



98% of Bridgeport's new housing is not affordable to Bridgeport residents who need housing.

City Response to Bridgeport's Affordable Housing Crisis:

HOUSING... BUT FOR WHOM?

Two years ago the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) produced a report, "Bridgeport's Affordable Housing Crisis: Everyone Pays the Price." In that report, BCAC documented the loss of 2,800 units of housing in Bridgeport, with the greatest loss in affordable housing.

We showed that other cities in Connecticut have used existing federal and state resources to develop affordable housing, but Bridgeport has only accessed a fraction of the state and federal funds other Connecticut cities have.

This report looks at the response of the City of Bridgeport and the Bridgeport Housing Authority to Bridgeport's affordable housing crisis over the last two years.

Bridgeport is the last city in Fairfield County that can be considered affordable.

City housing policies play a significant role in deciding who gets housing, who can stay, and who will be forced to leave Bridgeport. In this report, BCAC documents who will and who will not benefit from housing now being built in Bridgeport.



98% of the housing developments of 10 or more units built since 2005 or currently under construction in Bridgeport are not affordable to half the families who live in Bridgeport.



More than 15,000 Bridgeport families do not own their own homes. Many of them are the families most in need of affordable housing.



Virtually every family rental apartment or condominium developed in Bridgeport since 2005 or currently under construction is not affordable to Bridgeport's families earning up to 80% of the Bridgeport median income.

Source: Information provided by City of Bridgeport, individual developers and Bridgeport Economic Resource Center website.

Will the hard working families who have lived in Bridgeport their entire lives be forced to leave?

HOUSING FOR WHOM?

2 NEW HOUSING IS NOT AFFORDABLE TO BRIDGEPORT RESIDENTS

How does the City of Bridgeport define affordable housing?

Affordable housing is defined as housing that is affordable to those who earn 80% or less of the “median income” and are paying no more than 30% of their household income for housing.

Which “median income” should be used – Bridgeport’s median income or that of the region which includes the wealthier towns of Fairfield County?

The answer to this question makes a huge difference in what is considered affordable housing and who can afford it.

The City of Bridgeport defines affordable housing as housing that is affordable to households with an income up to 80% of the Area Median Income. By using the Area Median Income, the City includes the incomes of wealthier suburban families living in Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford and Trumbull. This more than **doubles** the median income of the families for whom the City of Bridgeport is aiming to provide “affordable housing.”

Few families who actually live in Bridgeport will be able to afford “affordable housing” under the City’s definition.

Defining affordability: A HUGE difference		
	City of Bridgeport’s definition of affordable housing	A fairer and more accurate definition of affordable housing
Median Income	Area Median Income \$79,000	Bridgeport Median Income \$37,000
80% of Median Income	80% of the Area Median Income \$63,200	80% of Bridgeport Median Income \$29,600
Monthly cost of housing at 30% of income	\$1,600 per month	\$715 per month
Hourly earnings needed	\$30.38 per hour	\$14.23 per hour

Source: 2005 U.S. Census Report

To address the affordable housing crisis in Bridgeport, wouldn’t it be better for the City to use the Bridgeport Median Income?

Bridgeport families lose out on new rental housing

More than half (51%) of Bridgeport’s families rent rather than own their homes. Many of these families are paying far more than 30% of their income for rent and desperately need affordable rental housing.

Bridgeport’s housing policy and plan must address the need for **both** rental apartments and home ownership.

- **Of all the housing of 10 or more units built since 2005 or under construction in Bridgeport, only 33% is rental housing -- and only 45% of the rental housing is for families.**
- **Only one of the 101 rental apartments for families recently built or under construction is affordable to Bridgeport families earning up to 80% of the Bridgeport Median Income.**
- **99% of Bridgeport’s new rental apartments for families are not affordable to Bridgeport families earning up to 80% of the Bridgeport Median Income.**

in our own backyard
Bridgeport residents tell their stories
 Maria

Maria lives in Bridgeport with her 12 year-old grandson. She has worked for the same employer for 22 years, earning \$13.15 an hour. She paid 46% of her income for rent and heat. In 2006, as heating bills skyrocketed, she got behind in her rent and was evicted. After a frantic search, she found another smaller but more expensive apartment. She is stressed out over trying to stretch her paycheck to pay for all her bills. Maria juggles her bills, paying one this month and another the next month. She suffers from high blood pressure, diabetes and a heart condition, but she cannot afford medical care and medications. Maria says she has made the decision to pay for food and housing for her family first.

Is Bridgeport's new rental housing family-friendly?

Bridgeport is a city of families. Two out of every three households are families.

Yet 55% of all rental developments of 10 or more units built over the last two years or currently under construction are for single adults or childless couples. Of the 101 family-size apartments that have been or are being built, **only one is affordable** to families earning up to 80% of the Bridgeport Median Income. More than four out of five of the remaining family-size apartments require a family income of nearly \$50,000. More than 60% of Bridgeport's households do not earn this much.

99% of Bridgeport's new rental apartments for families are not affordable			
Rental Developments	Number of apartments recently completed or being built	Number of two and three-bedroom apartments	Two and three-bedroom apartments that are affordable at 80% of the Bridgeport Median Income based on estimated rents
Arcade	23	15	none
City Trust	118	40	none
East Main Mews	20	14	1
Golden Hill	36	12	none
Yaremich Estates	28	20	none
Total	225	101	1

Source: Information provided by City of Bridgeport, individual developers and Bridgeport Economic Resource Center website.

Note: The following rental developments were not included in the table above because they are designated for specific populations: Conger House, supportive housing; Hall Neighborhood House, elderly; Olde School Commons, adults with disabilities; and Read's ArtSpace, artists.

There is a mismatch between housing being developed and the income of Bridgeport residents

Bridgeport renters are suffering the most from Bridgeport's affordable housing crisis. An astounding number of Bridgeport households are paying far in excess of 30% of their income for rent.

In five Bridgeport neighborhoods, nearly half or more of the families earn below \$30,000	
Neighborhood	Percent of households earning \$30,000 or less in five of Bridgeport neighborhoods
East End	48%
East Side	62%
Hollow	55%
South End	66%
West Side/End	53%

Yet, no rental housing is being developed in Bridgeport that is affordable to these families.

In five Bridgeport neighborhoods, renters are paying far too much for rent		
Neighborhood	Percent renter-occupied housing units	Percent renter households paying more than 50% of income for rent
East End	65%	33%
East Side	76%	32%
Hollow	84%	24%
South End	73%	56%
West Side/End	78%	30%

For these families, on a daily basis they must choose between paying for shelter or paying for food, medicine and other necessities.

HOUSING FOR WHOM?

4 A CLOSE LOOK AT WHO IS LEFT BEHIND

Many families are an emergency away from homelessness

Families paying more than 50% of their income for rent are at high risk of becoming homeless. The illness of a child or parent, the loss of a job, or other family emergency may strain family income, resulting in eviction and homelessness.

- **Nearly 40% of the families in homeless shelters have working parents, a 500% increase over the last ten years due to the affordable housing crisis.**

Who is hurt most by the lack of affordable rental housing?

More than 80% of Bridgeport's new family rental housing requires families to earn \$23 or more an hour to pay the monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment that can be as much as \$1,200 a month. A family earning up to \$30,000 a year would have to pay nearly half of their income to afford a rent of \$1,200 a month.

A rent of \$1,200 a month or more for a two or three-bedroom apartment means that:

- **61% of all Bridgeport families cannot afford this rent**
- **67% of all African-American families in Bridgeport cannot afford this rent**
- **71% of all Latino families in Bridgeport cannot afford this rent**

Bridgeport's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

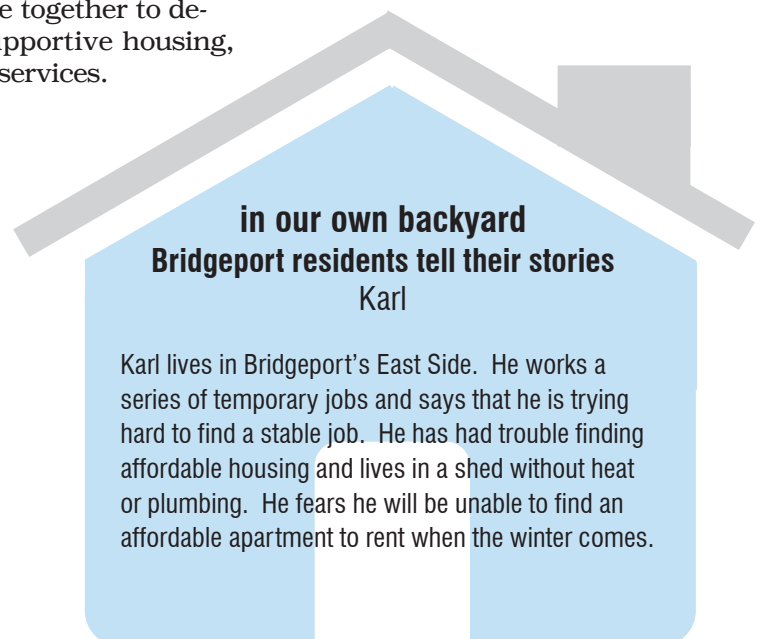
In December 2004, more than 35 representatives of greater Bridgeport area homeless shelters, social service providers, nonprofit housing developers and affordable housing advocates came together to develop a plan to end homelessness by providing supportive housing, which combines affordable housing with social services.

This plan, called Bridgeport's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, recognizes the crisis in affordable housing as one of the most serious impediments to ending homelessness. It establishes a goal of creating 126 units of permanent affordable or supportive housing in the region for each year for ten years, for a total of 1,260 housing units.

FOR HOMELESS SHELTER RESIDENTS, THERE IS PROGRESS:

31 apartments are completed and occupied
181 apartments are under construction

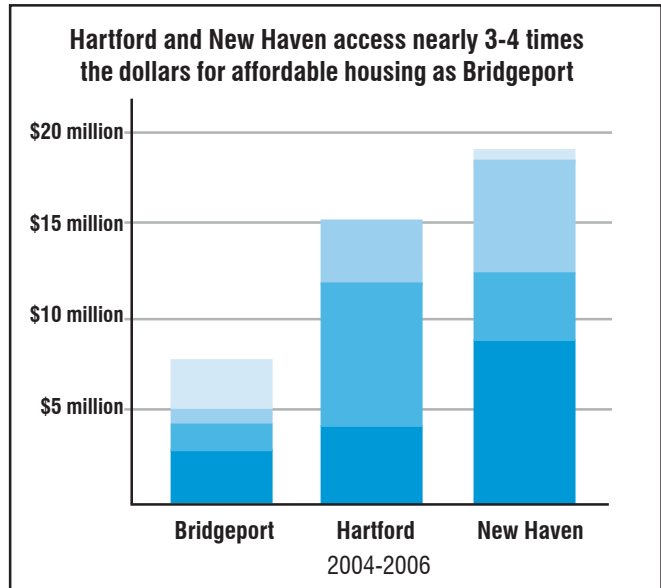
Source: Bridgeport Continuum of Care



Other cities are using available funding to develop affordable housing, but not Bridgeport

In BCAC’s previous report in 2005, “Bridgeport’s Affordable Housing Crisis: Everyone Pays the Price,” we found that Bridgeport lagged far behind other cities in using existing state and federal resources to develop affordable housing.

In this report, we again compare Bridgeport’s use of resources for affordable housing over the last two years. Sadly, the picture has not changed.



Source: Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, Federal Home Loan Bank, and Office of the State Treasurer of Connecticut

Federal and State Programs that Provide Funding for Development of Affordable Housing

- CT Housing Tax Credits
- CT Housing Trust Fund
- Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits
- Federal Home Loan Bank Funding

Priced out of homeownership opportunities

Condominiums are popping up all over Bridgeport, on lots both big and small. The prospective purchasers of these condominiums are not the 49% of Bridgeport residents who already own their own homes.

Are these condos affordable to Bridgeport families who have been renters and are now ready to become homeowners?

Not only is Bridgeport’s new rental housing unaffordable to Bridgeport families, but so are Bridgeport’s new condominium developments.

BCAC was able to gather data on seven condo developments that have recently been completed or are under construction. They total 456 units. They include: 325 Lafayette, Camelot, Columbia Towers, Federal Arms, Jefferson School, Village at Black Rock, and William Street.

- **316, or 69%, are two and three-bedroom condominiums**
- **Based on preliminary information provided by the City of Bridgeport or developers, nearly 75% of these family-sized two and three-bedroom units will cost \$200,000 or more, with purchase prices as high as \$375,000.**

In order to purchase a condo selling for \$200,000, a Bridgeport family would have to earn \$55,000-\$60,000 a year. This is an income \$25,000 higher than what is considered affordable using the Bridgeport Median Income.

HOUSING FOR BRIDGEPORT'S MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

6

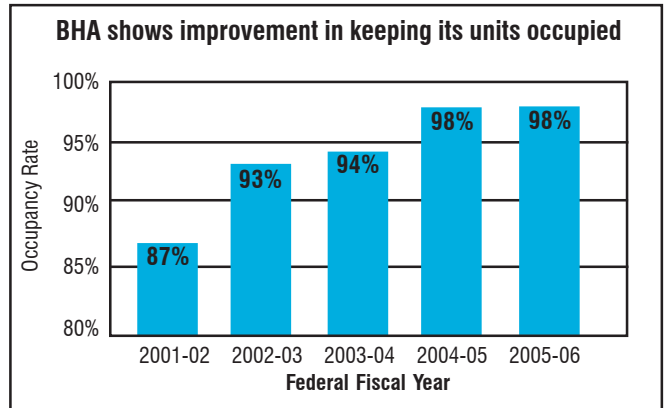
BRIDGEPORT HOUSING AUTHORITY (BHA) MAKES PROGRESS

BHA is keeping apartments occupied

Occupancy rate is the number of housing authority apartments that are occupied out of the total number of BHA apartments. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) oversees housing authorities and requires an occupancy rate of 95%. For the last two years, BHA has exceeded the HUD requirement.

THE RESULT:

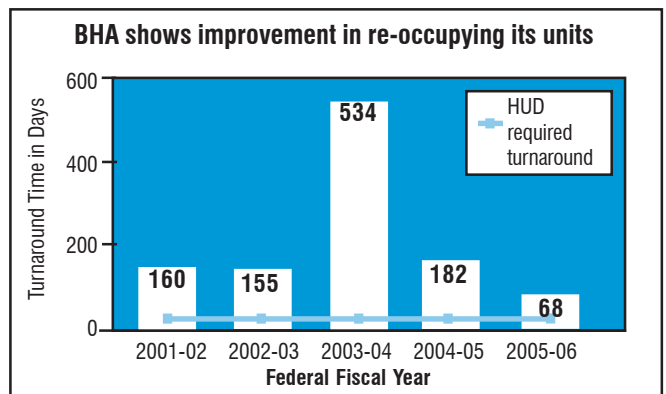
272 more families have affordable housing



Source: Bridgeport Housing Authority

BHA reduces turnaround time for moving new families into apartments

Turnaround time is the time it takes to move a new family into a vacant apartment. HUD requires housing authorities to move families into vacant apartments within 30 days. In 2003-04, turnaround time was at an all-time high of 534 days, or nearly a year and a half. Within two years, BHA had reduced its turnaround time to 68 days.



Source: Bridgeport Housing Authority

BHA needs to reduce its over-housing of residents

Over-housing is when a family has downsized over the years as children grow up and move out and a single person or couple are still living in a two or three-bedroom apartment. HUD requires that housing authorities house families in appropriately sized apartments.

BHA estimates over-housing in 350-400 of its apartments

Hundreds of families on BHA's waiting list need this housing

Other housing authorities across Connecticut have reduced their over-housing. BHA can too.

BHA and City lag in developing court-ordered replacement housing

In 1989, BHA demolished 1,076 apartments in Father Panik Village. As a result of a lawsuit by Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) on behalf of BHA tenants, the court ordered BHA to replace 818 of the demolished apartments and provide 245 Section 8 project-based housing vouchers.

In 2002, the City of Bridgeport demolished 256 Pequonnock apartments to make way for the new baseball stadium and parking at Harbor Yard. Under the threat of a lawsuit by CLS, the City of Bridgeport agreed to replace 100 of the demolished apartments and provide funding for 189 Section 8 housing vouchers.

	Apartments demolished	Required replacements	Replacements to date
Father Panik BHA to produce	1,076	818	582
Pequonnock City to produce	256	100	23

Note: This year an amended agreement decreased the Pequonnock replacements from 100 to 60 with a strict timetable for completing all units by June 2008, and established a fund for resident services with \$4 million provided by the City of Bridgeport.

Bridgeport CAN provide housing for everyone with a Balanced Housing Approach

Few would disagree that the City of Bridgeport needs market rate housing to attract new taxpayers to the city in order to build its tax base. An expanded tax base means a stronger city, more money for education, a lower tax rate, and the ability to offer more services.

However, a balance in the type and cost of housing being developed in Bridgeport must be a priority for the City **right now**. Available land and property are fast disappearing to market rate housing. Rising housing costs are pricing out the hard-working families who have lived in Bridgeport their entire lives.

A new “Balanced Housing Approach” by the City of Bridgeport can ensure that **housing for everyone** is developed in Bridgeport.

There is much that the City of Bridgeport can do right now to address the affordable housing crisis

The following recommendations were developed in a series of community meetings organized by BCAC.

1. Set aside a portion of the hundreds of city-owned properties in a land trust for development as affordable housing.
2. Create an inventory of city-owned property and provide this information on the city website.
3. Meet regularly with nonprofit developers to help them address challenges to the development of affordable housing in Bridgeport.
4. Join with nonprofit developers to get available funding resources and subsidies from government and private sources to maximize the development of affordable housing.
5. Use federal HOME and other funds for soft costs and predevelopment funding for affordable housing.
6. Employ an infill housing strategy using Bridgeport’s 2-6 family houses to build and rehabilitate affordable rental housing across the city.
7. Implement a 15% inclusionary zoning policy modeled on the City of Stamford’s policy.
8. Streamline permitting requirements, reduce fees and expedite processing for developers of affordable housing. Create a “one-stop” office at City Hall.
9. Assess property taxes on affordable housing based on their income rather than the market value in order to keep affordable housing affordable for the long term.
10. Expedite completion of Pequonnock replacement apartments and provide land to BHA for Father Panik replacement apartments.



Creating a new “Balanced Housing Approach” NOW – backed by strong policies and effective strategies – is the only way for the City of Bridgeport to ensure that the people who have grown up in Bridgeport, made their homes in Bridgeport, and raised their families here, are not priced out and forced to move from the city they love.



Thanks to the Fairfield County Community Foundation, the Frederick H. Leonhardt Fund of the New York Community Trust and the Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation for their support for this report.



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SPRING 2007