city begins looking at short-term remedies to the still extant inaccessibility issue. At this point, the only way in or out is still through Rt. 9.

2015

The Redevelopment Agency has their most recent meeting.

2016

The City begins the foreclosure of 17 Miller St.

2018

The City finally opens up a second access point - an at-grade rail crossing through Portland Street.

2023

Cultivating Justice begins the Miller Street Community Farm at 18 Miller St.

Today, CTDOT plan 0082-0318 will be closing the Rt. 9 access point. On the one hand, they will be eliminating a dangerous intersection, and on the other, they will be cutting neighborhood access back to a single entrance/exit.

What do you want for the future?

Learn more at cultivatingjusticect.com

