

PLAN **BOLD** • PLAN **SMART**

PLAN

BRIDGEPORT

Contents

Introduction

Vision and Guiding Principles

Bridgeport is a Livable City

Bridgeport is a Healthy Community

Bridgeport is an Equitable City

Bridgeport Values Nature

Bridgeport has a Robust Economy

Bridgeport is a Regional Center

Implementation Plan

Appendix



INTRODUCTION

Why Prepare a Plan?

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a tool for examining the state of a community and formulating a guide for its future. It is an opportunity for a community to come together and reach a consensus about the kind of place everyone wants it to be. This plan's purpose is to establish a common vision for the future physical form, economic health, and quality of life for the City of Bridgeport and to express the community's collective policies that will help frame that vision. That common vision provides a foundation for land use management in the Town through the zoning regulations. Thereby, this plan's purpose is also to support and reinforce the zoning regulations intent to protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of Bridgeport. This plan then lays out a set of recommended strategies and complementary actions to implement those policies and help them be realized.

This plan also meets state statutory requirements for municipal planning. The Connecticut General Statutes require that a municipal plan of conservation and development be updated every ten years.

What the State Requires of a Plan (Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-23)

The Planning Commission:

- Shall prepare (or amend) and adopt a plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years
- Shall regularly review and maintain the Plan
- May adopt amendments to the Plan or parts of the Plan as it deems necessary
- May prepare/amend plans for the redevelopment and improvement of districts or neighborhoods containing special problems or opportunities

The Plan Shall:

- Be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality,
- Provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails and other public ways as appropriate,
- Be designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people
- Recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses,
- Identify areas where it is feasible and prudent to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse, and to promote such development patterns and land reuse,
- Recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality,
- Note any inconsistencies with the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan
- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities,

- Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs and
- Consider focusing development and revitalization in areas with existing or planned physical infrastructure.
- Consider the following:
 - The need for affordable housing
 - The need for protection of existing and potential drinking water supplies
 - The use of cluster development
 - The state plan of conservation and development
 - The regional plan of development
 - Physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends
 - The needs of the municipality
 - The objectives of energy efficient patterns of development
 - Protection and preservation of agriculture

Consistency with the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan

The findings of this plan were compared with the current draft State Conservation and Development Policies Plan (2013-2018) for consistency. The 2013-2018 Plan provides a benchmark for municipal plans of development going forward.

The 2013-2018 Plan is organized around six growth-management principles. Municipalities must consider these principles as they update their plans of conservation and development:

1. Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure
2. Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs
3. Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options
4. Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands
5. Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety
6. Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional and local basis

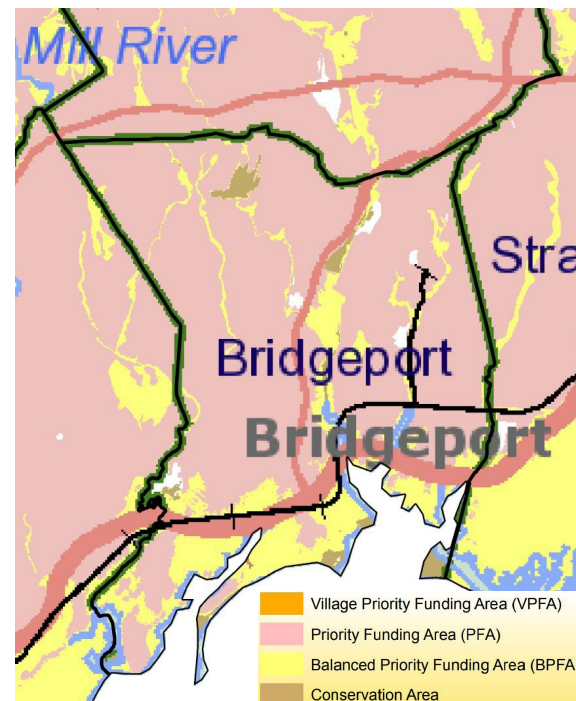
The policies and strategies which comprise this plan are complementary to the growth principles stated above.

This plan was also compared for consistency with the 2013-2018 Plan with regards to designations of the 2013-2018 Locational Guide Map, which identifies targeted conservation areas and priority funding areas to guide the award of state funds in support of local programs and projects. The policies within this plan

are consistent with the 2013-2018 Locational Guide Map at right which indicate that most of Bridgeport is located within a Priority Funding Area or within a Balanced Priority Funding Area.

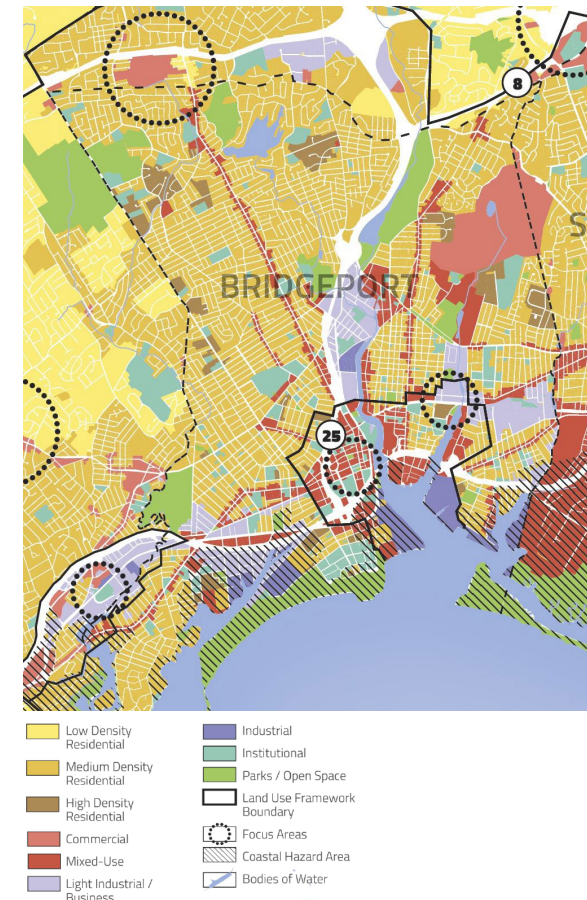
Priority Funding areas are areas that are targeted for growth and state investment to support growth. No state agency shall provide funding for a “growth-related project” unless such project is either located in a priority funding area or the sponsoring agency has fully complied with the statutory exception process, if such project is not located in a priority funding area.

Balanced Priority Funding Areas meet the criteria of both Priority Funding Areas and Conservation Areas. State agencies that propose certain actions in these areas must provide balanced consideration of all factors in determining the extent to which it is consistent with the policies of the State C&D Plan.



Consistency with Regional Plan

MetroCOG’s 2015 “Reconnect the Region” is a comprehensive plan for the region. The plan’s future land use recommendations for Bridgeport are based primarily upon the City’s existing land use. Three focus areas are identified by the plan, those being the area in proximity of the Westfield Mall in Trumbull, Downtown Bridgeport, and the area in proximity of Bridgeport Hospital on the East Side and East End of Bridgeport.



Relevant Plans, Studies, and Reports (within last 10 years)

Regional

Plans

- State of CT Plan of Conservation & Development
- MetroCOG Regional Plan
- MetroCOG Regional Transportation Plan
- MetroCOG Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- RPA: Fourth Regional Plan
- Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development- NY/CT Sustainable Communities Consortium
- Trans-Regional Express (T-REX)

Reports and Studies

- MetroCOG Tree Canopy Report
- Fairfield County Wellbeing Index Report
- Southern Connecticut Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience Report

Citywide

Plans

- Bridgeport 2020
- Bridgeport BGreen 2020
- Bridgeport Waterfront Plan
- Bridgeport Parks Master Plan
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plan
- CDBG Bridgeport Five-Year Consolidated Plan (2013-2018) and Program Year 39 Annual Action Plan
- 2017 Bridgeport Stormwater Management Plan
- Bridgeport Innovation Place Presentation and Strategic Plan
- RPA: Greater Bridgeport Emissions Reduction Strategy
- Green Connections in the East Side
- City of Bridgeport Department of Health Strategic Plan (2017-2022)

Reports and Studies

- Bridgeport Briefing Book
- Urban Land Institute Bridgeport Advisory Services Panel Report
- RPA: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory
- Organizational Assessment of Regulatory and Enforcement Functions
- RPA: Building Bridgeport's Future; Analysis of Zoning, Infrastructure, and Affordable Housing Capacity
- The Valuation of Bridgeport Parks (Fairfield University)
- Bridgeport Local Foods Local Places Report
- MS4 Annual Report Transmittal Form
- SASD Bridgeport Design Thinking Study
- State of the Child BCAC
- Urban Greening Opportunities in Bridgeport: Review of 2008 POCD
- Major Developments Projects Map

Neighborhood

Plans

- Black Rock NRZ Plan
- East End NRZ Plan
- East Side NRZ Plan
- Hollow NRZ Plan
- Mill Hill NRZ Plan
- Reservoir Avenue NRZ Plan
- South End NRZ Plan & Update
- Upper East Side NRZ Community Vision
- West Side/West End NRZ Plan
- DSSD Downtown Streetscape and Planting Guidelines
- Downtown Bridgeport Master Plan
- Tax Increment Financing Financial Plan and Analysis
- Rebuild by Design Resilient Bridgeport Briefing Document
- Barnum Station TOD Plan
- Barnum Station TOD Plan Tower Place Adaptive Reuse Strategy
- Johnson Creek Living Shoreline Plan
- Feasibility Study and Master Plan for Pleasure Beach Park
- West End Development Planning

Reports and Studies

- Ash Creek Bridge Feasibility Study
- Downtown Entertainment District Pamphlet
- Downtown Parking Analysis
- Lafayette Circle Realignment Report
- Bridgeport DSSD Recommendations
- DOT Safety Audit (Main St & Route 8)
- Downtown Priority Projects and Current Status
- Eco-Technology Park Progress Report

Historical Context

Positioned at the mouth of the Pequonnock River where it enters Long Island Sound, the Bridgeport area was first settled in 1639 in the vicinity of present-day Park and North Avenues, and established as the settlement of Pequonnock. Most of the land that comprises modern Bridgeport was obtained from the Pequonnock Indians.

In fact, today's busy commercial corridor formed by North and Boston Avenues follows the original path of an Indian trail that was later used by settlers traveling between Fairfield and Stratford.

In the late 1700s, a new road (modern-day State Street) was built from the Fairfield town line to the Pequonnock Harbor, opening a shoreline route from Fairfield to Stratford. By 1798, the business core of "Newfield" had shifted to the intersection of Main and State. Two years later, the Connecticut General Assembly incorporated Newfield as a separate borough, granting a degree of independence from the larger community of Stratford. In 1800, the name of the community changed again to the Borough of Bridgeport – named for the first drawbridge erected over the Pequonnock River. In 1821, Bridgeport was incorporated as a town, and in 1836, chartered as a city. By 1889, Bridgeport had annexed the East End and West Stratford, which, together with the annexations of the West End and Black Rock from Fairfield in 1870, formed Bridgeport's present boundaries (see Bridgeport's harbor and port were critical to its industrial development. The first steamboat run to New York City began in 1824, and by 1846, there were two trips per day. By 1897, more than 18,000 vessels cleared the port, and by 1916, more than 15,000 vessels cleared the port in the month of March alone. Early railroad connections – to other Connecticut towns to the northwest via the Housatonic Railroad, to the Waterbury brass industry via the Naugatuck Railroad and to New York via the New Haven Railroad – also strengthened the city's industrial position.

Bridgeport also gained distinction as the "Park City," due to its founding fathers' legacy of more than 1,200 acres of park and recreation areas, shoreline and the only zoo facility in the state. The initial portion of Seaside Park was given in 1865 by four donors who added to it over the next two decades. Beardsley Park was donated to the City in 1878.

The city also has a rich history of entrepreneurship. Bridgeport's most famous resident and former mayor is P.T. Barnum, promoter of "the greatest show on earth," the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus. Barnum's many other legacies in the city include Seaside Park, Washington Park and the downtown Barnum Museum. Bridgeport is also birthplace of the sewing machine, first mass-produced in the City by Elias Howe. In addition, Igor Sikorsky emigrated from Russia to Bridgeport and became known as the father of the modern helicopter.

This entrepreneurial spirit attracted businessmen to Bridgeport who had begun elsewhere but sought to expand; nationally recognized products manufactured in the city included valves, lace, garments, brake linings, sewing machines, scissors and adding machines. Two other products in particular, guns and corsets, brought Bridgeport great wealth. Dr. Warner's Health Corset was first manufactured in McGrawville, New York, but moved to the city in 1876. In 1900, 22 percent of all corsets sold in the U.S. came from Bridgeport. By 1917, the production rate was 120,000 corsets a week, and employment totaled 3,000. The arms industry proved even more lucrative. The Remington Arms Company of Ilion, Illinois, established a Bridgeport branch in 1867, and moved its headquarters there in 1912. The company's employment surged during World War I. In November 1915, there were 3,000 employees at Remington Arms, and within six months there were 16,000, with another 20,000 joining over the following year.

This rapid influx of workers into the arms and other war industries strained housing and government services in Bridgeport, as the city's population rose 45 percent within 20 months after World War I broke out in 1914.

The Bridgeport Housing Company was formed in 1916 to deal with the housing shortage with federal aid. It built 1,000 new housing units in about eight sites; many of these projects are now listed on the National Register.

By the end of World War II, economic changes that had begun in the late 19th Century – mainly a shift from traditional industrial goods to capital goods needed in a modern industrial economy – had reduced the role of small- and mid-sized cities. The shift led to consolidation of firms and the establishment of their headquarters in large cities near the sources of capital. The growth of trucking also gave manufacturing firms more choice of locations near the big cities. Faced with these trends, Bridgeport lost population and jobs to its suburbs through most of the 20th Century.



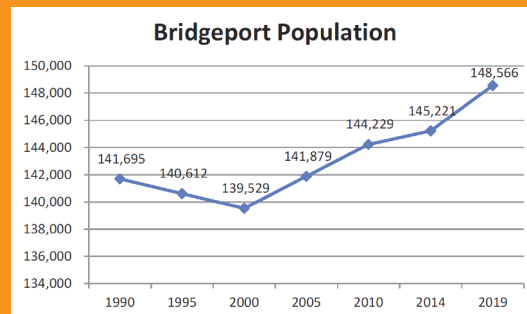
Demographic and Economic Trends

Bridgeport has experienced steady population growth since 2000, but that growth has been slow, averaging approximately 0.4% per year. In spite of its population growth, since 2015 Bridgeport has not been adding housing supply to the market relative to the number of units that have been demolished. This lack of housing construction has resulted in low housing vacancy rates

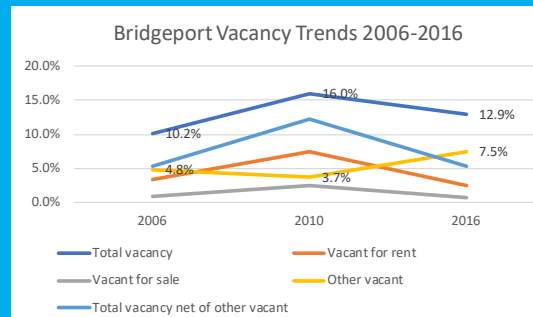
which has placed upwards pressure on rental rates. Consequently, rental rates have outpaced growth in wages and two-thirds of Bridgeport households now pay more than \$1,000 per month for rent or mortgage causing housing burden for many households to be in excess of 30%.

On a positive note, Bridgeport's unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing since 2010 and now stands at 6%, only 1.9 points higher than Fairfield County. Working against this trend is the fact that since 2001, Bridgeport has only experienced five years of positive employment growth, having most recently experienced the loss of over 700 jobs in 2017.

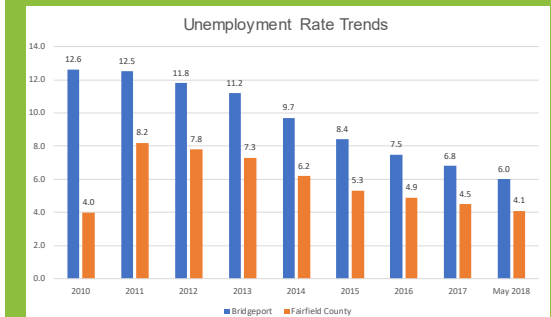
Population has been growing since 2000, but growth is slow.



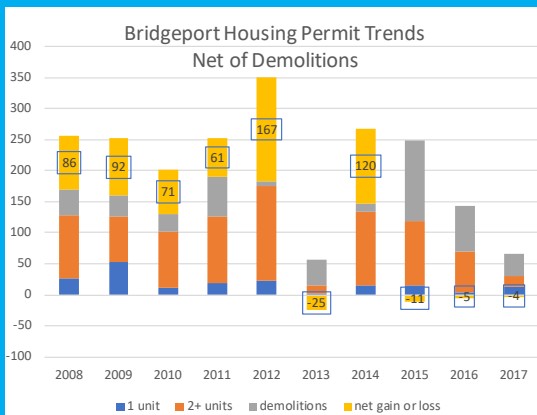
Housing vacancy rates have shrunk since 2010. Combined vacancy for rent and for sale is less than 5%.



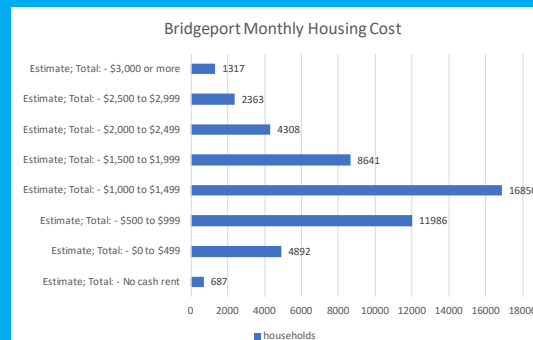
The unemployment rate in Bridgeport has been steadily decreasing since 2010.



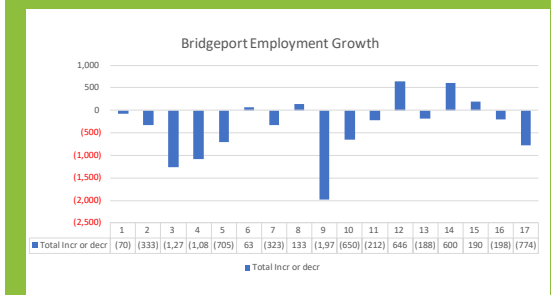
Housing Permits have been trending downward since 2014.



Two-thirds of households pay more than \$1,000 for rent or mortgage, indicating that housing burden is many cases is well in excess of 30%.



There have only been 5 years of positive employment growth in Bridgeport since 2001.



City Governance, Boards, and Departments with a Direct Role in Plan Bridgeport



**Agencies, Authorities,
Commissions, Committees, and
Task Forces with a Direct Role
in Plan Bridgeport**

Planning and Zoning Commission	Parks Commission	Public Safety and Transportation Committee	Environmental Task Force	Housing Authority
Commission for People with Disabilities	Airport Commission	Education and Social Services Committee	BGreen Sustainability	Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority
Fair Housing Commission	Port Authority Commission	Ordinance Committee	Redevelopment Agency	
Fair Rent Commission	Harbor Commission	ECD and Environment Committee	Food Policy Council	
Historic Commissions	WPCA Commission			

External Organizations that are Potential Resources or Partners for Plan Bridgeport





VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision

Bridgeport is a sustainable city with an environment, governance, and practices that support a **livable** city for generations into the future. As a livable city, Bridgeport has a diversity of housing options and educational opportunities in an environment that is safe, clean, and easy to travel within. The City's residents are healthy and have access to **healthy** food, recreation opportunities, and health care. Bridgeport is an **equitable** place that is inclusive and celebrates its diversity. The City's costs and resources are equitably distributed among residents, property owners, and other stakeholders and city policies are fair and uniformly enforced. **Nature** is present and accessible throughout the City – in parks, on streets, in neighborhoods, and along the City's waterfront. Bridgeport has a **robust economy** which provides jobs and opportunities for a broad spectrum of its residents while also functioning as a **regional center** of commerce. As a regional center and transportation hub, Bridgeport provides the region with goods, services, higher education and healthcare.



Bridgeport is a Livable City

- Public spaces and private properties are clean and well maintained
- There is multimodal connectivity throughout the city
- City services are responsive (Public Facilities, Engineering, Building and Zoning Departments)
- Neighborhoods are close to jobs and services
- Historic buildings are preserved and repurposed
- Neighborhoods are connected across physical and perceived barriers
- Residents have various housing options that are close to public transit
- The waterfront is utilized as an asset for new development
- Waterfront hazard areas are responsive to risks

Bridgeport is a Healthy Community

- Residents have access to affordable health care
- Residents have access to social services
- Residents have access to healthy foods
- Residents have access to parks
- There is a wide range of opportunities for physical activity
- Air and water quality meet and exceed safe standards
- The city is safe and its residents feel secure
- City services are responsive (Police, Fire, EMS, Education, Social Services, Blight)

Bridgeport is an Equitable City

- Bridgeport is an inclusive city that celebrates its diversity
- Benefits and cost of the city are equitably distributed among the city's residents and stakeholders
- City policies and ordinances are fair and uniformly enforced
- The needs of all residents and stakeholders are considered when planning and enacting policies
- There is a diversity of housing choice and available housing supply
- The city's residents have access to a range of educational opportunities

Bridgeport Values Nature

- Natural habitats are restored and are protected
- Renewable energy sources are encouraged and deployed
- The City engages in sustainable practices
- Watercourses, waterfronts, watersheds, floodplains and wetlands are protected
- The city has an extensive tree canopy and street trees are present
- Waste is isolated from the natural environment
- Nature is present in all of the city's neighborhoods
- Residents have access to the waterfront throughout the city

Bridgeport has a Robust Economy

- There is physical capacity for economic growth
- There are employment opportunities across multiple trades and disciplines
- The business environment is favorable for new businesses and supportive of existing ones
- Policy and tax structure is supportive of economic development
- The local labor force has expertise needed by local businesses
- The city has vibrant arts and culture

Bridgeport is a Regional Center

- Bridgeport is the largest employment center in the region
- Bridgeport provides goods and services to the region
- Bridgeport is the region's transportation hub
- Bridgeport is the regional center of higher education and health care
- Bridgeport is home to state and federal offices and functions