



# BRIDGEPORT 2020: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



The City of *Bridgeport*, Connecticut  
MASTER PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

# **BRIDGEPORT 2020: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

**MASTER PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT**

**BFJ Planning  
March 2008**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Master Plan Steering Committee

Pat Fardy, *Chair*  
Stuart Sachs, *Vice-Chair*  
Richard Anderson  
Eva Colon  
Georgia Day  
Asher Delerne  
Johnny Dye  
Thomas Errichetti  
Barbara Freddino  
Linda Grace  
Jackie Heneage

Susan Henrique  
Tyrone Jones  
Alan Kennedy  
Kris Lorch  
Millie Maldonado  
Richard Paoletto  
Anne Pappas Phillips  
Mario Pizighelli  
Keith Rodgerson  
David Vosburg  
Reggie Walker

### City of Bridgeport

Mayor John Fabrizi and Mayor Bill Finch  
Nancy Hadley, *Director, Office of Planning and Economic Development\**  
Michael Nidoh, *Planning Department*  
Lynn Haig, *Planning Department*  
William Minor, *Land Use and Construction Review*  
Ed Lavernoich, *Acting Director, Office of Planning and Economic Development*  
Caryn Kaufman, *Mayor's Office\**  
George Estrada, *Department of Public Facilities\**  
Ted Grabarz, *Department of Public Facilities*  
Alanna Kabel, *Department of Housing and Community Development*  
Kathleen Hunter, *Department of Housing and Community Development*  
Michael Feeney, *Chief Administrative Officer\**  
Gregory Conte, *City Attorney's Office*

*\*Denotes position held during the Fabrizi Administration only.*

### BFJ Planning

Frank Fish, *FAICP, Principal*  
Harlan Sexton, *AICP, Senior Associate*  
John West, *Senior Associate*  
Melissa Kaplan-Macey, *AICP, Associate*  
Susan Favate, *Planner*  
Winnie Liu, *Graphic Designer*

### Urbanomics

Regina Armstrong, *Principal*  
Tina Lund, *Associate*  
Fred Carstensen, *Special Consultant, Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis*

### Stantec

Gary Sorge, *LA, AICP, Senior Principal*  
Christian DeAngelis, *PE, Engineer*  
Stephen Hamson, *LA, Landscape Architect*  
Peter Mahony, *AICP, Senior Associate*

### Special thanks to the following consultants for their contributions

Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates/Regional Plan Association  
Basile Baumann Prost & Associates  
czbLLC  
Zucker Systems  
Russell Design  
Geoff Steadman

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# 1.0

## INTRODUCTION AND VISION

“ Investment is clearly coming to Bridgeport. The key now is to ensure that uses are compatibly located and that new development projects meet high quality design standards and complement the city’s existing urban fabric. ”

### 1.1 | INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

In January 2005, the City of Bridgeport, in partnership with the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, invited the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to assess its strengths and weaknesses and plot a course for revitalization. ULI recommended that Bridgeport should 1) Come together as a community to set goals for the city, and 2) Update its Master Plan and land use regulations. To achieve these important goals, the City initiated a coordinated update of its land use policy and planning documents in order to develop a new Master Plan of Conservation and Development for the City of Bridgeport (referred to herein as the “Master Plan”). For the first time in the city’s history, this Master Plan will incorporate the full requirements of a Plan of Conservation and Development, as outlined by Connecticut state statutes.

The time is right for a renaissance in Bridgeport. The city is now at a crossroads and is poised to once again become a regional destination. Many significant successes have been achieved that have created greater predictability and confidence in the city, encouraging new investment. The arena and ballpark at Harbor Yard, Captain’s Cove

Seaport, the Ferry Terminal, the new Derecktor shipyard, expansion projects at Housatonic Community College and Bridgeport and St. Vincent's Hospitals and the revitalization of State Street are just a few of the many successful redevelopment projects that have occurred in Bridgeport in recent years. Together, these projects have created a momentum for investment that is now evident in the numerous private development projects currently in the pipeline, including new residential development downtown and redevelopment of vacant industrial sites such as Steel Point and the former Remington Shaver plant.

As a result of demographic changes and escalating housing prices in the greater Bridgeport region, the City is uniquely positioned to attract new residents and reverse the trend of out-migration. Bridgeport serves as a regional inter-modal transit hub with highway, rail, bus, air and water access. This multi-modal transportation access, coupled with affordable land values relative to the region, makes Bridgeport an attractive location for both jobs and housing. The City is working to capitalize on these assets and recapture its position as a central player in the southern Fairfield County economy. Investment is clearly coming to Bridgeport. The key now is to ensure that uses are compatibly located and that new development projects meet high-quality design standards and complement the city's existing urban fabric.

The planning and development policies outlined in this Master Plan provide the framework to achieve these goals and guide investment in Bridgeport over the course of the next ten years. Recommendations and strategies discussed throughout the chapters of the plan are integrated at the end of the document in Chapter 14, Future Land Use Plan, and Chapter 15, Implementation. Once the Master Plan is approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the strategies and recommendations outlined in Chapter 15 will serve as action items for implementing the plan.

## 1.2 | CONNECTICUT MUNICIPAL PLANNING LEGISLATION

The Connecticut planning enabling legislation requires that each municipal government prepare a Master Plan of Conservation and Development to serve as a guide for public- and private-sector decisions to ensure the most appropriate and beneficial development of the community.

Section 8-23 (Plan of Development) of the Connecticut General Statutes states that Planning Commissions of the state's municipalities shall prepare, adopt and amend a plan of development for the municipality, outlining recommendations for the most desirable mix of land uses within the community. State requirements also mandate that the plan include:

- *A statement of goals, policies and standards for population densities and land uses and the actions that will be taken to direct and manage future growth and development.*
- *Existing and proposed locations of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, open space and other uses of land.*
- *A housing element that identifies the existing public and private housing stock, and the municipality's future housing needs.*
- *An element identifying existing and proposed economic development strategies, including local, regional and statewide concerns.*
- *A cultural resources element that identifies and maps boundaries of historic districts, scenic roadways and property listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*
- *An open space and recreation element that identifies these existing resources.*
- *Identification of strategies for future uses, including methods for encouraging energy-efficient and transit-oriented patterns of development.*
- *For municipalities along the shores of Long Island Sound including Bridgeport, reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of this ecosystem and habitat.*

### 1.3 | 1996 MASTER PLAN

Bridgeport's last master plan was prepared by the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency in 1996 and was formally adopted in February 1997. Because the prior plan (1986) was strictly a policy plan without a future land use map, the primary mission of the 1996 plan was to provide future land use policy recommendations and an accompanying land use plan map. The 1996 Plan refined the goals and objectives from the City's previous master plan to reflect new developments and challenges. Following the development of the 1996 Plan, the City updated its zoning regulations for the first time since 1949 in order to streamline the permitting process for new development.

### 1.4 | 2008 MASTER PLAN

Based upon the recommendations of ULI's report on the City of Bridgeport, the City undertook a comprehensive effort to update its Master Plan in 2007. In December 2006 the City hired planning consultants BFJ Planning and its subconsultants, Stantec, Urbanomics, the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis-UConn, Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, and the Regional Plan Association to coordinate this planning effort.

The Mayor then assembled a 23-member Steering Committee of residents and business owners to work with City planning staff and the consultant team and guide the planning process.

This 2008 Master Plan is the central planning document for the City of Bridgeport. It is based on a solid economic foundation outlined in Bridgeport's June 2007 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which was developed by a 31-member Committee as part of the Master Plan process. It explains desired development activity and identifies appropriate locations for various types of land uses. It also addresses and builds on the successes of other planning efforts developed in 2007, including a Housing Policy Plan prepared by a housing advisory committee with assistance from consultant czbLLC, and a Downtown Plan prepared by a leadership committee comprised of the Downtown Special Services District, the City of Bridgeport and a diverse group of stakeholders with assistance from consultants Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates and the Regional Plan Association. While the Master Plan takes a fresh look at

the city and how best to plan for its future, the policies embedded in the plan recognize and expand upon the building blocks for revitalization that have been put in place through previous and continuing planning and development efforts.

“ This 2008 Master Plan is the central planning document for the City of Bridgeport. It is based on a solid economic foundation, outlined in Bridgeport's 2007 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and builds on the successes of other planning efforts including the City's Housing Policy Plan and the Downtown Plan. ”

The policies contained within this Master Plan were developed by the Steering Committee and City staff with assistance from their planning consultants and input from Bridgeport residents and business owners. Public input was gathered through an extensive outreach effort that included 12 public meetings held over the course of five months to solicit comments on the issues that will be addressed in the chapters of the Master Plan: land use and zoning; historic preservation; housing; economic development; neighborhoods; downtown; environment and open space; arts and culture; municipal facilities and services; and transportation and infrastructure. In addition, an interactive website was developed for the project: [www.bridgeportmasterplan.com](http://www.bridgeportmasterplan.com). This site provided the public with downloadable copies of all presentations made at the public meetings as well as copies of draft plan chapters and maps developed to facilitate the planning process. The website allowed the public to email their comments on planning issues and draft planning documents directly to the City and consultant team. All comments made at the public meetings and through the website were reviewed and addressed by the Steering Committee as part of the plan development process.

## 1.5 | A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

This Master Plan is centered on six major planning themes. These themes set the tone for the plan and describe an overall vision for Bridgeport's future. They can be understood as a thread that runs throughout the chapters of the Master Plan, weaving together the numerous policies described in the chapters of the document.



Downtown Signage | Source: BFJ Planning

## DOWNTOWN

### *The Catalyst for Improving the City's Image*

#### Policies

- *Encourage dense transit-oriented development incorporating a mix of residential, entertainment and business uses*
- *Create downtown design standards that are pedestrian-friendly, environmentally sensitive, and respectful of the city's historic core*
- *Support expansion of restaurant, entertainment and cultural facilities*
- *Strengthen the Lafayette Boulevard office corridor*

Over the past 50 years, Downtown Bridgeport has, like urban downtowns across the country, suffered from disinvestment, losing businesses and population to neighboring suburban towns. However, in recent years many American cities, including Bridgeport, have begun to see a reversal of this trend, as young adults and older “empty nesters” are rediscovering cities and returning to downtowns. An urban setting with a mix of uses that allows one to live, work and play in a compact, historic, pedestrian-friendly environment provides opportunities for social interaction and cultural experiences that are attractive to these two populations. With small living space needs and significant disposable income, these groups are an ideal match for downtown living. Further, new residential development in downtowns can often accommodate this demand without displacement of existing residents, as these central urban areas typically contain little housing.

Housing prices in the greater Bridgeport region have risen exponentially in recent years, outpacing incomes. For people of modest means and those just starting out, there are virtually no affordable housing options available in Fairfield County. New housing in Downtown Bridgeport provides a relatively affordable housing alternative and urban amenities in close proximity to public transportation, which is a very attractive combination for those seeking an urban lifestyle. Investment in residential development in Downtown Bridgeport presents one of the few affordable real estate opportunities in the region with the prospect of significant appreciation.





Illustrative Downtown Plan

Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates

With these trends, the time is ideal for Bridgeport to promote residential and mixed-use development downtown and become a premier urban destination for Fairfield County. Attractions in and around Downtown, including the arena and ballpark at Harbor Yard, the Barnum Museum, Playhouse on the Green, Downtown Cabaret Theater, Housatonic Community College, University of Bridgeport and Seaside Park, provide the activity base diversity and cultural interest that is key to successful revitalization. The missing piece of the puzzle is people who will occupy downtown during day and evening hours, taking advantage of entertainment and cultural offerings, spending money and generating activity on Downtown streets. Their presence is essential to enhancing Downtown's image, projecting a sense of security and safety, and attracting visitors from across Fairfield County to patronize attractions.

Enhancing Downtown's image by making it both home and destination will benefit the city of Bridgeport as a whole. People from outside the city will come to Downtown for entertainment and recreation, and experience through restaurants, nightlife and culture what a vibrant and safe place it has become. Downtown Bridgeport will become "the place to be" in Fairfield County, serving as a catalyst for revitalization throughout the city and as a key asset to the region.

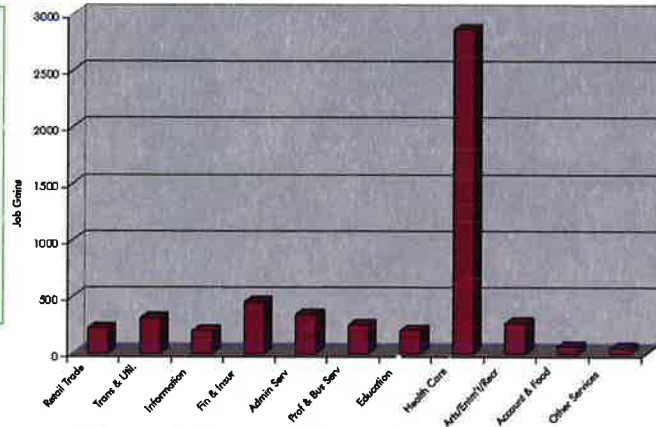
## JOBS

### Expand Economic Opportunities — Attract 15,000 New Jobs by 2020

#### Policies

Capture key growth sectors:

- *Health care*
- *Finance/insurance/real estate*
- *Administrative and professional office*
- *Arts, film and entertainment*



Bridgeport Projected Job Growth: 2016  
Source: Urbanomics

Bridgeport was once the industrial and financial capital of Connecticut. A major center for armaments production, consumer durable goods and luxury automobiles, the city's heavy manufacturing industry supported a secure working and middle class. However, since the end of World War II, employment in Bridgeport has been on a continuous decline. As in other major industrial cities across the country, a substantial portion of Bridgeport's industry moved abroad. At the same time, finance and corporate management firms were drawn to Stamford and other regional corporate centers. Vast areas of contaminated industrial land and idle downtown offices were left behind.

Since 1990, total employment in Bridgeport has declined from 61,750 to 44,863 jobs. During this period the overall greater Bridgeport region (Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk) gained 13,000 new jobs. By the year 2020, the region is expected to gain an additional 45,000 jobs. In order for Bridgeport to significantly increase its job base and become an employment center, it must capture its share of this projected regional job growth.

The City's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) plan presents a strategic action plan for Bridgeport to attract new jobs. This action plan is based on four goals that are accompanied by strategies and key projects. The goals of the CEDS are:

- *Increase the tax base: Make Downtown the foundation for growth*
- *Make better use of our assets: Value our waterfront, industrial heritage and location*
- *Strengthen economic competitiveness: Attract, create and retain jobs for our residents and newcomers*
- *Create neighborhoods of choice: Make Bridgeport a better place to live and work*

Achieving these goals is key to capturing projected job growth and revitalizing Bridgeport. If the projects recommended in the CEDS are implemented, Bridgeport could attract 15,000 new jobs (1/3 of the region's total projected job growth) by the year 2020. While industry will continue to play an important role in Bridgeport's job base, new industrial employment will focus on light rather than heavy industry. New and growing job sectors that Bridgeport is positioned to capture include health care-related jobs; back office support services to the region; and support services in the finance, insurance, real estate and information sectors. Additionally, redevelopment of Steel Point is expected to generate new service and retail jobs.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

### Foster Neighborhoods of Choice

#### Policies

- Provide programs that encourage property investment
- Continue to aggressively reduce blight, disinvestment and abandonment
- Emphasize safety to ensure livable neighborhoods
- Address high property taxes
- Focus growth on major transit corridors and reduce density within overcrowded neighborhoods
- Track neighborhood indicators to measure progress



Neighborhoods Map | Source BfJ Planning

Bridgeport's neighborhoods are the heart of the city and the centers of community life. The condition of a neighborhood's housing stock, its community facilities, public services, and its parks and open spaces are central to the quality of life of its residents. The quality of a neighborhood's housing and amenities most often determines whether people live in a certain area out of necessity or by choice.

In recent years Bridgeport has made great strides in improving the condition of its neighborhoods and transforming them into places where people choose to live because they want to, not because they have to. An aggressive blight reduction program is successfully removing abandoned and hazardous buildings from city neighborhoods. A capital investment program for new school construction is creating state-of-the-art education facilities in many city neighborhoods. School playing fields and open spaces are being made available to the local community after school hours. Crime rates are going down, and investment in property is rising.

Together these improvements are having a significant impact on the daily lives of city residents and are sending a positive message that the tide is turning in Bridgeport. As discussed in a recent housing policy report that was prepared for the City by consultants czbLLC, Bridgeport is now at a tipping point. The housing market in city neighborhoods is getting stronger. The question now is how strong will the market get? The answer depends on numerous factors, but most importantly on the condition of the housing stock; the condition of streets, sidewalks and neighborhood commercial areas; the city's fiscal strength; and the quality of its schools. Poor property upkeep, broken sidewalks, high taxes and low-performing public schools in many neighborhoods have a negative impact on the city's ability to attract and retain families.

In order for the City to continue to improve quality of life for neighborhood residents and maintain residents who may be able to afford to move elsewhere, it is essential that programs to reduce blight, disinvestment and abandonment are continued and supported. The City must work to reduce density in overcrowded neighborhoods and strengthen neighborhood commercial areas along major transit corridors. New initiatives that encourage property investment, such as rehabilitation programs and grants to homeowners, must also be provided. The City must continue to improve safety and reduce crime, increase the taxable portion of the tax base (which now stands at 47 percent of all property), and work to lower the property tax rate. By working to attract a diverse economic population and increase disposal income in the neighborhoods, the City can achieve this goal. A significant part of this strategy will be to encourage young professionals and empty nesters, two populations without children, to live in Bridgeport as they will help to increase the tax base without burdening the public school system.

At the same time, as the condition of neighborhoods continues to improve and property values rise, Bridgeport must also be cognizant of the need to maintain housing affordability for its residents. This is a difficult balance to strike, but can be achieved through mechanisms such as an incentive-based inclusionary zoning policy which can be used to create mixed-income neighborhoods, a housing trust and a land bank, as recommended in the czb housing study.

Over the course of the next ten years, the condition of the city's neighborhoods will be tracked utilizing a series of quality-of-life indicators that have been developed as part of the Master Plan process. These indicators include land use, population, age, race and ethnicity, employment, income, crime, education, housing value and property value. Baseline neighborhood data for each of Bridgeport's neighborhoods will be discussed in the Master Plan and will serve as a basis for evaluating the success of continued efforts to enhance Bridgeport's neighborhoods into the future.

“The quality of a neighborhood's housing and amenities most often determines whether people live in a certain area out of necessity or by choice.”



## EDUCATION

### *Quality and Choice to Attract Families*

#### Policies

- *Support capital improvements for the school system*
- *Provide parental choice and competition through innovative techniques (e.g. magnet and charter schools and tax credits)*
- *Partner with the business/corporate sector to support investment in both public and private schools*



Cesar Batalla Elementary School  
Source: City of Bridgeport

The availability of quality education in Bridgeport is essential to retaining existing families and attracting new residents. Without good schools, those residents who can afford to relocate will leave the city when their children reach school age, and potential new residents will choose to live in other municipalities that offer better school systems. Maintaining a strong base of families who are committed to living in Bridgeport is key to strengthening the city's neighborhoods and encouraging investment.

Several efforts to enhance the city's schools are currently underway. The City has embarked on a major capital investment program, "Building Bright Futures," to upgrade its school facilities. Under this program five new Pre-K through 8 schools and two inter-district magnet middle and high schools will be constructed, and ten other schools will be renovated and/or expanded. The first new school, Cesar Batalla Elementary School, has recently been completed and is now occupied. The new schools, which are being built on sites averaging eight acres, are being designed to serve as neighborhood centers, with the community having access to central spaces, fields and playgrounds after school hours.

Bridgeport is also working to expand school choice through magnet schools. The City was recently approved to build two new interdistrict magnet schools, which will serve students from Bridgeport, Easton, Monroe, Fairfield, Milford, Redding, Shelton, Stratford and Trumbull. In addition, a new magnet elementary school is planned in the North End in partnership with Sacred Heart University and

the Discovery Museum. A new math and science magnet high school is planned in partnership with Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo. An Achievement First-Bridgeport Academy for grades K through 8, modeled on a charter middle school in New Haven, was opened in September 2007.

In addition, the Bridgeport public school system has a close working relationship with the Diocese of Bridgeport, which operates six elementary schools, one high school and one special education school within the city. The superintendents of these two systems have partnered to apply for a \$100,000 grant from General Electric to fund joint attendances at conferences, a pilot science program and professional development. The Diocese also provides supplemental education services to Bridgeport's public schools with free after-school tutoring to public school students.

Enhancements to the public school system and partnerships with city's parochial schools are essential components of an effort to bring quality and choice to Bridgeport's education system and provide the choice parents need to make Bridgeport home. To attract families, these efforts must be continued and enhanced. Additional partnerships should be sought with private sector institutions, such as the University of Bridgeport, Housatonic Community College, St. Vincent's Medical Center and Bridgeport Hospital. In addition, new opportunities such as charter schools and tax credits for education should continue to be explored.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### *A Foundation for the Future*

#### Policies

- *Upgrade existing infrastructure to a state of good repair*
- *Separate combined stormwater/sewer systems to meet demands of future development*
- *Support an efficient multi-modal transportation network that keeps the city moving forward*
- *Enhance Bridgeport's connection to Wi-Fi and other leading technological communication systems*



Aerial view of Downtown Bridgeport showing key infrastructure elements: I-95, Routes 8/25 and Metro-North railroad.  
Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates

Bridgeport's infrastructure – its roadways, water, stormwater and sewer systems, gas and electric supply, and communication lines and hi-tech wireless and Wi-Fi services – is its foundation. The city cannot function without these systems. Upgrading and maintaining them is essential to sustain existing development and support new investment. Bridgeport's infrastructure has sufficient capacity to serve existing needs and accommodate new development. Its systems were built to support an industrial city with a population of 159,000 people. With a decline in industry and a current population of approximately 136,000, Bridgeport now has excess capacity that can be used to support new development.

However, while excess capacity exists, Bridgeport's systems are old and in many cases need to be upgraded to a state of good repair. Roadways need improvement and in some cases need to be raised to alleviate flooding problems; sidewalks and curbing in many neighborhoods are in disrepair; and portions of the city's combined stormwater and sewer systems need to be separated to prevent wastewater from entering Long Island Sound during major rainstorms. In some cases, such as with parking for special events downtown, sufficient infrastructure is available, but it is not being effectively managed. When there is an event at the arena, major traffic back-ups ensue as people try to crowd into one or two parking lots, while lots a few blocks away remain empty.

“ An updated and efficient infrastructure system tells developers that Bridgeport is a sophisticated city worthy of investment. ”

It is essential that these issues be addressed in order for Bridgeport to realize its potential as a central hub of activity for the region. An updated and efficient infrastructure system tells developers that Bridgeport is a sophisticated city worthy of investment. Bridgeport has the capacity to reclaim its preeminent position in the region. Now is the time to strengthen its foundation for the future.

## ENVIRONMENT

### A Greener Bridgeport

#### Policies

- *Reduce carbon emissions by 10 percent by 2020*
- *Remediate and redevelop brownfield sites*
- *Promote environmentally friendly building design and construction*
- *Foster the use of clean and renewable energy sources*
- *Expand and upgrade parks and open spaces*
- *Improve public access to the waterfront*
- *Improve stormwater quality*
- *Increase mass transit usage*



Black Rock Harbor | Source: BFJ Planning

Historically, Bridgeport has been known as the Park City. Its Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Beardsley and Seaside Parks are regional models for public parkland and open space. Bridgeport's green heritage should set the tone for its future. Past industrial uses have created numerous brownfield sites throughout the city, and air pollution is a significant problem in many neighborhoods. As part of its resurgence, Bridgeport now has an opportunity to reinvent itself as a green city.

Utilization of land for industrial use has declined significantly over the past 50 years. Newer industrial uses are polluting less than their predecessors with modern environmental regulations from state and national government. But Bridgeport can do more. New performance standards should be implemented to ensure that pollution from industrial uses is mitigated to the maximum extent possible in order to reduce asthma rates in city children and improve quality of life. Brownfields should be remediated so these sites, many of which have waterfront access, can be returned to productive use and can be accessed by the public. The economics of brownfield redevelopment, which require large-scale clean-up efforts to eliminate contamination, may necessitate flexible zoning and higher density, mixed-use development.

The use of mass transit should be encouraged through increased transit capacity and enhancements to the city's existing mass transit system, including strengthened connections between rail and bus services. Bridgeport should look to become a leader in sustainable land use practices by fostering the use of clean and renewable energy sources, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, enhancing stormwater quality, encouraging alternative transportation modes and vehicles, enhancing opportunities for walking and biking, and promoting environmentally-friendly building design and construction.

Perhaps most importantly, Bridgeport should return to its heritage as the Park City by recapturing its waterfront. As former industrial sites on the shoreline are cleaned, public access to the waterfront should be improved. The City should begin working to provide a continuous publicly accessible pathway along the waterfront, accompanied by passive parkland or open space in appropriate locations. The City boasts a significant open space inventory of regional, community, and neighborhood parks as well as community gardens, playground areas and athletic fields. Parks and open spaces throughout the city should be upgraded and integrated into a city-wide open space network.

Becoming a cleaner and greener city will benefit existing residents and help to attract visitors and investors. A green approach to all aspects of the city life, from energy to development to recreation, will make Bridgeport a leader in the region and enhance its attractiveness as a place to live, work and play.

The chapters of the Master Plan describe existing conditions and provide policy recommendations that plot a course for the city's future. Each chapter addresses a specific land use or planning issue and sets goals that the city will reach by the year 2020 through the implementation of the Master Plan.



# 2.0

## HISTORY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

### **POLICY**

*Reconnect Bridgeport to the region*

### **GOALS**

- 1 *Strengthen Bridgeport's position as a regional center for living, working and playing*
- 2 *Build on Bridgeport's strengths to add value to the region*

### **2.1 | REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The city of Bridgeport is located on the northern shore of the Long Island Sound, approximately 60 miles northeast of New York City and 60 miles southwest of Hartford. State Routes 8 and 25, which link to Interstates 84 and 91, merge with Interstate 95 in downtown Bridgeport (see Figure 2-1). Bridgeport Harbor is one of the three deep-water ports in Connecticut. Amtrak and Metro-North Railroad provide passenger rail service to Bridgeport via the City's downtown Inter-modal Transportation Center, and CSX operates a freight yard (primarily used by the Connecticut Department of Transportation for storage of maintenance and other equipment, and as a maintenance-of-way facility) within a quarter-mile of the Port of Bridgeport. The Sikorsky Memorial Airport is a City-owned and operated general aviation facility that is located in Stratford, ten minutes from downtown Bridgeport. The Port Jefferson Ferry links Bridgeport to Long Island.

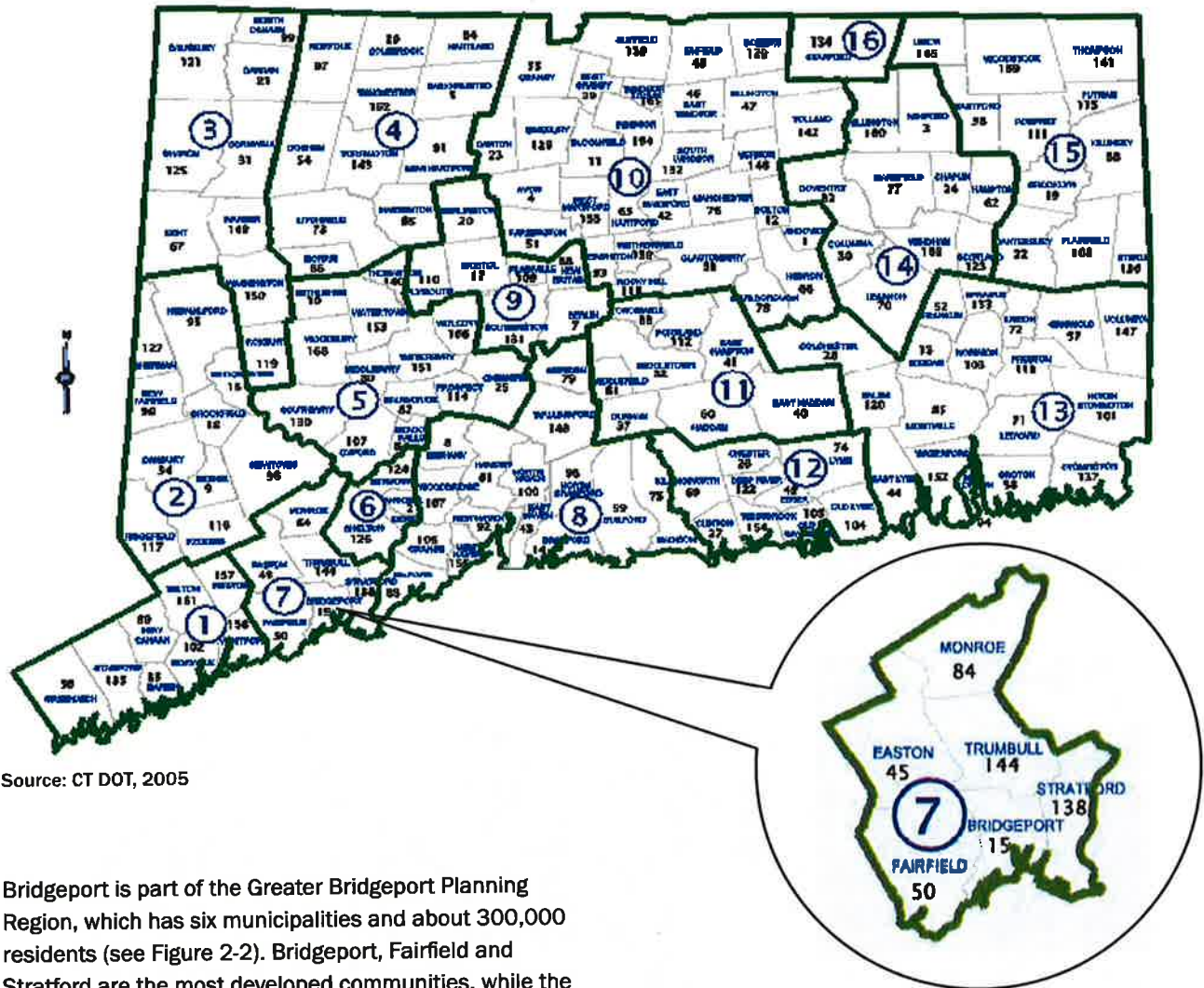
Figure 2-1 | Regional Location Map



Source: Hagstrom Map



Figure 2-2 | Greater Bridgeport Planning Region



Source: CT DOT, 2005

Bridgeport is part of the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region, which has six municipalities and about 300,000 residents (see Figure 2-2). Bridgeport, Fairfield and Stratford are the most developed communities, while the inland communities to the north – Easton, Monroe and Trumbull – are more residential. The planning region, under the jurisdiction of the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA), covers 146 square miles and is the most densely populated of the 15 planning regions in the state. The balance of southern Fairfield County, including Norwalk and Stamford, is contained within the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) region, which includes eight municipalities. Bridgeport is the largest city in both the GBRPA and SWRPA regions and in the state and serves as a center of health care and banking, and home to federal, state and county courthouses. GBRPA and SWRPA oversee Fairfield County’s land use, transportation, housing, public facilities, open space, environment, energy and economic development. They are state-designated regional transportation planning agencies and serve as conduits for disbursement of federal transportation funds to their member governments.



Seaside Park Shoreline | Source: BFJ Planning, 2007



The Greater Bridgeport Planning Region is part of the I-95/Northeast corridor stretching from Boston to Washington D.C. Approximately 150 miles from Boston and 60 miles from New York City, Bridgeport is part of the Tri-State Metropolitan Region. The city is also part of the federal government-designated Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk Metropolitan Statistical Area. Bridgeport's commuter-shed stretches along the I-95 corridor and the New Haven rail line from New York City to New Haven and encompasses the office centers that have developed around Stamford and Norwalk's train stations. It also extends northward along Routes 8 and 25, capturing residential communities and employment centers in the Pequonnock Valley. The city is also linked to Long Island via the Port Jefferson Ferry and is served by local and intrastate bus systems.

Long Island Sound is the Bridgeport Region's dominant natural feature, offering beaches such as Pleasure

Beach and Seaside Park and harbors for recreational boating such as Black Rock in Bridgeport. The region has a more moderate climate than most of New England because of its proximity to Long Island Sound, but receives more precipitation for the same reason.

## 2.2 | HISTORY OF BRIDGEPORT

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<sup>1</sup>. 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.



1875 Map of Bridgeport | Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Historical information sources: 1996 Bridgeport Master Plan, City of Bridgeport; Mary Proctor & Bill Matuszeski, *Gritty Cities*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978.



Perry Memorial Arch, Seaside Park | Source: BFJ Planning

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 Figure 2-2).

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’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. ”

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.



Former General Electric Plant | Source: BFJ Planning

## 2.3 | PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

### BRIDGEPORT MASTER PLANS

#### 1952 Master Plan

The 1952 Master Plan was Bridgeport's first land use plan and incorporated two key principles into the City's planning practices to deal with development issues. First, the plan designated 31 residential neighborhoods, representing all residential areas in the city. Secondly, the plan divided commercial activities in Bridgeport into three categories: central business district, secondary business district and local shopping centers. The plan objectives were categorized based on the three traditional land uses: residential, commercial and industrial. The plan recommended the elimination of non-industrial uses in industrial districts, to allow for expansion of existing manufacturing facilities. It also sought to consolidate commercial corridors along major thoroughfares, along with the provision of adequate off-street parking and loading spaces. Finally, the plan called for the elimination of heavy commercial and industrial uses in residential neighborhoods, as well as the prohibition of through traffic.

#### 1962 Master Plan of Land Use

The reconfiguration of the regional highway network in the late 1950s and early 1960s changed land use decisions throughout Bridgeport and created new boundaries for various districts, such as the Downtown "teardrop" formed partially by the I-95 and Route 8/25 expressways. In the midst of these changes, Bridgeport's 1962 master plan set goals to guide a land development policy that would maintain the city's regional position as the primary place of residence, as well as the industrial and commercial focal point. Key recommendations of the 1962 plan include developing modern medium- and high-density apartments near downtown and major thoroughfares; providing industrial sites where residential reuse would be inappropriate; reconstructing or eliminating obsolete commercial uses to locate shopping facilities in concentrated commercial areas; and reorienting downtown to capitalize on new highway access.

#### 1971 Master Plan

The updated 1971 master plan contained a future land use plan, a major thoroughfare plan and a community facilities plan. The land use plan incorporated four categories of residential uses, three of commercial and one of industrial. The thoroughfare plan summarized recommendations for infrastructure improvements, while the community facilities plan had suggestions for public buildings, including schools and recreation facilities. The 1971 plan combined traditional concepts like promoting higher density in the urban core with what were then more unconventional ideas, such as multiple neighborhoods with their own satellite or urban villages strategically located to encourage pedestrian use.

#### 1986 Master Plan

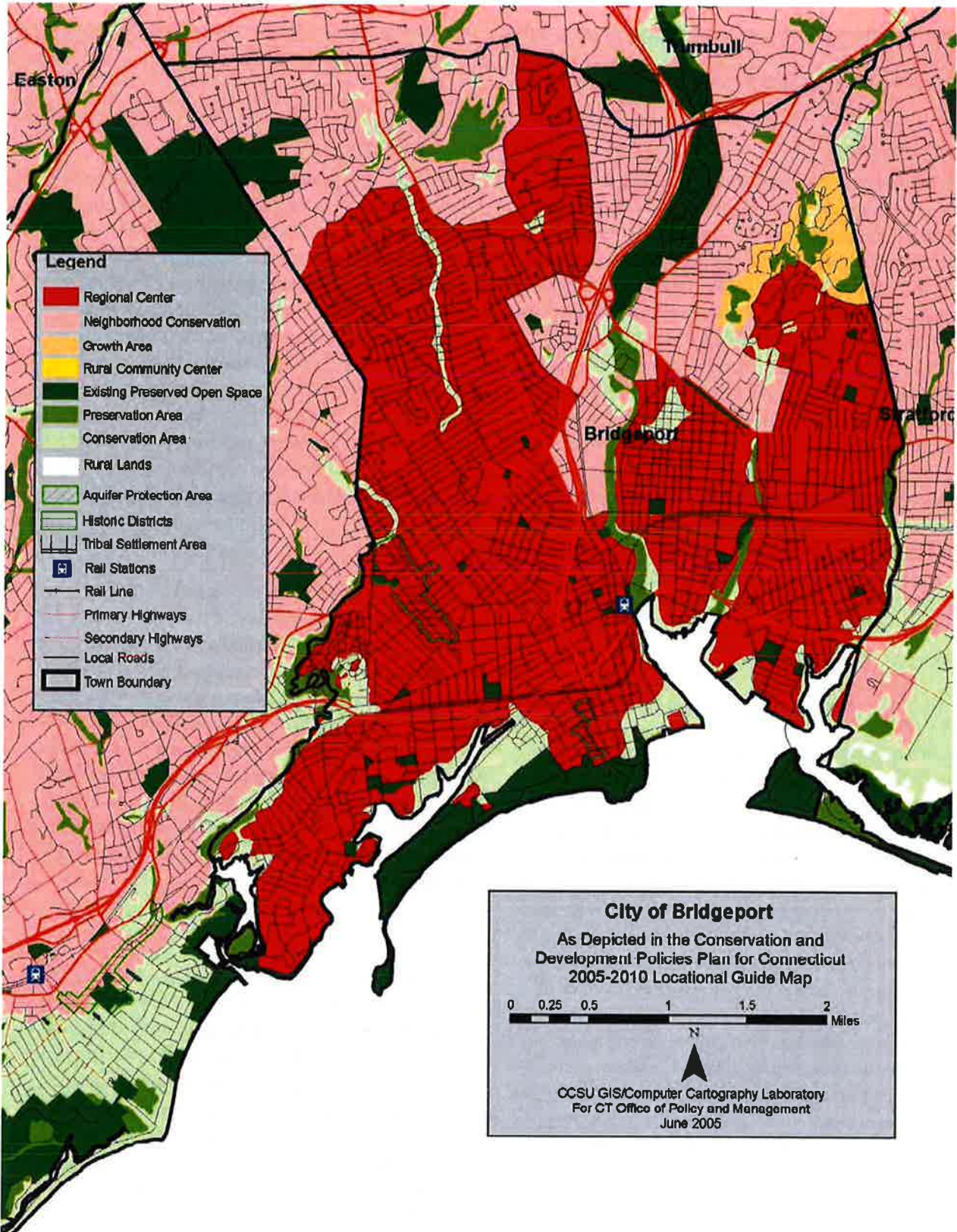
The 1986 plan viewed land use as just one of many elements in municipal planning, a process that included community goals, objectives and policy plans as the first planning phase. Thus, the plan did not have a future land use plan or map, the intent being to give the City flexibility in modifying land use as needed to conform to the plan's broad policy guidelines. The final plan was essentially an administrative plan containing a series of policy statements, with accompanying goals and objectives for economic development, housing, transportation, parks and recreation, coastal area management and land use.

#### 1996 Master Plan of Development

The main goal set forth by the Planning and Zoning Commission in developing the 1996 plan was to establish a future land use policy and accompanying land use plan map. The plan also refined the goals and objectives from the prior plan, focusing on redevelopment and infill as keys to revitalization. The 1996 plan outlined goals and objectives into eight broad categories: regional context, economic development, transportation, housing, land use, environmental remediation and port and waterfront development.



Figure 2-3 | State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan



Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

## OTHER PLANS AND REPORTS

### Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development

State law requires the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to prepare a Conservation and Development Policies Plan every five years. The current plan was adopted by the General Assembly in 2005 and covers the period from 2005 to 2010. The significance of the state plan for Bridgeport ultimately lies in the availability of funding. State funding of infrastructure needs or open space projects is more likely to be available if those needs are compatible with the State Plan.

The overall strategy of the state plan is “to reinforce and conserve existing urban areas; to promote staged, appropriate, sustainable development; and to preserve areas of significant environmental value.” To that end, the plan apportions the state into eight broad land categories according to each area’s characteristics and suitability for different forms of development or conservation action, then establishes priorities for these categories (See Figure 2-3).

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that each municipal plan of conservation and development “take into account the State plan of conservation and development...and...note any inconsistencies it may have with said State plan.” The State plan also serves as a document of reference for some types of municipal projects for which state funding is sought; these projects must be reviewed by OPM to determine the extent of their conformance to the State plan. In general, a municipal project that closely conforms to the State plan is more likely to receive funding. Thus, it is in Bridgeport’s best interest that, to the maximum extent possible, its Master Plan be consistent with the State plan.

### Economic Development Plan, Bridgeport, Connecticut (1985)

This report aimed to find strategies for Bridgeport to make itself a more attractive location for new jobs, while retaining its industrial base. The report documented existing economic trends in the city, and recommended a number of economic development actions, including providing more entertainment and cultural events, reusing or replacing much of the old stock of industrial buildings and making sites available throughout the city for new office and industrial development.

### Connecticut: Strategic Economic Framework (1999)

Known as the Gallis Report, this study addressed the state’s long-term economic future by defining the issues, relationships and resources needed to compete in a global economy. The report warned that Connecticut could become an “economic cul-de-sac” without major investments to update its overburdened and disconnected transportation system. The Gallis report argued that, despite a population shift to the suburbs, Connecticut’s cities remain important to its competitiveness. A 2006 follow-up report, *Connecticut: Economic Vitality & Competitive Cities*, noted that the cities continue to struggle. Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury and New Britain make up 16.5 percent of the state’s population, but account for 44.5 percent of its residents in poverty. Their unemployment rates also exceed the statewide average. The 2006 report set two goals to make Connecticut’s cities economically viable: Cities must attract and retain the middle class, young people and newcomers, who are priced out of many suburbs; and cities must enhance opportunities for current residents to raise their economic status.



### Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency Plan and Regional Profile (2003)

This report compiled data on the six municipalities in the GBRPA planning region; summarized existing transportation conditions; and recommended actions to meet regional transportation needs for the next 25 years. The Regional Profile also discussed land use for each municipality and the region, and municipalities were profiled by historical growth and development patterns, population, employment, income, housing, tax rates and traffic. An existing land use plan for the region that was provided in this report is shown in Figure 2-4.

### Connecticut Metropatterns: A Regional Agenda for Community and Prosperity in Connecticut (2003)

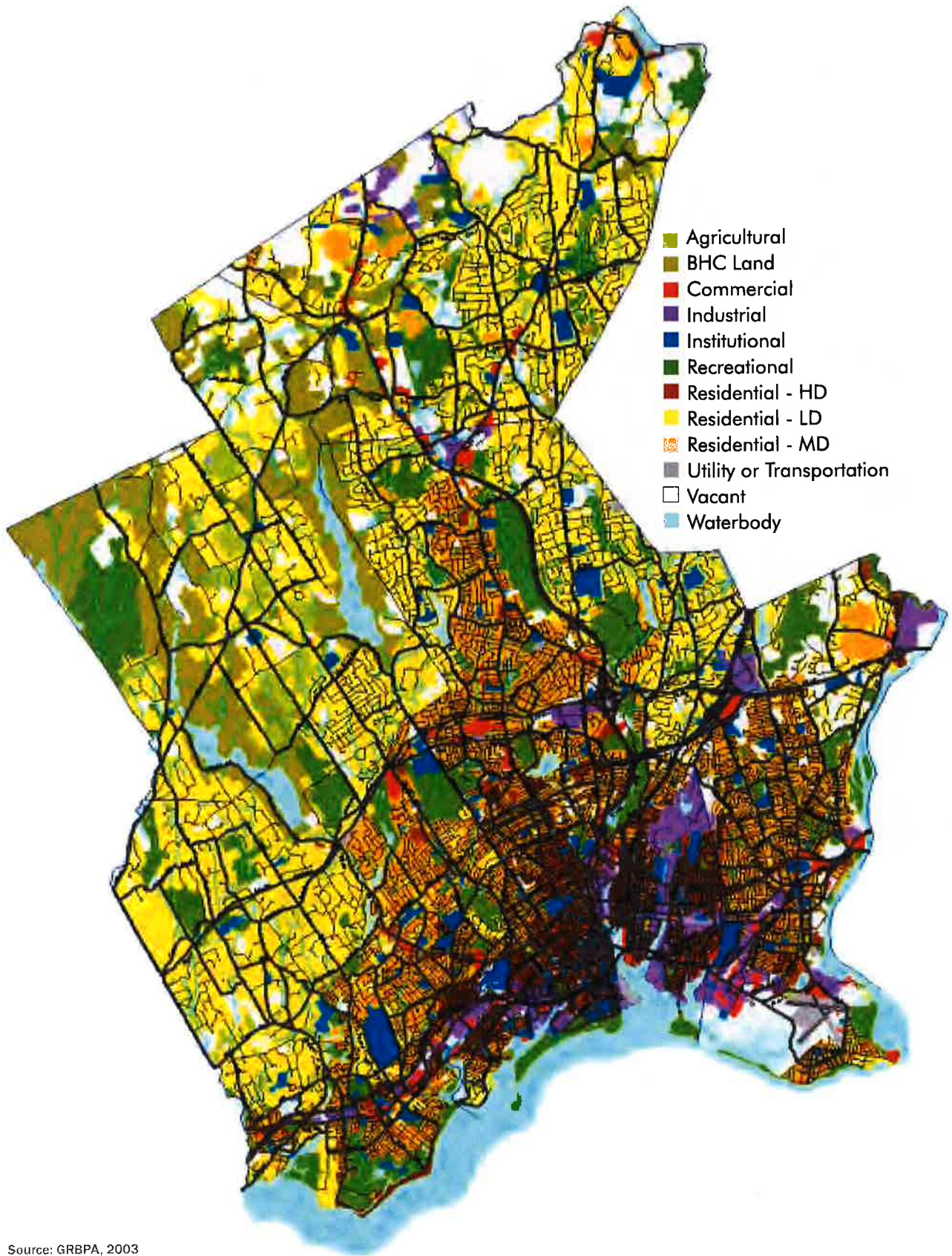
Commissioned by the Office of Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese of Hartford, this report argued that Connecticut's growth patterns are harmful to all of its communities, regardless of economic condition. The report noted that small cities and older suburbs face substantial and growing poverty with weak local tax bases, while outlying areas must cope with rapidly growing populations and below-average tax bases, and a group of fast-growing, middle-class suburbs struggles to provide schools and infrastructure. *Connecticut Metropatterns* said the state's fiscal system pits local governments against one another in a competition for tax base that undermines community character, wastes resources, discourages cooperation and raises fiscal disparities. The report suggested regional and statewide reforms like cooperative land use planning; tax and state aid reforms; and greater roles for state government, councils of government or other regional organizations.

“The report [*Connecticut Metropatterns*] suggested regional and statewide reforms like cooperative land use planning; tax and state aid reforms; and greater roles for state government, councils of government or other regional organizations.”

As shown in Figure 2-5, Connecticut's four central cities of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven and Waterbury (depicted in white) struggle with poverty and fiscal strain, but a growing number of smaller cities and suburban and rural communities also do. More than half of the state's residents are in suburban communities facing the stresses of either low and stagnant tax resources or high and increasing social and physical needs, while a small share of the population lives in affluent communities with very high tax bases and few social strains.

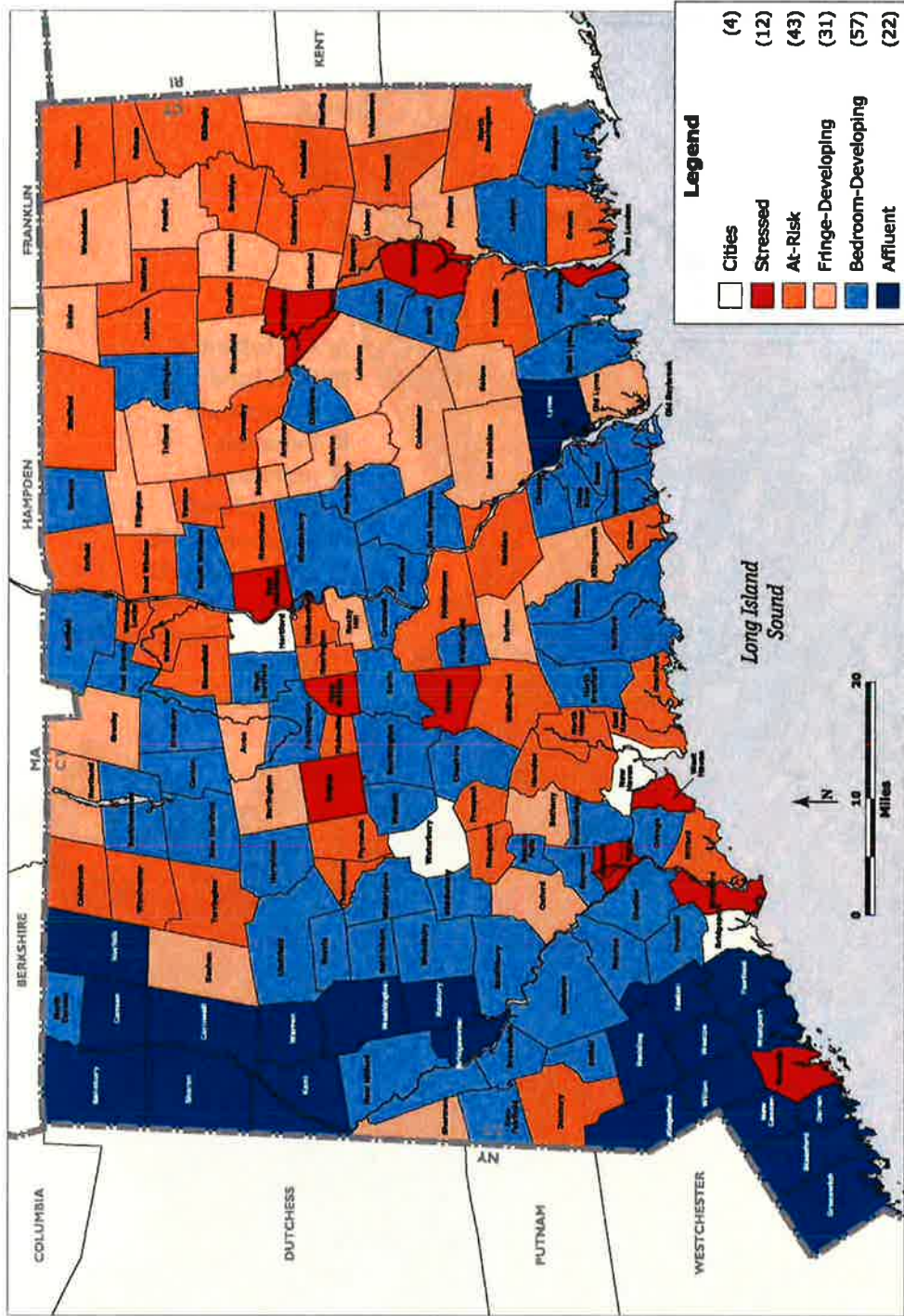


Figure 2-4 | Greater Bridgeport Planning Region Generalized Land Use, 2000



Source: GRBPA, 2003

Figure 2-5 | Community Classification of Fiscal and Social Risk



Source: Connecticut Metropatterns, 2003



### Urban Land Institute Report (2005)

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) report was initiated through a partnership between the City of Bridgeport and the Bridgeport Regional Business Council. The ULI panel that completed this report was charged with advising Bridgeport on the potential of its developable land portfolio and prioritizing proposed projects in the city. The panel also evaluated the City's economic development efforts, permit approval process and quality-of-life issues to determine potential roadblocks to development. Among its recommendations, the ULI panel proposed an update to Bridgeport's master plan; changing development review, permitting processes and other government systems; a shift away from industry and toward development of the waterfront and downtown areas; and a change in focus from large, expensive redevelopment projects to small, easily completed ones.

### Regional Study: One Coast...One Future (2006)

This report was completed by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, which was retained by the Bridgeport Regional Business Council to define the *One Coast...One Future* region and describe the linkages among the region's communities and surrounding areas. The study gave several recommendations to promote greater regional vitality:

- *Better describe and clarify the role of finance and insurance in the region,*
- *Cultivate measures that support labor force growth to offset weak employment growth and high housing costs,*
- *Connect the research and analysis already completed in the region to explore potential strategies for economic progress,*
- *Explore how Bridgeport could duplicate the economic revitalization that occurred in Stamford and Norwalk, and*
- *Work with other groups with a stake in additional research topics.*

*One Coast...One Future* is a consortium of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council and the Business Council of Fairfield County that seeks to stimulate economic growth, job creation and individual economic opportunity by linking the Coastal Fairfield County region's business centers. The organization's long-term plan has six objectives: a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), establishment of a marketing campaign focused on development and housing opportunities, creation of a marketing campaign for cultural and entertainment opportunities, development of a growth strategy for jobs in health care, linking of employer needs with available employee skills through a JobsNet program and creation of a Wi-Fi network in city centers.

### Restoring Prosperity: The State Role in Revitalizing America's Older Industrial Cities (Brookings Institute, 2007)

This report provided a framework for understanding how to restore prosperity to America's cities, particularly those in the Northeast and Midwest. Targeted at state and local government, business and civic leaders, it described the challenges facing cities, the opportunity that exists to leverage their many assets and a policy to advance their renewal. The report focused on three central messages: 1) given their assets, the moment is ripe for the revival of older industrial urban economies; 2) states have an essential role to play in the revitalization of older industrial cities, but they need a new urban agenda for change; and 3) the overall benefits of city revitalization – for families, for suburbs, for the environment, and ultimately for states – are potentially enormous. As discussed in this report, Bridgeport is located within a strong region, which is a key starting point for successful revitalization.

### Connecticut Smart Growth Initiatives

In February 2007, Governor M. Jodi Rell released a two-year operating budget proposal that included more than \$7 million in operating funding and \$587 million in capital funding for smart growth initiatives. The proposals included increases in annual grants to regional planning agencies and funding for improved global positioning information to allow informed land use decisions by municipalities. Also included was \$1 million each year to help cities and towns upgrade their local plans for conservation and development.

Governor Rell also released plans to propose \$245 million in state bonds per year in each of the two years for clean water projects, along with annual funding of \$10 million each for the Recreation and Natural Heritage Program and Open Space Grant Program, two ways the state secures open space. Proposals also call for \$5 million a year for the new, expedited Brownfield Remediation Pilot Program and \$2.5 million a year for grants to regional brownfield redevelopment loan funds.

The plans would fund a Responsible Growth Task Force, which would develop standards for measuring projects and defining “significant regional impact,” finding ways to bar the use of state development funds in designated protection areas and recommending improvements in laws governing the transfer of development rights.

An Executive Advisory Group would advise the Governor on prioritizing projects linking transportation, housing, job creation and repair or replacement of existing facilities, and on creation of a \$20 million Responsible Growth Incentive Fund for Fiscal 2009.

Other statutory changes, effective in Fiscal 2009, would:

- *Ban the use of Urban Act or Small Town Economic Assistance Act (STEAP) funds for economic development projects unless they meet responsible growth criteria or the state Bond Commission votes to waive the requirement.*
- *Require all projects funded by the state Bond Commission (except school construction) to be consistent with the state Plan of Conservation and Development unless the Bond Commission votes to waive the requirement.*
- *Make municipalities that have not updated local Plans of Conservation and Development ineligible for discretionary state funding without a waiver.*
- *Give regional planning agencies an opportunity to comment on development projects that have a significant regional impact.*

In addition, the State of Connecticut recently adopted legislation that provides new incentives for affordable housing. This legislation allows municipalities to establish “smart growth districts,” areas targeted to provide a mix of higher density housing, including affordable housing, for families, individuals and persons with special

needs. Once a municipality has established a district, it is eligible to receive grants for affordable housing from the State’s Office of Policy and Management.

## 2.4 | REGIONAL POLICY

Historically, Bridgeport’s central role in the region has been that of an industrial center. It was a regional employment center and producer of goods for sale throughout the country and the world. Today, the city’s role is changing. For the past 50 years it has been struggling to adapt to a decline in industry, a shift in employment trends toward the service sector, and demographic changes. These trends have left the city with the problems of unemployment, a declining tax base and concentrated poverty as many of those who could afford to live elsewhere left the city for the suburbs.

However, the tide is turning in Bridgeport. As real estate values and housing prices throughout the region have skyrocketed and roadways have become more and more congested, people have begun looking to Bridgeport as a desirable alternative to suburban living. With relatively affordable housing and multi-modal transportation access, the time is right for Bridgeport to attract new residents and commuters as well as visitors.

Bridgeport’s place in the region is key to its potential for revitalization. Easily accessible by highway, rail, bus, air and water, the city is uniquely positioned to attract new residents and jobs. It is home to many of the region’s major institutions, including state and federal government offices, Bridgeport and St. Vincent’s hospitals, Housatonic Community College and the University of Bridgeport. It also hosts major entertainment and cultural attractions such as the Harbor Yard arena and ballpark, Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo, the Barnum Museum, the Discovery Museum, Klein Memorial Auditorium, the Downtown Cabaret Theater and numerous local artists and theater companies.

*One Coast...One Future* identified economic development in Bridgeport as a high regional priority. With other county municipalities unable to grow their job markets or provide housing affordable to middle income workers, One Coast recognizes that Bridgeport has huge potential to be Fairfield County’s biggest growth center.

# 3.0

## PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT

### POLICY

*Recognize Bridgeport's potential for growth.*

### GOALS

- 1 *Welcome 10,000 new residents to Bridgeport by 2020.*
- 2 *Increase Bridgeport's capacity to implement successful development and enforce zoning regulations.*
- 3 *Enhance the fiscal health of City government.*

### 3.1 | POPULATION

#### Population Trends

Bridgeport's population peaked in 1950 at 158,700 residents and has since declined continuously to approximately 136,000 in 2005 (see Table 3-1). This loss of residents has occurred in the context of population growth in the coastal Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk metro area and Fairfield County. Along with population growth, the region has experienced increasing income levels over the course of the last decade, and the county's median income is now among the highest in the nation (see Chart 3-1). In contrast, Bridgeport's residents have become poorer in constant dollar terms.

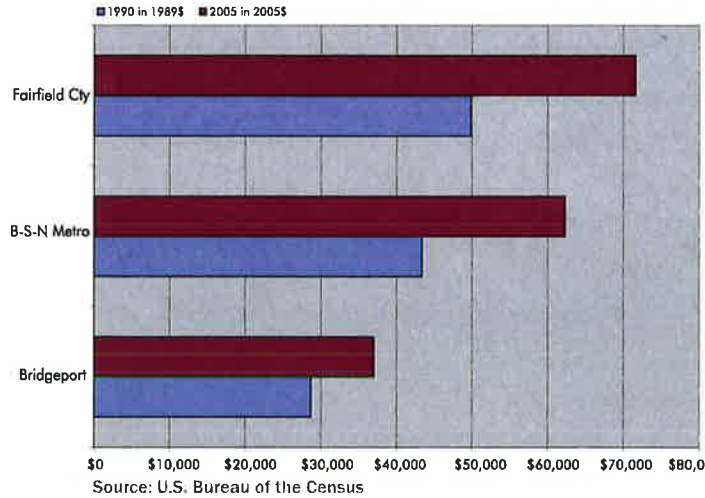


Table 3-1 | Population Trends in Bridgeport/Surrounding Areas, 1990-2005

Area	1990	2000	2005	Change 1990-2005	
				Number	Percent
Bridgeport	141,686	139,529	135,676	-6,010	-4.2%
Bridgeport - Stamford - Norwalk CT NECTA	841,941	892,283	913,411	71,470	8.5%
Fairfield County CT	827,645	882,567	884,050	56,405	6.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Chart 3-1 | Median Household Income in Bridgeport/Surrounding Areas, 1990-2005



**Population Characteristics**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2005 American Communities Survey, Bridgeport has 132,011 residents, accounting for approximately 15 percent of total residents in the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk metropolitan area. Bridgeport’s population includes 53 percent of the Black non-Hispanics within the metro area, 37 percent of the Hispanics within the region and 6 percent of White non-Hispanics within the metro area (see Chart 3-2).

Chart 3-2 | Race and Ethnicity of Households: Bridgeport and Surrounding Areas

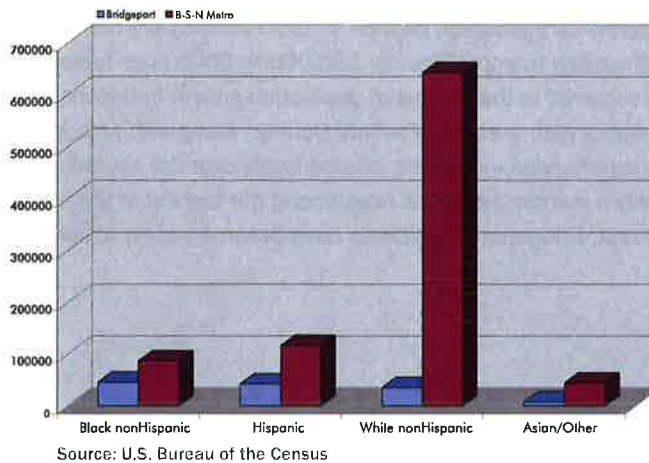
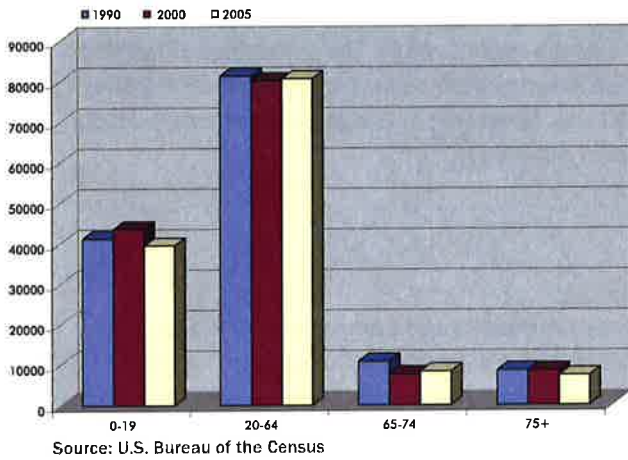


Chart 3-3 | Bridgeport Age Cohorts, 1990-2005



Immigration has been a major factor in the city's demographics; in 2005 nearly one in every three residents (32%) was born outside of the United States. Of those residents, one in every six (16%) arrived after 2000, and most will not likely become U.S. citizens based upon the naturalization rate of all foreign-born residents of Bridgeport.

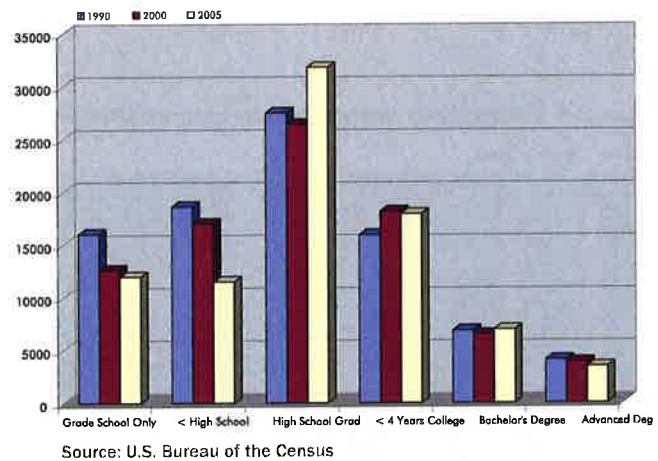
Bridgeport's residents are younger and have larger families than residents of the metropolitan area as a whole. The median age in Bridgeport is 34.5 years, compared with 39.9 years regionwide. 36.7 percent of the city's population is under 25 years of age, and 27.3 percent is under 18 (see Chart 3-3). Persons of retirement age (65 and older) account for 11.2 percent of all residents, compared with 13.7 percent in the metro area as a whole. With more youth and fewer older residents, Bridgeport's working age population of 21 to 65 years totals roughly 76,000 persons, or 57.5 percent of all household residents. With nearly three dependents for every four working-age persons, already low household incomes in Bridgeport are strained even further.

While 36,900 Bridgeport residents are currently enrolled in school – including nearly 7,000 in college or graduate school – a majority of the adult population has only a primary or secondary education. As shown on Chart 3-4, the educational attainment of the city's residents has remained essentially unchanged since 1990, although more residents have attained a high school diploma. Of

the population 5 years and older, 51,400, or 42 percent, speak a language other than English at home, and 18.6 percent of that population do not speak English very well.

The household structure of Bridgeport residents differs greatly from that of the metropolitan area. Regionwide, approximately 53 percent of households are comprised of married couple families and 17 percent of single family heads with or without children. In Bridgeport, the proportion of married couple households is only 31 percent, while single family heads account for 33 percent of all households. In addition, single people living alone occupy 31 percent of Bridgeport's housing, compared to 26 percent of the region's housing. The city's weaker family structure is reflected in higher geographic mobility compared to the region with a lower proportion of residents in the city living in the same house or apartment one year ago. The city also has a much higher fertility rate than the region, with 69 births per thousand women of reproductive age, compared to 53 percent in the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk area. For unmarried women of reproductive age, Bridgeport reports 63 births per year per thousand unmarried women, compared with 30 births per thousand in the region.

Chart 3-4 | Education Attainment of Bridgeport Population 25 Years and Older, 1990–2005



**Labor Force Participation and Employment Status**

Of the population 16 years and over, 69,150 Bridgeport residents (70%) were in the labor force in 2005. Of these residents 6,875, or 10 percent, were unemployed. Regionwide, the labor force participation rate was lower at 67 percent, but the unemployment rate was also lower, at 6 percent. Bridgeport's female employment participation rate was also higher than the region's with women representing one in every two job holders (50.3 percent) in the city versus 46 percent regionwide. The majority of Bridgeport's resident labor force works outside the city in neighboring towns of the region. The mean travel time to work is 28 minutes, and 71 percent of commuters drive to work in a single-occupant vehicle. Although Bridgeport has exceptional rail transport, only 10 percent of workers use public transportation.

The majority of employed Bridgeport residents work in the service sector, with only one in four (25%) employed in construction and manufacturing. Health care and education are the leading service sector employers, followed by retail trade. Half of the resident workforce is engaged in service, sales and lower skilled office jobs and only 18 percent of residents hold management or professional positions. The concentration of Bridgeport's resident workforce in lower skilled occupations has resulted in declining real incomes over the past fifteen years, as shown on Chart 3-5. Bridgeport's higher paid office jobs are held primarily by in-commuters, while residents hold lower paying jobs within the city or commute to neighboring municipalities for lower paying employment opportunities.

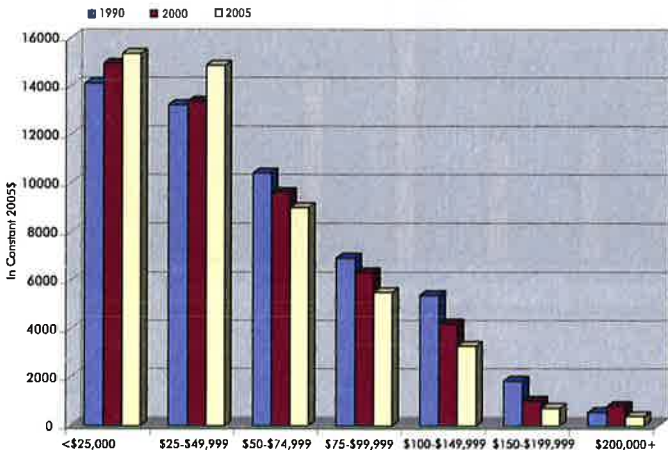
Despite multiple jobholders per household, there has been little change in residents' household income when measured in constant dollars. As shown in Table 3-2, the average annual wage in Bridgeport is \$25,000 less than the average regional wage. The percentage of families whose incomes were below the poverty level in 2004-2005 was 16 percent in Bridgeport, compared with 5 percent regionwide.

Table 3-2  
Average Annual Wage Comparison in 2005:  
Bridgeport & the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk CT CTA

In 2005 \$	Average Bridgeport Annual Wage	Average Region Annual Wage
Professional & Business Services	\$77,123	\$89,370
Finance & Insurance	\$68,457	\$215,436
Transportation & Utilities	\$47,353	\$72,241
Information Services	\$44,252	\$74,986
Health Care	\$43,079	\$43,259
Education Services	\$36,738	\$38,751
Retail Trade	\$30,931	\$33,071
Administrative Services	\$28,444	\$73,022
Other Services	\$26,968	\$28,931
Arts & Entertainment	\$26,968	\$31,122
Accommodations & Food	\$14,820	\$19,334
<b>All Industries</b>	<b>\$44,119</b>	<b>\$68,746</b>

Source: Connecticut State Department of Labor

Chart 3-5 | Bridgeport Households by Income Bracket, 1990-2005

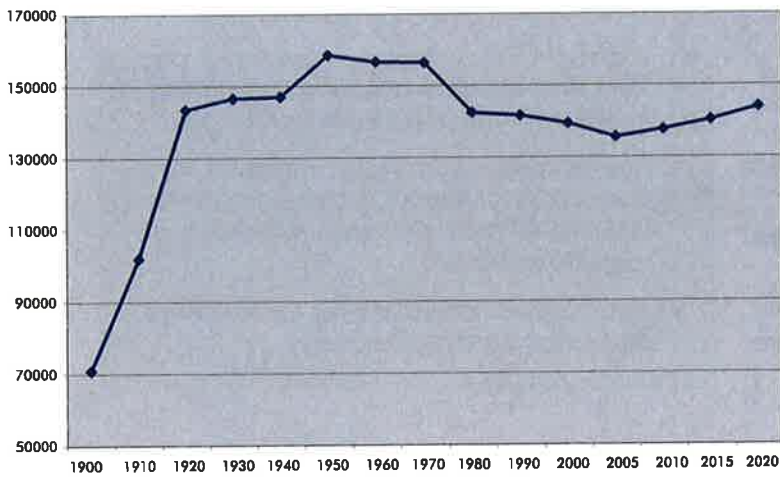


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Future Population Trends**

According to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Bridgeport’s population will grow from 135,676 residents in 2005 to 144,006 by 2020. The Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk metro area, which had 913,411 residents in 2005, is expected to add 60,640 new residents. For Bridgeport, this forecast represents a major turnaround after more than a half-century of population decline.

**Chart 3-6 | Bridgeport Population Trends, 1990-2020**



Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Urbanomics

**Table 3-3 | Projected Population Growth for Bridgeport & Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk CT Metropolitan NECTA**

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
<b>Change 1990-2005</b>						
Population	141,686	139,529	135,676	137,769	140,402	144,006
Households	52,323	50,307	49,095	50,677	52,664	55,110
Avg. Household Size	2.71	2.71	2.7	2.65	2.6	2.55
<b>Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk CT NECTA</b>						
Population	841,941	892,283	913,411	932,492	951,895	974,051
Households	---	---	332,726	340,070	347,300	355,600
Avg. Household Size	---	---	2.68	2.68	2.68	2.68

Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Urbanomics



## 3.2 | CITY GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES

### Administration

Bridgeport is governed by its City Charter, adopted by the state legislature in 1907 and revised in 1912 and 1992. The City has a Mayor-City Council form of government. The Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer of the City, and the City Council is the legislative body. The Mayor, who serves a four-year term, is responsible for setting policy, making nominations and appointments to boards and commissions and presiding at City Council meetings. The Mayor also acts as the official City representative and liaison with various governmental and private agencies and oversees the fiscal aspects of City government. The City Council consists of 20 members elected to two-year terms. Two council members represent each of the City's ten council districts (see Figure 3-1). The City Council, which holds regular meetings twice per month, is vested with the legislative powers of the City. Its major responsibilities are enacting ordinances necessary to govern the City and adopting Bridgeport's annual budget. Together, the Mayor and City Council directly oversee the five line divisions: City Clerk, Water Pollution Control Authority, Department of Libraries, Department of Education and Registrar of Voters.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), appointed by the Mayor, is responsible for coordinating all department management and operational policies and practices for the Mayor. The CAO is the liaison between the Mayor and the head administrators of the City's departments, which include: Office of Policy and Management, Civil Service, Fire Department, Police Department, Office of Planning & Economic Development, Finance Department, Public Facilities, Health and Social Services, Labor Relations, City Attorney, Weights and Measures and Information Technology. The City's organizational structure is illustrated in Figure 3-2.

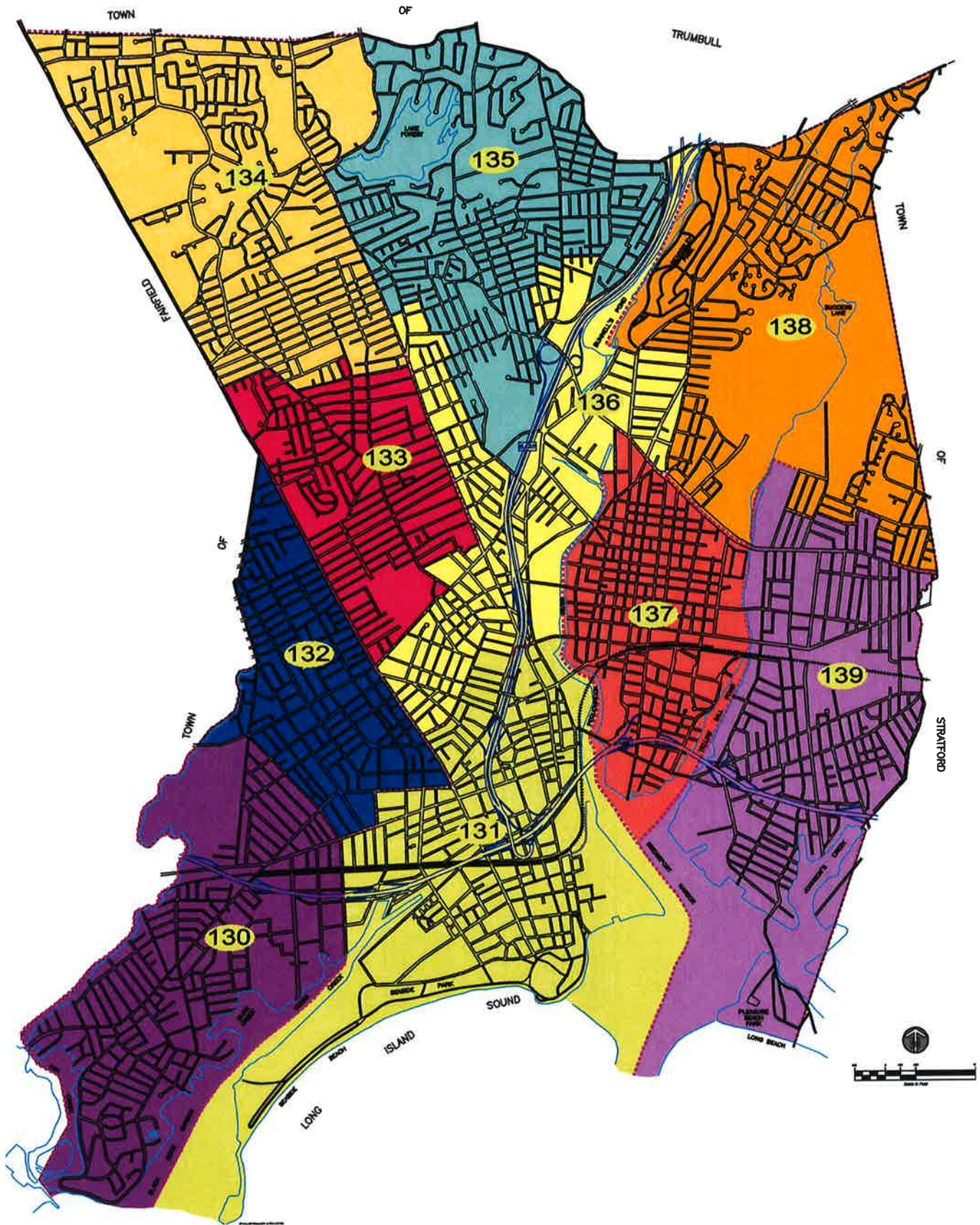
### Elected Boards

The only elected board in the City, besides the City Council, is the Board of Education. This board, which consists of nine members elected to staggered four-year terms, meets twice a month at the Bridgeport Regional Vocational Aquaculture School.

In addition to these two elected boards, the City has 18 appointed boards and commissions whose members are volunteers that are appointed by the Mayor. Terms vary depending on the board or commission. There are three types of boards/commissions, those that:

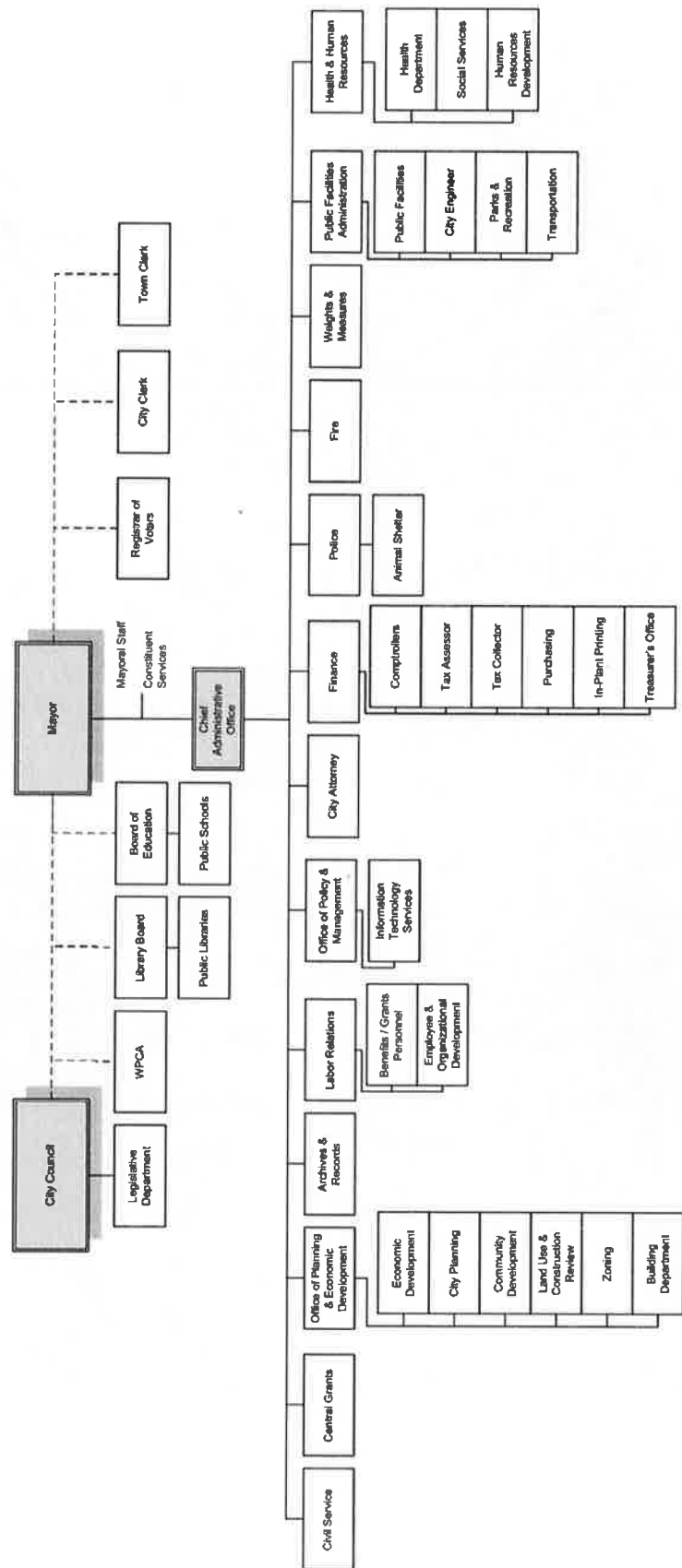
- *Have autonomy as decision- and policy-making bodies, e.g. Water Pollution Control Authority.*
- *Hear and decide appeals and complaints, e.g. Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Assessment Appeals, Historic Commissions.*
- *Perform advisory functions, e.g. Cable Advisory Board, Board of Public Purchases.*

Figure 3-1 | City Council District Map



Source: City of Bridgeport

Figure 3-2 | City Organizational Chart



This chart of organization does not include all the Boards and Commissions that each Department reports to.

Source: City of Bridgeport



## APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

### *Board of Assessment Appeals*

Up to 15 members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council to three-year staggered terms. Not a permanent board, it meets in March for real estate taxes and in October for motor vehicle taxes.

### *Board of Public Purchases*

Consists of the director of finance and four members appointed by the Mayor to staggered two-year terms. Advises the City on the affairs of the office of public purchases, approves the City's annual purchasing policy statement, approves all procedural rules and regulations and hears appeals from the decisions of the purchasing agent as authorized by law.

### *Bridgeport Redevelopment Agency*

Consists of five members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council to terms of two years. Approves development plans for redevelopment projects. This agency has the power to acquire property for the purpose of implementing approved development plans.

### *Cable Advisory Board*

Four members appointed by the Mayor, one member appointed by the Library Board and one member representing the Board of Education.

### *Civil Service Commission*

Four members appointed by the Mayor to staggered five-year terms. An additional member is elected by City employees; this member must be an employee of the City and is permitted to hold a paid public office or position. No more than two Mayor-appointed members may be of the same political party.

### *Commission on Aging*

Eight members appointed by the mayor for two-year terms. Evaluates the senior services provided by the community and makes recommendations to the Mayor on development and integration of public and private services agencies.

### *Ethics Commission*

Seven members nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council to terms of two years. No candidate can be an office-holder or political activist, and no one serving three terms is eligible for reappointment. No more than two members of any one political party may be appointed, and the two alternates must be of different parties.

### *Fair Housing Commission*

Five members and two alternates appointed by the Mayor, with approval of the City Council, to three-year terms. The Mayor and the President of the City Council are ex-officio members.

### *Fair Rent Commission*

Five members and three alternates appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council to terms of three years. Of the members, there must be at least two landlords and two tenants, and of the alternates, there must be at least one landlord and one tenant. No more than three members can be of the same political party.

### *Fire Commission*

Seven members appointed by the Mayor, subject to City Council approval, to two-year terms. The president and vice president of the commission are elected annually during the January meeting. The City Council can remove members with a two-thirds vote.



### APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS (*Continued*)

#### *Harbor Management Commission*

Seven members, including Planning and Zoning Commission representative, plus two alternates, appointed by the Mayor with City Council approval to four-year terms. No more than five members may be of the same political party.

#### *Historic Commission No. 1*

Five members and three alternates, all appointed by the Mayor to five-year terms, subject to City Council approval. The City Historian is an ex-officio member. The commission geographically comprises all historic districts in the city except for the Stratfield Historic District (see Chapter 5).

#### *Housing Authority*

Five members appointed by the Mayor to staggered five-year terms.

#### *Housing Site Development Agency*

Five members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council to terms of two years. Approves development plans for housing development projects. This agency has the power to acquire property for purposes of implementing approved development plans.

#### *Parks Commission*

Eight members appointed by the Mayor, subject to City Council approval to staggered four-year terms. No more than five members may be of any one political party.

#### *Planning and Zoning Commission*

Nine members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council, plus three alternates directly appointed by the Mayor. Members serve three-year terms and also act on inland wetlands and watercourses issues (see Chapter 4).

#### *Police Commission*

Seven members appointed by the Mayor, subject to City Council approval, to staggered two-year terms. The City Council can remove members with a two-thirds vote.

#### *Port Authority Commission*

Five voting members: three commissioners appointed by the Mayor, with City Council approval, for terms of three years; and two City officials – the Director of Economic Development and the Harbor Master. The board also has three ex-officio members: the Mayor, the City Council president and the Harbor Commission chairman.

#### *Stratfield Historic District Commission*

Five members and three alternates, all appointed by the Mayor to five-year terms, subject to City Council approval. The commission oversees the Stratfield Historic District; Historic Commission #1 oversees all other historic districts in the city (see Chapter 5).

#### *Water Pollution Control Authority Commission*

Five members appointed by the Mayor to five-year terms, subject to City Council approval. Four members are automatically appointed to the commission: the City Engineer, the City Attorney, the Director of Finance and the Director of Public Facilities (see Chapter 13).

*Zoning Board of Appeals* Five members appointed by the Mayor to staggered five-year terms, plus three alternates appointed to four-year terms.

The City also appoints members to serve on the boards of regional planning agencies including the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency and the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority.

### 3.3 | POPULATION AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES

#### Population

Bridgeport's population peaked in 1950 at 159,000 residents, declining to approximately 136,000 people by the year 2005. This loss of residents has occurred in the context of strong regional population growth in Fairfield County, which has driven the county's median household income to among the highest levels nationwide and has significantly increased the cost of housing. At the same time, median income in Bridgeport has fallen, and its overall housing prices remain the lowest in the region. For people of modest means and those just starting out, Bridgeport is one of the few affordably priced places to live in the region.

According to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Bridgeport will experience significant population growth over the next ten years. By the year 2020 the city will increase its population by nearly 10,000 residents, capturing one-sixth of the metropolitan area's total expected growth. This growth potential presents a significant opportunity for Bridgeport to increase employment and decrease its tax rate. In order to support this new growth and ensure that its benefits to the city are maximized, Bridgeport will need to make investments in economic development, housing, education and job training, and infrastructure. Increased opportunities for recreation, entertainment and culture will also be essential to attracting and retaining new residents and encouraging visitors and investors to spend time and money in Bridgeport.

Along with population growth, Bridgeport is expecting tremendous increases in private investment. The City has already seen a significant increase in development applications for residential and mixed-use (residential/commercial) projects and this trend is expected to continue. In order for the City to effectively manage this growth and ensure that new development meets high quality urban design standards and complements the city's existing urban fabric, it is essential that the capacity of its economic development, and planning and zoning functions be increased. Bridgeport has already begun to address this issue, budgeting five new positions for the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED). In addition, OPED has begun enhancing the staff level support to its Planning and Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. OPED now provides these boards with professional site plan application reviews, which focus on site layout, landscaping and design quality.

#### Government

While each of Bridgeport's boards and commissions serves a necessary function, the City should consider streamlining some of these groups through consolidation. Bridgeport continually struggles to find interested, qualified residents to serve on its boards and commissions and several of them have one or more vacancies. Completing the appointment and approval process of the candidates is time consuming both for the Mayor's staff and for the City Council. The City should consider changing certain criteria for appointment, where appropriate. The City should also work to ensure that its land use boards are composed of a variety of skills and experiences that can add value to the review of the increasingly complex range of development applications.

“By the year 2020, Bridgeport will increase its population by nearly 10,000 residents, capturing one-sixth of the metropolitan area's total expected growth.”

For example, having one historic commission to oversee just one district and another to oversee all the others appears to be an inefficient use of resources. Consolidating these two commissions, while ensuring there is adequate representation from each of the historic districts, could serve to clarify and strengthen historic preservation in Bridgeport.

In addition, the City should evaluate the necessity of requiring equal representation from political parties on all commissions. While balanced political representation may be appropriate and necessary in some cases – the Civil Service and Ethics commissions, for example – in other cases political affiliation may not have a substantial impact on a commission’s ability to achieve its mission and may impede the Mayor’s ability to find suitable candidates. The City should evaluate which boards and commissions reasonably require equal political participation and eliminate this criterion where it is not appropriate and where nonpartisan participation is sufficient, in accordance with State law.

“Bridgeport is seeing a significant increase in development applications for residential and mixed-use projects and this trend is expected to continue.”

Along with working to enhance the capacity of its governmental functions, the City should also work to improve its fiscal capacity and address its relatively high mil rate compared with surrounding municipalities. Increasing revenues to the City and decreasing the mil rate will help ease the tax burden currently faced by city residents and encourage investment in Bridgeport. The policies of this Master Plan support increases in property values in the Downtown, on former industrial properties, and in new economic growth sectors as a means of achieving this goal. However, similar to other large cities in Connecticut, an existing constraint on Bridgeport’s tax base is the amount of non-taxable property located within the city. The City should address this issue by: seeking to increase tax-paying property, where appropriate; working with the state and major tax-exempt entities to increase payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs), where feasible; and encouraging consolidation of municipal, state and federal offices. Chapter 13 of this Master Plan discusses the City’s policy on consolidation of its municipal facilities. In addition, the City should work with those tax-exempt institutions that are not subject to PILOTs to obtain alternate voluntary payments commensurate with their demands on City services.



# 4.0

## LAND USE AND ZONING

### **POLICY**

*Rebalance land use and zoning.*

### **GOALS**

- 1 *Reduce industrial zoned land from 20% to 10% by 2020.*
- 2 *Promote Downtown as a mixed-use district with strong design requirements and a pedestrian and transit orientation.*
- 3 *Refine zoning standards to be consistent with the goals of economic development and neighborhood preservation.*

### **4.1 | LAND USE**

The built environment – the type, location and intensity of existing land uses – defines the character of a city. Understanding how much land is presently devoted to residential, commercial, open space and other uses as well as the locations of vacant and under-developed properties is an important step in developing a vision for the future. The City's zoning and land use regulations are its central tools for controlling its array of land uses, and these controls influence future development patterns. The following discussion provides an overview of Bridgeport's existing land uses, zoning, historic districts and expected development patterns, with policy recommendations.

“The City of Bridgeport is Connecticut’s largest city, with 16 square miles of land area and 22 miles of waterfront.”

### Existing Land Use

The city of Bridgeport is Connecticut’s largest city, containing 16 square miles of land area and 22 miles of waterfront. It is the most densely populated municipality in the state, with approximately 8,250 people per square mile (12.89 people per acre). In comparison, Danbury has a population density of approximately 1,777 people per square mile, Hartford has 7,026 people per square mile, New Haven has 6,558 people per square mile, and Stamford has 3,102 people per square mile.

As shown in Table 4-1, residential uses account for 50 percent of Bridgeport’s total land area, followed by parks/open space and vacant land, at 12.1 and 11 percent, respectively. The city’s large percentage of vacant land represents a significant opportunity for revitalization. The majority of Bridgeport’s residential uses are categorized as low- or medium-density. Low-density housing is generally found in the city’s North End and North Bridgeport neighborhoods, as well as in Black Rock and the western part of the Brooklawn/St. Vincent’s neighborhood. High- and medium-density housing is concentrated in the central and southern portions of the city, in the Brooklawn/St. Vincent, Hollow, West End/West Side, Boston Avenue/Mill Hill, East Side, East End and South End neighborhoods and the northern portion of Black Rock. Other high-density pockets are in the North End between Park Avenue and Main Street, and in the Reservoir/Whiskey Hill area around Trumbull Avenue. Commercial uses make up 8 percent of the total land area, while industrial uses total 9.4 percent. Mixed-use development, which consists of parcels that contain both residential and commercial uses, accounts for 1.2 percent of Bridgeport’s total land, as of 2007. This percentage is likely to increase in the future as redevelopment of underutilized sites occurs. A total of 7 percent of the city’s land is devoted to institutional/public use, and 1.3 percent to utilities and infrastructure.

Table 4-1 | Existing Land Uses (2008)

Land Use	Percent of Total Land Area
<b>Residential</b>	
<i>Low Density</i>	29.2%
<i>Medium Density</i>	13.9%
<i>High Density</i>	6.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
Commercial	8.0%
Mixed Use	1.2%
<b>Industrial</b>	
<i>Light Industrial</i>	3.7%
<i>Heavy Industrial</i>	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
Parks/Open Space/Recreation	12.1%
Institutional/Public	7.0%
Utilities/Infrastructure	1.3%
Vacant	11.0%

Source: City of Bridgeport GIS data, BFJ Planning & Urbanomics, 2007 base data, updated 2008

**Historical Land Use**

The historical development pattern of Bridgeport has been along its waterways. Route 1 has traditionally been the major east-west local travel corridor, and serves as a density delineator: south of Route 1 are the oldest and most dense neighborhoods, while north of Route 1 are the younger and less dense areas. As a result, industrial and residential uses are in close proximity south of Route 1, but rarely north of the highway.

As shown in Table 4-2, residential uses in Bridgeport have consistently represented the largest land use. Total residential land area increased from 1950 to 1996 and declined somewhat between 1996 and 2000. Commercial land use peaked in 1990, but has remained fairly constant over the past 50 years. Industrial land use has fluctuated, falling sharply in the early 1990s before rebounding in 2000. Recreational land use increased from 1962 to 1996, but declined slightly by 2000. Utility/transportation land use was fairly constant from 1962 to 1990, but more than doubled between 1990 and 2000. Vacant land has varied over time, but fell sharply from 1996 to 2000.

Table 4-2 | Land Use Patterns over Time

Land Use (In acres)	Year						
	1950	1962	1974	1986	1990	1996	2000
Residential	3,714	4,329	4,413	4,426	4,483	5,455	5,393
Commercial	905	926	966	1,056	1,094	930	982
Industrial	1,032	999	1,152	1,242	1,254	744	1,214
Institutional	460	487	687	829	892	865	903
Recreational	667	657	755	774	797	890	850
Utility/Transportation	N/A	239	252	227	227	429	460
Vacant	1,484	776	488	413	230	960	423

Source: Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency Regional Profile, 2003



### Major Development Patterns

Bridgeport's existing Land Use Map is shown in Figure 4-1. The map was based on 2005 data from the City Tax Assessor's office, supplemented with the City's existing 1997 Land Use Map and field observations by BFJ Planning staff. One change to the 1997 map is the addition of a mixed-use land use category, which reflects single tax parcels that contain both residential and commercial uses. This category was added based on information obtained from the Assessor's office. It is expected that this land use category will grow as Downtown office buildings are converted to a mix of residential and commercial uses and industrial buildings are adapted for redevelopment.

Figure 4.1 shows Bridgeport's residential uses: low-, medium- and high-density, as light yellow, dark yellow and orange. Commercial uses are depicted in red, while mixed-use areas are indicated in pink. Industrial uses are shown in differing shades of purple based on intensity of use, and utilities are shown in gray. Parks and open spaces are indicated in green, institutional uses in blue and vacant parcels in white.

As indicated on the Land Use Map, Bridgeport's commercial uses are mainly concentrated along its major thoroughfares: Main Street, State Street, Fairfield Avenue, East Main Street, Stratford Avenue, Boston Avenue and Barnum Avenue. Significant commercial areas are also found in the Downtown area and the Enterprise Zone neighborhood.

Bridgeport's Downtown area contains a mix of commercial and institutional uses – City Hall, Housatonic Community College, the court system, the Post Office, etc. – and small pockets of open space/parks. The Downtown has few residential uses, though that may change as major adaptive reuse projects in the pipeline are completed.

The South End of Bridgeport contains a concentration of institutional uses, such as the University of Bridgeport, and a major park/open space: Seaside Park. Other large park and open space areas in the city are Beardsley Park, Veterans Memorial Park and Elton Rogers Woodland Park. Other major institutional uses include St. Vincent's Hospital, Bridgeport Hospital, Housatonic Community College and other schools and religious institutions. The hospitals are both expanding, and the associated doctors' offices and medical facilities have a major presence throughout the city, especially near the hospitals.

Industrial uses in Bridgeport are concentrated primarily along the waterfront and along Railroad Avenue and in North Bridgeport. The waterfront consists mainly of heavy industrial uses, with light industry generally found along Railroad Avenue.

### Existing and Future Land Use Patterns

Land use patterns in Bridgeport are changing. The city is moving away from its historic manufacturing base towards a more diverse economy. Bridgeport is beginning to take advantage of its prime location within the region and capture new housing and job opportunities. This shift in focus will have a significant impact on the desired mix of land uses within the city in the future and where those uses should be located. Several key land use issues are outlined below.

#### Waterfront Uses

While the city has a strong industrial past focused on heavy manufacturing along the waterfront, current market trends indicate a clear interest in allowing alternate waterfront uses, including residential and mixed-use development. As in many other waterfront communities throughout the country, there is also strong interest in providing public access to Bridgeport's waterfront. This could include uses such as a waterfront esplanade, open space/parkland, boating access and restaurants. In creating opportunities for such adaptive reuse of former industrial sites along the waterfront, the City will need to address both brownfields and Coastal Area Management issues.

#### Industrial Uses

Reclaiming the waterfront and other sites for uses other than industry will have an impact on industrial land use throughout the city. Bridgeport will need to determine what locations in the city are appropriate for continued, environmentally sensitive industrial operations. It will also need to consider what types of industrial uses it will continue to encourage and how to buffer these areas from incompatible uses such as residential, commercial and office.

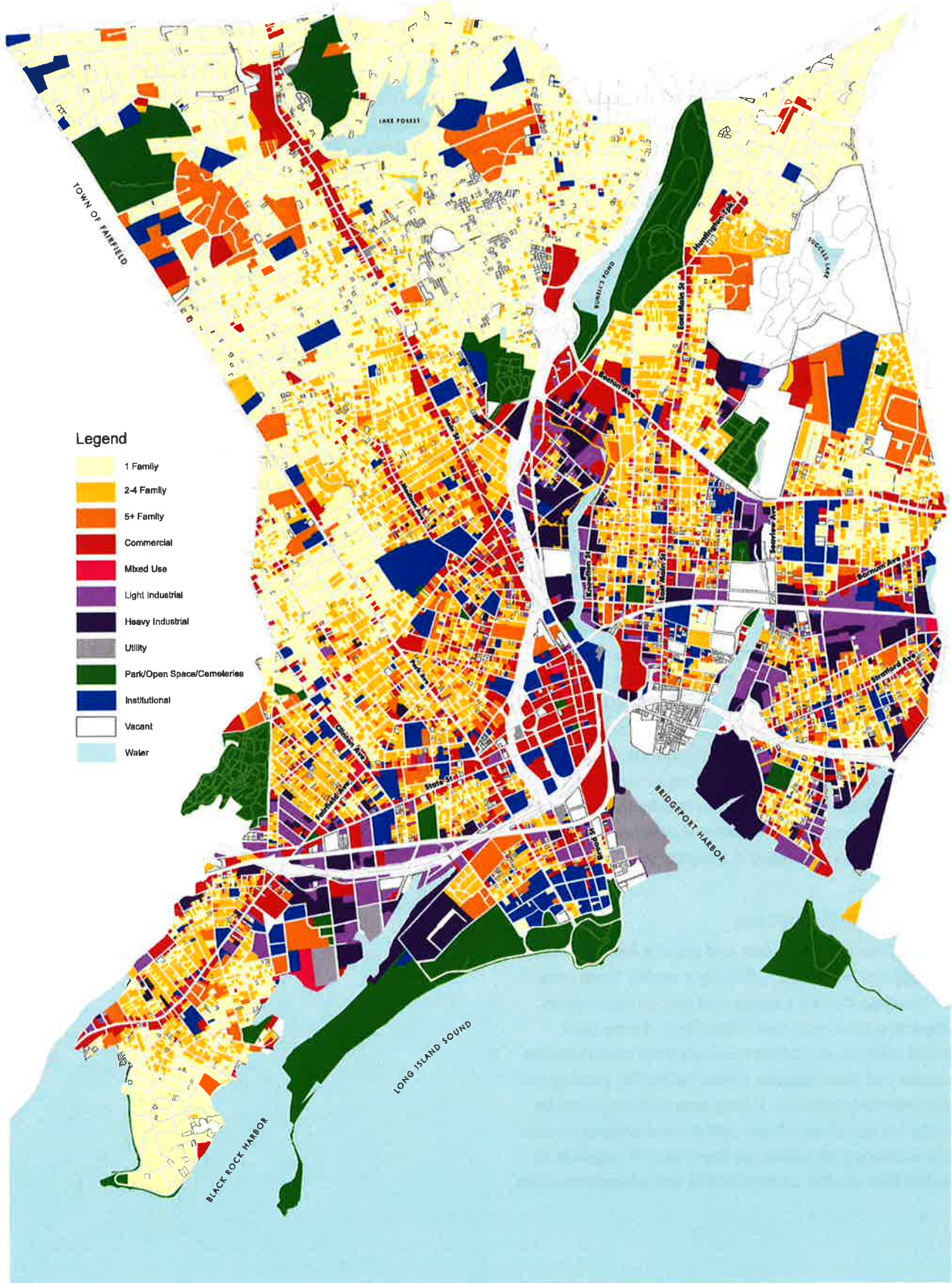


FIGURE 4-1 : EXISTING LAND USE MAP



### *Mixed-Use Development*

The Downtown Plan by Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates recommends a mix of residential, retail, office and other commercial uses in the Downtown. Other areas such as the waterfront and local retail districts may also benefit from mixed-use development. A mix of uses along the waterfront that includes residential, recreation and supportive retail uses has the potential to create a significant positive impact on Bridgeport's revitalization. Similarly, a mix of uses along neighborhood "main street" retail districts could strengthen the viability of local commercial uses. This could include residential units located above retail, restaurants and offices. Introducing mixed-use districts within neighborhoods and along the waterfront will require careful consideration of the types of uses that are appropriate for such areas.

### *Residential Density and Neighborhood Parking*

Some of the city's neighborhoods are experiencing increases in density, as two-family homes are converted to three-families, and three-families are converted to four, etc. The legalization of these conversions can benefit property tax revenues to the city, but has resulted in serious parking problems in some areas. Addressing density in conjunction with neighborhood parking issues will be an important element of neighborhood stabilization. In addition, Bridgeport must protect the character of its low-density, single-family neighborhoods into the future and should not allow high-density residential development in low-density neighborhoods. The city's single-family residential areas are key to creating a "housing ladder" in the city where residents are able to move from one type of housing to another as their incomes rise, as discussed in Chapter 10.

### *Entertainment/Cultural Uses*

A mix of entertainment uses and cultural activities within Bridgeport is important to the city's vitality. Such uses can enhance the city's image and play a major role in supporting local retail and restaurants. These uses should be located in areas that maximize these positive impacts and limit negative effects on traffic, parking and neighborhood character. A local arts council should be created to coordinate these cultural and entertainment organizations and encourage them to work together to market their assets, attract visitors and promote tourism.

### *Parks/Open Space*

Bridgeport is known as "The Park City." Therefore, an important part of the strategy for enhancing the city's image and improving quality of life for residents will be to enhance its parks and open spaces and increase public access to the waterfront. Currently less than two miles of the city's 22-mile coastline has been recaptured and only three to five miles of the waterfront is publicly accessible. Enhancing parks and open spaces and increasing waterfront accessibility will require evaluation of the adequacy of existing parklands and determination of areas in need of additional parks and open spaces. The City has a Parks Board and there is a master plan for both Veterans Memorial Park (formerly Ninety Acres) and Seaside Park. These are positive steps, but the City has not yet prepared a citywide analysis of its parks and waterfront access opportunities, which is necessary in order to determine where improvements to existing parks and additional parks and open spaces are needed and where opportunities for the public to access the waterfront can be provided. Of critical importance is the City's ability to adequately maintain its parks and open space resources. This reality of maintenance costs will need to be balanced with the desire to improve and expand parks and open space.



## 4.2 | ZONING

Bridgeport currently has 19 zoning classifications: five residential districts, four office/retail districts, three mixed use districts, three downtown districts, two industrial districts, a planned development district and a zoological park district (see Figure 4-2 and Table 4-3).

Table 4-3 | Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size
Residential AA (R-AA)	11,250 sf
Residential A (R-A)	9,000 sf for 60 ft frontage, 7,500 sf for 75+ ft
Residential B (R-B)	9,000 sf for 60 ft frontage, 7,500 sf for 75+ ft
Residential BB (R-BB)	9,000 sf for 60 ft frontage, 7,500 sf for 75+ ft
Residential C (R-C)	9,000 sf
Mixed Use Educational/Medical (MU-EM)	5,000 sf
Mixed Use Perimeter (MU-P)	6,000 sf
Mixed Use Waterfront (MU-W)	N/A (restricted to 10+ acre parcels)
Office/Retail Neighborhood (OR-N)	5,000 sf
Office/Retail Storefront (OR-S)	5,000 sf
Office/Retail General (OR-G)	10,000 sf
Office/Retail Regional (OR-R)	10,000 sf
Downtown Central Business (D-CB)	5,000 sf
Downtown Mixed-Use (D-MU)	6,000 sf
Downtown-Regional Sports/Entertainment (D-RSE)	20,000 sf
Industrial Heavy (I-HI)	No minimum
Industrial Heavy (I-LI)	No minimum
Planned Development District (PDD)	N/A (restricted to 25+ acre parcels)
Zoological Park (ZP)	40 acres

Source: Bridgeport Zoning Regulations, 2005

### Residential Zones

The Residential AA and Residential A zones are the city's low-density residential districts; single-family homes are the only permitted uses in these zones. In addition, all city parks are zoned Residential A. The R-AA zone requires a minimum lot of 11,250 square feet, while minimum lot size in the R-A zone is 9,000 square feet, assuming road frontage of less than 75 feet. Lots in the R-A zone with more than 75 feet of frontage may be up to 7,500 square feet. Maximum building coverage in both these zones is 3,000 square feet. The R-AA zone is mapped only in Black Rock, while the R-A zone is found mainly north of Route 1, in the North End, Lake Forest, Reservoir/Whiskey Hill and North Bridgeport. It is also found in smaller pockets in western Bridgeport in the Brooklawn neighborhood and in Black Rock. The City recently revised the definition of "family" in its Zoning Code in order to conform to current state laws and control the number of unrelated individuals residing in a

single household. This change is intended to protect the character of Bridgeport's single-family neighborhoods.

The Residential B and BB zones are medium-density districts allowing two- to six-family homes on 9,000 square foot lots (again assuming less than 75-foot frontage; lots of more than 75 feet of frontage may be up to 7,500 square feet). Maximum building coverage in these districts is 45 and 55 percent, respectively. These zones are mapped throughout the southern portion of the city.

The Residential C district is the city's high-density residential zone. It allows multifamily housing – including multifamily houses, apartment buildings, condominium complexes and public housing facilities – and has a minimum lot size of 9,000 square feet and maximum building coverage of 60 percent. However, the R-C zone



FIGURE 4-2: CURRENT ZONING MAP (1997)



only allows structures of up to 45 feet in height, which could be an issue for future development of mid- to high-rise development. This zone is primarily found south of Route 1, although it is also mapped in small pockets north of Route 1.

#### Office/Retail Zones

The city's four office/retail zones, which are primarily mapped along its major thoroughfares, are differentiated by allowed uses and intensity of permitted development. The OR-Neighborhood (OR-N) zone promotes small-scale, pedestrian-oriented retail uses for local residents. The OR-Storefront (OR-S) zone allows a range of retail, service and business uses and limited business service and office facilities. This zone seeks to preserve older commercial areas with traditional main street storefronts, and it requires new development to be compatible with the existing character of these areas. The OR-General (OR-G) zone allows for more intense commercial development near major roadways. This zone primarily accommodates auto-oriented commercial uses. The OR-Regional (OR-R) zone allows regional scale uses that attract people from outside the City and generate significant traffic. Uses allowed in this zone are office parks, major shopping centers, sports facilities and theater and entertainment complexes, and limited industrial uses.

#### Industrial Zones

Bridgeport's two industrial zones provide appropriate areas for industrial uses and provide separation between such uses and housing and other incompatible uses. The Heavy Industrial (I-HI) zone is reserved for those industries that produce nuisances such as truck traffic, smoke, dust and other hazards. The Light Industrial (I-LI) zone allows industrial uses that have minimal off-site impacts. This zone includes more stringent development and performance standards than the I-HI zone. For example, the I-LI zone does not allow high-impact resource production/extraction or industrial uses related to chemicals or petroleum refining and related industries. I-HI zones are concentrated primarily along Bridgeport's waterfront, while I-LI zones are found both on the waterfront and in the Lake Success area. The heavy industrial zone is the only district that allows adult entertainment facilities. This use is allowed by special permit and is subject to conditional use development standards.

Although only 9.4 percent of existing land use in Bridgeport is categorized as industrial, a considerably larger portion of the city's land area is zoned for industrial uses, particularly along the waterfront. Much of the industrially zoned land is either vacant or underutilized, and has now come into conflict with other adjoining uses, especially residential. This is particularly an issue with the heavy industrial zones. Many of these industrial zones also contain brownfields, which currently prevent their reuse. Remediating these areas for non-industrial uses will have an impact on industrial uses throughout the city. Bridgeport will need to determine which industries are desirable and where to locate them. Key in these considerations is striking a good balance of supporting existing industrial uses and promoting reasonable adaptive reuse. Adaptive reuse should be encouraged in those areas where industry is no longer active and is incompatible with surrounding properties, but it should be discouraged where productive industry remains. Landscape buffers should be required where industrial and residential uses meet. Performance standards should be implemented to ensure that industrial uses are good neighbors and prevent excessive noise, noxious fumes and dust and adverse impacts on on-street parking. The overall goal should be to reduce the total amount of industrially zoned property in the city but increase productivity of the remaining industrial zones.

#### Downtown Districts

The city has three downtown zoning districts that are differentiated by density and use. The Downtown Central Business (D-CB) zone, which is the main district governing the Downtown area, allows high-density commercial development. The Downtown Mixed-Use (D-MU) zone, mapped in two locations, allows lower-density commercial and residential development. These two districts include design standards for site layout and facades, which are applicable to all proposed development in these areas. They also provide incentive bonuses that allow for an increase in floor area ratio (FAR) in exchange for the provision of certain improvements or facilities by developers. However, these incentive packages appear to be unclear, and few, if any, developers, have applied for them to date. The Downtown Regional Sports/Entertainment (D-RSE) zone is a special downtown district intended to promote regional spectator sports and entertainment uses as well as professional offices. This zone includes the Arena at Harbor Yard. While its boundaries could be expanded, this zone will never be located in any other site not contiguous with the current zone.



As the Downtown area becomes a more vibrant, 24-hour mixed-use community (as discussed in Chapters 1 and 8 of this Master Plan) its zoning districts – particularly the D-CB zone – will need to be modified. Building massing and parking will need to be addressed and the current 250-foot height limit for the D-CB zone may need to be changed. As part of an effort to support a more active Downtown, the Planning and Zoning Commission recently modified the City's Zoning Code to allow outdoor dining in the Downtown area, as well as in Black Rock and other parts in the city.

### Other Zones

The city has a number of specialized zones that address particular needs:

- **Mixed-Use Educational/Medical (MU-EM) zone:** *Allows controlled expansion of major educational and medical institutions while discouraging displacement of residents. The largest MU-EM zone encompasses the University of Bridgeport, with smaller zones located on Main Street (including Central High School and St. Vincent's Medical Center) in the North End and along Mill Hill Avenue (including Bridgeport Hospital) in the Boston Avenue/Mill Hill neighborhood.*
- **Mixed-Use Perimeter (MU-P) zone:** *Encourages mixed-use development to buffer residential neighborhoods from major industrial/commercial areas. This zone is found in small pockets throughout the city, with a large MU-P zone located in the center of the city.*
- **Mixed-Use Waterfront (MU-W) zone:** *Allows owners of large (10 acres or more) contiguous undeveloped or underdeveloped properties that border Long Island Sound, Bridgeport Harbor or other waterfront areas to develop them with a mixture of residential, commercial and entertainment uses. Uses in the MU-W zone are subject to Development Plan Review by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The zone functions as a floating district, and is mapped only upon successful application to the Planning and Zoning Commission, initiated by a developer.*
- **Planned Development District (PDD):** *Permits owners of large (25 acres or more) contiguous undeveloped/underdeveloped properties to prepare a comprehensive plan for development. This zone allows a specific mix of residential, commercial, industrial and entertainment uses. Like*

*the MU-W zone, uses in the PDD zone are subject to Development Plan Review by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the zone is a floating district, mapped after Planning and Zoning Commission approval.*

- **Zoological Park (ZP) zone:** *Governs Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo and zoo-related uses, covering the entire zoo site. Because this zone was created for a specific purpose that has been fulfilled, it is unlikely that the City will see another application filed for such a zone.*

### Scattered-Site Zoning

Bridgeport's Zoning Code contains an overabundance of zoning districts. While some districts are widely mapped on large areas of the city, others address very specific uses and are mapped on single parcels. This approach is somewhat uncommon among zoning codes, as zoning districts generally delineate compatible uses within a zone and are not targeted toward one specific use. The overall affect of such scattered site zoning is that it reduces predictability, consistency and compatibility among land uses within neighborhoods.

## 4.3 | PLANNING ADMINISTRATION

Bridgeport's zoning regulations are administered by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals and zoning enforcement officers, as well as by the Department of Land Use Construction Review, the Historic Commissions, the Harbor Management Commission and the Port Authority.

### Planning and Zoning Commission

The commission is composed of nine members (plus three alternates), who serve three-year staggered terms. The Planning and Zoning Commission has the authority to adopt and amend the zoning regulations, including the boundaries established by the zoning map; to provide for the manner in which the regulations will be enforced; to grant or deny special permits or site plan approvals consistent with the zoning regulations; and to grant or deny liquor licenses. The Planning and Zoning Commission also serves as Bridgeport's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, which is authorized by State law to enact regulations necessary to protect wetlands and watercourses, and to define the boundaries of inland wetland areas.



### Zoning Board of Appeals

The board consists of five members and three alternates, who have the authority to hear and decide appeals alleging errors in orders or decisions made by a zoning enforcement officer; determine and vary the application of the zoning regulations in conformance with their intent; and revoke approvals or variances they have granted. The board also issues certificates of approval of locations for the sale of gasoline or other fuels.

### Zoning Enforcement

The Zoning Enforcement Officers are authorized to cause any building, structure or place to be inspected at any time; to issue notices of zoning regulations violations; to order the discontinuance or remedying of such violations; and to issue or deny requests for certifications of zoning compliance. The City recently launched a “one-stop permitting process” initiative to help better facilitate the land use processes for the public and will soon be implementing a permit management software program. The effort involved co-locating the essential departments that permit applicants need; as a result, the second floor of City Hall now houses the Building Department, the Department of Land Use Construction Review (LUCR), the Zoning Department, the Fire Marshal, the City Engineer and sidewalk and driveway permits.

### Department of Land Use Construction Review (LUCR)

The Department of Land Use Construction Review (LUCR) is one of eight divisions under the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED). The role of LUCR is to provide preliminary review and coordination of development proposals prior to formal submission to the City’s land use boards and commissions. LUCR provides guidance and assistance to prospective developers seeking land use regulatory approval of development projects through design review committee meetings. LUCR also oversees the Building Department and Zoning Office and the City’s permit management process.

### Historic Commissions

As described in Chapters 3 and 5, Bridgeport has two historic commissions: Stratfield Historic Commission and Historic Commission #1. The Stratfield Commission has jurisdiction over the Stratfield Historic District, while Historic Commission #1 oversees the other historic districts. Each commission has five members and three alternates, all of whom serve five-year terms and are appointed by the mayor. No member may hold a salaried municipal office in the City. Membership includes the city historian, who serves as an ex-officio member of the board.

### Harbor Management Commission

The Harbor Commission consists of seven members, including a Planning and Zoning Commission representative, plus two alternates, appointed by the Mayor with City Council approval to four-year terms. No more than five members may be of the same political party. The commission’s purpose is to prepare a harbor management plan in accordance with State statutes. Other responsibilities include recommending ordinances to implement the harbor management plan and reviewing proposed land and water use activities contiguous to the waterfront.

### Port Authority

Under State statutes, the Port Authority’s purpose is to foster and stimulate the shipment of freight and commerce through the ports of Bridgeport; develop and promote port facilities in order to create jobs, increase the City’s tax base and provide special revenues to the City; work with the City government to maximize the efficiency of available public funding; and cooperate with state and federal agencies in the maintenance, development, improvement and use of district harbors, waterways and industrially zoned properties. The Port Authority is governed by a commission of five voting members: three commissioners appointed by the Mayor, with City Council approval, for three-year terms; and the director of economic development and harbor master. Also, the board has three ex-officio members: the Mayor, the City Council president and the Harbor Commission chairman.

#### 4.4 | BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS

BFJ and Urbanomics conducted a build-out analysis of Bridgeport under the existing zoning regulations, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. The parcels within the city identified as currently vacant were selected and their area was compared with the applicable minimum lot area allowable under the Zoning Code. Vacant parcels analyzed included all vacant, unimproved land as well as large industrial sites that contain vacant industrial buildings. Vacant parcels not meeting minimum lot area requirements were classified as undevelopable and parcels determined to be large enough for development under the code were flagged. Figure 4-3 shows the developable parcels utilized in this build-out analysis.

Table 4-4 | Build-Out Analysis  
(Based on 2005 zoning regulations)

	Lots	Units	Acres
Residential	200	441	578
<b>Non-Residential</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Commercial	113	16,000,000 sf	49
<i>Mixed-Use Citywide<sup>1</sup></i>	43	3,100,000 sf	23
<i>Mixed-Use Downtown</i>	9	1,608,725 sf	4
Industrial	325	152,000,000 sf	540
<b>Total Non-Residential</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>168,000,000 sf</b>	<b>589</b>

<sup>1</sup> Excluding Downtown  
Source: Urbanomics, 2007

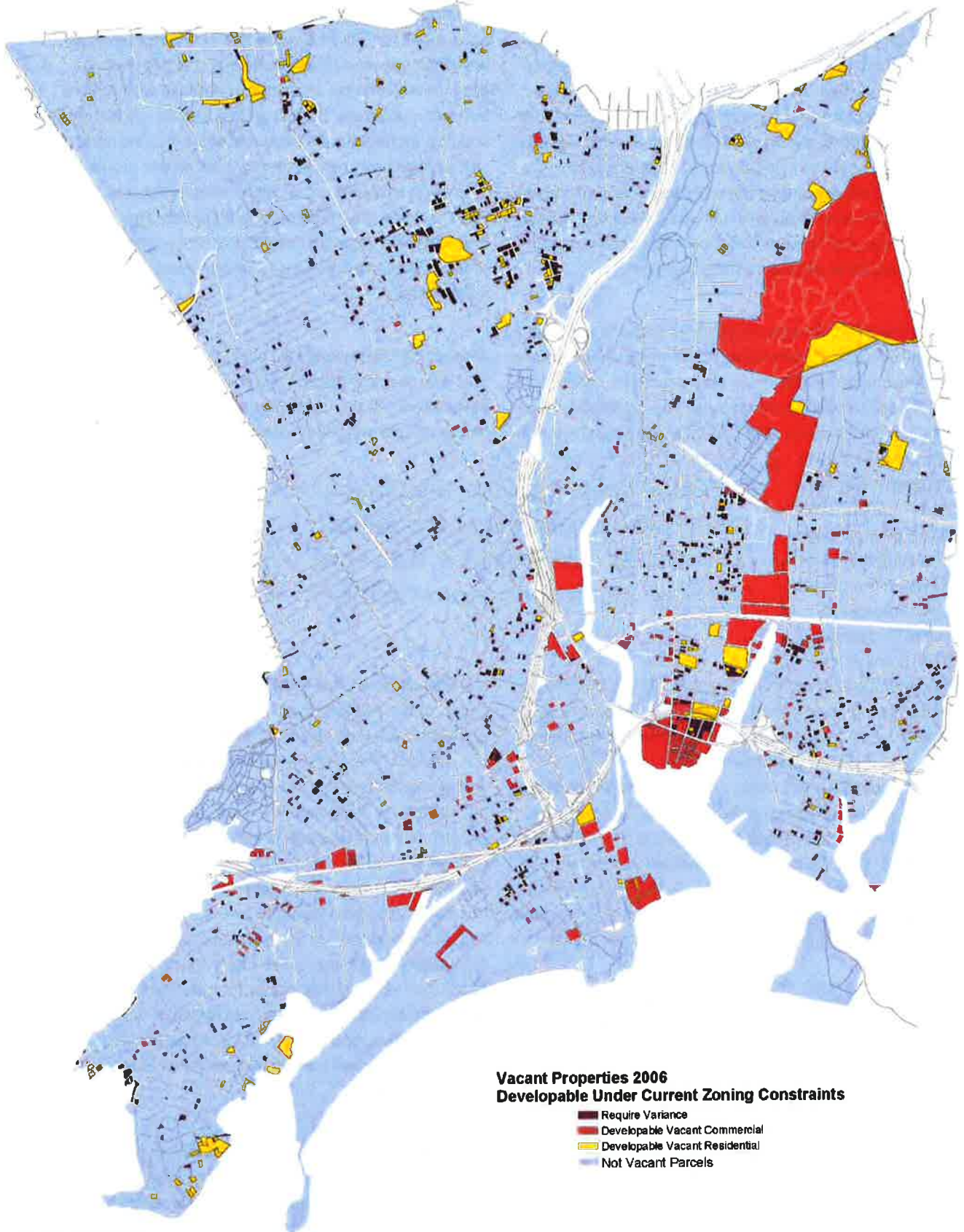
Potential residential development for flagged parcels was calculated based on the maximum number of units allowed under existing zoning. Potential non-residential development (industrial, commercial and mixed-use) was calculated based on the maximum square footage allowed by current zoning along with factors such as lot area, maximum coverage, maximum number of stories and building height.

Based on this methodology, the total number of potential residential, lots, units and developable acreage was determined for residential properties and the total number of parcels, developable square footage and acreage was determined for non-residential properties. As shown in Table 4-4, under current zoning, 441 new residential units could be constructed on 200 residential lots comprising 578 acres. A total of 152 million square feet of industrial space could also be built on 325 parcels comprising 540 acres. An additional 16 million square feet of commercial development, including mixed-use development, could be constructed under current zoning on

113 parcels comprising 49 acres. This 16 million square feet of potential commercial development includes 3.1 million square feet of mixed-use development citywide (excluding Downtown) and 1.6 million square feet of mixed-use development in the Downtown.

It is important to note that the vast majority (more than 80 percent) of existing vacant lots in Bridgeport were found to be non-developable, as they do not meet the minimum lot size required by zoning, and many of these lots do not have street frontage. These parcels are indicated in dark purple on Figure 4-3. Because many of these small vacant lots are located within residential neighborhoods, their inability to be developed without a variance is of particular concern. Vacant lots in neighborhoods detract from community character, reduce street activity and can lead to blight. In addition, when such lots do not meet minimum zoning requirements they can be hard to develop because construction financing may be difficult to acquire.

Figure 4-3 | Build-out Analysis Based on Current Zoning



Source: Urbanomics



#### 4.5 | LAND USE AND ZONING POLICIES

Bridgeport's industrial heritage defines its character. It is what made Bridgeport once the leading city in the region. While industry continues to play an important role in the city, it is no longer Bridgeport's leading economic sector. Goods production and related employment have steadily declined over the past decade, and this trend is expected to continue over the next ten years. Future economic development will depend on the city's ability to capture jobs in the health care, finance/insurance/real estate, professional office and arts and entertainment sectors, rather than its ability to expand its industrial base.

Given this trend, Bridgeport needs to evaluate its industrial zoned areas and determine those areas where industry continues to thrive and those where industry no longer exists and land should be rezoned. The objective is to reduce the total amount of industrial zoned property in the city, while increasing

the productivity of utilized industrial land. Based on an analysis of existing industrial activity in the city that was conducted as part of Bridgeport's 2007 Comprehensive

Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), the City should reduce its industrial-zoned land from 20 percent to 10 percent by 2020. Rebalancing industrial zoning to reflect current economic conditions will allow the city to support its remaining industries, while preparing to capture employment in projected growth sectors. This includes increasing land area zoned for mixed-use and high-density residential development in appropriate locations as well as health care/medical-related uses, particularly in the vicinity of Bridgeport's two existing major medical centers: Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent's Medical Center.

As Bridgeport moves toward a more diverse economy, it should work to promote compatibility among different land uses. Adaptive reuse should be employed in ways that are supportive of existing productive industrial and commercial uses and should make use of appropriate architectural, programmatic, design and landscaping elements to ensure compatibility with such uses. Performance standards should be implemented to ensure that industrial uses are good neighbors and prevent excessive noise and the release of noxious fumes and dust.

A central issue that must be addressed in developing regulations for adaptive reuse is the inherent conflicts that arise between new residents and existing industries. These conflicts should be addressed with buffers between such uses. Buffering tools should include landscaping, architectural treatments and noise barriers, as well as regulatory requirements, such as the prohibition of through trucks or noise during certain hours of the day. Buffering requirements should encourage creativity and flexibility, while providing sufficient regulatory "teeth" to accomplish the overall goal of protecting a range of viable uses.

Another significant land use change expected in Bridgeport over the next decade is a shift toward mixed-use development in the Downtown and along commercial corridors. Currently, land uses in these areas are pre-

dominantly commercial, but as redevelopment occurs, the City should encourage a mix of residential, commercial and entertainment uses. A mix of uses, along with design requirements, will promote pedestrian activity and

activate city streets. It will encourage an urban lifestyle typical of thriving urban areas where residences and related commercial and entertainment uses support one another. The City is currently working to adopt new zoning regulations for the Downtown that will encourage mixed-use development. These regulations include provisions that encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) and allow for transfer of development rights in order to encourage preservation of historic buildings. In addition, the proposed new zoning for Downtown includes design guidelines to ensure a consistent and high-quality urban character within the city's historic core. Other zoning regulations for mixed-use areas that should be considered include expansion of the mixed-use waterfront zone to the north and the addition of public access requirements for properties located along the waterfront.

In reviewing its zoning regulations to reflect the policies of this Master Plan, the City should address the issue of under-sized undevelopable parcels in its neighborhoods. The presence of numerous vacant, undersized lots has a

“As redevelopment occurs, the City should encourage a mix of residential, commercial and entertainment uses in the Downtown and along commercial corridors.”



negative impact on the character of the city's neighborhoods and contributes to blight. Addressing this issue will require development of a strategy that allows for potentially decreasing the minimum lot size required in some residential zones, consolidating existing lots, and developing community gardens or other uses that will benefit the neighborhoods on undevelopable parcels. Where appropriate, such lots could be utilized as public parking areas to address parking shortages that exist in many of the city's core neighborhoods.

As part of its efforts to address undevelopable properties, the City should consider reducing the minimum lot size required in its low and medium density (e.g. single-family and two to four unit multifamily) residential zones. For example, minimum lot area for a single-family home in the city's R-A zone is currently 9,000 square feet. This could be reduced to 5,000 square feet, which is a historic lot size for urban areas in the region and is consistent with urban zoning practices. Reducing minimum lot size in appropriate areas would reduce the number of vacant, undevelopable properties in the city's neighborhoods. The City should also consider increasing the amount of time allotted for an owner to rebuild a damaged structure on an undersized lot. This could help prevent existing, non-conforming lots with damaged structures from becoming undevelopable.

While there is no rule of thumb for the correct number of zoning districts for a city, it appears that Bridgeport has too many with 19. The City should evaluate the utility of its existing zoning districts and consolidate and/or create new districts as appropriate. It should also address issues of scattered-site zoning, high density residential development along the waterfront, mixed-use development along neighborhood commercial corridors, and changes to the city's industrial zones as discussed in Chapter 15.

Finally, the City should also work to modify its review procedures for applications that involve site plan review and zoning variances. Currently, applications for variances are heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) before associated site plans are reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z). This has proven to be a problematic process because once the ZBA grants a variance, the P&Z often has little opportunity to require enhancements to site plans to address issues such as parking, landscaping, and site layout. Bridgeport's application review procedures should be modified to provide P&Z with an opportunity to comment on a proposed site plan before a variance is granted by ZBA. In addition, the City should consider the creation of special permits for certain uses in order to improve development control and reduce the number of variance applications that come before the ZBA.



# 5.0

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### POLICIES

- 1 *Renew the city's connection to its history.*
- 2 *Strengthen the cultural sector.*

### GOALS

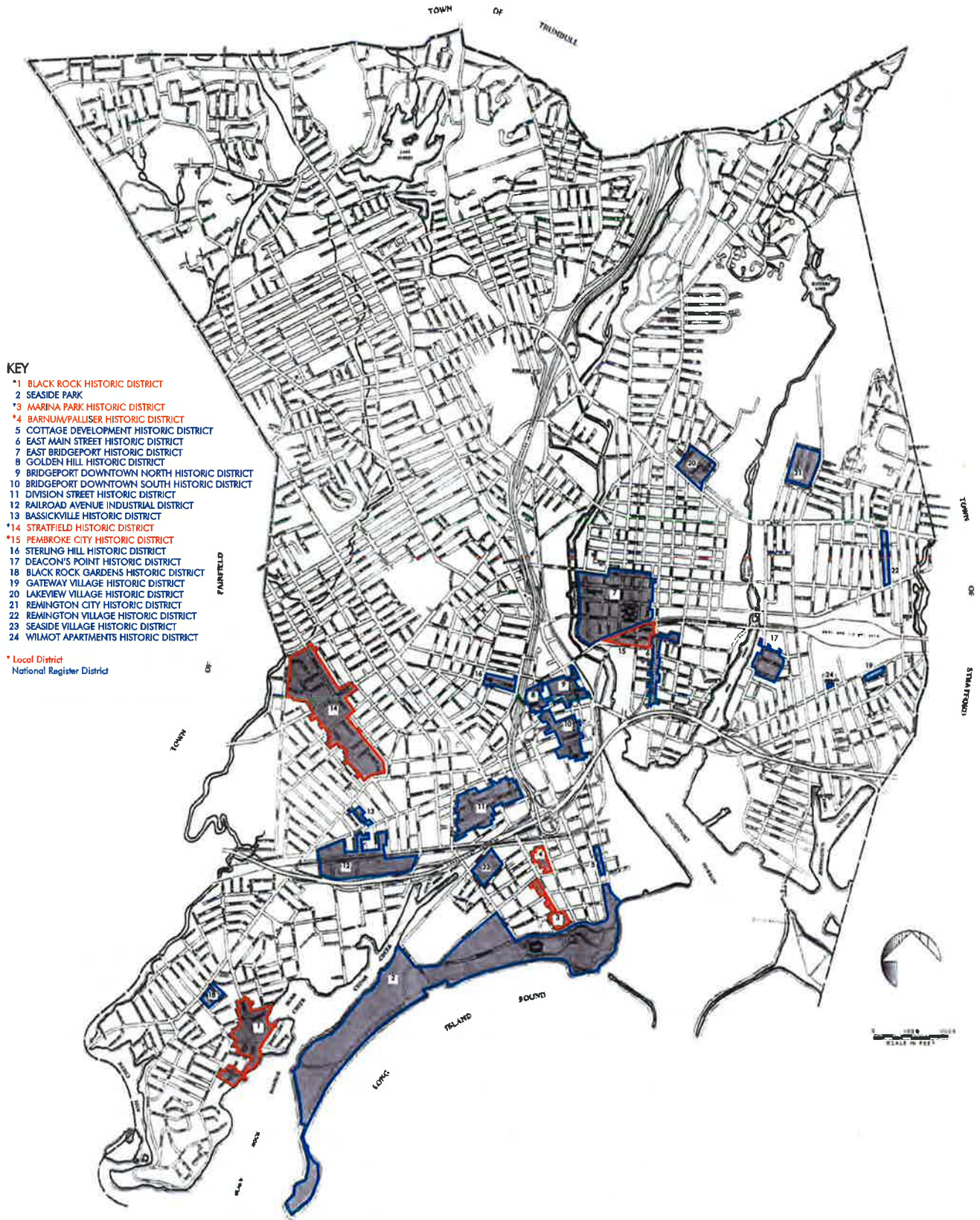
- 1 *Preserve the city's historic fabric.*
- 2 *Encourage Bridgeport's arts, entertainment and cultural organizations to work together to enhance their leadership, funding and marketing capacity and create sustainable jobs in the creative economy.*

### 5.1 | HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Bridgeport has a total of 24 historic districts, comprising both local districts and those listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see Figure 5-1).

While both National Register historic districts and local historic districts are listed on the State Register of Historic Places, they differ in structure and the reviews required. A National Register historic district is established through the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service as formal recognition of an area with historical, architectural or cultural significance. Alterations to a property listed in a National Register historic district only require review if there is state or federal involvement. A local historic district offers greater protection and involvement from the community. The Connecticut General Assembly grants municipalities authority to establish locally designated historic districts and individual historic properties for which viewable exterior architectural changes are reviewed by a local preservation commission. This ensures that alterations are consistent and appropriate with the existing character of the district or property.

Figure 5-1 | Historic Districts Map



Source: City of Bridgeport



Under Connecticut statutes, any interested group of residents may ask that the municipal government appoint a local historic district study committee to study the possibility for a district and prepare a report of the historically and architecturally significant properties in the proposed district and the district as a whole. The report is submitted to the municipal planning and zoning board and the State Historic Preservation Office for review and comment, and a public hearing is scheduled. A local historic district cannot be established without a referendum among its property owners. Two-thirds of the property owners within the proposed district must support the designation or it is not permitted. If the referendum is passed, it must go on to the municipal government for approval.

Bridgeport's local historic districts are governed by two historic district commissions: Stratfield Historic District Commission and Historic Commission #1. The Stratfield Commission has jurisdiction over the Stratfield Historic District, while Historic Commission #1 oversees the other historic districts. Each commission has eight members and three alternates, who serve five-year terms and are appointed by the mayor. No member may hold a salaried municipal office in the City. Membership includes the city historian, who serves as an ex officio member of the board. The commissions meet separately each month and are overseen by the Department of Land Use Construction Review.

The local historic districts are also governed by the City's zoning regulations through the Historical Overlay (O-H) zone. This zone applies to properties within the historic districts, as well as properties adjacent to those districts, in a buffer area. The purpose of the zone is to ensure that the historic district commissions can review and comment on applications before the P&Z and ZBA that may affect historic resources. It requires that any application for new construction, demolition or alteration of structures or a change of use to allow industrial, commercial, business, or home industry uses within historic districts be contingent upon receipt of a certificate of appropriateness from the appropriate historic district commission.

**LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

The following are Bridgeport's five locally designated historic districts, as shown in Figure 5.1. With the exception of Pembroke City Historic District, all local districts are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Black Rock Historic District*  
Roughly bounded by Black Rock Harbor, Grovers Avenue, Beacon and Prescott Streets. Contains 302 acres and 109 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1979.

*Marina Park Historic District*  
Marina Park in the area of Park and Waldemere Avenues. Contains 110 acres and 14 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1982.

*Barnum/Palliser Historic District*  
Roughly bounded by Myrtle and Park Avenues, Atlantic and Austin Streets (both sides). Contains 59 acres and 33 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1982.

*Stratfield Historic District*  
Centered around CT 59 and U.S. 1. Contains 1,100 acres and 242 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1980.

*Pembroke City Historic District*  
Bounded by Crescent Avenue, East Main Street and Pulaski Street. The historic district connects the East Bridgeport Historic District and the East Main Street Historic District.

**NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS**

The following 19 districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but are not locally designated historic districts:

*Seaside Park*  
Contains Seaside Park on Long Island Sound. Listed on National Register in 1982.

*Cottage Development Historic District*  
Includes Cottage Place and Atlantic, Broad, Main and Whiting Streets. Contains 31 acres and 47 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1982.

*East Main Street Historic District*  
Bounded by Walters and Nichols Streets from 371-377, 741-747, 388-394 and to 744 East Main Street. Contains 160 acres and 33 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1985.

**NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS (Continued)*****East Bridgeport Historic District***

Roughly bounded by railroad tracks and Beach, Arctic and Knowlton Streets. Contains 938 acres and 250 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1979.

***Golden Hill Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Congress Street, Lyon Terrace and Elm and Harrison Streets. Contains 100 acres and 13 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1987.

***Bridgeport Downtown North Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Congress and Water Streets and Fairfield Avenue, and including Elm, Golden Hill and Chapel Streets. Contains 200 acres and 38 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1987.

***Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Elm, Cannon, Main, Gilbert and Broad Streets. Contains 270 acres and 50 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1987.

***Division Street Historic District***

Roughly bounded by State Street and Iranistan, Black Rock and West Avenues. Contains 390 acres and 186 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1982.

***Railroad Avenue Industrial District***

Roughly bounded by State and Cherry Streets and Fairfield and Wordin Avenues. Contains 500 acres and 22 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1985.

***Bassickville Historic District***

Consists of 20-122 Bassick, 667-777 Howard and 1521-1523 Fairview Avenues and 50-1380 State Street. Contains 34 acres and 38 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1987.

***Sterling Hill Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Pequonnock Street, Harral Avenue, James Street and Washington Avenue. Contains 80 acres and 41 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1992.

***Deacon's Point Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Seaview Avenue and Williston, Bunnell and Deacon Streets. Contains 165 acres and 77 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1992.

***Black Rock Gardens Historic District***

Bounded by Fairfield Street, Brewster Street and Nash Lane, including Rowsley and Haddon Streets. Contains 89 acres and 12 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1990.

***Gateway Village Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Waterman Street, Connecticut Avenue and Alanson Avenue. Contains 89 acres and 87 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1990.

***Lakeview Village Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Essex Street, Boston Avenue, Colony Street, Plymouth Street and Asylum Street. Contains 89 acres and 90 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1990.

***Remington City Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Dover and Remington Streets and Palisade Avenue, between Stewart and Tudor Streets. Contains 180 acres and 164 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1990.

***Remington Village Historic District***

Roughly bounded by Willow and East Avenues, between Boston and Barnum Avenues. Contains 140 acres and 69 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1990.

***Seaside Village Historic District***

East side of Iranistan Avenue between South Street and Burnham Street. Contains 165 acres and 58 buildings. Listed on National Register in 1990.

***Wilmot Apartments Historic District***

Junction of Connecticut and Wilmot Avenues. Contains 50 acres and four buildings. Listed on National Register in 1990.

As discussed in Chapter 4.0, despite the significant number of local and national historic districts found in Bridgeport, in practice they provide the City with only limited ability to control rehabilitation and new development. Only development within local historic districts requires a Certificate of Appropriateness; National Register-listed districts do not require such certification, nor is a certificate required for those properties that are within the Historic Overlay (O-H) zone but are not included in the local historic district.

**5.2 | CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The City of Bridgeport is rich in arts, entertainment and cultural resources, which serve both the city and the region. While much of these resources are centered around Downtown, cultural institutions can be found throughout Bridgeport, providing opportunities to attract visitors from elsewhere in Fairfield County and beyond.

**Theaters**

*The Bijou Square* complex has an early 20th-Century historic cinema being renovated into an independent film theater with three screens, as part of a larger mixed-use project.

*The Downtown Cabaret Theatre*, located in the former YWCA on Golden Hill Street in downtown Bridgeport, seats approximately 275 people. The theater presents Broadway-style musicals as well as original works, and is also home to a children’s theater company. The facility underwent a \$1.3 million renovation in 1995, funded by a state grant and a capital campaign.

*Klein Memorial Auditorium*, in the West End/West Side area of Bridgeport, opened in 1940 and seats about 1,400 people. The Art Deco style theater has been the home of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony for the past 60 years, and presents operas, theater shows and dance recitals, as well as educational programs during the school year.

*Playhouse on the Green*, formerly the Polka Dot Playhouse, is a 228-seat theater located on McLevy Green in downtown Bridgeport. It offers music, comedy, staged readings, lectures and more, with a focus on educational programming. The theater’s marquee and historic façade are local landmarks, and the building once housed People’s Bank. The facility also includes an art gallery.

*University of Bridgeport’s Arnold Bernhard Arts and Humanities Center*, on Iranistan Avenue on the university’s campus, includes the 950-seat Mertens Theatre, the 200-seat Littlefield Recital Hall and the smaller, experimental Mather Theatre, as well as an art gallery, classrooms, studios and reception space.



The newly renovated Bijou Square  
Source: City of Bridgeport



Klein Memorial Auditorium | Source: BFJ Planning





Barnum Museum | Source: The Barnum Museum



Black Rock Art Center | Source: BFJ Planning



Discovery Museum | Source: The Discovery Museum



Housatonic Museum of Art | Source: Housatonic Community College



Arena at Harbor Yard | Source: City of Bridgeport



Ballpark at Harbor Yard | Source: BFJ Planning

### Museums and Gallery Spaces

*Barnum Museum*, located in a landmark building in Downtown Bridgeport, opened in 1893 and showcases the city's most famous native, including a scale model of a five-ring circus, a mounted baby elephant and exhibits on Tom Thumb and Jenny Lind. It also includes exhibits on Bridgeport's industrial and social history.

*Black Rock Art Center*, housed in the former Black Rock Bank & Trust Building at the intersection of Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street, has performance spaces, dance studios, an art gallery, educational suite and administrative offices for culturally diverse organizations, and partners with local schools for educational programming.

*City Lights Gallery*, just off McLevy Green in Downtown Bridgeport, seeks to promote emerging and established artists from the City and region. The gallery presents new shows featuring painting, drawing, sculpture, photography and mixed media every four to six weeks, and offers drawing lessons and other events.

*Discovery Museum and Planetarium*, a private museum in the North End, attracts visitors from throughout the Tri-State area. It has hands-on science exhibits, planetarium programs and a space learning center.

*Housatonic Museum of Art* at Housatonic Community College features works by such artists as Rodin, Picasso, Matisse, Miro and Chagall. The museum offers lectures, programs and changing exhibitions in its Burt Chernow Galleries and has the largest art collection of any two-year college in the country.



Captain's Cove Seaport | Source: City of Bridgeport

*NEST Arts Factory* is a gallery and studio space in the West End/West Side area of Bridgeport. The City's foreclosure on the building has created some uncertainty in where its occupants will relocate, but at the arts and culture seminar, the affected artists were optimistic that the organization would continue regardless of its physical location.

*Rainy Faye's Bookstore and Gallery* is located on Broad Street in Downtown and features live jazz, poetry readings, storytelling, lectures and other events.

The *University of Bridgeport Art Gallery* is housed in the Bernhard theater complex. In addition, the university's collection of modern art is displayed across its campus.

### Other Major Attractions

The *Arena at Harbor Yard*, a 10,000 seat facility, is home to the AHL Sound Tigers hockey team and Fairfield University's men's and women's basketball teams, and hosts more than 140 entertainment events a year.

The *Ballpark at Harbor Yard*, adjacent to the arena, is home to the Bridgeport Bluefish minor league baseball team. The \$19 million Ballpark was built in 1997-1998 and funded through a combination of public and team contributions. It has a seating capacity of 5,300, with optional standing room admittance of 200 for sold-out games.

*Captain's Cove Seaport* maritime and amusement center on Black Rock Harbor features a 400-seat restaurant, specialty shops, scenic harbor cruises, live entertainment and the Nantucket lightship. The seaport has a marina with space for more than 400 boats, and slips for transient vessels. Dundon House, a Victorian structure relocated to Captain's Cove in 1991, contains a sea museum with photo exhibits, ship models and artifacts found by divers.

*Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo*, the state's only accredited zoo, is open year-round and exhibits almost 300 animals, including several endangered species such as tigers and bears. The facility, located in North Bridgeport, includes an indoor rain forest exhibit plus a New England farmyard, greenhouse, picnic grove, café, gift shop and the former Pleasure Beach carousel.



### Outdoor Performance Spaces

*Baldwin Plaza*, located at the intersection of Fairfield Avenue and Broad Street in front of the state courthouse, hosts concerts and other outdoor entertainment events.

*McLevy Green* is a landscaped plaza abutting Main Street that serves as the setting for Sweetport, a Friday night live music series during the summer, as well as the International Sounds of Summer Music Festival and Bridgeport's holiday tree lighting.

*Peacock Pavilion* at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo is an outdoor stage nestled in the zoo's picnic grove. The 500-capacity venue hosts much of the zoo's programming and is available for rental for private events. It has been the site of *Bridgeport Free Shakespeare*, a professional educational theater project that offers annual summer productions of Shakespeare works. In 2006, the group changed its name to Connecticut Free Shakespeare to reflect planned expansion to additional venues.

*Seaside Park* can accommodate a large number of people for concerts, music festivals and other special events on its open lawn, with views of Long Island Sound and a bandshell, directly opposite the University of Bridgeport theater complex. The *Washington Park Gazebo* and *Went Field Pavilion* also provide summer concert and event space in Bridgeport.

The *Barnum Festival* was created in 1948 to celebrate the life and times of P. T. Barnum and to commemorate the history of Bridgeport. The summer-long annual festival includes concerts, parades, art shows, parties and a fireworks show at Seaside Park. *La Danza*, inspired by Puerto Rico's national dance, is a charter event of the festival that promotes Latin America's cultural diversity with an annual salute to a different country.

The *Columbus Day Parade* is held every October in Bridgeport.

*Gathering of the Vibes*, an annual multi-day music and camping festival launched in 1996, has brought a number of bands to the Northeast, becoming one of the region's premier summer music festivals. The event was held in Bridgeport's Seaside Park in 1999 and 2000, and returned there in the summer of 2007.

The *Summer Sounds of the World* concert series, the largest world music series in the State of Connecticut, is presented throughout July and August in various parks and locations throughout the city.

The *Greater Bridgeport St. Patrick's Day Parade* draws more than 10,000 spectators over its 1.5-mile route through downtown Bridgeport.

*Nutmeg State Games* is a multi-sport festival of Olympic-style competition offering 24 different sports for Connecticut's amateur athletes. The games were held in Hartford until 2005, when they began a three-year stint in Bridgeport. While the event will take place in Danbury in 2008 and 2009, organizers have not ruled out the possibility of the games returning to Bridgeport.

The *Olympiad Greek Festival*, held every May, attracts thousands for Greek food, music, dancing, a flea market and amusement rides. The festival is sponsored by Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, on Park Avenue in the North End.

The *Puerto Rican Parade of Fairfield County* is held annually in Bridgeport in July. The parade begins at Central High School and ends in Seaside Park, and includes pageants, music and a banquet.

### 5.3 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICIES

Bridgeport's historic buildings and cultural institutions distinguish it from the suburban municipalities that have grown up around it. They are a source of pride for city residents and should play a key role in revitalization efforts. Historic buildings and facades should be incorporated into development and adaptive reuse projects, particularly Downtown. These buildings are integral to the city's urban fabric and are a unique asset that should be capitalized upon. In the neighborhoods, historic districts and buildings create a unique atmosphere that cannot be replicated in newer developments. Preservation and restoration of important structures in these areas can have a positive impact on surrounding properties.





Baldwin Plaza | Source: City of Bridgeport



McLevy Green | Source: BFJ Planning



Seaside Park Bandshell | Source: City of Bridgeport



Puerto Rican Parade of Fairfield County  
Source: Puerto Rican Parade of Fairfield County Committee

The key to historic preservation is to encourage rehabilitation of important historic buildings while recognizing that not every old structure in the city merits preservation. To this end, specific criteria should be developed for evaluating the integrity of older structures. This will prevent demolition of important buildings, while allowing for the removal of any non-historic, deteriorating structure that has become an eyesore in a neighborhood. New construction in historic areas should complement the character of existing structures. Along with historic tax credits and grants and loans for the rehabilitation of historic properties, these strategies will encourage restoration and compatible new construction.

Similar to its historic properties, Bridgeport's cultural institutions and entertainment venues play an important role in defining the character of the city. Together, theaters, arts organizations, museums, and its ballpark and arena provide the array of attractions that is typical of successful urban areas throughout the country. One of the primary issues for these institutions in Bridgeport is a crucial lack of coordination among the various arts, entertainment and cultural organizations that are working hard to attract visitors to the city, promote tourism and gain patrons. This lack of cohesion has a negative impact on the individual organizations throughout Bridgeport as well as the city as a whole. Groups suffer from a lack of marketing and funding and are unable to capture potential spill-over effects of one another's efforts.

In order to address this crucial issue, a local Arts Council should be created to coordinate local efforts and tap into regional approaches to coordination being developed as part of the One Coast...One Future project for Fairfield County. This Arts Council should be a non-governmental organization composed of representatives from local arts, cultural and entertainment organizations. A government liaison should be designated to provide for communication between this group and City government. Other initiatives that should be undertaken include the creation of an arts incubator through a public-private partnership to provide work space and technical support for artists; designation of Downtown and appropriate commercial corridors as arts/cultural districts; provision of incentives to encourage arts, culture and entertainment uses in these areas; allowing live/work artists' spaces in appropriate areas; and encouragement of film and sound production

activities within the city. The Housatonic Art Museum, the Fairfield Arts Council and the new Coastal Fairfield County Cultural Alliance completed a draft Bridgeport Cultural Plan in November 2007 that seeks to strengthen the city's cultural sector. Upon completion of a final Cultural Plan, the City may wish to consider implementing key recommendations from the plan.

In addition, the City should centralize physical plant management functions for City-owned buildings that house cultural institutions to more effectively manage the maintenance of these buildings. Currently, upkeep and repair of these properties is carried out on an as-needed basis, without an overall capital program. In the long term, some of the buildings and their maintenance responsibilities could potentially be transferred to the Arts Council if it develops the capacity to effectively manage them and is able to create a capital improvement program to support such work.

# 6.0

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

### **POLICY**

*Reclaim the city's natural resources.*

### **GOALS**

- 1 *Protect and enhance Bridgeport's natural resources, including its coastal area.*
- 2 *Plant 3,000 new trees by 2020.*
- 3 *Reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 10% by 2020.*

### **6.1 | INTRODUCTION**

Landform, rivers, wetlands, the Long Island Sound and urban forest are natural features within the City of Bridgeport that have been reshaped, diminished, dumped upon and polluted by excessive and uncontrolled human activity for nearly three centuries. Attitudes, regulations and priorities have changed. The City of Bridgeport and its residents recognize the aesthetic, environmental and economically strategic value of the city's location as a coastal community in Fairfield County.

Bridgeport's environmental setting is highlighted by its prominence on Long Island Sound. The coastline extends over 22 miles and is composed, in part, of barrier islands, beaches and parkland. Transportation, residential, energy facilities, commercial, and industrial activities comprise the balance of the waterfront. Multiple deep navigable channels support water related activities. Over three square miles of coastal area or 20 percent of the City falls within the Coastal Area Management (CAM) boundary and is protected under city and state coastal area management policies. Portions of these areas have been recognized by the Connecticut Department of Environmental



Protection (CTDEP) as habitat for endangered plant and animal species. For example, a portion of Pleasure Beach is a seasonal nesting ground for piping plover. Tidal wetlands and barrier beaches along the coast of Bridgeport provide places to forage, nest and take refuge for migratory and resident bird species.

The landform that encompasses Bridgeport is typical for the region. Topographic change ranges from sea level along the southern coastline to 310 feet near the northwest corner of the city. The last glacial period shaped the land which presently includes five main watersheds (Bruce Brook, Yellow Mill, Pequonnock River, Coastal area and Rooster River). The Pequonnock River contains the largest watershed and carries runoff from neighboring towns to the north. Though quality of all the local waterways is classified as impaired by CTDEP, conditions are improving.

Bridgeport's land is classified as over 86 percent developed. Most of the city's wetlands have been impacted or destroyed. The only mapped freshwater wetlands within the city are located in the North End at Veterans Memorial Park and Elton Rogers Park, in the West Side/West End along Mountain Grove Cemetery and in North Bridgeport in portions of Remington Woods/Lake Success. These wetlands act as filters and temporary storage areas for stormwater runoff as well as habitat for plants and wildlife. Flooding problems in certain neighborhoods throughout the City have been exacerbated by overdevelopment, reduction and fragmenting of these naturalized areas.

Heavy industry has contributed to the contamination of over 400 parcels in the City of Bridgeport. However, many of these parcels have recently been or are currently being cleaned up or capped to allow for safe redevelopment and/or reuse.

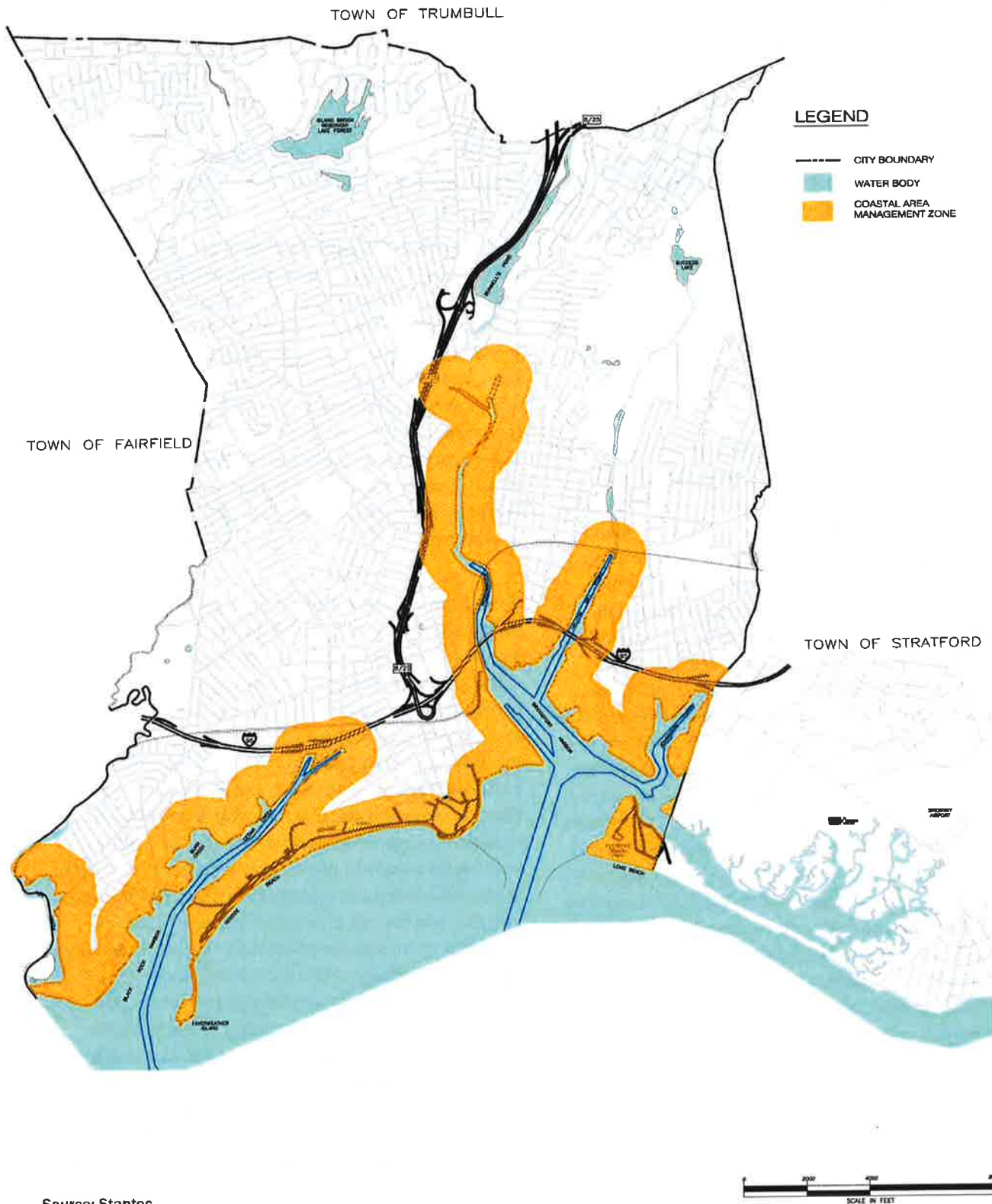
## 6.2 | COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT

Managing its coastal area is an essential component of Bridgeport's efforts to protect its natural resources and achieve sustainable economic growth (see Figure 6-1). Bridgeport is part of the coastal area of the State of Connecticut as defined by the Connecticut Legislature in the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA, Vol. 8, Title 22a, Chapter 444, Sections 90-113c of the Connecticut General Statutes). Much of the city's historical growth and development as well as its quality of life is tied to its coastal area setting on Bridgeport Harbor, one of Connecticut's three deep-water ports, and Long Island Sound — an estuary of national significance as designated by the U.S. Congress. The coastal area has provided Bridgeport and its citizens with vital economic, environmental and cultural opportunities and benefits from the city's initial settlement to the present day.

The CCMA has established the state's coastal management policies for both conservation of coastal resources and beneficial use of those resources. In addition, the CCMA established the mandatory process of coastal site plan review whereby Bridgeport and all other coastal municipalities in Connecticut must review projects proposed within their designated coastal boundaries to determine the consistency of those projects with the state's policies. The CCMA also provides for the voluntary development of municipal coastal programs (MCPs) which are implemented through local plans of conservation and development and zoning regulations. The purpose of Bridgeport's MCP — the Bridgeport Coastal Plan — which was adopted in 1982, is to set and advance the City's coastal management goals and objectives to guide the conservation and beneficial use of the city's coastal resources. Although the goals and objectives expressed in the Bridgeport Coastal Plan are consistent with the state policies established in the CCMA, the City should update its coastal plan to reflect the coastal policies expressed in this Master Plan.

To further strengthen the City's ability to manage its coastal resources, Bridgeport has also prepared and adopted a Harbor Management Plan for the most desirable use of Bridgeport Harbor and the other tidal and navigable waters within the City's harbor management jurisdiction. The Master Plan of Conservation and Development and Harbor Management Plan are separate but complementary documents that together serve as the city's principal guides for land and water use in the coastal area.

Figure 6-1 | Coastal Area Management



Source: Stantec

Bridgeport's coastal area supports a diversity of uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, utility and open space uses. Significant sections of the coastal area are also vacant or underutilized and have been targeted for redevelopment. Prominent coastal features include Ash Creek (whose jurisdiction is shared between Bridgeport and the Town of Fairfield); Black Rock Harbor at the mouth of Cedar Creek; Fayerweather Island at the entrance to Black Rock Harbor; Bridgeport Harbor, including the inner and outer harbors; the Pequonnock River which flows through the center of the city into the inner harbor; the Yellow Mill Creek Channel; Johnson's Creek; and the Pleasure Beach barrier island on the city's eastern boundary with the Town of Stratford.

Much of the city's waterfront, especially along the inner harbor, is highly engineered and developed, reflecting its long history of industrial use as well as current port uses.

#### Coastal Resources

A variety of coastal land and water resources are found within Bridgeport's coastal area, including but not limited to tidal waters and embayments, intertidal flats, tidal wetlands, beaches, floodplains and living marine resources such as finfish and shellfish. Upland resources include developed shorelands and urban waterfront areas. The natural coastal resources are important determinants of Bridgeport's quality of life. They provide significant natural values and ecological functions related to fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and scenic quality. They are valuable for many different uses including boating and other recreational activities, water-dependent commercial and industrial uses of the Port of Bridgeport, commercial fishing and water-enhanced residential and commercial development. The location and extent of the city's coastal resources were identified by the city in the course of developing Bridgeport's municipal coastal program (MCP). The MCP recognizes that the water and other natural coastal resources in the Bridgeport coastal area are part of the larger estuarine and watershed system of Long Island Sound and the Pequonnock River and that actions within that ecological system can have significant impacts on other parts of the system, or on the system as a whole.

The MCP also recognizes that flooding and shoreline erosion are natural, ongoing processes that will continue to affect water and waterfront use and development in Bridgeport and that coastal area land-use must be carefully planned to reduce or avoid the potential impacts of flooding and erosion. Parts of the city's shoreline have historically been subject to severe tidal flooding (most notably during hurricanes in the 1930s, '40s and '50s). Shoreline flooding and erosion are also caused by more frequent spring and winter storms. As a result, large portions of the coastal area fall within coastal flood hazard areas identified on the city's Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Water quality in Bridgeport's coastal area is classified by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in accordance with state water quality criteria. The classifications establish designated uses for surface waters and identify the criteria necessary to support those uses. The classification currently applied throughout the city's entire coastal area is Class "SC/SB." This is a relatively poor classification that indicates that certain State water quality criteria are not being met due to pollution levels. The City should work to reduce sources of pollution as necessary to achieve Class "SB" classification for its coastal area.

The quality of surface water in the coastal area has a profound impact on the overall quality of life as well as waterfront land use and water use. Despite the current classification of Bridgeport's waters, there have been a number of accomplishments in recent years with regard to understanding and improving water quality conditions in the Bridgeport coastal area and Long Island Sound, including improvements of municipal wastewater collection and treatment systems along the Sound (such as the improvements to Bridgeport's East Side and West Side wastewater treatment plants) and establishment of water quality monitoring and educational efforts. Nevertheless, pollution and the risk of pollution still exist. Bacteria and other pollutants can affect the enjoyment of boating activities, the vitality of fish and wildlife, and the health of those who come into contact with the water. Simply stated, water pollution in the coastal area diminishes quality-of-life and is a significant concern. As a result, the implementation of all feasible measures to maintain and improve surface water quality is a basic goal of the city's MCP, including measures to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, which includes stormwater runoff from roads, parking lots, and other surfaces in the watersheds that drain into Bridgeport's coastal waters.



Significant shellfish resources are found in the Bridgeport coastal area. These include private beds worked by commercial shellfishing companies as well as shellfish beds within the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture (DA/BA). Due to existing water quality conditions, Bridgeport's coastal waters and intertidal areas have been classified as "prohibited" by the DA/BA, which means that the harvesting of shellfish for uses other than depuration in other waters or aquaculture purposes is currently prohibited.

The intertidal resources in Bridgeport's coastal area, including wetlands and intertidal flats subject to alternating periods of tidal inundation and exposure, are of particular ecological significance. Although much of the tidal wetland areas formerly around Bridgeport and Black Rock Harbors have been lost to development over the last two centuries, protection of the remaining wetlands is an important goal of the MCP because of the wealth of ecologically important functions provided by wetlands.

As areas of high nutrient value and biological productivity, wetlands provide detrital products which become the food of organisms living in Long Island Sound, including crabs, worms, snails, finfish and shellfish. Wetlands also provide habitat, nesting, feeding, and refuge areas for shorebirds and serve as the nursery ground for larval and juvenile forms of many of the Sound's marine organisms.

Intertidal flats are gently sloping or flat areas usually devoid of vegetation and composed of muddy, silty and fine sandy sediments. They are found along the Bridgeport shoreline in a number of locations and provide natural values similar to the values provided by wetlands. Intertidal flats serve as sources and reservoirs of nutrients for a variety of marine organisms. Microflora and algae, along with decaying marsh plants, can contribute to a vast reservoir of fragmented organic matter or detritus in the intertidal area. Shellfish are among the conspicuous benefactors of the productive intertidal flats in the coastal area. In addition, intertidal flats enhance shellfish habitat by acting as a sink for toxic material and other pollutants.

The MCP encourages and supports the proper management and protection of the city's intertidal resources and the protection of their ecological functions, including

functions related to fish and wildlife habitat, nutrient productivity, water quality, and floodwater storage and buffer. In addition, the MCP encourages and supports the enhancement and/or restoration of degraded natural resources to the extent feasible.

### Water and Waterfront Uses and Activities

Bridgeport's coastal area is used for a variety of industrial, commercial, utility, residential and recreational purposes. Waterfront land uses include those genuinely dependent on their waterfront locations, those enhanced by such locations and some with no functional relationship to the water. Water-dependent uses include the port facilities, utility facilities and facilities supporting recreational boating and other water-based recreational pursuits. Water-dependent uses are defined in the CCMA, and both the State of

“Businesses in the port area should be clean and green and make the most of the natural assets at hand.”

Connecticut (through the CCMA) and City of Bridgeport (through its MCP) have established policies to promote and protect those uses and

to maintain the city's navigation infrastructure, including the Bridgeport Harbor Federal Navigation Project (FNP).

The Port of Bridgeport includes Bridgeport Harbor and Black Rock Harbor and, along with New Haven and New London, is one of Connecticut's three deep-water ports. The port receives shipments of petroleum products and bulk cargo; supports ship-building, boat repair and commercial fishing industries; and its passenger and vehicle ferry service is a major transportation link between Connecticut and Long Island. The Bridgeport Harbor FNP consists of a system of channels, anchorage basins and breakwaters authorized by the U.S. Congress to support waterborne commerce. The MCP encourages and supports maintenance dredging of the channels and anchorage basins by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as needed to maintain and enhance the viability of the port and ensure that viable water-dependent and water-related uses continue to play a role in Bridgeport's future. Maintaining a working port does not preclude mixed-use, residential and recreational waterfront uses. A "good neighbor" approach to choosing what kinds of development are allowed in the future should be undertaken, ensuring that businesses in the port area are clean and green and make the most of the natural assets at hand. By emphasizing such environ-

mentally friendly uses, Bridgeport can also capitalize on “green” industries that are likely to represent major future economic growth sectors, while also furthering its goals of reducing pollution and protecting the city’s natural resources.

Bridgeport is also an important center of recreational boating in western Long Island Sound with a number of facilities serving the boating public located on the waterfront. These facilities include docks, boat slips, moorings, and launching ramps as well as boat repair, service, and storage facilities. Boating facilities include launching ramps owned and operated by the city and private entities. In addition, private boating clubs provide recreational boating services, facilities and activities for members and guests.

In addition to recreational boating-related activities, other recreational uses are also based on access to the coastal area. These include land-based fishing and more passive recreational activities such as walking along the shoreline, picnicking and enjoying views of Long Island Sound from Seaside Park – the city’s principal waterfront park with well over a mile of beachfront on Long Island Sound – St. Mary’s By the Sea and other points of public access to the water. The MCP encourages and supports the provision of facilities and opportunities for public access, consistent with the capacity of the city’s coastal resources to support that access. Further, the MCP recognizes the need to balance public rights to use navigable waters in accordance with the Public Trust Doctrine with the littoral rights of waterfront property owners for reasonable access to navigable waters.

### Planning and Development Initiatives

In 2007, Bridgeport’s coastal area remains subject to the forces of change as a result of various planning and development initiatives expected to have major effects on waterfront character and use. The city’s most prominent waterfront redevelopment sites include Steel Point, the former Remington site in the South End, the Seaside Park landfill and properties along the Pequonnock River. Along with the redevelopment of these properties, one of the City’s priorities as expressed in this Master Plan, is to increase public access to the waterfront and create waterfront greenways. As discussed in Chapter 14, the City has designated four, new major greenways: the Pequonnock Riverfront, East End, Seaside Park and Seaview

Avenue greenways. The Pequonnock Riverfront Greenway will extend from the Port Jefferson ferry landing northward along the western side of the Pequonnock River to Lindley Street, and from River Street southward along the eastern side of the river, around Steel Point and northward up Yellow Mill Channel to Crescent Avenue. The East End Greenway will extend from I-95 at the western side of Johnson’s Creek, southward along the creek, and then across Bridgeport Harbor to a newly connected Pleasure Beach. This greenway will also extend westward along the harbor coastline, corresponding with the area designated mixed use/light industrial on the Future Land Use Plan. The Seaside Park Greenway will create a continuous open space pathway along Black Rock Harbor, from the western end of Seaside Park to Iranistan Avenue, and will also extend eastward from Seaside Park, past Main Street. The Seaview Avenue Greenway will utilize a portion of the right-of-way of the planned Seaview Avenue Transitway and extend from I-95 northward along Yellow Mill Channel to Route 1 (Boston Avenue). In addition to these major greenways, smaller greenways are proposed along the frontage of Captain’s Cove on Black Rock Harbor, and along Island Brook in the Reservoir/Whiskey Hill neighborhood, extending from an existing pathway in Svihra Park northward to Summit Street. The common theme among the City’s vision for its waterfront is to reconnect Bridgeport with Long Island Sound, connect Downtown to Bridgeport Harbor, and protect the city’s most valuable natural assets for the benefit of future generations. To that end, the key goal of the proposed greenways is to extend them, where possible and practical, as close to the waterfront as possible, to provide public waterfront access.

The basic goal of the MCP is to achieve sustainable and substantial economic growth and community development in the coastal area, facilitated by beneficial and coordinated uses and development of waterfront sites in balance with conservation and enhancement of environmental quality and the city’s natural coastal resources. Implementation of the MCP will continue to be pursued through the effective application of city land- and water-use policies and zoning regulations to guide the beneficial use and conservation of the coastal area in the public interest. Further, implementation will involve coordination among all involved City, State and Federal agencies with authorities and programs affecting the coastal area, as well as coordination and consistency among City plans and programs affecting the area.

### 6.3 | COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Consistent with State of Connecticut Coastal Area Management regulations, Bridgeport's policy and goals for management of its coastal area is as follows:

#### Policy

*Guide the beneficial use and conservation of Bridgeport's coastal land and water resources in a manner consistent with the Bridgeport Coastal Plan, Bridgeport Harbor Management Plan, and Connecticut Coastal Management Act.*

**Goal 1** Conserve and enhance the environmental quality, natural resources and ecological functions and values associated with Bridgeport's coastal area and the larger estuarine and watershed systems of which the coastal area is part.

**Goal 2** Achieve and maintain the highest reasonably attainable quality of coastal waters through substantial reduction of nonpoint source pollution and enhanced municipal wastewater treatment.

**Goal 3** Achieve coastal area opportunities for sustainable economic growth and community development, in balance with conservation of coastal resources and environmental quality.

**Goal 4** Maintain a diversity of water-dependent facilities and uses that individually and collectively enhance the local and regional economy and the quality of life in Bridgeport; give highest priority and preference to water-dependent uses and facilities in shorefront areas.

**Goal 5** Maintain and enhance the Port of Bridgeport, including dredging of the harbor as needed, to provide vital economic, transportation and environmental benefits of local, state-wide, and national significance.

**Goal 6** Provide long-term opportunities for safe and enjoyable public access to Bridgeport Harbor and Long Island Sound for active and passive recreational uses; promote a safe, attractive and interconnected system of public waterfront areas and facilities linked with commercial centers of the city.

**Goal 7** Preserve and promote Bridgeport's coastal character and maritime heritage associated with Bridgeport Harbor and Long Island Sound.

**Goal 8** Plan for and regulate coastal area land-use in a manner consistent with city goals for economic growth and development and the capacity of the natural and man-made environment to support development in the Bridgeport coastal area in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

As required by the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, all development activities proposed for Bridgeport's coastal area must be consistent with these policies. All development applications for projects within the coastal area are subject to the City of Bridgeport's Coastal Site Plan review process. In order to be consistent with state requirements, the City's development application forms should be updated to reference CT DEP's current Connecticut Coastal Management Manual, dated September 2000.



## 6.4 | CITYWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

In addition to its coastline, Bridgeport's natural resources include its parks and open spaces, viewsheds, hillsides and urban forests. These features are critical components of the city's ecosystem. As discussed in Chapter 7, Parks and Open Spaces, Bridgeport's open spaces play an important role in wildlife preservation, passive recreation and stormwater management. The City should consider classifying specific sites within the current parkland and open space inventory as preservation areas that are protected by land use regulations. This designation would distinguish preservation areas from other parks and recreation areas within the city in order to protect critical natural features. Public viewsheds to the city's waterfront are also important environmental features that should be protected. The City should adopt regulations or design guidelines for waterfront properties to encourage provision and maintenance of views to the Long Island Sound and its major tributaries from public thoroughfares such as trails, roads and parkland. These regulations should be simple provisions that address height of fencing and landscaping in designated view corridors. In addition to viewsheds, Bridgeport's hillsides and steep slopes are also important natural features that should be protected; grading and clearing of these features results in increased erosion and runoff. The City should limit excavation and leveling of steep slopes as part of its site plan review and/or special permit procedures.



Street trees enhance neighborhood character | Source: Stantec

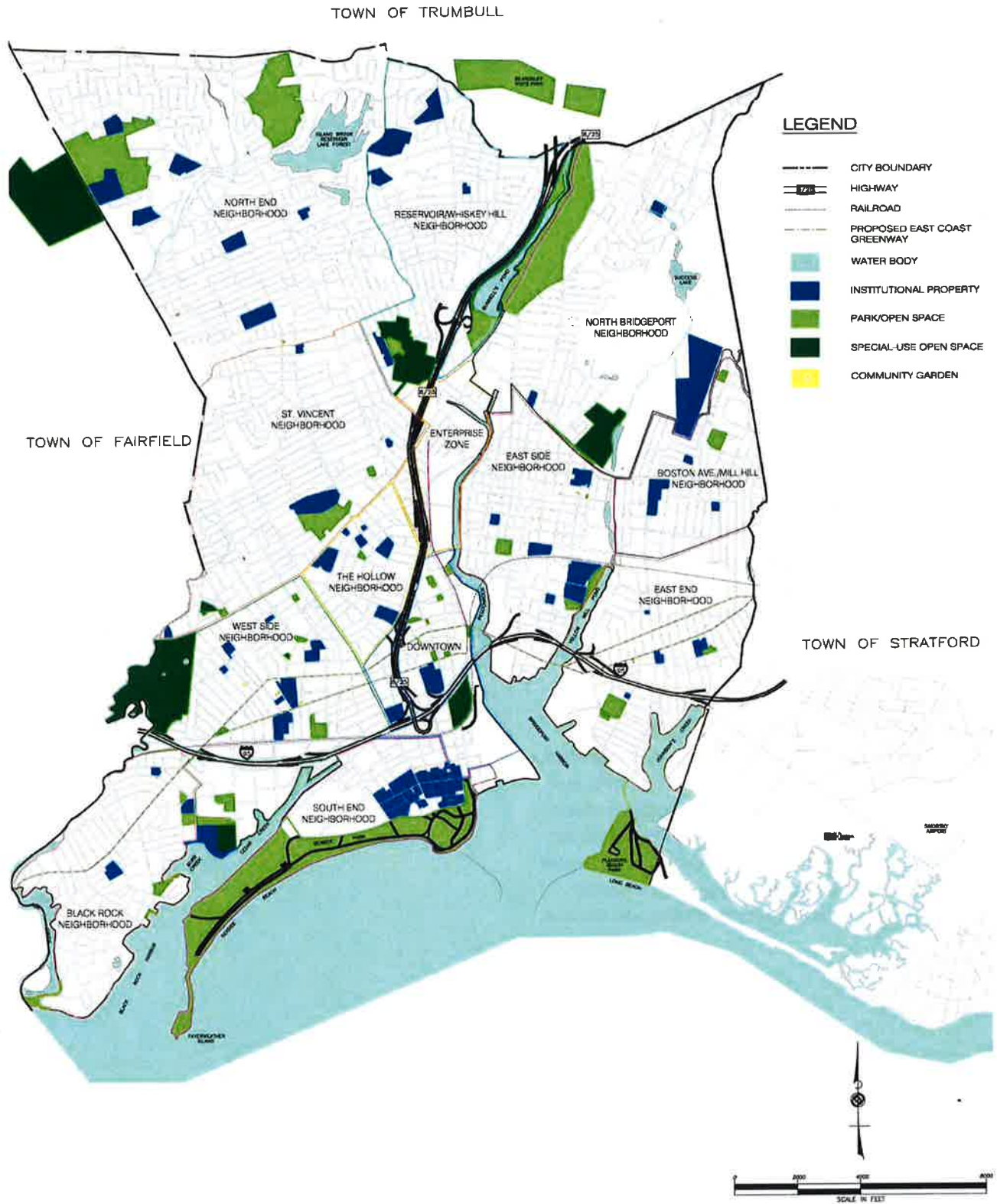
### Trees

Perhaps the most prominent natural feature in the city's landscape is its trees. The presence or absence of street trees has a significant impact on the character of city neighborhoods. Trees beautify neighborhoods, provide shade and clean the air, enhancing quality-of-life for city residents. They also absorb rainfall, reduce flooding and reduce heat island effects, whereas unshaded asphalt soaks in thermal energy and radiates it back into the atmosphere. Planting new trees and maintaining urban forests is an important component of Bridgeport's efforts to improve air quality, micro-climate, image and property values. Locations should be carefully selected to provide the best growing environment possible and tree types, sidewalk condition, pedestrian activity and overhead wires should be taken into consideration. Regulations should strictly prohibit removal of street trees by private land owners. The City must also maintain communication with local utilities to avoid unnecessary removal or excessive pruning or root damage related to utility maintenance and upgrades.

A new street tree planting program should be funded by the City with the goal of planting 3,000 new trees by the year 2020. As urban trees often suffer from stresses related to poor air quality and lack of regular maintenance, new trees that are planted should be hardy varieties that are low maintenance and tolerant of toxins found in urban air. The city's tree planting program should encourage planting of appropriate tree species on private property. Free delivery, materials or installation services are mechanisms that could foster public interest in the program. Species should be selected by qualified arborists or other officially designated personnel. A tree planting program of this type would require:

- *Identification of a funding source*
- *Dedication of a street tree planting crew or outsourcing of services to perform installation work during each growing season (April 15 to June 15 of each year; select fall installations may also be considered)*
- *Provision of maintenance and watering until trees are fully established*
- *Increased roadway/catch basin maintenance*
- *Creation of a GIS-based inventory, maintenance program and schedule*

Figure 6-2 | Existing Open Space



Source: Stantec

In addition, the City's site plan regulations should be amended to include provisions that require installation of new street trees along private property frontage on public roadways. Such provisions could require one tree for every 30 feet of frontage on a public roadway and should specify setbacks from adjacent properties and exemptions where conflicts with utilities and traffic sight lines may occur.

The City should also work to preserve existing urban forest areas wherever possible. Any development proposed for areas that contain existing urban forest land should be required to preserve at least 25 percent of the forested area in its natural state. Existing trees on such sites should be preserved to the maximum extent practicable and a minimum replacement of 50 percent of trees removed from such sites should be required. On smaller sites including single family lots, clear cutting of trees and vegetation should be discouraged through site development controls. Currently, site clearance often occurs prior to obtaining Planning & Zoning approval for development. This practice should be discontinued. In addition, the City should work to green its roadways and encourage the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation to plant trees along large and open areas of continuous highway right-of-way.

The City's tree planting program also needs to include ongoing management of existing street trees. For example, street trees along sidewalks should be inspected on an ongoing basis to verify the health of the tree, prevent injury from falling branches and periodically prune and trim the tree to ensure adequate vertical height for pedestrians. Managing the urban forest may also involve selective cutting to eliminate saplings and excessive underbrush that may be susceptible to fires and disease.

### Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Emissions

Air quality in Bridgeport is adversely affected by airborne particulate from industrial uses, commercial buildings, automobiles, and power plants located both within the city and in the region. The City should continue to work with other municipalities and states in the region to reduce pollutants through implementation of stronger environmental regulations. At the local level the City should work with both the public and private sectors to reduce CO2 levels in Bridgeport by 10 percent by the year 2020. This pollution reduction goal is consistent with the national goal set by the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, which sets the goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 7 percent between 1990 and 2012. The Mayor of Bridgeport has recently signed onto this agreement in which participating cities commit to:

- *Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns;*
- *Urge their state governments, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol – 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012; and*
- *Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan Climate Stewardship Act, which would establish a national emission trading system*



In working to achieve the goal to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> by 10 percent by 2020, the City should focus on achievable actions with measurable goals. Initiatives that Bridgeport should pursue include:

- *Converting municipally-owned vehicles to hybrids and biodiesel vehicles,*
- *Working with the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority to promote the conversion of GBTA buses to alternative fuel technology,*
- *Encouraging private use of hybrid fuel technology vehicles by providing priority parking spaces for such vehicles in the Downtown and at the inter-modal transit center,*
- *Reducing school bus emissions and installing particulate filters on both school and city buses,*
- *Working with energy companies to make their facilities cleaner and more efficient,*
- *Requiring the use of green construction practices and materials for all new public facilities and schools, and*
- *Creating tax incentives to encourage homeowners and businesses to utilize clean and renewable sources of energy production.*

A task force should be established to coordinate these efforts and measure outcomes. The task force should include city staff, private sector industry leaders, and local environmental leaders, as well as regional representatives. Progress toward the 10 percent emissions reduction goal should be evaluated based on the city's current volume of municipal emissions compared to future volumes.

Power generation in the South End | Source: Stantec



### Environmentally Sustainable Land Use Practices

The City of Bridgeport should seek to become a leader in environmentally sustainable land use practices. As discussed throughout this Master Plan document, achieving environmental sustainability in Bridgeport is a theme that goes beyond parks and open space. It touches upon a variety of land use issues and areas including, but not limited to, brownfield development, building construction, energy production, port activities, stormwater quality, mass transit and transit-oriented development. The way in which all of these issues are addressed will have an impact on the degree to which Bridgeport is able to achieve its environmental goals. The key will be for the City to consider environmental sustainability as a significant factor in decision-making on these multiple issues into the future.

As part of this effort, the City should seek to capitalize on ongoing efforts in the region that aim to increase environmental awareness, protect natural resources, and improve air quality. These initiatives include:

#### Energy Conservation

The City should support public access television and other media tools to educate Bridgeport residents about everyday activities that conserve energy. A program should be established to provide tax incentives to encourage property owners to utilize alternative energy production sources such as solar panels to reduce the demand for non-renewable and pollution causing fuel sources. The value of such improvements should be excluded from property assessments. The City could further promote such improvements by considering the installation of solar panels or other energy-saving systems on municipal buildings. The City of Bridgeport could also encourage “green” building practices throughout expedited site plan permitting for such development.

In conjunction with State authorities, the City should also consider means and opportunities to generate revenue via permits sold to city-based pollution producing power generating companies. The revenue collected from such permits could then be reinvested into energy efficiency programs and facilities that generate clean energy. The City should encourage zero net energy use for new development and support regional and state-level initiatives requiring utility providers to procure 20 percent of their electricity from clean energy sources such as wind and

solar power by the year 2020. In addition, the City should support investments in efficiency and demand reduction technologies rather than new supply facilities.

#### Reduction in Pesticide/Herbicide Use

The City shall support State level legislation regulating the use of herbicide and pesticides in the maintenance of municipal grounds and facilities.

#### Expand Municipal Recycling Programs

Bridgeport maintains a curbside recycling collection program. Cardboard, newsprint, white paper, cans and bottles and other recyclable plastic products are typical collection items. The City may also consider providing additional collection sites (permanent or temporary) for residents to dispose of household-generated hazardous wastes.

#### Reduce Heat Island Effect

The City should encourage reduction of pavement and impervious surfaces and limit impervious site coverage on all site plan applications and building modifications requiring permits and certificates of occupancy. Currently, Bridgeport's zoning regulations are interpreted to require asphalt or concrete paving of all parking areas. The zoning regulations should be revised to allow for the use of acceptable pervious paving materials. The City should also encourage the adaptive re-use of brownfields, vacant and underutilized properties in lieu of development on undeveloped land, by using best practices to incentivize such redevelopment.



Roof-mounted solar panels | Source: Stantec

# 7.0

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE

### **POLICY**

*Renew the Park City's green spaces.*

### **GOALS**

- 1 Enhance existing resources.*
- 2 Expand the city's open space inventory.*
- 3 Ensure that all residents live within a 15-minute walk from a park or open space by 2020.*

### **7.1 | INTRODUCTION**

Bridgeport, traditionally known as the Park City, has a new opportunity to reclaim its green heritage. When they were built, Frederick Law Olmsted's Beardsley and Seaside Parks set high regional standards for recreation and leisure activities. The city boasts a significant open space inventory of regional, community and neighborhood parks, as well as community gardens, playground areas and athletic fields. While Bridgeport's open space system has suffered from disinvestment over time, the city has an extensive network of parks, recreation and conservation areas. Upgrading and integrating this network of open spaces into the fabric of a modern Bridgeport is an important component of the city's future. This network must provide for:



- *Recreation opportunities for all age groups and underserved communities and neighborhoods;*
- *Parks and land preserves for passive recreation, protection of threatened natural habitats, and stormwater management;*
- *Neighborhood community centers and playgrounds;*
- *School playgrounds available for public use;*
- *Optimization of existing parks and open spaces;*
- *Enhancement of and improved access to the city's waterfront;*
- *Interconnections among the City's major parks and open space areas; and*
- *Recreation and environmentally based enhancements to Pleasure Beach, including restored public access.*

From an environmental, recreational and economic perspective, the waterfront is clearly one of Bridgeport's greatest assets. The City has maintained a portion of its waterfront for public access and recreation – in particular Seaside Park – but a major challenge in expanding access is the legacy of heavy industrial activity along the city's waterways. While many industrial sites on the waterfront continue to thrive with active industrial uses, the waterfront also has significant brownfield sites and abandoned industrial infrastructure. Recapturing these spaces and structures is costly.

Today, Bridgeport's residents are visiting parks at a rate and intensity unmatched in years past, and parks and open space maintenance and capital improvement budgets are struggling to keep up. The city is poised for population growth, and this will further burden its park and open space system. These trends of greater public demand for recreation and open space are testimony to the public's desire to achieve healthier and more active lifestyles, to observe and appreciate natural resources and to gather with neighbors and friends or simply find a place for quiet enjoyment. The challenges and costs facing the city's parks and open space network are significant, but the benefits to Bridgeport's residents will far exceed needed investments.

## 7.2 | WHAT IS OPEN SPACE?



Public open space in the Downtown area.  
Source: Stantec

Open space comes in many shapes and sizes and serves a variety of user groups. Major land holdings, generally of 25 acres and up, tend to provide recreational facilities with citywide or regional attractions and may serve as undeveloped landscaped buffers between non-compatible and sensitive land uses such as transportation corridors and fragile wetland environments. Smaller open spaces, generally 10 to 20 acres, serve as community-based parks with passive and active recreation opportunities ranging from trails to athletic fields for team sports. Neighborhood parks are typically 5 to 10 acres and tend to be located within a 10- to 15-minute walk from a significant population of city residents. Open space can also be thought of in its smallest scale as civic squares, school sites and community gardens, all popular elements of a livable and vibrant community. To promote public pedestrian access to all the City's parks and open spaces as well as its 22-mile waterfront, linear links should be established among these different classes of parkland via trails and walkways and within transportation corridors.

A significant challenge to achieving this vision is the development of adequate capital and operating funding streams for programming and maintenance of existing open spaces and for site acquisition and construction of new parkland. New public-private partnerships have appeared in the revitalization of Bridgeport's downtown and waterfront and in burgeoning housing conversions, as well as in the arts and entertainment sectors. The same cooperation and enthusiasm must be encouraged for the open space and recreation sector. Achieving a state-of-the-art open space and recreation network in Bridgeport will require a cooperative effort among the City, advocates, volunteer and friends groups, as well as not-for-profit organizations, working together to program and design existing and new parks to meet the needs of the city's residents as well as to protect and enhance Bridgeport's natural resources.

### 7.3 | INVENTORY OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

In order to analyze the city’s parks and open spaces, a classification of park and open space categories has been developed. This classification categorizes parks generally by size, accessibility, current use and range of facilities available as follows:

**Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities** These facilities may vary in size but are typically larger than 25 acres. They attract residents from nearby towns and perhaps throughout the state. Beardsley Park, which includes Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo, may be categorized as such since it is a unique public recreational, educational and cultural destination appealing to and attracting visitors from throughout the state. For its public beach amenities, Seaside Park may also be considered a regional park.

**Community Parks** These facilities are generally greater than 10 acres in area and contain recreation amenities for citywide residents including trails, ball fields, picnic areas and often a unique amenity such as a fishing pond, meadow or concert pavilion. They contain infrastructure such as parking facilities, lighting, lighted ball fields and restrooms. They may also provide smaller-scale active and passive recreation amenities commonly found in small neighborhood parks and hence serving local and city residents.



**Neighborhood Parks** Neighborhood parks vary in size but are typically 5 to 10 acres in size. They are the central recreation amenity serving a neighborhood and may contain play courts, a limited number of ball fields, seating areas, playground and open gathering areas. They experience frequent visitation from nearby residents often walking to the park. Parking and restroom facilities may have limited or seasonal availability.

**Mini Parks** Community gardens and playground areas may be classified as mini-parks. These facilities are typically less than one acre in size and lack restrooms and dedicated parking. They may provide limited but highly desirable facilities that serve residents with young families, senior citizens and many others who desire to socialize with their neighbors or may otherwise lack private open space. These facilities are often a great source of pride for residents of urban areas, and they encourage healthy lifestyle alternatives for those with limited means of transportation.



**Special Use** Special use areas may include golf courses, tennis courts, athletic stadiums, public/private recreation facilities such as skating arenas, and protected open space and preserves.



Figure 7-1 illustrates the neighborhood distribution of the City’s park and open space facilities and community gardens, as well as locations for potential open space improvements.



### 7.4 | CURRENT PARK CONDITIONS, OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Many of Bridgeport’s parks have been recently renovated and enhanced. Likewise, the City has successfully obtained local, state and federal funding from Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants, State Open Space and legislative Special Act monies and municipal bond funds. However, these capital improvements are presently endangered by the insufficiency of operation and maintenance funds which have cut back not only maintenance staff but park and recreation programming. As park use has increased, these capital improvements have become overused and, in some cases, begun to deteriorate. The most recent inventory of recreation and park facilities is reflective of the popularity of sporting activities. The City of Bridgeport provides:

- 21 softball fields
- 7 baseball fields
- 12 basketball courts
- 23 tennis courts
- 4 multi-purpose fields
- 36-hole golf course
- 2 ice skating rinks
- 2 all-purpose stadiums
- 3 outdoor tracks
- 3 saltwater beaches
- 12 horseshoe courts
- 3 bocce courts

“Achieving a state-of-the-art open space and recreation network in Bridgeport will require a cooperative effort among the City, advocates, volunteer and friends groups, as well as not-for-profit organizations.”

### 7.5 | RECREATIONAL TRENDS AND PREFERENCES

Changing demographics have altered lifestyle, recreational, entertainment and leisure time preferences throughout the City. This is typical in urban areas where recreational venues, for example, are accessible by foot or transit. Bridgeport is a diverse community with significant populations of baby boomers, empty nesters, young families and seniors with unique recreational priorities. Community centers, health-care wellness programs, extracurricular school-based activities and universal accessibility will all factor into the quality and ability of the City to serve its diverse population.

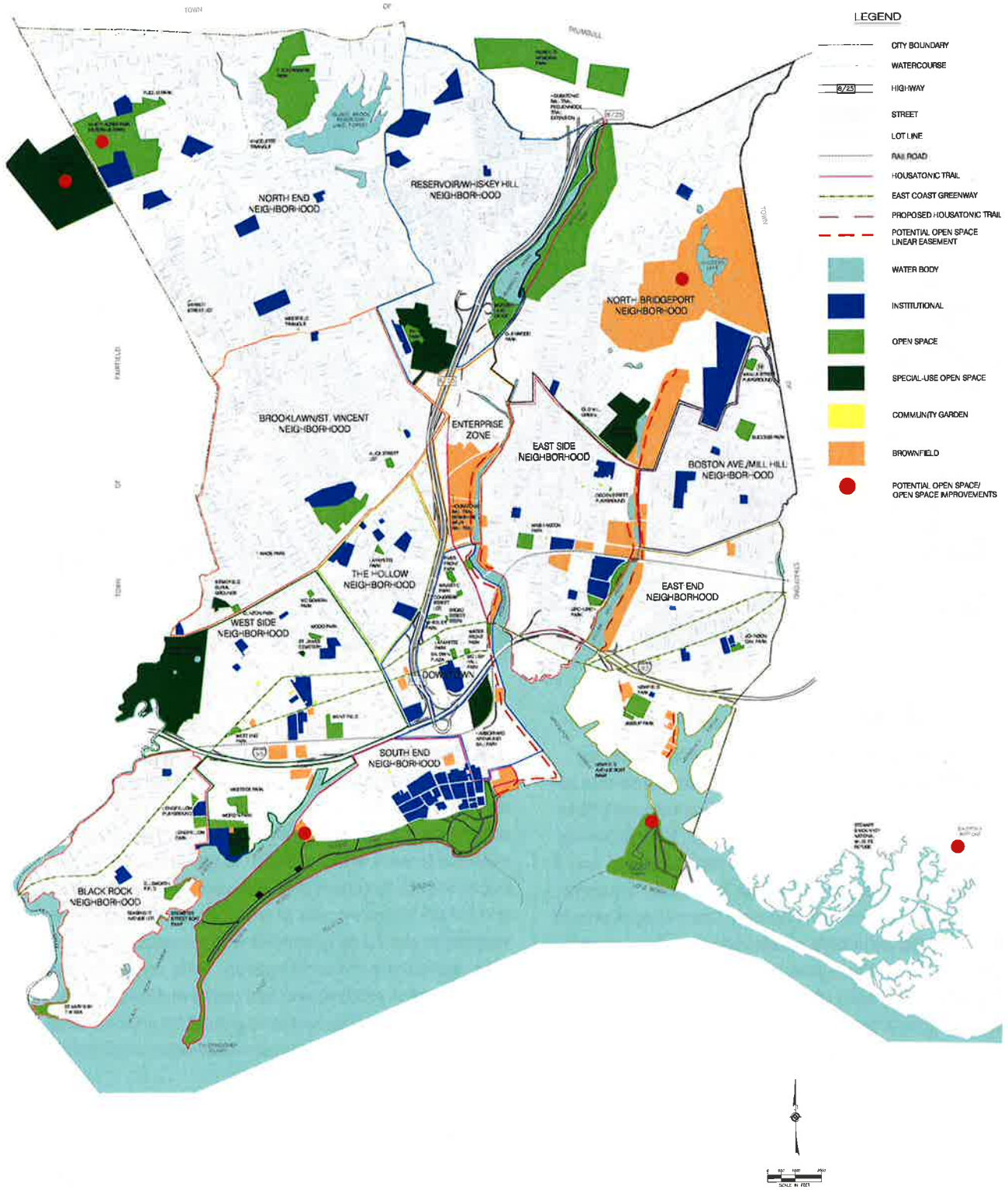
Based on recent recreational surveys throughout the region and interviews with City representatives, the following amenities are needed to better serve Bridgeport residents:

- Soccer fields of various sizes;
- Basketball courts;
- Trails, bikeways and greenways; and
- Softball fields.

Several neighborhoods within Bridgeport are underserved by the current inventory and distribution of parks and open spaces. Vacant public and private properties as well as reclaimed or to be reclaimed brownfield sites offer opportunities for new open space and parks. Of the city’s 13 neighborhoods, if examined independently, more than half are underserved, falling below the desirable land area (10%) allocated to parks and open spaces. Though these percentages simply represent guidelines and do not factor in large regional parks available to all Bridgeport residents, they are important to note based on the limited transportation and mobility options available to some residents throughout the city. Specific neighborhoods that may currently be underserved by the existing inventory of parks and open space include:

- Black Rock
- Boston Avenue/Mill Hill
- Brooklawn/St. Vincent
- Downtown
- East Side
- Hollow
- Reservoir/Whiskey Hill
- West End/West Side







View toward Pleasure Beach from East End | Source: Stantec

## 7.6 | PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

Existing parks and open spaces as well as public access to these resources should be improved so that all Bridgeport residents live within a 15-minute walk from a park or open space by the year 2020. Pedestrian access to Pleasure Beach should be reestablished, and it should be restored for public use, balancing conservation, beach use and development. Open spaces should be enhanced for wildlife preservation, passive recreation and stormwater management. As part of this effort, no less than 25 percent of the Remington Woods/Lake Success property should be preserved as meaningful open space. Natural buffers should be maintained on this property between any proposed uses on-site and adjacent residential uses. In addition to the preservation of at least 25 percent of this property as open space, the Remington Woods site will be subject to stormwater and inland wetlands regulations and site plan review, which will provide greater regulation of tree removal and wetland areas. Thus, in actuality, significantly more of the property will likely remain undeveloped.

In addition, incentive bonuses allowing for greater building height Downtown in exchange for the provision of publicly accessible open space and possible funding for waterfront recapture should be explored. The City should continue to work with the Board of Education to expand public access to school play and open space areas during non-school hours. Access to parks, open space and the waterfront should be expanded with an enhanced pedestrian, vehicular and transit network. Safe and attractive connections to existing and new parks and beaches via sidewalks, bus, trolley and ferry should be created. Sidewalks should be required on all mixed-use corridors and within a quarter-mile from schools.

Taking into account the City's existing park and open space facilities, public demand and existing constraints on operation and maintenance funds, the Master Plan recommends the following parks and open space policies:



### PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

- Enhance access to parks, open space and the waterfront by improving pedestrian, vehicular and public transportation access (e.g. Seaside Park, Pleasure Beach). Pedestrian access to Pleasure Beach should be restored.
- Improve existing parks to optimize utilization.
- Continue to engage community representatives on school reconstruction and development projects and provide public access to play and open space areas during non-school hours.
- Establish gateways or a central commons area within each Bridgeport neighborhood. These spaces may be a corner of a school site, a streetscape enhancement or signature treatment at an existing neighborhood park.
- Establish more neighborhood and mini-parks throughout underserved neighborhoods. Consider reclamation of vacant lots for temporary or permanent designation as park land. Outdoor recreation space, improved physical image and space for community interaction are needed. For example, improve Nanny Goat Park in the Hollow neighborhood and provide recreation facilities appropriate for a range of age groups, i.e. toddlers, young children, pre-teens, teens, adults and senior citizens.
- Establish provisions to allow greater building height within designated downtown areas in exchange for publicly accessible plazas and open space at street level and waterfront recapture.
- Enhance and expand open space for wildlife habitat preservation, passive recreation use (trails, bird watching, etc.) and stormwater management.
- Natural areas should be classified as preservation areas and not as open space. The City may consider more stringent regulations pertaining to permitted uses within preservation areas. The intent of these provisions will be to permanently protect and reinforce the City's commitment to preservation of its natural heritage.
- Provide access to open space (trails) on the planned Discovery Museum Magnet School site.



Wooded trails | Source: Stantec



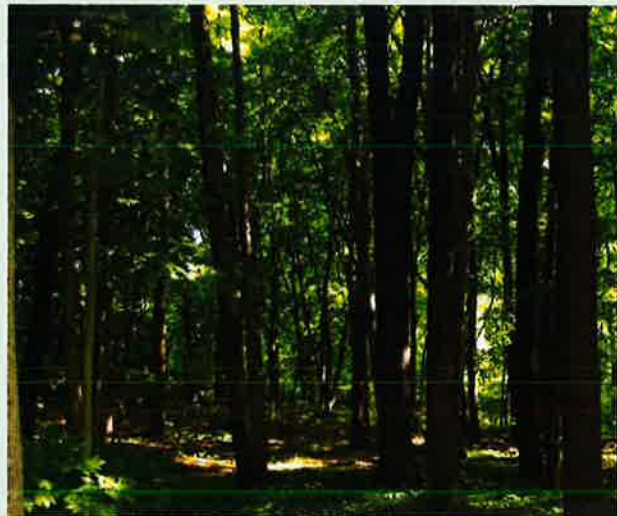
Natural areas | Source: Stantec



- Encourage use of clean and renewable energy sources to support new park facilities (structures, lighting, etc.) including the rebirth of Pleasure Beach as a self-sustaining facility with both solar and wind power generation facilities. Revenue generated from the sale of this power back to the local service provider should be directed specifically to the Parks Commission's operating and capital programs.
- Incorporate sustainable design practices in the development of new park facilities that utilize alternative and clean sources of energy, manage stormwater quality and quantity and encourage recycling.
- Ensure that every resident has access to a park or accessible open space within ¼-mile of their place of residence. Provide safe and attractive connections to these open spaces through a sidewalk installation and replacement plan and street tree planting program. Mini-parks serve in this capacity.
- Provide sidewalks in mixed-use neighborhoods where sidewalk networks are currently intermittent. Provide sidewalks extending out ¼-mile from public schools.
- Ensure that major parks are accessible by public transportation.
- Acquire strategically located and undeveloped brown-field sites for open space and consider alternatives for passive and/or active recreation use or ability to provide stormwater/flood control measures.
- Ensure that open space, forest, and natural habitat are preserved on a portion of the privately owned Remington Woods Site and that the balance of the site is developed in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- Implement measures to ensure that future use of the former landfill site near Seaside Park incorporates open space and the use of alternative energy sources to offset demand for non-renewable energy sources.
- Explore opportunities to expand Seaside Park as a mixed-use open space area with active and passive recreational uses.
- Establish a clear procedure for identifying and acquiring open space.
- Maintain and enforce wetland, wetland buffer, water resource and protection measures through the City's Planning and Zoning Commission. Enforce tree protection measures and regulate tree removals in wetlands, wetland buffers and along roadways through this commission.
- Provide alternative recreational resources including dedicated space for activities that are incompatible with existing public park use. For example, dedicate a park specifically for dogs and their owners that will provide an alternative for those who currently allow pets to run free (though illegal by State law) in existing parks.



Former landfill site: view from Seaside Park | Source: BFJ Planning



Urban forest | Source: Stantec

## 7.7 | ACTION ITEMS

Consistent with the above policies, a significant number of planning and design projects are underway, many of which are a collaborative effort by multiple City agencies. Some have advanced to the request for proposal and developer/contractor selection process. Significant action items are highlighted below:

### Waterfront Access Guidelines

Provide waterfront access guidelines to prospective developers that may encompass boardwalks, at-grade pathways, parking standards, small boat slip or dock design guidelines.

### Pequonnock Valley Greenway/Bikeway Walkway Trail

The Valley Greenway Trail will link Unity Park in Trumbull with Beardsley State Park (formerly Fairchild Memorial Park), Beardsley Park and Glenwood Park in Bridgeport. From Glenwood, a future trail right-of-way will connect to the existing Berkshire Spur Rail-Trail to the Bridgeport Rail Station. From there, future links will connect to the Arena and its parking, the Water Street Dock and Port Jefferson ferry as well as various harborfront development sites with public, lighted promenades (e.g. Steel Point, Captain's Cove and Remington Shaver).

### Seaview Avenue Linear Park

The linear park will utilize major waterfront parcels anticipated to be remediated on Yellow Mill Channel, including the General Electric (GE) site further upstream that eventually will provide public pedestrian access from Remington Woods clear southward to the redeveloped Derecktor Shipyard parcel fronting on Bridgeport Harbor. The extent of needed transportation-related improvements to the Seaview Avenue corridor may depend on the extent of any future development proposals for the privately owned GE and Remington Woods parcels.

Proposed transportation enhancements within the Seaview Avenue corridor should be re-evaluated. Preliminary engineering plans recommend a typical suburban highway solution, whereas a tree-lined urban boulevard with sidewalks, bike and parking lanes is likely to be a more appropriate approach for this roadway. An urban boulevard would provide necessary improvements in traffic capacity, while also respecting the needs of adjacent neighborhoods with regard to traffic calming and community character.

### Pleasure Beach

There is heightened awareness of the need to resolve the present access problems to Pleasure Beach, whether that entails the reconstruction of the swing bridge, provision of seasonal water taxis, nearby boat/kayak launch with adjacent parking or restricting access to a new pedestrian bridge. Once the access issue has been resolved, renovation of the vandalized bath houses, picnic facilities and their infrastructure will be a priority.

A seasonal water taxi may provide a network of service within Bridgeport's Harbor with scheduled stops at the railroad station, Steel Point, Seaside Park and Pleasure Beach. This water taxi service could augment a bus jitney linking downtown and its parking structures, the railroad station, the arena and ballpark with Seaside Park and its beach. Operating these transit links on a seasonal and special event basis appears feasible and in demand.



Pleasure Beach and Bridgeport's East End  
Source: Stantec





Pavillon at Pleasure Beach | Source: Stantec

Future use of Pleasure Beach should balance recreational use and protected shoreline for wildlife habitat with an appropriate amount of consistency with regulatory requirements and public interest. Any future use of Pleasure Beach should ensure public access; access should be limited to pedestrian traffic, maintenance and service vehicles and ferry service. Future development may include wind or solar-generated power facilities to emphasize the City's commitment to green and sustainable design. Energy produced may be used to support facilities on Pleasure Beach or sold back to local power producers and distributors for credit toward citywide power costs. Pleasure Beach may provide opportunities to implement green energy technology including tidal, geothermal, wind and solar without compromising the existing environmental and recreation resources. Implementing these measures in such a high-profile location will further Bridgeport's goal of becoming a national leader in green technologies.

Former parking area at Pleasure Beach | Source: Stantec

Vehicular and pedestrian access to Pleasure Beach ceased in 1996 due to damage to existing bridge crossings. In the past this area was a regional destination, but access concerns and potential impacts on the East End community warrant careful consideration of future proposed uses. Parking, traffic and safety issues inherent in accessing a regional destination via neighborhood streets create unique challenges for the future of Pleasure Beach.





Environmental regulations may pose significant constraints on economic development of Pleasure Beach. For example, water-dependent use, tidal zone encroachment, floodplain and habitat impact may all affect the scale and location of any future development plans. Access to support future private development may be further constrained by bridge construction costs and navigable waterway requirements.

Bird-watching along the coast of Connecticut is a popular recreational activity for residents of the state and throughout the region. Bridgeport's waterfront and Pleasure Beach offer extensive area for public access and opportunities to enjoy a variety of shorefront landscapes. Bird-watching is noted to be a significant economic resource due to the large volume of participants and their spending capacity. Essex, Connecticut, is a popular destination for eagle watching, generating many seasonal events, and local merchants look forward to these activities each year. Currently, pedestrian access to Pleasure Beach is limited to specific locations in Stratford. The recent settlement related to cottage use on Long Beach in Stratford now provides a significant opportunity for continuous open space or other suitable land use along the recaptured shoreline. The City of Bridgeport and the Town of Stratford should work together to create a comprehensive and coordinated land use and preservation plan for Pleasure Beach and Long Beach.

#### **Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course/Wonderland of Ice**

Site-specific master planning efforts have identified enhanced user fees and revenue generation opportunities and management and operation improvements for both Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course and Wonderland of Ice. The high-demand rink facilities at Wonderland have recently been expanded. Upgrading of the golf course and its driving range is underway and expected to dramatically increase the present 55,000 rounds per year, which, together with the current renovations of the park restaurant, is expected to increase park revenues.

The City of Bridgeport is considering adapting other passive recreation uses such as trails to Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course. The golf course contains additional land that may allow safe accommodation of both golf and passive uses.

#### **Sikorsky Airport**

The perimeter of Sikorsky Airport, located in Stratford, contains tidal wetland areas that may be protected and permanently dedicated to open space, expanding on present portions of the tidal wetlands now part of the Stewart B. McKinney Federal Wildlife Refuge. The area provides an excellent opportunity for water-borne activities, particularly kayaking. Proximity to Long Beach and Pleasure Beach provides an extensive network of undeveloped and continuous shoreline, wildlife habitat and opportunities for recreation enhancements.

#### **Veterans Memorial Park**

Master planning efforts for Veterans Memorial Park, located in the northwest corner of Bridgeport's North End neighborhood, have identified the need for additional sports fields which now have been designed and are slated for construction. Equal emphasis must be given to preserving and enhancing wetlands and woodlands in Veterans Memorial Park.

#### **Beardsley State Park (formerly Fairchild Memorial Park)**

Beardsley State Park (formerly Fairchild Memorial Park) is the site of a potential Science High School (regional magnet). A "green" building design has been mandated for the school.

#### **Newfield Park**

Improve Newfield Park and establish a pedestrian connection or "greenway" to the waterfront. Establish more publicly accessible open space along the East End waterfront with direct connections to Newfield Park, a future Yellow Mill Channel Greenway and Pleasure Beach.

#### **Waterfront Access for Non-Motorized Boating**

Long Island Sound, its tributaries and marshes along Bridgeport Harbor and neighboring town coastlines provide opportunities for kayakers that equal or exceed those available anywhere along the Connecticut coastline. Public boat-launching facilities containing small ramps, safe parking and restrooms are the simple amenities needed to sustain this activity. The City should provide three to four facilities distributed along the coastline. It may be possible to require such public facilities for new waterfront development projects.



Veterans Memorial Park | Source: Stantec



Newfield Avenue public boat launch | Source: Stantec

**Community Gardens**

Community gardens are an important resource in the social and recreational makeup of a neighborhood. Bridgeport should support efforts to sustain community gardens on appropriate parcels in the city.

**Bicycle Amenities and Waterfront Communities**

Encouraging bicycle use within Bridgeport for commutation, recreation and exercise must be a top priority. Incentives should be offered for businesses that provide bicycle lockers and shower facilities for employees who bicycle to work. Safe bicycle connections between major destinations (parks, civic centers, cultural attractions) should also be clearly designated and promoted.



Community gardens offer opportunities for recreation and social interaction | Source: Stantec



# 8.0

## DOWNTOWN

### POLICY

*Downtown resurgence.*

### GOALS

- 1 *Encourage new mixed-income housing Downtown.*
- 2 *Promote mixed-use development and entertainment and cultural uses Downtown.*
- 3 *Create Downtown design standards within a strong pedestrian-friendly environment.*
- 4 *Encourage Class A office space on Lafayette Boulevard.*
- 5 *Create a transit-oriented development (TOD) zone.*

### 8.1 | INTRODUCTION

Like urban downtowns across the country, over the past 50 years Downtown Bridgeport has suffered from disinvestment, losing businesses and population to neighboring suburban towns. However, over the past ten years many American cities, including Bridgeport, have begun to see a reversal of this trend as young adults and older “empty nesters” are rediscovering cities and returning to downtowns. An urban setting with a mix of uses that allows one to live, work and play in a compact, pedestrian-friendly environment provides opportunities for social interaction and cultural experiences that are attractive to these two populations. With small living space needs and significant disposable income, these groups are an ideal match for downtown living. Further, new residential development in downtowns to accommodate this demand most often does not result in displacement of existing residents as these central urban areas typically contain little housing.

Housing prices in the Bridgeport region have risen sharply in recent years, outpacing incomes. For people of modest means and those just starting out, there are virtually no affordable housing options available in Fairfield County. New housing in Downtown Bridgeport provides a relatively affordable housing alternative and urban amenities in close proximity to public transportation, an attractive combination for those seeking an urban lifestyle. Investment in housing in Downtown Bridgeport presents one of the few affordable real estate opportunities in the region with the prospect of significant appreciation.

The time is right for Bridgeport to promote residential and mixed-use development downtown and become a premier urban destination for Fairfield County. Many attractions in and around Downtown, including the arena and ballpark at Harbor Yard, the Barnum Museum, Playhouse on the Green, Downtown Cabaret Theater, Housatonic Community College, University of Bridgeport and Seaside Park, provide the activity base, diversity and cultural interest key to successful revitalization. The missing piece of the puzzle is people who will occupy Downtown during day and evening hours, taking advantage of entertainment and cultural offerings, spending money and generating activity on Downtown streets. Their presence is essential to enhancing Downtown's image, projecting a sense of security and safety and attracting visitors from across the county to patronize attractions.

Enhancing Downtown's image by making it both home and destination will benefit the city of Bridgeport as a whole. As people from outside Bridgeport come to Downtown for entertainment and recreation and experience through restaurants, nightlife and culture the vibrant and safe place it has become, the city's image in the region will change. Downtown Bridgeport will become "the place to be" in Fairfield County, acting as a catalyst for revitalization throughout the city and a key asset to the region.

This chapter focuses on a new vision for Downtown Bridgeport, which has already begun to take shape with the multiple development projects underway Downtown. It is based on *Re-Imagining Downtown Bridgeport* (the "Downtown Plan"), a consensus plan that is based on a collaborative planning process guided by a Leadership Committee comprised of the Downtown Special Services District, the City of Bridgeport and a diverse group of Downtown stakeholders. The planning process began in early 2006 with a series of community gatherings and

committee meetings and culminated a little over a year later with a fully drafted plan. This chapter gives an overview of existing conditions in the Downtown and presents a vision and policies to guide future development, as well as strategies for implementation of the Downtown vision from the Downtown Plan.

## 8.2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Development Projects

Currently, a total of about 1,000 new residential units



Part of the Downtown North Historic Rehabilitation project | Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates

are underway or nearing construction Downtown in addition to the 4,000+ units planned for the Pequonnock, Remington and Steel Point sites. The Downtown North Historic Rehabilitation project will include more than 500 residential units in three-rehabilitated historic buildings and

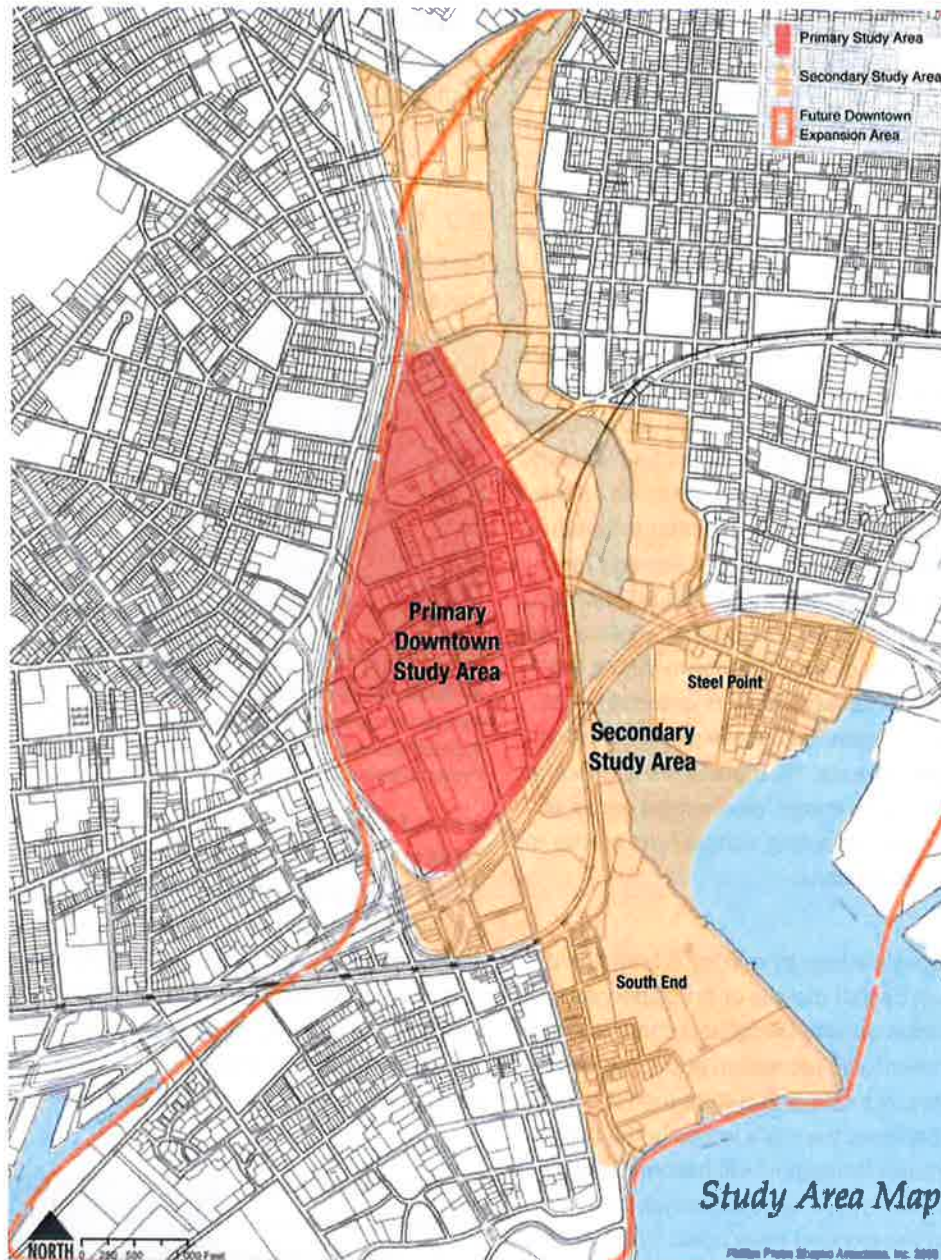
a new 14-story tower, as well as 100,000 square feet of retail and commercial space. The Arcade Hotel on Main Street is the third-oldest retail arcade in the nation and will be redeveloped as 23 apartments and 34,000 square feet of retail space. Bijou Square historic redevelopment is a major mixed-use development project in four renovated buildings along Fairfield Avenue and Elm Street. The Steel Point proposal includes 2,000 to 3,000 residential units and a one million square foot retail "lifestyle center."

In addition to planned residential units Downtown, there is a growing commercial and entertainment presence in this area. Major white-collar employers include the headquarters for People's Bank and offices for Pitney Bowes and Royal Bank of Scotland, as well as county and federal courts. The Harbor Yard



Downtown office space | Source: BFJ Planning

Figure 8-1 | Downtown Plan Study Area



**Study Area.** The Study Area primarily comprised the "teardrop"-shaped Downtown core bounded by the elevated rail tracks to the south, Route 8 to the northwest, and Pequonnock River to the northeast; and secondarily extended to adjoining areas, Steel Point and the South End. The plan is focused on strengthening the primary downtown core, with the goal of expanding the downtown district to incorporate a larger area that connects the primary study area to Bridgeport's waterfront.

Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, 2007





New Downtown residential development | Source: BFJ Planning

Arena and Ballpark offer sports and entertainment near the train station and highways, and have a combined visitation of nearly one million visitors a year. New entertainment uses and mixed-use development are planned for the Pequonnock site, and loft development is moving ahead in the heart of Downtown and adjoining South End.

### Market Conditions

#### *Residential*

Downtown Bridgeport has fewer than 1,000 residents, most of whom are low-income. As its residential market expands with development projects that are planned and underway, the number of market-rate units will increase, resulting in a more economically diverse Downtown.

Downtown housing is expected to attract empty nesters, young professionals and middle-income populations seeking affordable housing options relative to Fairfield County and urban amenities such as arts and culture, entertainment, restaurants and retail. Market-rate housing in Downtown Bridgeport is expected to be affordable

to middle-income populations relative to the county, defined as households earning \$56,000 to \$85,000 a year. These households can be expected to afford rents of \$750 to \$1,200 a month.

#### *Office*

As an employment center, Downtown Bridgeport has approximately 10,000 employees. The city currently has 2.6 million square feet of existing Class B+, B and C office space, which typically attracts small professional offices, such as law and architecture firms. Bridgeport benefits from prime visibility and access to I-95 and Routes 8 and 25 and has an opportunity to expand its office market to include Class A office space with visibility from these corridors.

The “Fairfield East” submarket, which includes Bridgeport, is gaining strength. The submarket’s total office inventory is just over 8 million square feet with a 14 percent vacancy rate (on par with the countywide vacancy rate of 13 percent). For the first three quarters of 2006, new commitments in the area increased to 530,000 square feet, and net absorption was positive at 230,000 square feet. New office construction is expected to be sporadic in the near term countywide as well as in Bridgeport. Large transactions (more than 20,000 square feet) and Class A office space continue to dominate the county’s leasing landscape. Significant office development in Downtown Bridgeport is mainly contingent on site location decisions by larger tenants seeking newly built Class A space on signature sites.

#### *Circulation*

Bridgeport is the most densely populated of the County’s municipalities. It is at the County’s geographic center and is conveniently located with respect to highway, rail, water and air access. It is at the crossroads of Routes 8/25 and I-95, which have an average daily traffic count of 90,000 and 145,000 vehicles, respectively. These significant numbers of vehicles passing by Bridgeport daily represent a substantial opportunity to capture employment. The City’s new inter-modal transportation center, located in Downtown Bridgeport, connects a new bus terminal, ferry terminal, commuter/Amtrak station and expanded commuter garage. This center will be linked to the heart of Downtown via a new Main Street portal which will consist of a promenade and retail arcade. It will both bring employees to Downtown and provide



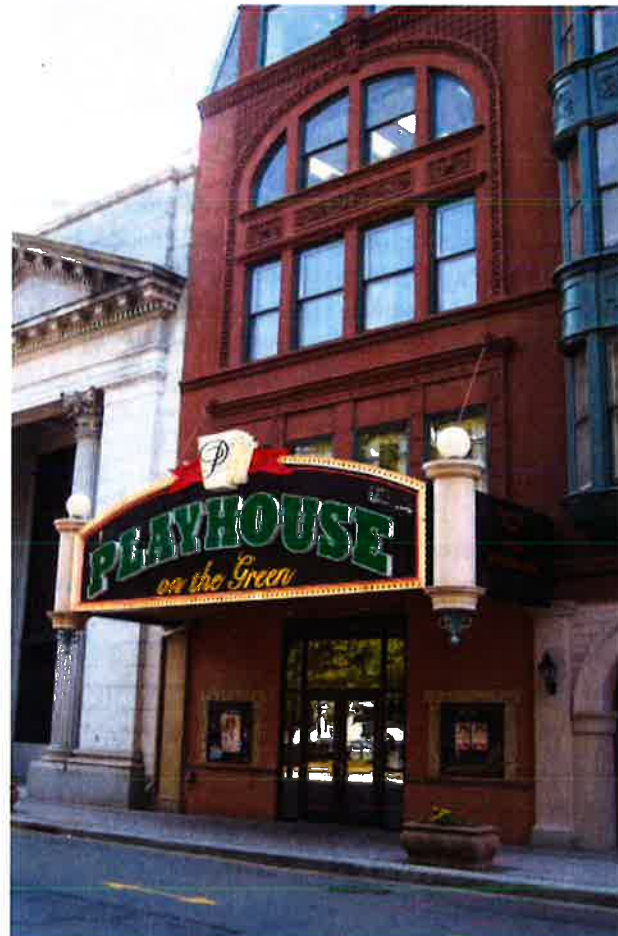
University of Bridgeport | Source: BFJ Planning

Bridgeport residents with easy access to employment centers throughout the region, including major corporate centers in Greenwich, Norwalk, Shelton and Stamford.

#### *Community Resources*

Housatonic Community College (HCC) located Downtown and the University of Bridgeport (UB) located in the South End in close proximity to the Downtown have a combined enrollment of nearly 9,000 students. HCC has approximately 5,000 students and is embarking on a \$63 million expansion of its Downtown campus. The college houses a first-rate art collection and art school. UB has an enrollment of approximately 4,000 students and a well-regarded performance center and design school.

Entertainment and cultural attractions in the Downtown include the arena and ballpark at Harbor Yard, the Barnum Museum, Playhouse on the Green (formerly the Polka Dot Playhouse), Bijou Square and the Downtown Cabaret. Seaside Park, a 325-acre park with beachfront and an amphitheater, is within walking distance of the Downtown. A Downtown business improvement district, the Downtown Special Services District (DSSD), has been established to fund streetscape maintenance and improvement projects.



Playhouse Theater | Source: BFJ Planning



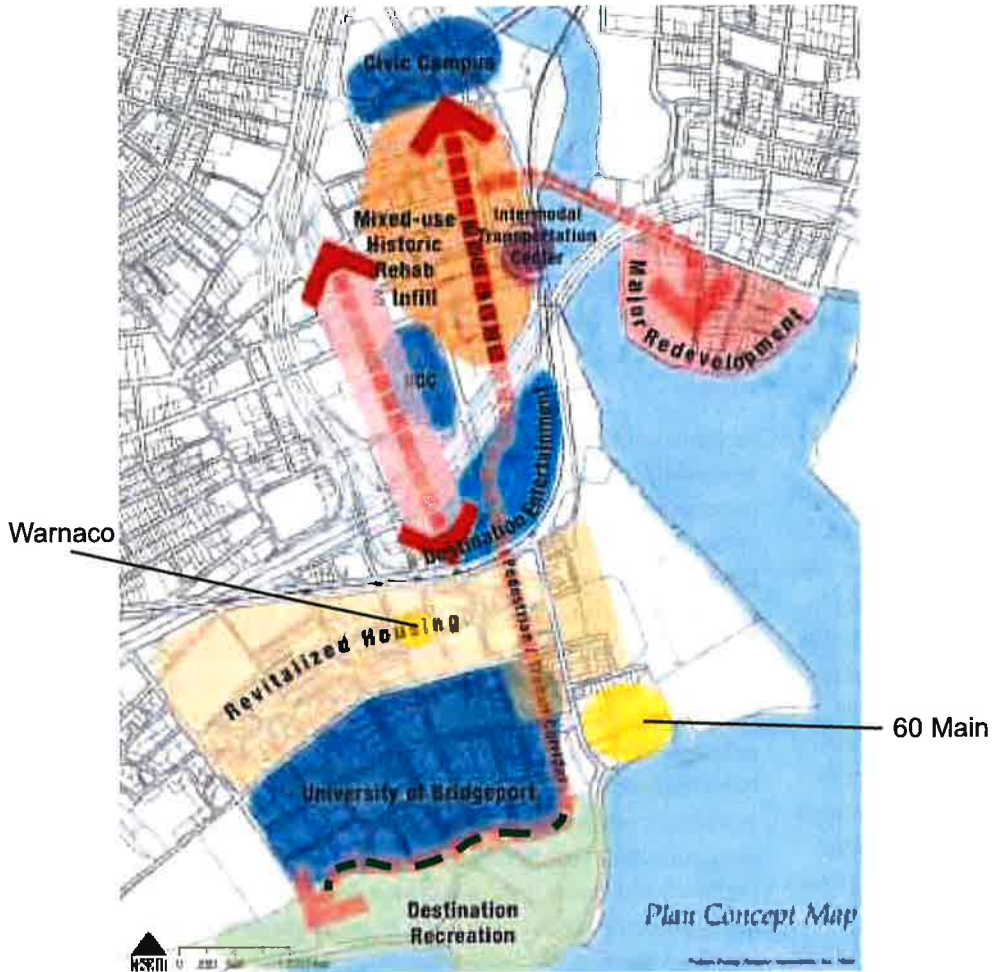


Figure 8-2 | Downtown Plan Concept Map  
Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, BFJ Planning

### 8.3 | A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

One of the central themes of the Master Plan is “Downtown: The Catalyst for Improving the City’s Image.” This vision recognizes that enhancing Downtown’s image by making it a home and a destination will have a positive impact on the city as a whole. As people from outside Bridgeport come to Downtown for entertainment and recreation and experience what a vibrant and safe place it has become while enjoying restaurants, nightlife and culture, Bridgeport’s image in the region will change. Downtown Bridgeport will become “the place to be” in Fairfield County, serving as a catalyst for revitalization throughout the city and a key asset to the region.

As outlined in the Downtown Plan, there are several goals that must be achieved in order for the city to realize this vision for the future:

- *Attract new residential development and create a mixed-use Downtown*
- *Promote green building principles*
- *Promote Downtown as a multi-modal, transit-friendly city center and support transit-oriented development (TOD)*
- *Create a unified parking management strategy*
- *Link, highlight and market Downtown’s assets*



1) Attract new residential development and create a mixed-use Downtown

Bridgeport is uniquely situated to capture the youth housing niche because it offers an affordable housing option for young people who are currently leaving Fairfield County due to a lack of affordable housing. This is a largely untapped market with the majority of young adults (ages 25 to 34) currently leaving Fairfield County. According to a recent study by the Carsey Institute, Fairfield County's young adult population declined by nearly one-third between 1990 and 2004. An urban setting with a mix of uses that allows one to live, work and play in a compact, pedestrian-friendly environment provides opportunities for social interaction and cultural experiences that are attractive to this population. This market opportunity has already captured the eyes of developers, including Urban Green Builders and others, who are explicitly targeting the young professional population. In addition to the youth housing market, the Downtown also presents opportunities to attract empty nesters that are looking for smaller housing units and an active urban environment and middle income populations in search of an affordable housing alternative in Fairfield County. In combination with relatively affordable real estate, Bridgeport offers a variety of unique residential opportunities including lofts in the Downtown and adjacent South End; opportunities for infill housing; luxury housing at the Pequonnock, Remington and Steel Point development sites; and homeownership opportunities in the South End.

To date, new development in the Downtown has been dominated by historic preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures. This type of development is consistent with the aesthetic tastes and space needs of the youth and empty nester housing markets. New adaptive reuse projects including Sterling Market Lofts and the rehabilitation of the City Trust Block into 118 residential units are capitalizing on these assets and having a transformative impact on Downtown's image and activity.

As a companion to residential development Downtown, Bridgeport is positioned to tap into the latent market for unconventional retail including entertainment/retail development, lifestyle centers and restaurant rows. A critical component of the retail strategy is to establish Main Street as the thriving retail spine of Downtown. The tenancy strategy for Main Street should be focused on independent and entrepreneurial specialty and boutique retailers and restaurants with nightlife offerings that complement (rather than compete with) the big-box and chain retail planned for Steel Point. While there are a number of retailing liabilities which currently preclude retail from thriving in Downtown, market demand is anticipated to change dramatically as new residents with more disposable income and distinct retail preferences relocate to the area. Redevelopment of historic buildings such as the Arcade building on Main Street, with its unique retail format, will usher in a new wave of small

scale retailers.

Allowing outdoor dining, opening temporary markets on nights when there are events at the arena and ballpark at Harbor Yard and enlivening plazas will also help activate Downtown's street life.

While Bridgeport's market for commercial office space is currently weak, in the long term Downtown is well situated



Ballpark at Harbor Yard | Source: BFJ Planning

to develop a Class A office corridor along Lafayette Boulevard, similar to Tresser Boulevard in Stamford. With visibility and access from both Route 8 and I-95, the City has the potential to develop high-profile office space and capture projected job growth in the region in the finance, insurance, real estate and health-care sectors. Downtown offices will benefit from a growing Downtown residential population, with added retail and restaurants to serve their employees and a local talent pool of young, college-educated individuals. Within Fairfield County's robust office sector, employers are likely to increasingly gravitate to where their workers are located. A 2006 report from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) noted a strong statistical correlation between the relative size of the 25-34 age cohort and overall job growth, suggesting that a "housing first" strategy will support office in the long run. In the short term, existing office space can be used by small entrepreneurial, start-up and professional service firms.

Capitalizing on the energy of the arena and ballpark at Harbor Yard and the development of the Pequonnock site, the Downtown Plan suggests the creation of an "Arena District," a national trend in which arenas and ballparks are built in the context of larger entertainment and mixed-use districts. By providing a mix of uses including retail, entertainment and housing in the Harbor Yards Complex area and on the Pequonnock site, the area can be programmed to be a "24/7" district. The Downtown Plan envisions the district as the midpoint between Downtown and the South End that will forge a strong link between these neighborhoods in the long term.

#### 2) Promote green building principles

By reinforcing the green building practices already being implemented by developers including Urban Green Builders, Bridgeport can become a model for modern, sustainable redevelopment. Green building practices such as green roofs, energy efficient buildings and low-impact development in combination with transit-oriented development practices will have a profound impact on the environment, but will also redefine Bridgeport's image as a vibrant, cutting edge city. The City should strongly encourage the use of green design elements in all City-owned properties and should encourage private developers to incorporate green building practices into their development proposals through zoning incentives.

#### 3) Promote Downtown as a multi-modal, transit-friendly city center and support transit-oriented development (TOD)

A significant component of the strategy for a thriving mixed-use Downtown is to encourage and support a transit-oriented, pedestrian friendly environment. The planned inter-modal transportation center with Amtrak and Metro-North service, the Port Jefferson and planned lower Fairfield County and Manhattan ferries, and Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) buses, together with transit-oriented development policies for new development, will help to position Downtown Bridgeport as a significant transit hub along the northeast corridor. These regional services should be supplemented with a local transit connector to increase accessibility to Downtown and the South End. This connector would link Downtown to Steel Point, the South End, Seaside Park and the University of Bridgeport, creating transit-friendly neighborhoods with a unified streetscape and design vocabulary.

#### 4) Create a unified parking management strategy

An important component of successful revitalization Downtown is the creation of a parking district and the designation of a Parking Authority with a district-wide parking manager. Currently, the city's parking stock is not used to its fullest potential. While both on-street and off-street parking capacity is substantial it is not optimized. A parking manager would be responsible for coordinating a parking strategy for arena and ballpark events, recalibrating meter lengths and fees according to location and employing parking meter funds and fines as a revenue source. The goal of the parking manager strategy is to better utilize existing parking facilities and create new parking opportunities. A parking district and plan would manage parking demand, promote alternative travel modes and create pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented development patterns. Shared parking should also be a component of the City's parking strategy. Shared parking would allow a reduction in overall parking requirements for multiple uses with different peak parking demand periods. For example, individual parking requirements for a residential and office use that shared a parking lot or garage could be reduced as peak parking demand for these two uses occurs at different times of the day.

In addition to parking management, roadway circulation should also be improved to accommodate increased development in the Downtown area. This can be achieved by reopening Congress Street Bridge and realigning Lafayette Boulevard to eliminate the circle and create a direct connection to Routes 8 and 25.

The competitive edge for a Downtown is the ability to create a pedestrian environment where people walk instead of drive from one place to another. Accommodating parking for new development in Downtown should be conceived in terms of transit-oriented development. Strategies such as reducing parking requirements for new development can be implemented through zoning.

#### 5) Link, highlight and market Downtown's assets

One of Bridgeport's greatest assets is the 325-acre, Olmsted-designed Seaside Park, with its tree-lined parkland and beach. The park is an ideal place for biking, rollerblading, running or walking as well as boating, canoeing, kayaking and fishing. Seaside Park is a central component in the marketing and re-envisioning of Downtown Bridgeport as a 21st century "Park City." In the long term, the City should explore connecting Seaside Park and Downtown into the network of regional recreational resources, creating a "green necklace" of parks and public spaces in Bridgeport. The creation of bikeways along the Broad Street corridor will reinforce South End as an "urban village" and the park as a distinguishing attribute that can give Downtown Bridgeport an edge in attracting the next generation of Connecticut residents.

Two other valuable assets that should be capitalized upon are the learning institutions that anchor Downtown Bridgeport: Housatonic Community College (HCC) and University of Bridgeport (UB). The Master Plan supports efforts by the University of Bridgeport to revitalize the area, recommends strengthening and upzoning the Broad Street corridor and promotes upgrading the housing stock in the South End. A revitalized South End is vital to Downtown because it links Downtown to some of the city's most desirable assets: Long Island Sound, Seaside Park and the University of Bridgeport. Purposefully considering the South End and its housing strategy as an extension of the Downtown Plan is imperative. Support for the improvements that are planned or underway at both HCC and UB boosts Downtown and showcases the educational, artistic and cultural amenities of the area. Highlighting the latent assets of these institutions is central to defining Downtown as an arts and cultural center.

The future of Downtown is staked on reinventing its image for the current market. The city has experienced a period of decline with a loss of manufacturing and suburbanization, but now the industrial vestiges and urban virtues have rebounded in Bridgeport's favor with market trends supporting renewed interest in downtowns, loft districts and urban waterfronts. The imaging strategy for Downtown Bridgeport is primarily focused on creating a pleasant and attractive street image for Downtown while promoting economic development.



## 8.4 | IMPLEMENTING THE DOWNTOWN VISION

Implementation of the overall vision for the Downtown will require zoning changes to regulate building masses, promote a variety of land use options in appropriate locations and identify sites where higher-density development is most appropriate. As a complement to zoning, design guidelines are also needed to increase the visual appeal of the city's built environment. Specific objectives and strategies for achieving the goals outlined in the previous section are outlined below.

### 1.) ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATE A MIXED-USE DOWNTOWN

A. Capitalize on the transit-oriented nature of Downtown in order to create development opportunities.

- *Develop design and phasing guidelines for significant TOD at the inter-modal transportation center.*
- *Replace the parking structure/former bus station with a mixed-use development adjacent to the train station with its entrance through the Mechanics and Farmers Bank.*

B. Adopt zoning and design guidelines that direct building form and scale

- *Adopt a village district for Downtown.*
- *Regulate building masses to follow a model of a shorter base oriented to the sidewalk, with towers above oriented to primary corridors and corners.*
- *Adopt form-based zoning for the entire downtown.*
- *Establish design guidelines for key sites.*

C. Promote a variety of housing options in Downtown

- *Promote housing on the Pequonnock site.*
- *Support existing and potential residential development in Downtown, Steel Point and the South End.*
- *Target the youth population being lost by Fairfield County due to high housing costs.*

D. Make Downtown a "24/7" destination for retail, entertainment and restaurants

- *Promote destination entertainment and recreational uses at the Pequonnock site.*
- *Place the first priority on Main Street; reinforce Main Street as the retail spine of Downtown.*
- *Create zoning mandate for ground-floor retail along the Main Street corridor.*
- *Support and promote tenancy of newly developed retail space.*
- *Promote small food stores, a green market and public markets to serve new residents.*
- *Encourage venues, retailers and restaurants catering to young adults.*
- *Foster independent, entrepreneurial retailers in Downtown.*

E. Differentiate between long-term and short-term office needs

- *In the short-term, attract small-scale office tenants, e.g. architects, lawyers, technology firms and young investors.*
- *In the long-term, Class A office space is most appropriately located along Lafayette Boulevard*
- *Create incentives to stimulate new Class A office construction.*
- *Seek opportunities for office and mixed-use development that may arise through strategic joint ventures.*
- *Take advantage of mixed-use opportunities: State Police Barracks, City Hall Annex, etc.*

#### F. Explore incentives to foster the right retail mix

- *Pursue lease guarantees for “Mom and Pop” businesses.*
- *Explore development of City and State financing programs to cover start-up expenses or provide loan guarantees to help entrepreneurs secure favorable financing.*

#### G. Create a civic campus at Congress Plaza

- *Consolidate City offices at Congress Plaza and sell vacated sites.*
- *Pursue joint development with private partners using a master builder.*
- *Retain civic uses at the historic theatres.*
- *Consider relocating the library to a state-of-the-art facility in an adaptive reuse of the vacant Majestic and Poli theatres at Congress Plaza.*
- *Consider locating a four-year college at Congress Plaza.*

### 2) PROMOTE GREEN BUILDING PRINCIPLES

#### A. Utilize green technology as a way to redefine Bridgeport as a Green City.

- *Explore green infrastructure opportunities as a part of any future infrastructure upgrades.*
- *Set up Wi-Fi hotspots throughout Downtown extending to Seaside Park.*
- *Study capacity of infrastructure to handle future growth.*

#### B. Promote the use of green building technology as part of development and redevelopment projects

- *Require the use of green construction practices and materials for all new public facilities and schools.*
- *Create a scorecard for private development with points for green design and public park and plaza improvements.*
- *Create incentives to encourage integration of green roofs and energy-efficient buildings into development projects.*

### 3) PROMOTE DOWNTOWN AS A MULTI-MODAL, TRANSIT-FRIENDLY CITY CENTER AND SUPPORT TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

#### A. Create linkages and connectivity between Seaside Park and Downtown through the Harbor Yards Sports Complex and the South End.

- *Adopt a Transit Connector route that extends from Seaside Park and beach in the South End through Downtown’s core to Steel Point.*
  - *Route should connect Main and Broad Streets.*
  - *Start with a rubber tire vehicle, plan for possible upgrade to light rail, if feasible.*
  - *Focus on frequency and signalization to expedite service.*
  - *For funding, consider the following:*
    - *State bonding*
    - *Eligibility for “Small Starts” federal funding*
    - *Steel Point developer*
    - *Public transit agency involvement*

- *Create a green identity for the transit connector*
- *Improve Broad Street connections.*
- *Improve wayfinding and signage*
- *Allocate funds for roadway improvements in the South End.*
- *Unify design features between Downtown and South End.*
- *Create paths in Seaside Park along Long Island Sound and Broad Street in order to connect the usable waterfront to Downtown.*
- *Identify appropriate locations for bike lanes and bikeways, mindful of linkages to a larger greenway system.*
- *Close Main Street to vehicular traffic from South Frontage Street north to John Street on game and event nights.*

#### 4) CREATE A UNIFIED PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

##### A. Create a parking management strategy.

- *Designate a parking district and district-wide parking manager.*
- *Coordinate parking strategy with arena and ballpark events.*
- *Recalibrate meter lengths and fees according to location.*
- *Vary parking rates by time of day and day of week via smart parking meters and set up hierarchical zones to help create priority spots.*
  - *Short-term (15-minute) for quick turn-around parkers.*
  - *Moderate-term (2-hr) for restaurant, government, library and other retail uses.*
  - *All-day parking should be in more remote facilities.*
- *Employ parking meter funds and fines as a revenue source.*

##### B. Create new parking opportunities

- *Use seed money from State and Payments in Lieu of Parking (PILOPs) to generate revenue for new centralized parking structures.*
- *Locate an additional garage at City Hall Annex site when redeveloped.*
- *Identify areas where additional on-street parking can be provided through re-striping.*

##### C. Promote better usage of existing parking facilities while encouraging alternative transportation strategies that reduce parking demand

- *Enhance signage directing people to parking areas.*
- *Resolve traffic flow issue at the commuter garage.*
- *Support shared parking.*
- *Introduce car-sharing and bike sharing programs for Downtown residents and visitors.*
- *Reduce surface parking: use surface lots for infill development.*
- *Reduce parking requirements for residential development that offer car-sharing, shared parking, ride-sharing, and transit passes, as well as payments in lieu of parking (PILOPs).*
- *Allow parking in designated public parking spaces for residents.*
- *Coordinate with garage owners within Downtown to secure off-street parking for public.*



#### D. Improve roadway circulation

- *Reopen the Congress Street Bridge to accommodate increased development in Downtown and Steel Point and provide emergency north/south routing on the east side.*
- *Realign Lafayette Boulevard to eliminate the circle and create a direct connection to the Route 8 ramps.*
- *Enhance arterial access and highway entrances/exits to optimize traffic flow.*
- *Continue to rely on Water Street as a service and connector road.*
- *Synchronize traffic signals and walk signs.*

### 5) LINK, HIGHLIGHT AND MARKET DOWNTOWN'S ASSETS

#### A. Create a unifying design vocabulary and uniform signage throughout Downtown

- *Create common design features for:*
  - > Main Street
  - > I-95 underpass
  - > Pequonnock development
  - > Improvements along Broad Street
  - > Rail line underpass
  - > Banners and signs
  - > Commercial signage
- *Redefine the I-95 underpass at Main Street with bright lights, excitement and commerce.*
- *Increase the Harbor Yard Sports Complex's role in Downtown revitalization through the creation of an Arena District.*
  - > *Incorporate festive lighting within the Arena district.*
- *Night-light the smokestack, bridges and existing landmarks.*

#### B. Encourage beautification of Downtown

- *Revamp Downtown Bridgeport banners.*
- *Employ best practices in managing newspaper vending machines.*
- *Work with property owners on improving sidewalks, facades and storefronts.*
  - > *Provide incentives for improvements with both "carrot" and "stick" approaches.*
- *Cooperate with GBTA to improve existing bus shelters.*
- *Work with DSSD property owners to enhance street level views of buildings to enhance safety and connectivity.*

#### C. Support and retain the historic character of Downtown

- *Update the survey of structures eligible for listing on the National Register every five years.*
- *Amend zoning to further protect all structures deemed eligible for National Register listing.*
- *Promote and support infill development.*

D. Activate sidewalks, streets and public spaces and make them more pedestrian-friendly

- *Promote al fresco dining and make permissible under zoning and the City's Code of Ordinances.*
- *Improve pedestrian connections to, from and among the train station, bus terminal and ferry terminal.*
- *Continue emphasis on pedestrian activity and safety.*
- *Use Main Street as a temporary market or festival space on "game nights" and special occasions with sidewalk dining and event-oriented programming.*
- *Maximize the use of a trolley/bus in connection with special events and remote/shared parking.*
- *Create an additional pedestrian connection between the Ferry Terminal and Harbor Yard Sports Complex.*
- *Work with Fairfield County Courthouse to make its front plaza design more pedestrian friendly.*
- *Work with HCC to open its interior courtyard to the public.*
- *Highlight gateways and pathways on HCC campus.*
- *Activate uses in and around Downtown plazas.*

E. Promote the "greening" of downtown

- *Work with People's Bank to improve its plaza and create additional plantings, movable seating, gallery, café, etc.*
- *Incorporate streetscape improvements*
  - *Introduce benches, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, paving, etc.*
- *Provide opportunities for active and passive recreation and unconventional and innovative landscape design.*

F. Expand arts, educational and cultural opportunities throughout Downtown

- *Explore potential for a four-year college Downtown.*
- *Work to attract large-scale, multi-venue music events.*
- *Work with HCC to bolster the Housatonic Museum of Art as an attraction.*
- *Foster relationships between HCC and UB so that HCC becomes a feeder school to UB.*
- *Partner with HCC and UB on a significant public art initiative and visuals for the Transit Connector.*
- *Encourage UB to develop a "model" school in the South End.*
- *Make the space under the I-95 overpass safer and more pedestrian-friendly with lighting and the display of local artists' and art students' work.*

G. Expand recreational opportunities throughout Downtown

- *Support the overall concepts of the Pequonnock River Renaissance Plan, but revisit its recommendations with respect to Downtown's recent evolution.*
- *Target the City-owned Stratford Avenue waterfront site in Downtown for recreation and maritime uses.*
- *Secure a 25-foot public easement along or (as necessary) proximate to the riverfront for walking, bicycling and rollerblading.*

# 9.0

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### **POLICY**

*Recharge the city's economic batteries.*

### **GOALS**

- 1 *Capture 15,000 new jobs by 2020.*
- 2 *Maximize the benefits of Bridgeport's assets, including its waterfront and regional location.*
- 3 *Support the growth of local institutions: colleges, universities, hospitals and health care facilities.*

### **9.1 | INTRODUCTION**

Economic development is the centerpiece of this Master Plan and is the key to the realization of Bridgeport's vision for its future. The six overarching themes of the Master Plan, discussed in Chapter 1, all play a role in the city's economic future, including Downtown, jobs, neighborhoods, education, infrastructure and the environment. The first step in the preparation of the Master Plan was the development of a 2007 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the city. The CEDS, which was developed by a 31-member committee as part of the Master Plan development process, explains desired development activity within Bridgeport and identifies appropriate locations for different types of land uses. All of the policies of the Master Plan are consistent with Bridgeport's CEDS and support the city's economic development goals. The 2007 CEDS is included in this Master Plan as Appendix B.



The primary economic development goal of the Master Plan is job creation. If Bridgeport is able to capture one-third of the expected job growth in the region over the next decade, the city will have 15,000 new jobs by the year 2020. While Bridgeport's traditional industrial base will continue to play a role in the city's economy, in the future Bridgeport's key job growth sectors will be health care, which is expected to provide the greatest number of new jobs, followed by finance/insurance and real estate, professional office and arts and entertainment. Bridgeport is well positioned in the region to capture back-office support services for regional financial, information and technology firms. Capturing these jobs will benefit the city's productivity and will increase the tax base.

In addition to job growth, the city should encourage economic development by maximizing its existing assets, including its waterfront and regional location. The city should continue to support industry at its deepwater port and should seek new opportunities to enhance port activities. The city's 770 acres of brownfields, many of which are along the waterfront, present a significant redevelopment opportunity. While some of these sites have been remediated to allow for new development, many others will require extensive clean-up work to return them to productive use. The City should continue to pursue state and federal funding to assist in brownfield remediation. The waterfront presents an opportunity for both new residential and mixed-use development, as well as public access via a waterfront esplanade and parkland.

Another important element of the city's economic development policy is support for the growth of local institutions. Bridgeport's colleges, universities and hospitals are a tremendous resource whose full potential as economic generators for the city has yet to be realized. Both Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent's Medical Center have indicated that they are committed to expanding within the city. These institutions present substantial opportunities to capture projected job growth in the health-care sector, and their growing presence in the city will encourage the location of additional health and health-related services in Bridgeport.

The presence of colleges and universities, including Husson Community College, University of Bridgeport and Sacred Heart University, in and around Bridgeport presents an opportunity to expand education and job training

“The primary economic development goal of the Master Plan is job creation.”

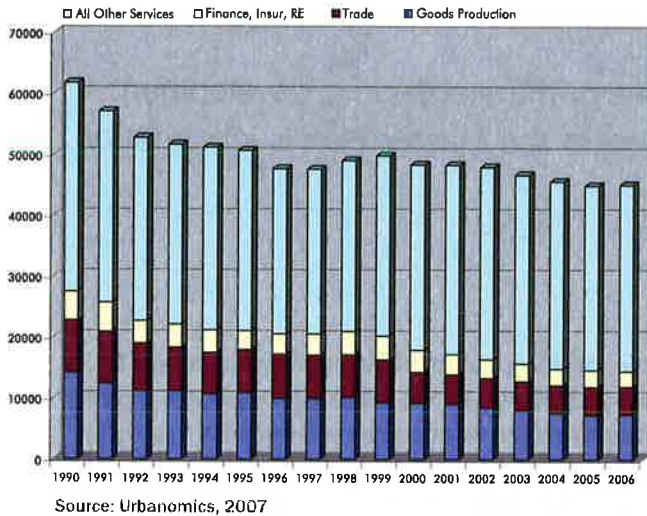
in the city. Many public-private partnerships between these institutions and the public school systems currently exist, and should be expanded and extended to private companies, to ready Bridgeport's work force for new job opportunities in the city. Additional partnerships between college- and university-level education programs and the city's public schools should be explored to provide student teaching experience to teachers in training and additional free classroom support to Bridgeport's public school students and teachers.

## 9.2 | ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

At one time, Bridgeport was the industrial and financial capital of Connecticut. A major center of armaments production, consumer durables and even luxury automobiles, the heavy manufacturing industry created a secure working and middle class. But over much of the post-WWII period, employment has steadily declined, as has the city's population. Industry moved abroad, finance and corporate management were drawn to Stamford or elsewhere in the region and residents who could afford to suburbanize relocated. Vast areas of contaminated industrial land and idle Downtown offices were left behind.

Since 1990, total employment has declined in Bridgeport from 61,750 to 44,863 jobs, with all losses concentrated in private industries. In contrast, the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk region grew from 401,300 to 414,200 jobs, with the other principal cities either expanding or experiencing fewer losses. Most of Bridgeport's residents now work outside the city, while the relatively few higher paying jobs in Bridgeport are held by in-commuters. A look at the composition of regional job trends, and the city's participation, over the recent past and likely future, depicts the challenges facing Bridgeport.

Chart 9-1 | Bridgeport Total Employment, 1990-2006

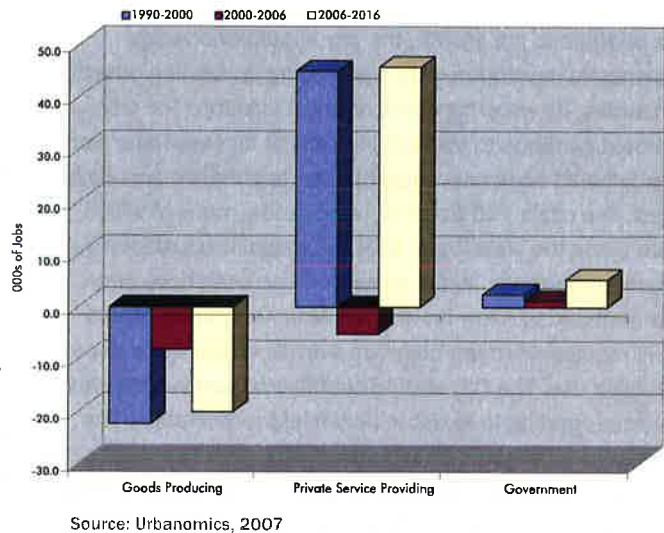


As total employment in Bridgeport slipped from 15.4 to 10.9 percent of the regional employment, the losses in manufacturing made up 40 percent of the total decline, amounting to some 6,600 jobs. By 2006, manufacturing represented only one in every eight Bridgeport jobs, down from one in every five in 1990. Total goods production, including mining and construction, contracted by 48 percent over the period, with similar losses posted in financial activities and trade, both down 47 percent. Other services, which fell only 14 percent, grew to represent a growing share of citywide employment, up from 41 percent in 1990 to nearly half of total employment by 2006. Government jobs, including state and federal as well as City jobs, alone did not experience a decline, eventually accounting for one in every five jobs in Bridgeport. As the largest city in the state, Bridgeport is the government center of Fairfield County and houses courts, prisons and other government services utilized by the region.

In the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk CTA, goods production contracted by some 22,300 jobs between 1990 and 2000, followed by losses of 8,100 between 2000 and 2006. Bridgeport's losses accounted for nearly a quarter of the regional decline over the entire period. As a banking center, Bridgeport was hit particularly hard by the national recession that resulted in consolidation of banks during this period. While all private service providers reduced employment by nearly 8,100 jobs in Bridgeport during the 1990s, they expanded jobs by 45,000 in the region at large.

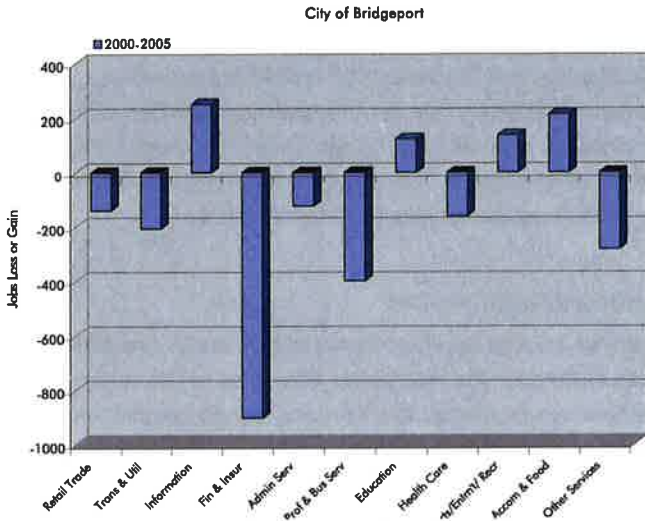
Between 2000 and 2006, service jobs failed to rebound after the recession, and both the city and region suffered losses. Bridgeport contributed nearly 30 percent of the service job losses since 2000, or 1,500 jobs of the 5,100 lost regionwide. As Chart 9-3 shows, four service sectors grew in recent years, adding employment in Information Services, Education, Arts & Entertainment and Accommodations & Food. However, more than half of Bridgeport's net loss was concentrated in Finance & Insurance, and over one quarter in Business & Professional Services, critical sectors for Downtown office growth.

Chart 9-2 | Major Sector Employment in Bridgeport, 1990-2016



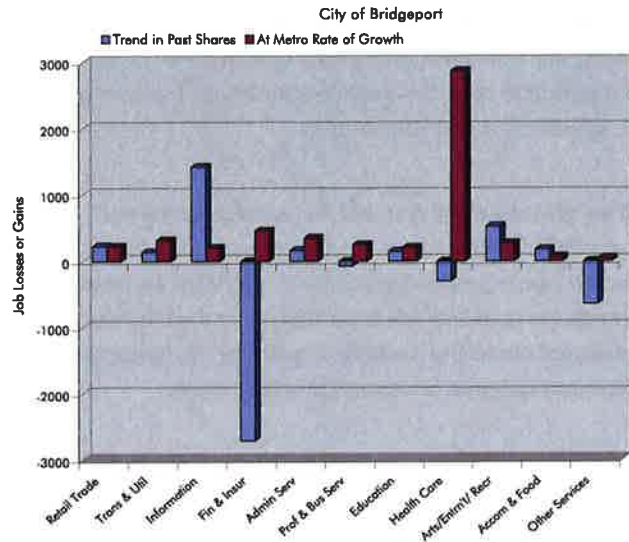
Total employment in the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk region is expected to grow by 7.5 percent between 2006 and 2016, creating some 31,100 new jobs. This growth will be concentrated in service providing and government activities, as goods producers continue to lose employment regionwide. A net decline of 20,000 jobs is forecast for Mining, Construction and Manufacturing, down from 57,200 to 37,200 by period-end. Private services are expected to gain easily as many jobs as were attracted in the 1990s, adding 45,800 to the base of 310,200 in 2006. Government payrolls, which have not seen any job losses in the past two periods, will likely expand by some 5,200 workers. By 2016, private service sectors are expected to make up 80 percent of all job opportunities in the region, while government will account for 12 percent, leaving only 8 percent of all employment for goods producing industries.

Chart 9-3 | Bridgeport Service Sector Job Performance, 1990-2016



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

Chart 9-4 | Bridgeport Service Sector Job Performance, 1990-2016



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

Table 9-1  
Average Annual Wage Comparison in 2005:  
Bridgeport & the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk CT CTA

In 2005 \$	Average Bridgeport Annual Wage	Average Region Annual Wage
Professional & Business Services	\$77,123	\$89,370
Finance & Insurance	\$68,457	\$215,436
Transportation & Utilities	\$47,353	\$72,241
Information Services	\$44,252	\$74,986
Health Care	\$43,079	\$43,259
Education Services	\$36,738	\$38,751
Retail Trade	\$30,931	\$33,071
Administrative Services	\$28,444	\$73,022
Other Services	\$26,968	\$28,931
Arts & Entertainment	\$26,968	\$31,122
Accommodations & Food	\$14,820	\$19,334
<b>All Industries</b>	<b>\$44,119</b>	<b>\$68,746</b>

Source: Connecticut State Department of Labor

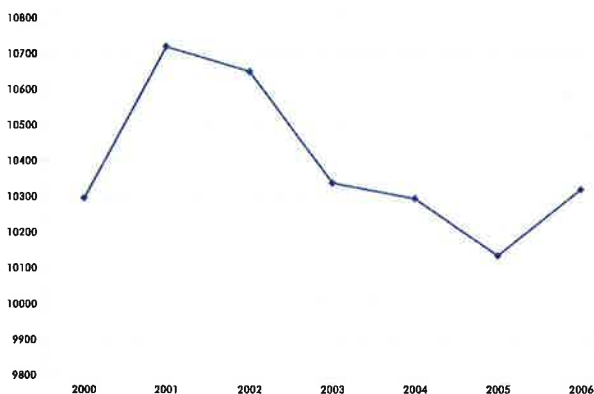


If present trends continue, Bridgeport will participate very little in the region’s employment recovery. In the service growth sector, continued losses in Finance & Insurance, as well as Health Care and Other Services, will outweigh marginal gains in Information Services, Arts & Entertainment and other service sectors of the city. Coupled with further erosion in Manufacturing, the net loss in Bridgeport’s employment will likely reduce total jobs to a new low of 41,500 in 2016, down from 45,000 jobs in 2006.

However, should Bridgeport grow at the regional rate of sector-specific job growth, the city could attract some 3,000 new jobs, with virtually all of the net growth concentrated in Health Care. By retaining its existing share of regional employment, modest gains can also be expected in Finance & Insurance (450 jobs), Administrative Services (300), Arts & Entertainment (270), Business & Professional Services (250) and a host of other services with some 200 new jobs each (Retail Trade, Transportation, Information and Education).

Neither outlook would do much to revitalize Bridgeport, especially in the Downtown area. Nor would job attraction alone be cause for a viable economic recovery. As Table 9-1 shows, the quality of job opportunities in the city needs to be elevated above the low skills implied by the major wage differences between Bridgeport and the region.

Chart 9-5 | Bridgeport Health Services Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

### 9.3 | BRIDGEPORT’S ECONOMIC SECTORS

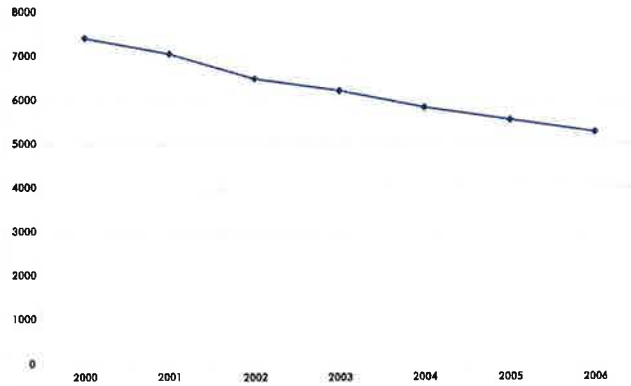
This section takes a closer look at Bridgeport’s economy by focusing on its major job sectors. These sectors, which are described using the North American Industrial Classification (NAICS) system for classifying industries, represent industries that contributed most significantly to the city’s job base as of 2005. An analysis of these sectors is useful because they are the most likely sources for the 15,000 additional jobs targeted by 2020.

#### Health and Social Services

Health and Social Services firms provide health care and social assistance for individuals. Examples of the sector facilities include ambulance services, health practitioners, hospitals, nursing care facilities, continuing care retirement communities and substance abuse facilities, as well as other social assistance. In 2005, Health and Social Services ranked as Bridgeport’s largest employment sector, with 303 facilities employing 10,134 workers.

Health and Social Service providers represent an area of notable success in the Bridgeport economy. The city is home to two major hospitals, both of which are currently engaged in major expansion projects. Relative to state-wide measures, the medical community’s share of total employment is extraordinarily high in Bridgeport. Although the number of workers employed in the sector underwent a series of declines in recent years – reducing health service employment by 5.5 percent from 2001 to 2005 – a reversal of this trend appears to be underway. The *One Coast...One Future* Health Care Assessment noted that health care is the region’s strongest growth niche. Regardless of the direction of the trend, health care will remain a major driver of Bridgeport’s economy into the foreseeable future. This sector is central to Bridgeport’s economic future in terms of job creation; however, the city’s hospitals are tax-exempt institutions and do not contribute to the tax base. Similarly, the state’s many health and social services institutions located in Bridgeport are also exempt from taxes. The City should discuss payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) with the state, where appropriate, or voluntary contributions to the City to cover the costs of municipal services.

Chart 9-6 | Bridgeport Manufacturing Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

### Manufacturing

Manufacturing establishments are engaged in the production of durable and nondurable goods. The durable goods sector, which historically has predominated in Bridgeport, is primarily concerned with the mechanical, physical or chemical transformation of materials, substances or components into products. The assembling of parts is also considered as manufacturing, except where activity is strictly classified as construction. Typically, establishments in the manufacturing sector are often described as plants, factories or mills. Characteristically, they use power-driven machines and materials-handling equipment.

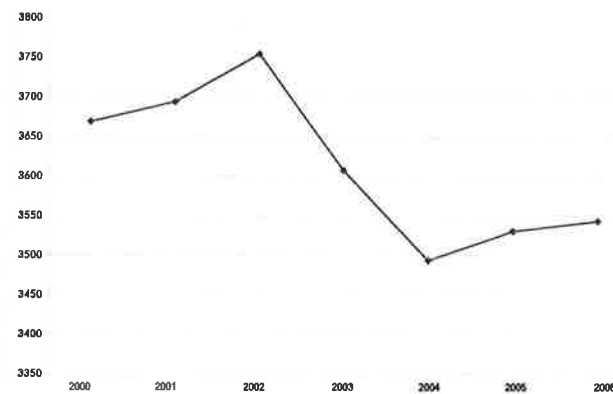
However, establishments that transform materials into new products by hand, or in the worker's home, and those engaged in selling to the general public, like bakeries, candy stores and tailors, may also be included in manufacturing, typically in the nondurable goods sector. Subsectors of Manufacturing generally reflect distinct production processes related to material input, production and equipment and employee skill.

Manufacturing is the second-largest private sector in Bridgeport, consisting of 225 establishments that employ over 5,000 workers. Once the largest center of goods

production in Connecticut – specializing in armaments, household appliances and other national brands – Bridgeport has lost most of its industrial base, leaving behind empty antiquated factories, mill buildings, and contaminated land. These properties add little to the tax base and are costly to demolish and remediate in order to return to productive use.

Similar to other older manufacturing cities in the region and across the country, Bridgeport saw a steady and significant decline in manufacturing employment from 2000 to 2006, amounting to 29 percent and reaching a period low of 5,273 workers. This trend is down from 7,424 workers in 2000 in the manufacturing sector. In 2006, manufacturing made up approximately 12 percent of total employment in the city, falling from over 15 percent of citywide jobs in 2000. This recent decline, however, is on par with that observed for both the U.S. and Connecticut as whole. The relative wage of Manufacturing has seen a 10 percent drop over the period, reaching its current low of just 8 percent over the city average. After rebounding in 2003 to a period high, the relative wage in Manufacturing has seen a persistent decline along with its declining share and aggregate employment.

Chart 9-7 | Bridgeport Retail Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

## Retail

The Retail sector consists of establishments primarily engaged in retail merchandise that offer services paired with the merchandise. The retail process is the final step in the distribution of merchandise, with retailers organized to sell merchandise in small quantities to the general public. The industry has two main types of retailers: store and non-store retailers. Unlike the retail store industry, the non-store industry focuses primarily on direct-to-consumer advertising such as magazines. In Bridgeport, the Retail sector is the third-largest employer, with some 300 establishments, averaging 12 employees per store. The City is currently undertaking large-scale redeployment in several retail areas, led by the Downtown and including mixed-use development, to foster more commercial development. It is anticipated that this transformation will help re-brand the city's image and attract new consumer dynamics.

Retail employment is relatively under-represented in Bridgeport's economy. With nearly 3,550 jobs in 2006, the Retail share consistently stood around 8 percent of citywide employment between 2000 and 2006, or fell roughly 4 percentage points below the average statewide share. It is this under-performance or market opportunity that redevelopments, such as Steel Point, hope to address. Such expansions in consumer services look to play a role in filling the void left behind by national contractions in manufacturing, a trend acutely felt in Bridgeport.

From 2000 and 2002, the Retail sector created 85 new jobs in Bridgeport, peaking employment at 3,755. The

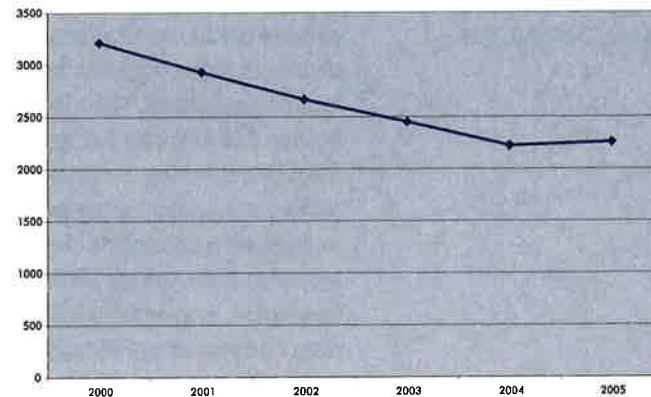
period 2002 to 2003 showed the greatest single-year loss, contracting by 148 jobs citywide. A consecutive fall in 2004 caused Retail employment to trough at 3,494. This drop could be attributable to the recession following 2001 and the overall employment decline in the market. The lagging nature of employment, coupled with the increased sensitivity of Retail Trade, resulted in a further decline between 2002 and 2004, mirroring the recession. Thereafter, the sector began to recover with a steady rise in employment from 2004 to 2006, when jobs reached 3,544 on an annual basis.

With an average annual wage of \$30,931 in 2005, Retail employees are among Bridgeport's lowest-paid workers. As employment in the sector increased from 2000 to 2002, the relative wage experienced a modest rise of 5.4 percentage points, peaking at 74 percent of the citywide average. After the recession, the relative wage experienced a downward trend, despite a marginal increase in 2004.

Some examples of new and proposed retail development in Bridgeport include 881 Lafayette Boulevard (across from Housatonic Community College), the retail component of the Inter-modal Transportation Center, the Arcade Hotel, retail space at City Trust Apartments, Downtown North historic rehabilitation, Steel Point, the Pequonnock development site, 1163-1197 State Street (in the West End/West Side neighborhood) and a new Super Stop & Shop at 2145 Fairfield Avenue.



Chart 9-8| Bridgeport Finance and Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

### Finance and Insurance

Finance and Insurance establishments are primarily engaged in facilitating financial transactions, or in creating, liquidating or changing ownership of financial assets. Three principal types of activities are undertaken: raising funds by issuing securities, pooling of risk by underwriting insurance and annuities, and providing specialized services facilitating or supporting financial intermediation, insurance, and employee benefit programs. The unique production processes of Finance and Insurance establishments that rely on the use of specialized human capital and specialized physical capital, sets them aside from other industries. In Bridgeport, 92 Finance and Insurance establishments employ some 2,250 workers. Although the sector pays considerably more than the average citywide wage, Bridgeport's financial service workers are primarily of mid-level skill. Compared with the average annual financial earnings in the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk Metro Area, which stood at \$215,436 in 2005, Bridgeport's Finance and Insurance establishments paid \$68,457 per worker.

Connecticut has the largest concentration of insurance and financial-service firms in the United States, accounting for 21 percent of the gross state product. More than 8 percent of the state's work force is employed in the sector, with a high concentration of financial analysts, underwriters, risk managers and actuaries.

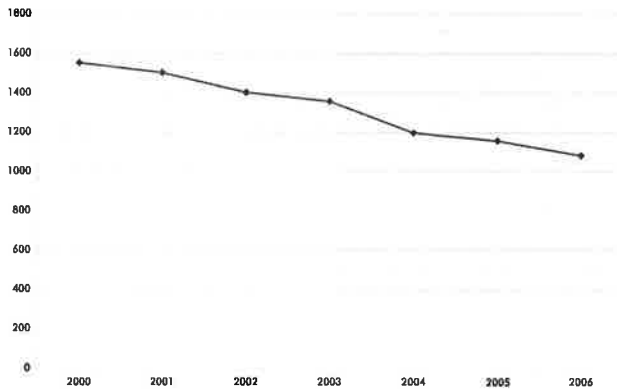
Bridgeport, once the fourth-largest banking city in New England, functions today primarily as an extension of the county's Finance and Insurance specialization. The city's financial district is highly concentrated in the Downtown, which plays host to the headquarters of People's Bank

and the credit card division of RBS National Bank. Downtown also contains operations of larger banks, such as investment services and management companies. The second-largest concentration of financial services is located in neighborhoods bordering Fairfield, specifically the North End and the Brooklawn/St. Vincent neighborhood. These two neighborhoods, while still containing bank branches, tend to house small banks such as the Fairfield County Federal Credit Union.

Employment in the Finance and Insurance sector declined steadily in Bridgeport throughout the period. Starting with 3,215 workers in 2000, employment fell to 2,257 by 2005. This trend is in sharp contrast to a rising employment level in the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk CTA, where financial-services jobs advanced by 4,500 jobs from 2000 to 2006. As a share of citywide employment, the sector has fallen from 6.6 to 5.0 percent, whereas regionwide it has grown from 8 to 9.3 percent of total employment. The importance of financial activities in southwestern Connecticut, many of which have relocated from New York City, attests to missed opportunities in Bridgeport, and the city's potential for eventually attracting growth and rebuilding this sector.

Over the recent period, the average annual earnings of finance and insurance workers rose, and then declined, to 55 percent above all citywide wages. Compared with a Metro Area relative wage for Finance and Insurance jobs that represented threefold the regionwide average of all industry wages, the earnings potential of development in this sector holds promise for enhancing the earnings of Bridgeport workers.

Chart 9-9 | Bridgeport Professional & Technical Services Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

**Professional and Technical Services**

Professional and Technical establishments specialize in performing professional, scientific, or technical services for others, which require a high degree of expertise and training. Activities performed include: legal advice and representation, accounting, bookkeeping and payroll services, architecture, engineering, computer services, consulting, research, and advertising services. In Bridgeport, this sector ranks ninth among private industries in level of employment, with nearly 1,100 jobs in some 200 establishments. Average annual earnings are second only to Utilities.

Total employment in Professional and Technical Services declined steadily from 2000 to 2006, losing 471 jobs from 1,555 in 2000. The loss amounted to a 30 percent decline for a sector that is growing strongly in the Metro Area. Bridgeport's Professional and Technical Services sector share is roughly half that of Connecticut and the national average. Similar to total employment, the share of people working in the sector has fallen since 2000, dropping from 3.2 to 2.5 percent in 2006.

The healthy relative wage of Professional and Technical Services workers is a result of the advanced skills needed for participation in this sector. At \$77,123 per worker in 2005, wages are superior to those in nearly all other sectors in the city, ranging from 65 to 79 percent above the citywide average wage.

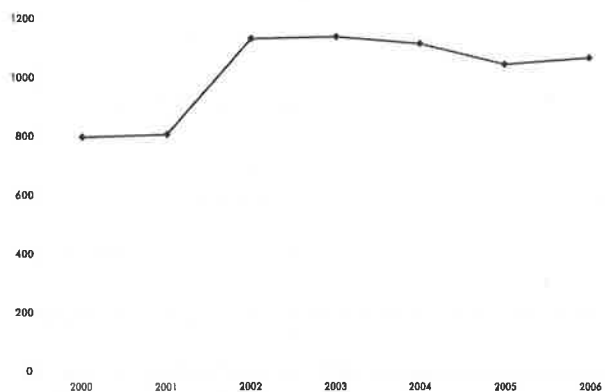
**Information**

Establishments in the Information sector are primarily engaged in producing and distributing information and cultural products, providing the means to transmit or distribute these products as data or communication, and in processing data. The main components of this sector are the publishing industries, including software and traditional publishing, but the sector also consists of motion picture production, telecommunications, broadcasting, and sound recording. In Bridgeport, the Information sector ranks 11th among 18 private sectors and its major employers, among 34 total establishments, are drawn from newspaper publishing and radio broadcasting.

After a major increase in Information employment in 2002, Bridgeport's information and technology sector has shown strong resilience, climbing from 799 in 2000 to 1,135 by 2006. While many other sectors experienced employment losses, Information held onto its job gains and, even more impressive, exhibited this strength while maintaining its relative wage. This contrasts with other sectors that maintained employment levels only at the cost of reducing relative wages. In Bridgeport, the rising employment shares compare with a declining trend at state and national levels.

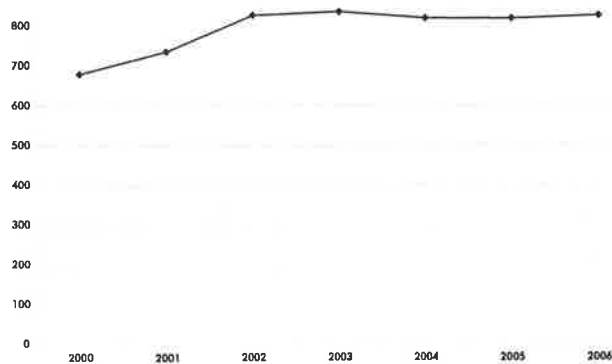
With average annual earnings of \$44,252 in 2005, Bridgeport's Information sector offered the average citywide wage. Although the relative wage fell to 94.7 percent of the citywide average in 2006, the relative wage has never fallen more than 7 points below the norm since 2000.

Chart 9-10 | Bridgeport Information Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

Chart 9-11 | Bridgeport Arts & Entertainment Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

Establishments in the Arts & Entertainment sector operate facilities or provide services to meet varied cultural, entertainment, and recreational interests of their patrons. This sector is comprised of establishments that are involved in producing, promoting, or participating in live performances, or exhibits open for public viewing; preservation of objects and sites of historical, cultural, or education interest; and recreation that allow patrons to participate for amusement, a hobby, or leisure-time interests. With 36 such establishments, Bridgeport has more Arts and Entertainment facilities than any other Connecticut city. Employing more than 800 workers, the sector places 12th among all private industries in the city.

Between 2000 and 2003, the number of workers employed in the Arts and Entertainment sector rose from 680 to 835. Thereafter, employment stayed fairly constant, between 830 and 824 by 2006. These trends resulted in an upward share of Arts and Entertainment employment in the city, in comparison to a steady or downward share of total employees at the state and national levels. There appears to be a growing concentration of visual and performing artists, writers and other creative professionals living and working in Bridgeport. The sector includes workers who export their products and services, bringing income from outside the city. An accurate count of the work force is difficult, as many artists hold multiple jobs. Other creative businesses include a growing film industry, radio and television professionals as well as designers, architects, publishers and advertising companies.

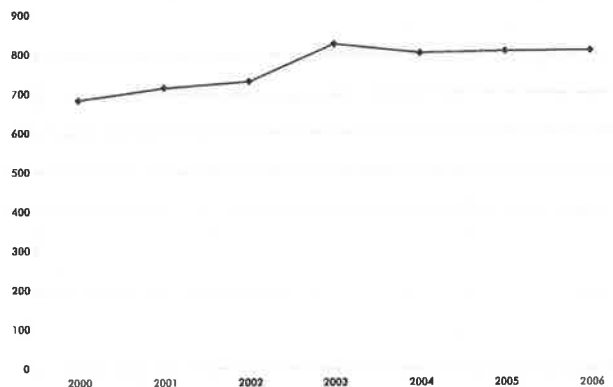
Relative wages of the jobs in this sector rank consistently among the lowest in the economy. This is to be expected, as these jobs are primarily part-time positions employing young workers. The apparent rise seen in the first few periods is likely the result of minimum wages becoming more competitive due to downward pressures on wages under adverse economic conditions.

### Education

Education establishments, such as schools, colleges, universities, and training centers, primarily provide instruction and training in a wide variety of subjects. In 2005, 27 private educational facilities in Bridgeport employed some 800 workers at an average annual wage of \$36,738.

Total employment in the Education sector of Bridgeport climbed slowly between 2000 and 2002, from 685 to 732 workers. Between 2002 and 2003, employment increased 13 percent, a 94 person expansion. Since then, employment in Education has declined slightly from 826 in 2003 to 809 in 2006. As a share of the city's total employment, the Education share has trended upward over the entire period, moving in tandem with both the U.S. and Connecticut educational employment shares. Starting at less than 1.5 percent, the share climbed annually to a high of 1.8 percent in 2006.

Chart 9-12 | Bridgeport Education Employment, 2000-2006

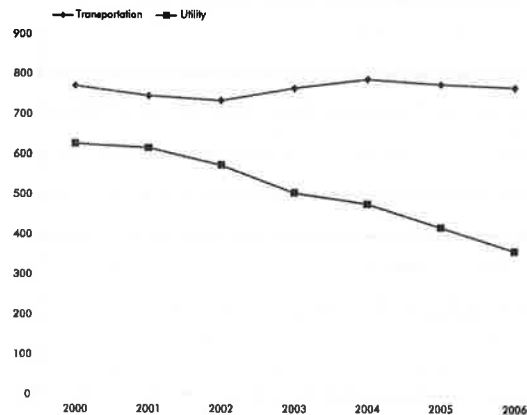


Source: Urbanomics, 2007

While both the share and level of employment increased, the average wage fell from a high position in 2001, to a low relative wage position in 2006, at 21 percent below the citywide average. Nominal wages increased over the period, from \$33,475 to \$36,738 per worker between 2003 and 2005, barely ahead of inflation.



Chart 9-13 | Bridgeport Transportation & Warehousing & Utilities Employment, 2000-2006



Source: Urbanomics, 2007

### Transportation and Warehousing

The Transportation and Warehousing sector is primarily engaged in providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage services, scenic and sightseeing transportation and supporting activities related to modes of transportation. With 776 jobs in 38 establishments, the Transportation and Warehousing sector was Bridgeport's 14th largest private sector, with average annual wages of \$29,837 in 2005.

Whether by land, sea, or air, Bridgeport is a crossroads for Fairfield County. The city's transportation hub, situated within minutes of Interstate-95, connects southwestern Connecticut with the rest of the state. Heavily frequented by New York and Stamford commuters, the Bridgeport railroad station is the fourth-busiest station on the Metro-North line, as well as the fifth-busiest Amtrak station in Connecticut. The bus system averages 14,500 train transfers per month and annually runs 5 million trips on its 16-route service. Additionally, the Port Jefferson Ferry also moves about a million passengers along with half a million vehicles annually across Long Island Sound. An ambitious Inter-modal Transportation Center, currently under development, aims to connect the rail, ferry and bus systems at one location in the heart of Bridgeport's commercial district.

Total employment in the Transportation sector has been relatively unchanged over the past six years and the share of employment citywide has climbed from 1.6 to 1.8 percent by 2006. This compares to a precipitous loss

in Utilities employment and a perceptible decline in the relative importance of Transportation jobs nationally, though not statewide. In 2000, wages in the Transportation sector were 31 percent below the citywide average; by 2006, a decline in relative wages reached 61 percent, or 39 points below the citywide average. Given the stability in the sector as a function of the city's economy, especially in light of job losses in other sectors, the erosion in earnings for average workers suggests more focus be placed on developing higher productivity Transportation jobs.

### Utilities

Establishments in the Utilities sector are engaged in the provision of electric power, natural gas, steam supply, water supply and sewage removal. Utility providers are among the largest employers and taxpayers in Bridgeport. The Aquarion Water Company, SBC/AT&T telecommunications, and the Southern Connecticut Natural Gas Company each offer more than 100 jobs. The Bridgeport Power Station, owned by PSEG Power Connecticut, is the fourth-largest power plant in the state. The Wheelabrator waste to energy plant provides energy to 70,000 homes. Ranking 16th among 18 private sector employers in Bridgeport, the Utilities sector has eight establishments, providing an average annual wage of \$79,738 in 2005, or the highest average payroll per employee.

Total employment declined sharply in the Utilities sector over the 2000-2006 period, falling 43 percent to 360 employees. This loss represents a decline in share of total employment, from 1.3 to 0.8 percent of all Bridgeport jobs, and compares to a relatively stable performance in the sector statewide or as a share of all employment in the U.S. economy. With an annual wage 82 percent above the citywide average, the loss of employment in the Utilities sector is particularly troubling for Bridgeport.

## 9.4 | BRIDGEPORT'S ECONOMY: A LOOK AHEAD

Future economic growth in Bridgeport will depend upon private investment initiative, guided by an informed public sector. The Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk region is expected to attract some 45,800 private service jobs over the 2006-2016 period. Given national and global market trends, Bridgeport cannot count on goods producers to resuscitate its economy, for even under the best conditions the trend is downward. Assuming recent past performance, the city's private service providers will also not add sufficient jobs to outweigh this drag, but given a share in regional growth rates the gain in service jobs would signal a modest recovery.

However, a robust recovery will require bold initiatives in private housing investment and commercial development. Not unlike Providence and Baltimore, Bridgeport can be turned around by building on its historic inner city character and by transforming idle industrial areas into vibrant mixed-use clusters. The strategy developed in the 2007-2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and embedded in this Master Plan, will seek to capture some 15,000 new jobs in new developments on rezoned industrial land and Downtown sites, thereby restoring the Bridgeport economy to the level of employment enjoyed in 1990.

By their very nature, new jobs will be drawn from export sectors in which the city has demonstrated some strengths and the region has anticipated new growth. Based upon the market analysis, the sectors are:

- *Health Care*
- *Finance and Insurance*
- *Professional and Technical Services*
- *Information Services*
- *Arts and Entertainment*

To attract export jobs, Bridgeport must first offer a diverse white collar labor force, a strategy which can be accomplished over the long term by improvements to education and training, but in the short term by new inner city housing developments that draw young professionals and seasoned executives. By building upon the City's labor force and export base, population-serving jobs will subsequently be generated that add not only to overall employment levels, but also to the City's quality of life.

In keeping with this approach, targeted to the above service sectors, the following private developments are illustrative of investment initiatives that are critical to Bridgeport's economic recovery:

- *Steel Point Mixed Use*
- *Pequonnock Mixed-Use High Rise*
- *Downtown North Adaptive Mixed Reuse*
- *60 Main Street High-Rise Housing*

Collectively, all proposed developments for private services and new housing would accommodate 11,400 jobs, of which 5,900 would be located on rezoned industrial land and 5,500 on primarily Downtown sites.

By rezoning a portion of the City's industrial land for mixed use development, viable concentrations of industry will not be disrupted. Rather, efforts are proposed to buttress important clusters of goods production and transportation, such as the West End Industrial Corridor, Derecktor Shipyards, the Inter-modal Transportation Hub and the Seaview Avenue Industrial Park.

Combined, these and related actions are anticipated to expand more traditional industrial activities by some 3,600 new jobs.

Thus, the combination of targeting regional growth sectors and supporting viable traditional industries uses, Bridgeport could see the creation of about 15,000 new jobs by the year 2020.

“Future economic development in Bridgeport will depend upon private investment initiative guided by an informed public sector.”

## 9.5 | BRIDGEPORT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Bridgeport is unique among the cities and towns of Fairfield County: an urban city in a land of suburban municipalities. The city's assets are many: excellent transportation and transit access and proximity to New York City and Stamford; a natural deepwater port and beautiful beaches; and an industrial past that has laid the foundation for a smart industrial base and also left Bridgeport with striking 19th Century brick and stone industrial buildings with significant redevelopment possibilities. However, as numerous as the city's strengths are, it also faces many challenges: heavy industry has left behind large numbers of brownfields and long-vacant buildings; the mil rate is the highest in Fairfield County due to low property values and an excessive amount of tax exempt properties due to the concentration of regional services in Bridgeport; and the resident labor force is not as prepared for the challenges of the modern job environment as it should be.

Bridgeport is at a critical point in its history. Planning and policy decisions made now will either propel the city into the future or will leave it to stagnation and decline. As such, the 2007-2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the city of Bridgeport, upon which this chapter is based, outlines a series of goals and strategies as part of a strategic action plan for economic development in Bridgeport. The goals and strategies are symbiotic, taking into account not only the greater workforce preparedness that is needed to increase employment and attract new business, but also a more diverse housing stock and better schools. These quality-of-life factors are necessary to attract new residents to Bridgeport, bolster the tax base and improve the city's image. The CEDS goals and strategies represent a comprehensive look at economic development in Bridgeport, and are intended to serve as a long-term guide to the city's economic future.

“Quality of life factors are necessary to attract new residents to Bridgeport, bolster the tax base and improve the city's image.”

### Goal 1: Increase the tax base – Make Downtown the foundation for growth

The mil rate in Bridgeport is the highest of any municipality in Fairfield County, due in part to the large number of publicly owned and tax-exempt properties. Increasing the tax base throughout the city is a necessity.

However, in order to have a real impact, growth needs to be focused in a single area so results are visible, progress is evident to residents and visitors alike and improvements and developments are in close enough proximity that each one spurs the next. The obvious focal point is the Downtown Central Business District, the psychological center of Bridgeport and the location of the inter-modal transit hub. The first impression of the city is that from the area immediately surrounding the train station and the exits from I-95. Growth needs to begin in this critical area, and thus the strategies that follow, while applicable throughout Bridgeport, are based on the assets and needs of the Downtown and are consistent with the Downtown Plan published by Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates (PPSA) under the auspices of the Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) (see Chapter 8).

#### Strategy 1: Encourage infill and high-rise development in the CBD

For Downtown to meet the potential laid out in the Downtown Plan, the resident population needs to be increased by some 5,000 residents. The comprehensive housing study conducted by czbLLC (see Chapter 10) recommended increasing the share of high-density market-rate housing in areas of Bridgeport that currently have fairly little housing (Downtown and the waterfront), in order to attract new residents and increase the tax base while creating relatively little drain on municipal services.

The Downtown Plan points to a market of young professionals who are unable to afford homes in the surrounding towns and are unwilling to settle in the suburbs, for whom nightlife and proximity to transit are important. The other target market is empty nesters, those who no longer want the trouble of upkeep on their family homes, and for whom access to cultural facilities and convenience retail are important.

Both of these markets are prime candidates for lofts in renovated industrial structures, as well as new high-rise market-rate buildings with water views. The relatively high



value of this new construction will go far to increase the tax rolls of the city, not only enhancing the city's capacity to provide services, but with time, lowering the mil rate as well.

**Strategy 2: Preserve historic structures by adaptive reuse**

Downtown has a number of beautiful historic structures that have outlasted their original purposes. These buildings are assets to be renovated, retrofitted and converted to new uses. Not only does this strategy increase the value of the properties – many of which have been vacant for years – but it also preserves the proud history of the city. Residential conversions are an especially good use of these properties, as they convey an urban “edginess” to a domicile that is particularly attractive to the youth market.

**Strategy 3: Build on existing CBD business clusters (civic, sports/recreation, nightlife, education, transportation, judicial) and reduce tax-exempt properties**

There are several business clusters already in existence in the Downtown. The most recent clusters to take hold are the entertainment areas of sports/recreation and nightlife that began with the construction of the Arena and Ballpark at Harbor Yard just south of the Downtown, the Downtown Cabaret Theatre and Playhouse on the Green. A number of restaurants have accompanied these entertainment venues. Unfortunately, the largest existing business clusters – health care, civic, judicial and education – are exempt from property taxes. These are the largest employers in Bridgeport and should be supported; however, where possible, tax-exempt uses should be consolidated to free up space for other development. Chapter 13 discusses some opportunities for this consolidation, suggesting the combination of municipal functions that are currently spread among several buildings, such as City Hall, City Hall Annex and McLevy Hall. Such consolidation of functions could not only free up valuable property for redevelopment, but increase the efficiency of the City's operations.

**Strategy 4: Prepare for and encourage Class A office space**

It is unlikely that Bridgeport will immediately capture the office industries that have taken hold in Stamford and elsewhere in Fairfield County. However, with an increased population of young professionals in the Downtown core, as well as the expansion of the existing business clusters, the need for Class A office space will surely follow. In addition, the city could carve a niche as a prime location for the back-office functions of large corporations within the

region. Preparation for this demand is imperative. Wherever possible, new developments should include fitting for broadband and Wi-Fi. In addition, the Downtown Plan also recommends preserving Lafayette Boulevard as a future office corridor, giving office uses preference over other commercial uses. Finally, the City should pursue funding for streetscape improvements to create a more office-friendly environment.

**Goal 2: Make better use of the city's assets – Value the waterfront, industrial heritage and location**

Bridgeport has assets unique to Fairfield County. Its waterfront has both exceptional beaches and a natural deepwater port; however, both have been underutilized and undervalued in recent decades. The city has a proud industrial past and potential to capture new, cleaner industry, and the role of this industry should not be ignored. The challenge will be in creating and fostering an environment that will allow appropriate existing waterfront uses to remain while promoting new types of business and development. The asset most easily capitalized upon is location. Being situated on I-95 and Route 8/25, 90 minutes from New York City and 30 minutes from Stamford by train, Bridgeport is well placed to be a catchment area for both business and residential development.

**Strategy 1: Support deepwater port uses that are environmentally sound**

Bridgeport has one of the few natural deepwater ports in the region, and the City should support this vital piece of its waterfront, which not only provides jobs, but is also a major element of Bridgeport's character. However, maintaining a working port does not preclude residential and recreational waterfront uses. A “good neighbor” approach to choosing what kinds of development are to be allowed in the future should be undertaken, ensuring that businesses in the port area are clean and green and make the most of the natural assets at hand. By emphasizing such environmentally friendly uses, Bridgeport can also capitalize on “green” industries that are likely to represent major economic growth sectors, while also furthering the goals of reducing pollution and protecting the city's natural resources (see Chapter 6).

### Strategy 2: Improve public access to and recreational use of the waterfront

The beaches in Bridgeport have a rich history of recreational use. Pleasure Beach's boardwalk attractions made it a summer recreation destination for decades. Seaside Park has one of the most beautiful strips of sand along Long Island Sound. For years, however, the public has been largely cut off from these significant recreational spaces – the bridge to Pleasure Beach was damaged and Seaside Park, while occasionally hosting major events, is largely underutilized.

The Pequonnock River and Yellow Mill Channel have been lined with industrial uses that were dependent on these waterways for goods transportation. Now that many of these companies are gone and this use of the rivers is obsolete, it behooves Bridgeport to make these waterways a source of recreation for residents who, according to input at public meetings, feel they cannot access the water despite living within steps from it. Enhanced access to Bridgeport's miles of waterfront would represent a significant improvement in quality of life for many city residents, increasing neighborhood amenities and transforming these areas into neighborhoods of choice, rather than necessity. This improved quality of life would serve the twin goals of increasing property values and attracting new residents to Bridgeport, both of which would raise the city's tax base and thus increase its fiscal capacity. Thus, recreational uses are not only a nicety for existing Bridgeport residents; they can also spawn commercial venues and are a major draw for residential development.

### Strategy 3: Encourage mixed-use – residential, commercial and recreational uses

As alluded to in the previous strategy, a healthy, vibrant mixed-use waterfront is advantageous to everyone. Residential development will be attractive to newcomers only if there is a commercial infrastructure to support it. New businesses are more likely to locate in places with convenient access to work force housing, while port industry workers will value the additional commercial amenities provided in tandem with a residential base.

This mixed-use development can be accomplished through either new projects – such as Steel Point – or through adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial buildings. Adaptive reuse is a key tool in economic development

and revitalization, and, rather than precluding viable industrial and commercial uses, can actually be a way to further the success of these neighboring uses. Adaptive reuse can remove blight, improve infrastructure, increase security, enhance investment, increase property values and even create customers. This can only be accomplished if private property owners invest in remediation and work with the City to clean “dirty” properties instead of warehousing them while paying minimal taxes.

An issue that often occurs in the adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings to residential uses is conflicts between the new use and existing industry. Buffers are therefore needed to ensure compatibility between these uses, as discussed in the policies in Chapter 4. However, buffers can go beyond the traditional minimal landscaping used solely to satisfy regulatory requirements. True buffering may mean legal arrangements, such as prohibitions of thru trucks or noise after a certain time. It may be the way traffic is designed to circulate or how sidewalks are constructed. It may mean noise barriers or visual, architectural treatments. Or it may be the actual size and massing of the buildings. The City's policy on buffers should be one that encourages creativity and flexibility as appropriate to specific sites, but one that also contains sufficient “teeth” to accomplish the overall goal of protecting a range of viable uses.

### Strategy 4: Complete the inter-modal transportation network

Bridgeport is ideally situated to benefit from its proximity to New York City, Stamford and the suburban residential communities in the rest of Fairfield and New Haven Counties. The Metro-North and Amtrak lines already stop in the city. The bus terminal has expanded and commuter parking facilities are also being expanded. With ferry service already existing between Bridgeport and Port Jefferson, Long Island, there is a potential to develop a high-speed ferry service to Manhattan. Location is an asset to be capitalized upon, and Bridgeport is well on its way. Completion of these important transportation projects is imperative to the economic life of the city.

“Adaptive reuse can remove blight, improve infrastructure, increase security, enhance investment, increase property values and even create customers.”

**Goal 3: Strengthen economic competitiveness – attract, create and retain jobs for residents and newcomers.**

Bridgeport's ranking in the regional economy is at an all-time low. While surrounding towns have capitalized on new industries and technologies, the city has languished. There are several major growth industries that Bridgeport is ripe for capturing, as long as steps are taken now.

Existing industrial businesses are struggling with both physical and labor force constraints. Many remaining industrial buildings are not suited for modern manufacturing, and vacant, clean industrially zoned land is a rare commodity. These employers are also struggling to find suitable replacements for a skilled labor force that is rapidly approaching retirement age. Finding suitable labor is not only affecting the manufacturing industry. A recent regional assessment of work force needs on the southwestern coast of Connecticut found that every major industry sector in the region is having difficulty finding applicants with the required technical skills, and more importantly, the basic work preparedness skills necessary to keep a job.

The weakening tax base in Bridgeport has led to declining infrastructure and a school system that significantly lags the state in academic performance. Although numerous elements are necessary for the city to complete an economic revitalization, the following strategies focus on the five key areas of investing in infrastructure, capturing regional growth industries, retaining existing businesses, building work force preparedness and reclaiming brown-field sites.

#### Strategy 1: Invest in infrastructure

Infrastructure, be it transportation, utilities or communications, is the foundation for expanding old businesses, creating new ones and spawning residential development. Bridgeport's infrastructure systems were built to support a major industrial center with a population of nearly 160,000 people and its wastewater treatment system supports suburban towns to the north of the city. With a decline in industry and a current population of approximately 136,000, the city now has excess capacity that can be used to support new development. However, Bridgeport's systems are old, and in many cases need to be upgraded to a state of good repair to adequately serve current and future development. Roadways need improvement, and some may need to be raised to alleviate

flooding problems, while portions of the city's combined stormwater and sewer systems must be separated to prevent wastewater from entering Long Island Sound during major storms. Sidewalks and curbing in many neighborhoods are in disrepair. Railroad bridges are too low to accommodate modern truck and bus heights. It is essential that these issues be addressed in order for Bridgeport to realize its potential as a central hub of activity for the region. Some key projects that the city should complete include repairing the Congress Street Bridge and reconfiguring local bus lines to improve access between housing and employment centers.

#### Strategy 2: Capture regional growth industries

As discussed above, Bridgeport has not fared well in capturing the new regional growth industries. The city has lost jobs in sectors such as finance and insurance and professional and business services, while other Fairfield County towns have seen exponential increases. Policy decisions must be made that will help to attract industries with a strong future to Bridgeport, which is crucial to reach the goal discussed above of attracting 15,000 new jobs to the city by the year 2020.

To meet this goal, Bridgeport will need to pursue the key growth sectors discussed earlier in this chapter of health care, finance/insurance/real estate, administrative and professional office and arts and entertainment, as well as support more traditional industrial activities where the city has particular strength. Capturing the key industry growth sectors will require a diverse white collar labor force, which will be created in the short term by new residents attracted by new housing, and in the long term by improvements to education and training. The City should also encourage important clusters of goods production and transportation, via such efforts as completion of the inter-modal transportation hub and expansion of a Seaview Avenue Industrial Park. Other efforts to support existing businesses are discussed below. This two-pronged approach – capturing new growth industries while retaining the current viable industries – will allow Bridgeport to achieve its job creation goals.



### Strategy 3: Retain existing businesses

Existing businesses, whether new startups or older firms that have weathered the economic hard times of the past, need continued support. Industrial shops with smart-technologies want to expand but cannot find the space. Small businesses are struggling with the additional legal and contractual requirements caused by expansion. Minority firms are grappling with the bureaucracy of the MBE and DBE processes. To address the space needs of existing businesses, the City should seek to redevelop strategic areas with warehouses and other retrofitted space that meets the needs of businesses seeking to expand or relocate. The City should also implement outreach and training programs for minority and small businesses in terms of legal and fiscal requirements of ownership. This is particularly important when these types of businesses are bidding for City contracts.

### Strategy 4: Build work force preparedness through education and manpower training programs

Many of the industries that remain in Bridgeport require specialized technical training and computer skills not only for office jobs, but for smart-technology industry as well. Employers throughout the region are struggling to find new hires with the computer proficiency and other technical skills they require. Even more troubling, regional employers are having difficulty in finding recruits with basic work force preparedness. This skill set includes having the ability to read and write, a basic level of customer services skills and even knowledge of workplace etiquette (e.g. proper behavior and attire, being on time). These deficiencies are epidemic at all levels of educational attainment, affecting applicants from high school dropouts to college graduates throughout the region.

In order to better prepare Bridgeport's work force, not only are specialized training classes required so new skilled workers may replace retirees, but the current educational system as a whole must also be reexamined. The City has begun to take these steps: industrial training programs and ESL courses are available and must continue to be supported. To improve the educational standards that have fallen behind, the City is also in the process of building five new elementary schools and renovating a number of others, and it has been approved for the construction of two new interdistrict host magnet schools, to serve students from Bridgeport, Easton, Monroe, Fairfield, Milford, Redding, Shelton, Stratford and Trumbull.

### Strategy 5: Reclaim Brownfield sites

Brownfields are a major problem in Bridgeport; many of the old heavy industries left behind contaminated sites that require remediation before any further use can be made of them. Some 447 parcels consisting of 772 acres were identified as brownfields in 2005; there are most likely more, but the exact number is unknown. Contamination limits development of all types, both industrial expansion and residential conversion. A comprehensive effort is required to assess and implement cleanup so that the city may reclaim this valuable commodity.

How to go about financing the cleanup is a critical issue. Bridgeport has recently received EDA grants for cleanup, but, given the city's heavy industrial history, they will not be sufficient to fully address the brownfields problem citywide. Pressure should be brought to bear on the corporations (or their successors) who created the pollution in the first place, and some pending legislation would require that businesses list their contaminated holdings on their balance sheets and clean up such sites. However, in Bridgeport, this legislation would backfire, because the City itself has long since taken control of many of these sites, and being required to list them on its balance sheet would be extremely harmful to the City's bond rating.

To adequately address the brownfield situation, the City should hire a full-time brownfields coordinator to complete a comprehensive survey of all brownfield sites in Bridgeport and maintain a database of these sites. Such a coordinator would oversee the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites on a case-by-case basis. Meanwhile, the City should continue to support the remediation of privately owned land, such as Remington Woods, so that these areas can be made available for redevelopment, balanced with the preservation of open space.

### Goal 4: Create neighborhoods of choice – Make Bridgeport a better place to live and work

Improving the business climate and worker training will only go so far to allow Bridgeport to reach its full potential. The general perception of the city is not positive, and the highest wage earners working in Bridgeport tend to live elsewhere. The city needs to become a place where people want to live. This means creating diverse housing options throughout the city, developing neighborhood commerce to include local convenience retail, encouraging personal involvement, investing in the community, enhancing community services to high standards for every neighborhood, and improving educational achievement.

**Strategy 1: Encourage housing diversity throughout Bridgeport**

Bridgeport has the lowest property values and the highest mil rate in Fairfield County. The city's housing is primarily single-family, and 17.1 percent of its units are classified as "affordable" by the state, meaning that they are accessible to households earning up to 80 percent of the county's median income, or costing less than \$900 per month for a two- to three-bedroom. The czbLLC housing study (see Chapter 10) recommends a greater share of medium- and high-income housing in order to increase Bridgeport's fiscal capacity by improving the tax base. Such an increase in the diversity of housing would also create a "housing ladder" for Bridgeport residents, so that as their incomes increase, they will have a range of housing options to allow them to stay in the city, rather than leave.

Encouraging housing diversity in Bridgeport is not intended to adversely affect the character of the neighborhoods, but to enhance it, by fostering a blend of affordable, work force and upscale housing options at different densities throughout the city. By creating a more balanced mix, the City will be able to provide better services, and hopefully bring its mil rate more in line with the rest of the county.

**Strategy 2: Develop neighborhood commerce**

Residents at the various public meetings have noted the lack of accessible convenience retail. Many Bridgeport residents drive across city lines to shop in the more suburban shopping facilities in Trumbull, Fairfield and Stratford. Convenience retail is not only an amenity for current residents and a boon for new residential development, but these small businesses keep Bridgeport's income in Bridgeport. To promote these smaller-scale businesses, the City should promote mixed-use corridors and restaurant rows throughout Bridgeport as appropriate, to serve the surrounding neighborhoods. One way to accomplish this could be to rezone these areas to a new mixed-use designation that could provide for both neighborhood retail and higher density housing alternatives (see Chapters 14 and 15). The City should also work to expand small businesses' access to Community Capital and CEDF funds.

**Strategy 3: Provide equitable community services**

Access to community services of all types is essential to strengthening a neighborhood. As discussed in Chapter 13, the location, capacity and quality of municipal facilities, and the services they provide, are crucial considerations because they can direct and shape private development, help stabilize neighborhoods and improve community character and quality of life. Some actions for the City in this area include supporting Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent's Medical Center in their expansion plans, particularly those pertaining to neighborhood treatment centers and clinics; implementing plans for a centralized public facilities and emergency operations center; expanding community policing programs and continuing school construction and expansion plans.

**Strategy 4: Encourage community involvement in planning Bridgeport's future**

Bridgeport's checkered political past has bred a level of distrust and disconnect between residents and the City. This situation has led to a sense by many residents that no single person can impact the decisions made at City Hall, and thus, with some notable exceptions, many people have stopped trying. The more recent administrations have attempted to change the status quo in this regard, and to create an atmosphere in which residents can more easily and effectively inform the City about the path it should take. The public input portion of the Master Plan process represented a significant positive step in this direction. The Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) planning process that has occurred or is being undertaken in a number of Bridgeport neighborhoods is another major positive development.

While community involvement is not a direct economic development strategy, it does translate into community investment – a sound basis for the economic development of the city. Maintaining a strong and lasting connection to city residents will help Bridgeport grow its resources and realize its vision for the future.

# 10.0 HOUSING

## POLICY

*Realize the potential of housing as an economic driver for Bridgeport .*

## GOALS

- 1 Increase the quality and value of Bridgeport's housing.*
- 2 Create a housing ladder that allows people to move from one type of housing to another within Bridgeport as their incomes rise.*
- 3 Provide incentives to promote mixed-income neighborhoods and deconcentrate poverty.*
- 4 Maintain housing affordability within the city.*
- 5 Create an inclusionary zoning ordinance that requires market-rate developers to provide 10 percent of units as affordable either through construction on-site, off-site or contribution of an in-lieu payment to a Housing Trust Fund.*

## 10.1 | INTRODUCTION

As the largest land use in the city, housing is central to Bridgeport's economy and the quality-of-life of its residents. The condition and variety of the housing stock defines the city's neighborhoods and has a significant impact on Bridgeport's image in the region. In the past, the housing stock in many of Bridgeport's neighborhoods has detracted from rather than supported the city's economic development goals. Concentrated poverty and blighted properties have been significant challenges to revitalization efforts. But the tide is now changing. An aggressive blight reduction program, a capital investment program for new school construction, decreasing crime rates, increased property investment, and a strong regional housing market are creating "communities of choice" in Bridgeport – places where people live because they choose to, not because they have to.



In response to this changing housing market, the City commissioned czbLLC to prepare a housing study to evaluate the strength of its housing market and develop a draft housing policy for Bridgeport. As discussed in the czbLLC report, Bridgeport is now at a tipping point. The housing market in city neighborhoods is getting stronger. The question now is how strong will the market get? As discussed in this chapter, the answer depends on numerous factors but most importantly the condition of the housing stock; the condition of city streets, sidewalks and neighborhood commercial areas; the city's fiscal strength; and the quality of its schools. Capturing and harnessing this new strength by attracting an economically diverse population will further enable the city to deconcentrate poverty, increase its property values and ease the existing tax burden on city residents.

This chapter provides an overview of the city's existing housing stock and housing market conditions and presents a housing policy that emphasizes the connection between housing revitalization and economic development in Bridgeport.

## 10.2 | POPULATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

Like many small, industrial cities in the Northeast, Bridgeport's population has decreased steadily since World War II as people have left the city for the suburbs. As shown on Table 10-1, population trends across Bridgeport's neighborhoods vary widely. Between 1990 and 2000 some neighborhoods, such as Brooklawn, North Bridgeport and the North End, experienced significant population gains, and others such as the South End, East Side and East End experienced significant losses. Part of the population decline in these neighborhoods stems from the closure and demolition of several public housing projects, including Pequonnock Apartments and Father Panik Village. Overall, Bridgeport experienced a population loss of 7 percent between 1990 and 2005, while Fairfield County's population grew by 7 percent during that same period.

According to czbLLC's housing study, the average income of new households that did move to Bridgeport during the 1990s was 60 percent lower than that of households moving into Fairfield County. During this period, city household incomes increased at a slower rate than county incomes, and poor Fairfield County residents remained highly concentrated in Bridgeport. In 2005, over half of the city's families with children were headed by single mothers, compared to 22 percent countywide; over one quarter of adults had not graduated from high school; 18 percent of residents lived below the poverty level; and 10 percent of workers were unemployed. These trends have a significant impact on Bridgeport's fiscal capacity and on the city's housing market.

Table 10-1 | Population by Neighborhood, 1990-2000

Neighborhood	Population			
	1990	2000	Change	% Change
North End	28,473	31,470	2,997	10.5%
Reservoir/Whiskey Hill	13,215	12,843	-372	-2.8%
North Bridgeport	10,300	11,505	1,205	11.7%
Boston Ave./Mill Hill	10,333	10,322	-11	-0.1%
East End	9,787	8,184	-1,603	-16.4%
East Side	17,474	13,095	-4,379	-25.1%
Enterprise Zone	871	872	1	0.1%
Downtown	2,767	2,484	-283	-10.2%
South End	4,740	3,781	-959	-20.2%
Black Rock	9,045	8,863	-182	-2.0%
West End/West Side	17,847	17,514	-333	-1.9%
Hollow	9,132	9,562	430	4.7%
Brooklawn/St. Vincent	7,679	9,034	1,355	17.7%

Source: czbLLC, 2007

### 10.3 | HOUSING TYPES

“The City’s Anti-Blight office has issued more than 600 anti-blight warnings and 240 citations since the initiative began in 2005.”

Housing accounts for 42 percent of the Bridgeport’s total land area. As shown in Table 10-2, over two-thirds of the housing stock is comprised of multifamily structures. Detached single-family homes make up 25 percent of the housing stock and attached single family units account for 8 percent of the city’s housing.

The relatively low percentage of single-family housing in Bridgeport sets it apart from neighboring municipalities, whose housing stock consists almost exclusively of detached single-family residences. The county’s other large cities, Norwalk and Stamford, contain multifamily units, but this housing is generally lower density than similar housing found in Bridgeport.

Housing types vary across Bridgeport’s neighborhoods. The majority of Bridgeport’s low-density housing is found in the North End and North Bridgeport, as well as in Black Rock and portions of the Brooklawn/St. Vincent’s neighborhood. Medium- and high-density residences are concentrated in the central and southern parts of the City, although there are some pockets of high-density housing in the North End and in the Reservoir/Whiskey Hill area. While some areas, including Lake Forest and Whiskey Hill/Reservoir, are characterized mostly by single-family detached housing, others such as Brooklawn, Black Rock, East End, East Side and West End/West Side have a range of housing types including single-family attached units and smaller multifamily units. Housing in other neighborhoods such as Downtown consists mainly of larger multifamily residences.

### 10.4 | HOUSING STOCK

The majority of the city’s housing stock (68 percent) was built before 1960; of those units, nearly 40 percent of residential structures were built before 1939. Most of Bridgeport’s single-family housing was built in the 1950s.

Bridgeport’s aging housing stock, having experienced a lack of maintenance and, in some cases, substantial disinvestment, has resulted in blighted conditions in many parts of the city. Over time, vacant and deteriorating structures negatively impact both property values and quality-of-life in the city’s neighborhoods. In order to address the negative visual and social effects of blighted properties, the City implemented an aggressive anti-blight program in June 2005. This initiative, “Stop Trashing Bridgeport,” has been very successful at removing blight and improving the appearance of city neighborhoods. The City’s Anti-Blight office, which administers the program, has issued more than 600 anti-blight warnings and 240 citations since the initiative began.

According to the czbLLC housing study, between 2000 and 2005, the number of vacant housing units in the city increased by approximately 65 percent, and by 2005, nearly 30 percent of vacant units in Fairfield County were located in Bridgeport. By 2005, the city’s vacancy rate was fully double the county’s (12 percent versus 6 percent). Vacancy rates within the city varied by housing type and tended to be greatest in buildings with at least five units (particularly those with 50 units or more) and in housing constructed either in the 1940s or 1970s. This trend is particularly notable in neighborhoods such as the Hollow and the East End, which have a high concentration of high-density and older housing units.

Table 10-2 | Housing Types

Housing Type	Percent of Units
Single-Family, detached	25%
Single-Family, attached	8%
Multifamily, 2-4 units	38%
Multifamily, 5-49 units	19%
Multifamily, 50+ units	10%

Source: City of Bridgeport GIS data, BFJ Planning & Urbanomics, 2007 base data, updated 2008

### 10.5 | HOME OWNERSHIP AND HOUSING DEMAND

In 2000, Bridgeport’s homeownership rate was just 43 percent. Although the city’s homeownership rate increased slightly (to 49% in 2005), it remained well below the county’s (which also increased, to 72% in 2005). As shown on Chart 10-1, the homeownership rate in Bridgeport is significantly lower than that of other municipalities in Fairfield County.

Owner-occupancy and homeownership rates are typically correlated with levels of property upkeep and maintenance and the overall condition of city neighborhoods. Higher homeownership and owner-occupant levels are generally associated with more desirable neighborhoods. Based on 2000 Census data, homeownership rates in Bridgeport’s northern neighborhoods exceeded 50 percent and reached over 75 percent in some areas. At the same time, just 35 percent of East End residents and 24 percent of East Side residents owned their homes. In the Downtown and Hollow neighborhoods, homeownership rates were just 11 and 16 percent, respectively. (It is expected that the rate of homeownership in Downtown will increase sharply in the future as commercial buildings are converted to market-rate, homeownership residences.)

The difference in homeownership rates across city neighborhoods reflects the varying nature of Bridgeport’s housing stock. Single family homes (both detached and attached) have the highest homeownership rates; therefore, single family neighborhoods tend to have relatively high homeownership. In some neighborhoods such as the East Side, East End and Hollow, however, the presence of single-family housing stock does not correlate with high homeownership levels. In these areas, low homeownership rates reflect weak overall demand by potential homebuyers who have the choice to live elsewhere. Table 10-3 provides a breakdown of homeownership rates in single-family detached and attached housing by neighborhood.

Varying demand for housing in city neighborhoods is also reflected in homeownership trends over time. Between 1990 and 2000 some neighborhoods, including the Hollow, Brooklawn/St. Vincent, West End/West Side and East Side, lost approximately 20 percent of their homeowners. Neighborhoods that have typically been characterized by high homeownership rates, including the North End and North Bridgeport, also lost homeowners. At the same time, other neighborhoods, including Downtown and Brooklawn/St. Vincent, experienced gains in homeownership. In Reservoir/Whiskey Hill, East End and East Side, the population of both owners and renters declined, indicating housing market weakness in these areas. The change in Bridgeport’s homeownership rates by neighborhood between 1990 and 2000 is shown on Table 10-4.

Chart 10-1 | Homeownership Rates: Fairfield County (2000)

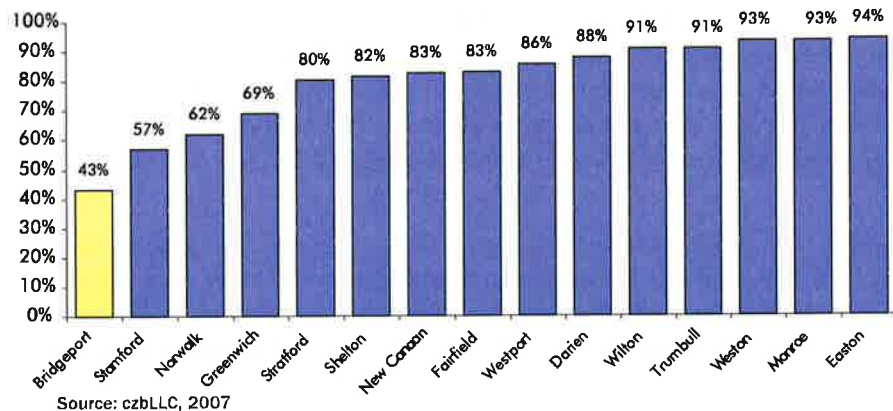




Table 10-3  
Homeownership of Single-Family Units by  
Neighborhood (2000)

Neighborhood	Single-Family Detached	Single-Family Attached
North End	92%	67%
Reservoir/Whiskey Hill	89%	63%
North Bridgeport	92%	42%
Boston Ave./Mill Hill	84%	65%
East End	51%	37%
East Side	55%	31%
Enterprise Zone	0%	0%
Downtown	65%	53%
South End	39%	87%
Black Rock	88%	65%
West End/West Side	67%	25%
Hollow	52%	30%
Brooklawn/St. Vincent	83%	46%

Source: czbLLC, 2007

Table 10-5 | Average Sale Price, 2004-2006

Neighborhood	Average Sale Price	
	Single-Family	Multifamily
North End	\$278,963	\$327,383
Reservoir/Whiskey Hill	\$242,083	\$325,020
North Bridgeport	\$225,201	\$274,611
Boston Ave./Mill Hill	\$165,795	\$256,185
East End	\$136,732	\$230,212
East Side	\$150,578	\$240,510
Enterprise Zone	\$155,500	\$265,955
Downtown	\$148,167	\$263,657
South End	\$255,000	\$251,276
Black Rock	\$409,860	\$330,386
West End/West Side	\$189,056	\$268,431
Hollow	\$167,662	\$268,300
Brooklawn/St. Vincent	\$243,292	\$332,295

Source: czbLLC, 2007

Table 10-4  
Homeownership by Neighborhood (1999-2000)

Neighborhood	Owner Households			Renter Households		
	1999	2000	% Change 1999-2000	1999	2000	% Change 1999-2000
North End	7,120	7,008	-2%	4,608	5,037	9%
Reservoir/Whiskey Hill	3,210	3,084	-4%	1,135	1,091	-4%
North Bridgeport	2,376	2,251	-5%	1,793	2,108	18%
Boston Ave./Mill Hill	2,027	1,865	-8%	2,167	2,193	1%
East End	1,168	1,022	-13%	2,097	1,859	-11%
East Side	1,217	939	-23%	4,191	3,056	-27%
Enterprise Zone	79	67	-15%	209	187	-11%
Downtown	76	114	50%	1,068	884	-17%
South End	407	358	-12%	1,000	963	-4%
Black Rock	1,654	1,653	0%	2,517	2,468	-2%
West End/West Side	1,467	1,183	-19%	4,232	4,140	-2%
Hollow	609	491	-19%	2,518	2,672	6%
Brooklawn/St. Vincent	1,689	1,723	2%	1,689	1,891	12%

Source: czbLLC, 2007

## 10.6 | HOUSING VALUE

Between 2000 and 2005, the median value of owner-occupied single-family housing in Bridgeport increased by 85 percent, from \$117,500 to \$218,800. This is a significant recovery from the previous ten-year period, when median value fell by 19 percent, from \$145,900 to \$117,500. This recent housing market trend indicates that Bridgeport's housing market is gaining significant strength. According to the czbLLC housing study, this upswing can largely be attributed to Bridgeport's position as an island of valuable, underutilized development opportunities surrounded by a substantially saturated and strong regional housing market.

However, the average sales price for single family and multifamily homes varies substantially among Bridgeport's neighborhoods, as shown in Table 10-5. The highest-priced homes, both single- and multifamily, are found in Black Rock, North End, Brooklawn/St. Vincent and Reservoir/Whiskey Hill. The lowest-priced single-family homes are found in the East End, East Side and Enterprise Zone; and the lowest-priced multifamily homes are found in the East End, East Side and South End.

### 10.7 | AFFORDABILITY

Compared to other municipalities in the region, Bridgeport has the highest proportion of very low-income households, as measured by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Median Income (AMI) estimates. Approximately 41 percent of the city's households earn less than 50 percent of AMI; only 18 percent earn more than 120 percent of AMI. In 2005, one-quarter of Bridgeport households earned \$20,000 or less, and almost half of city households earned less than \$35,000; only 20 percent of Bridgeport households earned \$75,000 or more. In comparison, in Fairfield County just 14 percent of households earned \$20,000 or less and 25 percent earned less than \$35,000, while 48 percent earned \$75,000 or more. In 2005, Bridgeport's poverty rate was 18 percent, more than double the county's overall poverty rate.

Median rent in Bridgeport is approximately 80 percent of the county median. From 2000 to 2005, the city's median rent rose 30 percent, from \$671 to \$869. Between 1990 and 2005, the gap between median rent in Bridgeport and median rent in Fairfield County's other urban areas grew, indicating increasing affordability in Bridgeport relative to the region. While Bridgeport's median rent was \$200 less per month than Stamford's in 1990, in 2005 rent was an average of \$450 less per month. Still, between 2000 and 2005, the number of Bridgeport apartments renting for less than \$500 a month decreased by 40 percent. During this period the number of apartments renting for less than \$750 per month decreased by more than 50 percent.

Even though Bridgeport rents remain significantly lower than those elsewhere in Fairfield County, these declines in low-cost units mean that many Bridgeport residents face housing cost burdens. A household is considered "cost burdened" if more than one-third of its income is spent on housing. Increasing housing burdens are affecting both renters and owners in the city. In 2000, 40 percent of city households (43 percent of renters and 33 percent of owners) spent more than they could afford on housing.

Residents' fairly stagnant incomes are also an issue. Recent HUD data shows that housing costs are outpacing income growth. Fair market rents in Bridgeport have risen 27 percent since 2000 – approximately four percent per year – while median household income has grown an average of 3 percent per year and average wages paid in the

City of Bridgeport have grown approximately 2 percent per year. Therefore, while Bridgeport offers affordable housing opportunities relative to the region, housing is becoming less affordable for Bridgeport residents.

### 10.8 | HOUSING MARKET CHALLENGES

During the 1990s, the average income of households (including renters and owners) moving into the city was approximately \$42,000, while the average income of those households moving out of the city was approximately \$60,000. In contrast, nearby suburban towns were attracting households with an average income of \$100,000.

Between 2000 and 2005, Bridgeport has experienced a substantial shift in its housing market with an increasing number of homebuyers from outside the county and outside the state. Demand from lower Fairfield County, New York (particularly the Bronx) and New Jersey has grown in recent years. These householders often have multiple jobs and cannot afford housing closer to their places of employment and are often first-time homebuyers.

While Bridgeport's relative affordability makes it an attractive housing choice for many, the city faces numerous challenges in attracting and retaining moderate- and higher-income households and families. The city has a legacy of fiscal problems, which have limited its ability to provide municipal services at a comparable cost to neighboring municipalities. Population decline over the course of the last decade has also made it more difficult for the city to improve public services and quality-of-life without increasing the fiscal burden on residents. As shown on Table 10-6, Bridgeport's tax rate is significantly higher than those of other Fairfield County communities. This places an undue burden on property owners, hindering property investment.

In order to transform its neighborhoods from communities of necessity to communities of choice, the quality and cost of local services must be addressed. The czbLLC housing study notes that real estate agents and lenders cite the city's public schools as a significant factor in households' decisions to move out of Bridgeport. This is a particularly significant loss because families with school-aged children are typically in their prime earning years and tend to invest in the social

Table 10-6 | Property Tax Mil Rates in Bridgeport and Neighboring Areas (2006)

Location	Mil Rate
Stamford High*	30.7
Stamford Low*	27.9
<b>Bridgeport</b>	<b>42.3</b>
Easton	26.6
Stratford	28.9
Monroe	26.1
Town of Fairfield	16.7
Trumbull	21.7
Shelton	24.3

\*Stamford has six different regions, with varying mil rates  
Source: State of Connecticut, czbLLC, 2007

and physical capital of their communities. In addition, the city's relatively high crime rate – or the perception of crime – compared to neighboring municipalities is noted as a contributing factor in people's decision to leave Bridgeport.

## 10.9 | HOUSING POLICIES

Despite the challenges to its housing market, Bridgeport is well positioned to take advantage of the market strength and private resources of the region. As property values have risen throughout Fairfield County, many people have been priced out of the market and are looking for an affordable housing alternative. Bridgeport offers multi-modal transportation access to regional employment centers and a unique urban experience in the region in addition to relatively affordable real estate. These qualities must be capitalized upon in order for the city to attract the young professional, empty nester, and middle-income populations it needs in order to enhance its fiscal strength and diversify its population.

The upswing in Bridgeport's housing market is nearing a tipping point. The question is no longer "what if the Bridgeport housing market gets stronger?" The questions now are:

- *When will the market get stronger?*
- *How strong will it get?*
- *How should the City position itself to benefit most from these forces?*
- *How should the City invest public dollars to complement and shape these forces?*

The answer to these questions depends on the City's ability to attract households at a mix of incomes and diversify its population. An economically diverse population will help Bridgeport deconcentrate poverty, increase its property values, and ease the existing tax burden on city residents. Targeting a mixed-income population is also key to creating a range of housing choices, or a "housing ladder" within the city that would allow people to move from one type of housing to another within Bridgeport as their incomes rise. This housing ladder is essential to building the social capital of the city and reinventing Bridgeport as a community of choice, rather than a place where people live out of necessity.

At the same time, the City's housing policy must recognize that as Bridgeport capitalizes on the market potential of its housing stock and realizes the benefits of increased fiscal strength, it will need to address the impact – in terms of housing choice and affordability – of rising housing costs on low-income households. Bridgeport must plan for this eventuality and be sensitive to it, without negatively impacting housing revitalization efforts in the city. Bridgeport must work to build its housing market now; efforts to keep the city affordable should not prevent development. The present need for a good development environment, however, does not preclude sensitivity to the pressures on affordability that will likely occur in the future.

The czbLLC study recommends a three-part housing strategy for Bridgeport that encourages additional growth of the private market's demand for housing in Bridgeport by building on the city's assets, strengthening its neighborhoods to create communities of choice, and leveraging growth to preserve existing affordable units:

### 1) Building on Assets

Private developers are already taking note of Bridgeport's existing assets. Despite slow growth in its housing market over the past several decades, over 4,900 units are pending approval through current applications with the City. Realtors and lenders have noted an increase in developer interest over the past five years with increased sales of lots and buildings for development and redevelopment.

In order to ensure that developer interest is translated into development projects that benefit the city, diversify neighborhoods, and contribute to the achievement of Bridgeport's housing goals, the City should adopt an inclusionary zoning ordinance. An inclusionary zoning ordinance will allow the City to provide incentives to developers such as special permits and expedited application review to attract development to targeted areas, while raising new resources for the development of affordable housing units and neighborhood revitalization efforts. It is a tool that encourages market rate housing and extracts value from such development to be used to further affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization goals. Consistent with the State of Connecticut's affordable housing policy, the inclusionary zoning ordinance should require developers to provide 10 percent of units as affordable either through construction on-site, off-site or contribution of an in-lieu payment to the Housing Trust Fund.

### 2) Strengthening Neighborhoods

Transforming many Bridgeport neighborhoods into communities of choice will require increasing local demand by rehabilitating existing properties, deconverting multi-unit properties back to single-family homes, and providing incentives for households at a range of income levels to purchase homes. Such activities can be sponsored by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or HOME funds, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs), or other public or foundation support. Strengthening neighborhoods will also require soft loan programs that provide rehabilitation funds for homeowners, and neighborhood rehabilitation programs that assist homeowners in maintaining their properties. Infill housing development within neighborhoods through non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity will also be an important component of community revitalization.

In addition to these traditional sources, a Housing Trust Fund should be set up to support such efforts. Developers building in areas targeted by the inclusionary zoning ordinance would have the option of contributing funds to the city's Housing Trust Fund in lieu of providing affordable housing units on- or off-site. The Fund could be designed to support a range of activities, such as intensive beautification projects and crime reduction efforts. Fund-sponsored activities within a particular neighborhood should be tailored to existing neighborhood market conditions and housing stocks.

### 3) Preserving Affordable Housing

While the Housing Trust Fund will primarily focus on efforts to stimulate demand in the city's weaker neighborhoods, a new community land trust would be a mechanism to ensure that units remain affordable into the future as property values in the city rise. The community land trust would be a new entity, incorporated as a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization based in the city of Bridgeport. It would acquire and renovate scattered site properties and sell the structures to residents at affordable prices. The czbLLC housing study proposes a goal of preserving 500 units of affordable owner-occupied housing by the year 2017 through direct acquisition and resale and another 250 through donations (City-owned properties or new privately developed units sold into the Trust).

By retaining control of the land, the community land trust would be able to reduce the sale price of affected units by the value of the land (as well as any other subsidies used to make the unit affordable to households at particular income levels). Owners of the homes on community land trust land would pay a monthly lease fee. As owners decide to move, they would sell their home in a conventional transaction. They would also be permitted to profit from capital gains on the property, based on a formula provided by the trust. The launch of the Trust could be seeded by a contribution from new development taking place in the inclusionary zone. A portion of this contribution would be retained for administrative and legal costs and hiring staff for the trust, while the remainder would be spent on acquiring and rehabilitating strategically located properties.

In addition, as part of its housing strategy, the City of Bridgeport should take advantage of recently adopted state legislation that provides new incentives for affordable housing through the creation of smart growth districts. This legislation allows municipalities to create districts targeted for a mix of higher density housing, including affordable housing, for families, individuals and persons with special needs. Such districts are eligible for grants for affordable housing through the State's Office of Policy and Management. Bridgeport should designate Downtown, Steel Point, 60 Main Street and the industrial area between I-95 and the railroad – known as the "smile" – as smart growth districts. Significant private investment is expected in these areas and such designation will help ensure that affordable housing is provided as part of new, market-rate development projects.



# 11.0

## NEIGHBORHOODS

### POLICIES

- 1 *Rejuvenate neighborhoods by enhancing quality-of-life.*
- 2 *Revitalize neighborhoods with neighborhood planning.*

### GOALS

- 1 *Emphasize property upkeep and safety as the keys to attractive communities.*
- 2 *Neighborhood level planning initiatives will be encouraged and supported.*

### 11.1 | NEIGHBORHOODS OVERVIEW

Enhancing quality-of-life in the city's neighborhoods is one of the six overarching themes of the Master Plan. Bridgeport's neighborhoods are the centers of community and have a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of city residents. The condition of a neighborhood's housing stock, neighborhood commercial centers, community facilities, public services and its parks and open spaces are central to the quality-of-life of its residents. The keys to maintaining attractive communities are property upkeep and safety. When properties are well-maintained and people feel safe in their neighborhoods, residents take pride in their communities and become invested in them. Investment of social capital – the time and effort that people contribute to civic engagement – is an essential building block of stable neighborhoods.

Bridgeport currently has an aggressive anti-blight program that has successfully removed abandoned and hazardous buildings from city neighborhoods. This initiative should be supplemented with a strengthened community policing program that engages neighborhood residents and provides police to “walk the beat” to enhance neighborhood safety and increase residents’ sense of ownership and investment in their communities. In addition, grant and loan programs should be provided to encourage property maintenance and improvements.

Along with maintenance and safety, successful urban neighborhoods must provide a support structure for families that includes retail services, public services, schools and parks/open space. These supportive elements are essential to creating communities of choice in Bridgeport where residents chose to stay when they can afford to leave. The City is making important strides to upgrade neighborhood infrastructure with significant investments in new and expanded public school facilities that are being designed to serve as neighborhood centers with playing fields that are open to the community after school hours, improvements to libraries and new senior and community centers.

In combination with capital investments, investments are also being made in community building and community organizing at the neighborhood level. Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) plans are being developed by and for communities throughout the city. The NRZ program was created by the State of Connecticut in 1995 to give neighborhoods a greater say in determining their future and assist them in neighborhood planning and community building activities. In Bridgeport, NRZ plans have been approved for the Hollow and East End neighborhoods and plans are currently being developed for Black Rock, East Side, West Side/West End and South End. The City should continue to encourage community-based planning efforts and support the implementation of NRZ plan recommendations for its neighborhoods.

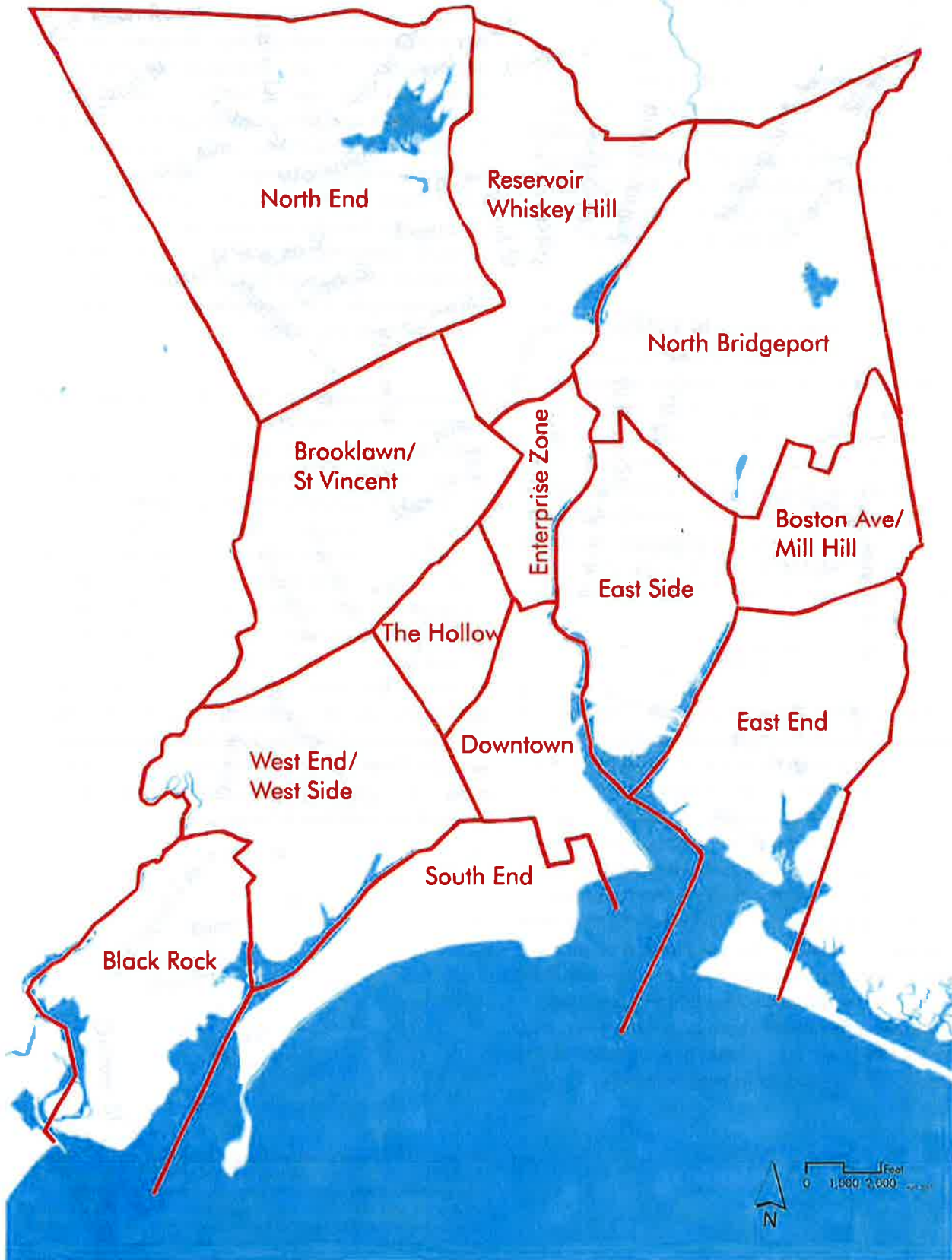
## 11.2 | Neighborhood Profile Overview

Rivers, highway corridors and community perceptions define Bridgeport’s neighborhoods. While one person’s sense of a neighborhood’s boundaries may differ from another’s, for the purpose of this Master Plan, 13 city neighborhoods have been delineated, as shown on Figure 11-1. The boundaries of these neighborhoods follow Census tract boundaries, allowing for compatible comparisons across neighborhoods, and respect local understanding of neighborhood lines to the greatest extent possible. However, locally defined districts, such as school districts, police precincts or Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs), do not necessarily conform to neighborhood boundaries as discussed in this Master Plan.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter provides a profile of each of the city’s neighborhoods, with the exception of Downtown, as Downtown is discussed separately in detail in Chapter 8. Each neighborhood profile describes the area’s boundaries and includes a summary of existing neighborhood conditions, including population, racial/ethnic composition, housing stock and employment, and discusses neighborhood planning and development activities. In addition, the profiles describe crime and education conditions in each neighborhood relative to other neighborhoods in the city, based on an index developed by the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) at the University of Connecticut (described below). It should be noted that the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone neighborhood discussed in this chapter are not the same as the boundaries of the State-designated enterprise zone, which provides tax incentives for development.

<sup>1</sup> The City of Bridgeport unofficially recognizes 17 neighborhoods. However, for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Master Plan processes, it was necessary to develop neighborhood indicators that the City can continue to use to chart the progress of neighborhood economic development in terms of quality-of-life issues, for use in capital expenditures and other actions. To make more compatible comparisons among neighborhoods, boundaries were adjusted so each neighborhood, or combination of neighborhoods, would be roughly comparable in size.

Figure 11-1 | Downtown Plan Study Area



Source: BFJ Planning, Urbanomics

The profiles also provide an existing land use map for each neighborhood that includes proposed development sites and the following demographic data:

- *Age (2000)*
- *Race/Ethnicity (2000)*
- *Income (2006)*
- *Employment (2000)*
- *Educational attainment (2000)*
- *Students meeting State of Connecticut Master Test goals for Grades 4 and 6 (2006)*
- *Average SAT scores (2006)*
- *Students per classroom (2006)*
- *Students per teacher (2006)*
- *Housing*
  - > *Owner occupancy (2006)*
  - > *Vacancy (2006)*
  - > *Structures over 20 years old (2006)*
  - > *Units with 1+ cars (2006)*
  - > *Overcrowded units (2006)*
  - > *Average sales price (2006)*
- *Parks/Open Space (2006)*
- *Crime (reported felonies - 2006)*
- *Blight citations (2005-2006)*

The purpose of this data is to provide each neighborhood with a current baseline measure for economic and social indicators. These indicators will allow each neighborhood to compare future progress to present conditions and track achievements in enhancing quality-of-life. They also provide information necessary to compare existing conditions and future progress across neighborhoods.



Table 11-1 | 2006 Neighborhood Development Index and Neighborhood Rankings

Neighborhood	Overall Neighborhood Development Index	Income Index	Education Index	Crime Index
Black Rock	5	2	10	13
Boston Avenue/Mill Hill	6	8	2	6
Brooklawn/St. Vincent	3	4	3	10
Downtown	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
East End	8	7	8	3
East Side	10	10	9	4
Enterprise Zone	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Hollow	7	6	4	5
North Bridgeport	4	5	5	11
North End	1	3	1	12
South End	2	1	6	9
Reservoir/Whiskey Hill	N/A	N/A	N/A	8
West End/West Side	9	9	7	7

Source: CCEA, 2007

### 11.3 | Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA)

#### Neighborhood Baseline Report

As part of the Master Plan project, the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) at the University of Connecticut prepared a baseline report that documents trends in crime rates, school performance and income and housing characteristics across the city's neighborhoods. This report provides a Neighborhood Development Index for each neighborhood, which is a combined measure of neighborhood performance in terms of income, school quality and crime relative to other Bridgeport neighborhoods. This overall comparative index is based on three indices: a crime index that measures the relative incidence of crime, an education index that measures relative school performance and an income index that measures relative standard of living. The crime index is based on violent crime reports received from the Bridgeport Police Department, which are aggregated by neighborhood. These rates (incidents/100 residents) are weighted to reflect the fact that some crimes, such as murder and rape, have a

greater impact on neighborhood safety than others such as auto theft and burglary. The education index is based on test scores and program participation rates for public schools compiled by the Connecticut Department of Education. The income index is based on changes in income adjusted for inflation and median housing sales price by neighborhood as reported by Connecticut's multiple listing service. The complete CCEA report is included in this Master Plan as Appendix D.

Table 11-1 shows the components of the Neighborhood Development Index and each neighborhood's rating for 2006, referred to in the neighborhood profiles. For both the income and education indices, data are not available for Downtown, the Enterprise Zone or the South End. Therefore, these indices provide rankings by neighborhood based on a total of ten neighborhoods. As crime data are available for all neighborhoods, the crime index rating is based on a total of 13 neighborhoods.

## BLACK ROCK

The Black Rock neighborhood is located along the coast in Bridgeport's southwestern corner. It is bordered by the town of Fairfield to the west, Black Rock Harbor to the south, the South End neighborhood to the east and the West End/West Side neighborhood to the north. The area contains two historic districts: the Black Rock Gardens Historic District and the Black Rock Historic District. With a thriving restaurant row, almost one in every six arts, entertainment and hospitality jobs in Bridgeport are located in Black Rock. However, this sector offers the lowest-paying jobs of all of Black Rock's industries, with an average annual wage of approximately \$21,500. The average salary for jobs located in Black Rock is \$39,000.

In 2000, Black Rock was home to 8,863 residents. The majority of the neighborhood's population was white (56.6%) followed by Hispanics (19.6%) and Black non-Hispanics (18.0%). Nineteen percent of the neighborhood's residents were foreign-born. There were 4,322 housing units in Black Rock in 2000, over 90 percent of which were built before 1980. Single-family homes are the predominant housing type in the neighborhood, but owner-occupied units account for less than 40 percent of total housing units.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks Black Rock fifth overall in terms of quality-of-life compared with Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. Although crime rates in the neighborhood are relatively low, Black Rock experienced a decline in both educational performance and real income between 2001 and 2006.

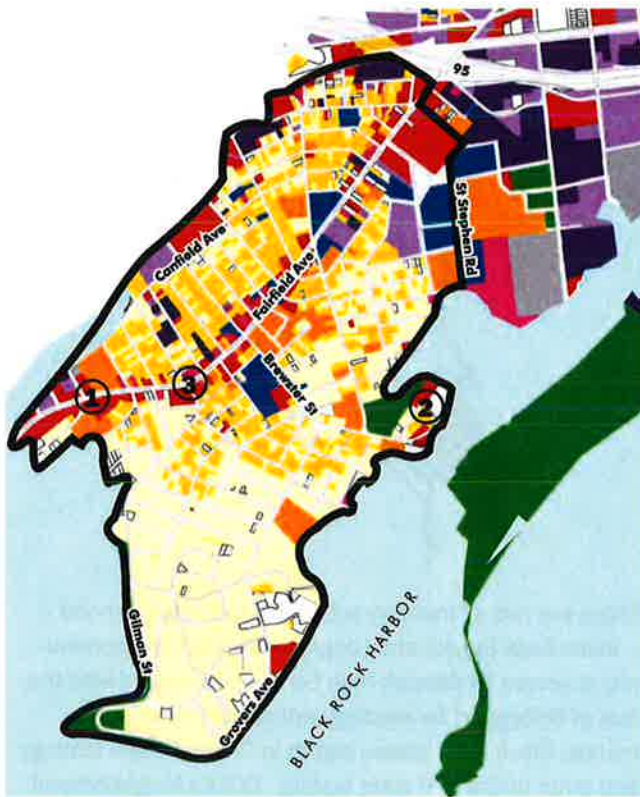


There are two elementary schools in the neighborhood – Black Rock School and Longfellow School; the community is served by Bassick High School. Compared with the rest of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, Black Rock places eighth in Grade 4 state testing and tenth in Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Education Index places Black Rock tenth out of the ten city neighborhoods that it evaluates. In contrast, CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks Black Rock lowest in terms of level of crime experienced in the neighborhood relative to all other neighborhoods in the city.

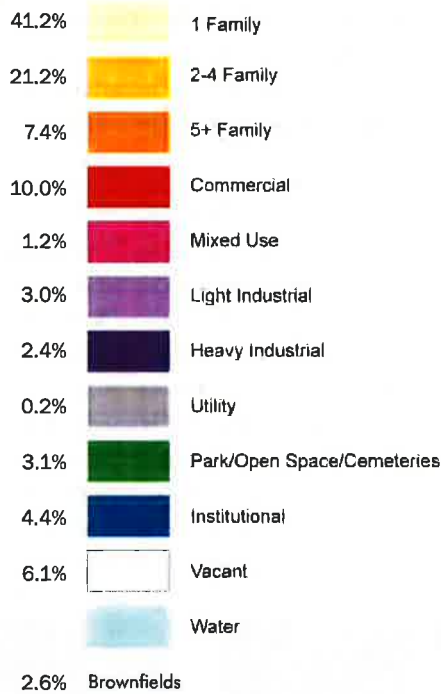
### Neighborhood Planning and Development

Black Rock has an active Community Council and a well-defined sense of neighborhood. Recent community activism activities in the neighborhood have included the introduction of a resolution for a moratorium on heavy industrial uses on the waterfront, the promotion of a Black Rock train station and creation of a Black Rock Restaurant District. In addition, the neighborhood promotes community activities such as the Art Walk and fundraisers for local charities. Black Rock is currently working to prepare its Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) Plan.





**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**

1. Riverbank Landing
2. Brewster Street Residential
3. Black Rock Restaurant District

**Black Rock**

<b>Population</b>	8,863
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	7.3%
19 years & under	20.2%
65 years & under	12.8%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	80.4%
White	56.6%
Black	18.0%
Asiary/Other	5.4%
Hispanic	19.6%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$67,514
Persons Below Poverty	13.4%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	6.0%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	20.4%
HS Graduate	25.8%
Some College	23.4%
College Degree+	30.4%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	6.0%
Grade 6	2.1%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	352
Math	345
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	24.16
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	18.73
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	4,332
Owner Occupied	38.2%
Renter Occupied	57.0%
Vacant Units	4.9%
Built Last 20 Years	9.1%
With 1+ Cars	83.7%
Overcrowded Units	4.1%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$409,860
Multifamily	\$330,386
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	1.6%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	142
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	53
No. of Foreclosures*	0

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test



### BOSTON AVENUE/MILL HILL

The Boston Avenue/Mill Hill neighborhood is located on the eastern border of Bridgeport and is bounded by the Town of Stratford to the east, Lake Success Business Park (also known as Remington Woods) to the north, Seaview Avenue to the west and Barnum Avenue to the south. Although largely residential, Boston Avenue/Mill Hill is known for its medical and educational institutions, including Bridgeport Hospital and numerous doctors' offices. These institutions have a significant impact on employment in the neighborhood, with 74 percent of residents employed in health and education services. The average salary of Boston Avenue/Mill Hill residents working in this industry was \$53,114 in 1999, just above the neighborhood average, but more than 18 percent higher than all citywide wages for the sector.

In 2000 there were 10,322 residents in Boston Avenue/Mill Hill. The neighborhood's population was divided fairly evenly among racial/ethnic groups – 35 percent of the population was Black non-Hispanic, 34 percent was Hispanic and 26 percent was White. Asians accounted for 5 percent of the neighborhood's population. Seventeen percent of the neighborhood's residents were foreign-born. In 2000, the neighborhood had 4,449 housing units, over 80 percent of which were built before 1980. Multifamily homes are the predominant housing type in the neighborhood, and approximately half of the housing stock is owner-occupied. Boston Avenue/Mill Hill is home to two historic districts, Remington City Historic District and Remington Village Historic District.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks Boston Avenue/Mill Hill sixth overall in terms of quality-of-life compared with Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. Over the course of the past six years (2000-2006), this neighborhood has experienced a decrease in crime and an improvement in its public schools. There are two elementary schools in Boston Avenue/Mill Hill – Edison School and Hall School – and the area is served by Harding High School, which is located in the neighborhood. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, Boston Avenue/Mill Hill places sixth in Grade 4 state testing and third in Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Education Index places the area second out of the ten city neighborhoods it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks Boston Avenue/Mill Hill sixth out of the 13 neighborhoods it evaluates.

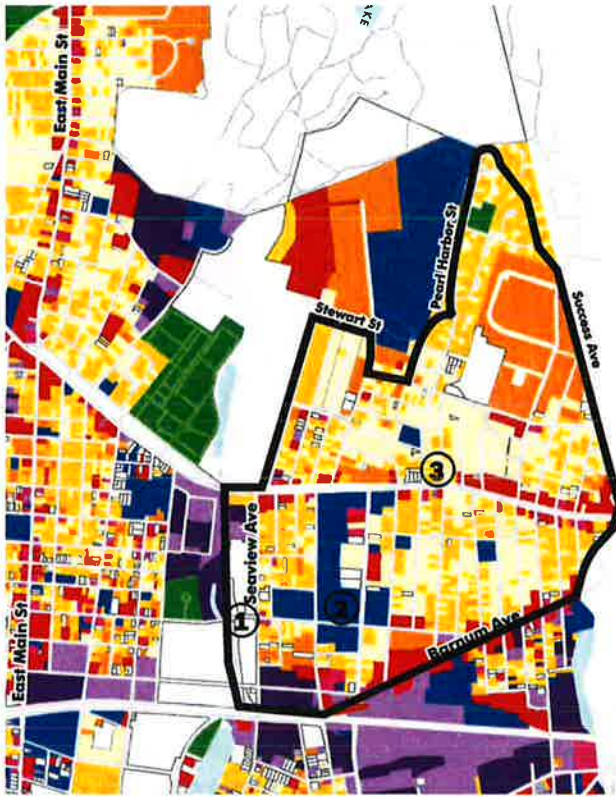


#### Neighborhood Planning and Development

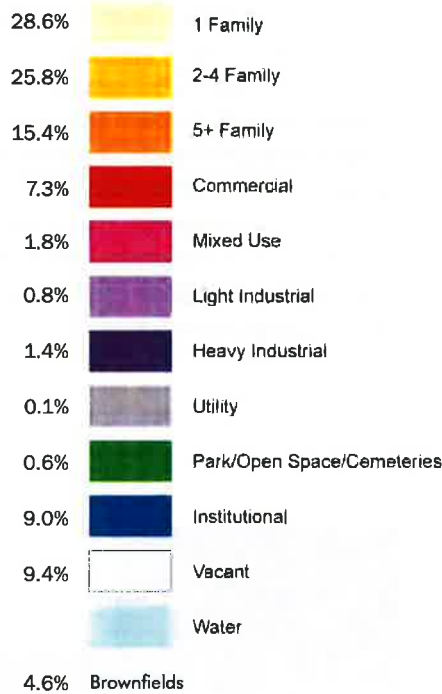
Anchored by Bridgeport Hospital and surrounding residential neighborhoods, the Boston Avenue/Mill Hill neighborhood is solidly mid-level in terms of its desirability relative to Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. Recent development activity in the community includes the construction of Carriage Crossing, a 22-unit townhouse development, a \$15 million expansion of the Bridgeport Hospital Emergency Room and planned infrastructure upgrades to the Seaview Avenue Corridor. While these developments are positive indicators for the neighborhood, the Boston Avenue/Mill Hill community has not yet engaged in a neighborhood-level planning process to identify a vision for its future.







**Existing Land Use**



- Proposed Development**
1. Seaview Avenue Transit Corridor
  2. Bridgeport Hospital Expansion
  3. Carriage Crossing Residential

**Boston Avenue/Mill Hill**

<b>Population</b>	10,322
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	9.9%
19 years & under	30.6%
65 years & under	11.8%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	66.3%
White	26.4%
Black	35.0%
Asian/Other	4.9%
Hispanic	33.7%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$49,689
Persons Below Poverty	16.5%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	12.1%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	38.2%
HS Graduate	33.5%
Some College	21.5%
College Degree+	6.8%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	12.9%
Grade 6	16.2%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	374
Math	370
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	24.03
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	17.37
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	4,449
Owner Occupied	41.9%
Renter Occupied	49.3%
Vacant Units	8.8%
Built Last 20 Years	7.8%
With 1+ Cars	72.0%
Overcrowded Units	7.5%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$165,795
Multifamily	\$256,185
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	0.2%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	385
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	103
No. of Foreclosures*	0

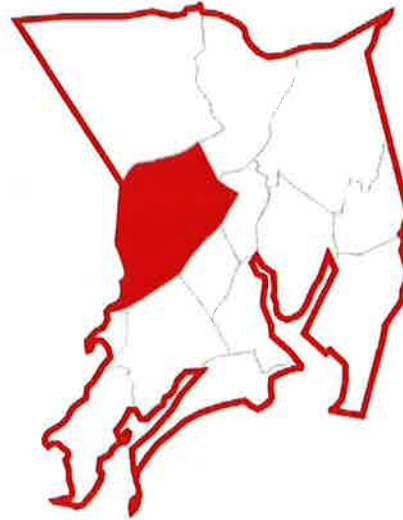
Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test

### BROOKLAWN/ST. VINCENT

The Brooklawn/St. Vincent neighborhood is located adjacent to the Town of Fairfield and lies between the middle-income North End and the lower-income West End/West Side. The neighborhood derives a portion of its name, and much of its character, from the presence of St. Vincent's Medical Center. Not only do the hospital and associated medical office uses (along with Central High School) contribute to Brooklawn/St. Vincent's large concentration of institutional uses, but they have effects on neighborhood employment as well. The largest number of employed residents (52%) work in education and health services and accounted for almost 20 percent of Bridgeport's workers in this industry. Education and health services paid an annual salary of \$47,525, which is greater than both the sector's citywide average and the neighborhood's average annual wage.

In 2000, Brooklawn/St. Vincent had 22,600 residents. The majority of residents (42%) were White non-Hispanic, followed by Hispanic (25%), Black non-Hispanic (20%) and Asian (13%). Approximately 30 percent of the neighborhood's residents were foreign-born. In 2000 the neighborhood had 9,062 housing units, over 90 percent of which were built before 1980. The overall character of the neighborhood is single-family residential; however, more than half of its housing is renter-occupied. The area contains part of the Stratfield Historic District.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks Brooklawn/St. Vincent third overall in terms of quality-of-life compared with Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. Over the course of the past two years (2004 to 2006), the neighborhood has experienced a decrease in crime and improvement in its public schools. There are four elementary schools in Brooklawn/St. Vincent – the Blackham, Madison, Read and Maplewood Schools – and the area is served by Central High School. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance,



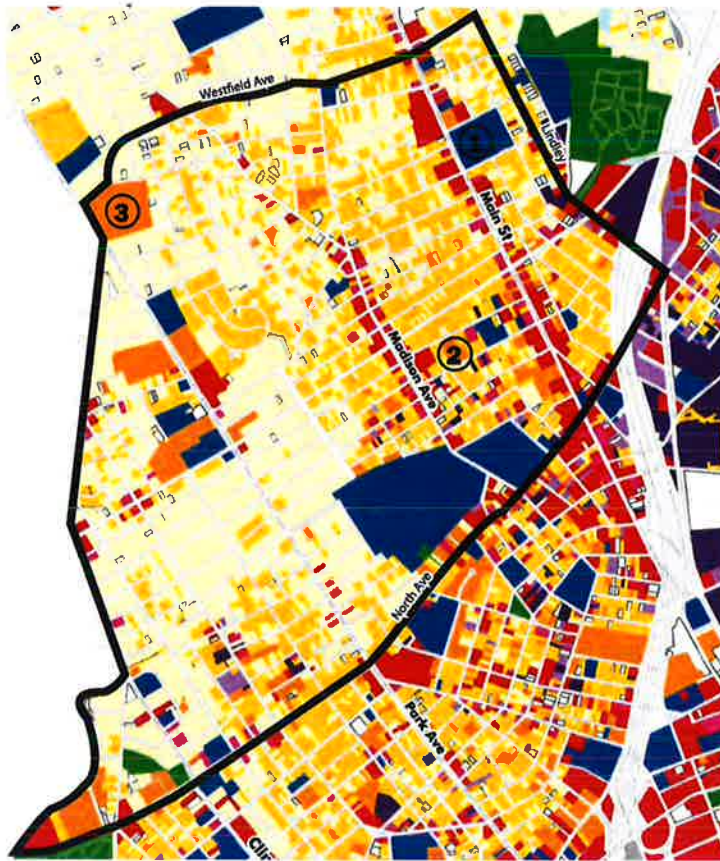
Brooklawn/St. Vincent places second in both Grade 4 and Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Education Index places the neighborhood third out of the ten city neighborhoods it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the area tenth out of the 13 neighborhoods it evaluates, indicating a relatively low level of crime in the neighborhood compared with the rest of the city.

#### Neighborhood Planning and Development

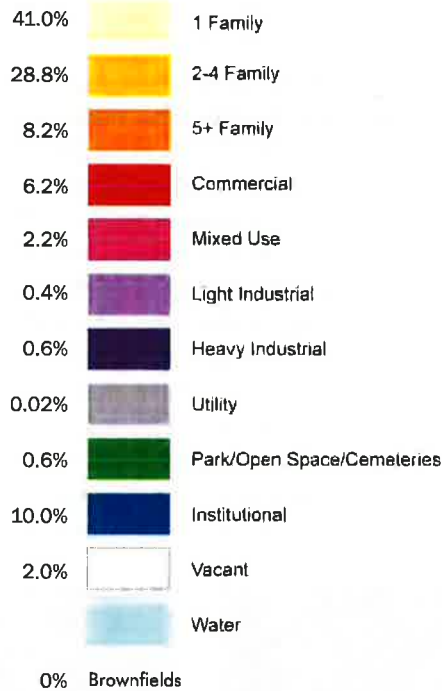
With recent improvements in safety and school performance, Brooklawn/St. Vincent is well positioned to continue to experience increases in housing values. A total of 980 building permits were issued for work in the neighborhood between 1993 and 2006, placing Brooklawn/St. Vincent second in terms of demand for building permits within the city. Most of these permits were for interior and exterior renovations and additions; few permits were issued for new buildings, as the neighborhood is largely built out. The interest in renovations, along with increasing housing values, are positive indicators for the neighborhood. However, the St. Vincent/Mill Hill community has not yet engaged in a neighborhood-level planning process to identify a vision for its future.







**Existing Land Use**



- Proposed Development**
1. St. Vincent's Medical Center Expansion
  2. Federal Arms Condominiums
  3. Watermark CCRC Expansion

**Brooklawn/St. Vincent**

<b>Population</b>	22,600
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	8.0%
19 years & under	27.4%
65 years & under	12.9%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	75.1%
White	42.1%
Black	20.3%
Asian/Other	12.7%
Hispanic	24.9%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$58,578
Persons Below Poverty	12.5%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	6.7%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	29.3%
HS Graduate	31.7%
Some College	24.0%
College Degree+	15.1%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	13.12%
Grade 6	18.20%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	436
Math	427
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	23.44
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	16.88
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	9,062
Owner Occupied	41.6%
Renter Occupied	52.3%
Vacant Units	6.0%
Built Last 20 Years	9.6%
With 1+ Cars	83.8%
Overcrowded Units	6.2%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$243,292
Multifamily	\$332,295
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	0.5%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	479
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	142
No. of Foreclosures*	0

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test

## EAST END

Located adjacent to the Town of Stratford just east of the East Side, the East End neighborhood borders the Long Island Sound and is bisected by I-95 and the Amtrak/Metro-North rail line. Johnson's Creek is a prominent surface water feature in the southeast portion of the neighborhood, and the port is a major industrial use within the community. The East End is characterized by a tight weave of industry and housing typical of pre-World War I industrial areas designed as walk-to-work neighborhoods. In 2000, the largest employment sector in the East End was the manufacturing sector, which accounts for over 40 percent of jobs in the neighborhood. The average wage for manufacturing jobs was approximately \$47,000.

The East End had 8,194 residents in 2000. The majority of residents (65%) were Black non-Hispanic, 26 percent of residents were Hispanic and few were White non-Hispanic (5%) or Asian (4%). The East End has the largest concentration of Black residents in Bridgeport. Less than 10 percent of East End residents are foreign-born. In 2000, the area had 3,288 housing units, 90 percent of which were built before 1980. Housing in the East End is characterized by 2-4 family flats and is mostly renter-occupied. Twelve percent of its housing stock is vacant. The area has three historic districts: Deacon's Point Historic District, Gateway Village Historic District and Wilmot Apartments Historic District.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks the East End eighth overall in terms of quality-of-life compared with Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. Historically, the neighborhood has struggled with some of the highest crime rates in the city. However, in recent years the East End has seen a decrease in crime and increases in income and educational performance. There are two elementary schools in the neighborhood – the Dunbar and McKinley Schools – and the area is served by Harding High School. Compared with the rest of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, the East End places second in Grade 4 state testing and seventh in Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Education Index places the neighborhood eighth out of the ten city neighborhoods it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the area third out of the 13 neighborhoods it evaluates, indicating a relatively high level of crime in the neighborhood compared with the rest of the city.

### Neighborhood Planning and Development

The East End has prepared a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) Plan, which has been adopted by City Council, outlining



the community's vision for its future and recommended land use and zoning changes. The following is a summary of the land use planning and development recommendations of the East End NRZ Plan:

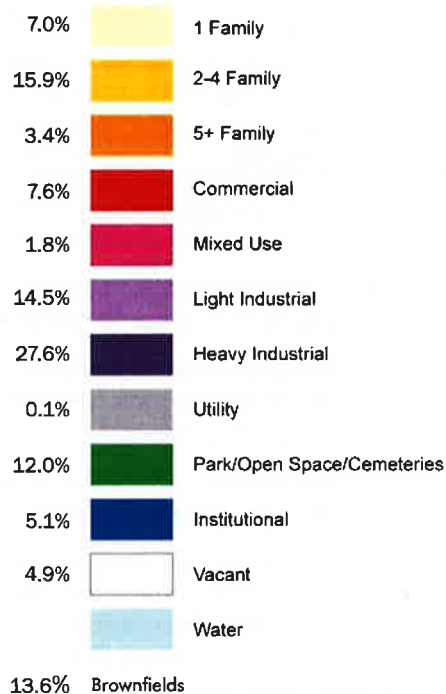
- *Develop design guidelines and performance standards for Stratford Avenue and for the neighborhood.*
- *Provide waterfront access to Johnson's Creek, including a linear park with an elevated walkway along Johnson's Creek with a fishing pier.*
- *Relocate incompatible or conflicting land uses and rezone land from industrial to other, more viable uses, such as office, small business, retail and residential.*
- *Amend zoning regulations to encourage shared parking along commercial and mixed use corridors.*
- *Vegetate vacant land awaiting redevelopment to provide open space for residents.*
- *Reduce exposure to lead paint by increasing monitoring in schools and implementing the HUD abatement program.*
- *Improve water quality in inter-tidal water bodies surrounding the East End.*
- *Improve air quality in the neighborhood by addressing diesel combustion sources such as truck traffic and off-road heavy equipment from industrial and port-related uses.*







**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**

1. Seaview Avenue Industrial Park
2. Columbia Towers
3. Derecktor Expansion
4. Pleasure Beach

**East End**

<b>Population</b>	8,184
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	11.5%
19 years & under	36.3%
65 years & under	7.6%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	74.0%
White	5.2%
Black	65.1%
Asian/Other	3.8%
Hispanic	26.0%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$46,914
Persons Below Poverty	22.6%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	13.7%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	36.4%
HS Graduate	36.7%
Some College	21.2%
College Degree+	5.6%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	5.3%
Grade 6	13.4%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	374
Math	370
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	16.60
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	14.48
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	3,288
Owner Occupied	31.1%
Renter Occupied	56.5%
Vacant Units	12.4%
Built Last 20 Years	10.1%
With 1+ Cars	71.2%
Overcrowded Units	8.3%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$136,732
Multifamily	\$230,212
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	8.7%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	325
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	156
No. of Foreclosures*	7

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test

**EAST SIDE**

The East Side neighborhood is located across the Pequonnock River from the Downtown and the Enterprise Zone, and is adjacent to the East End. With direct access to Bridgeport Harbor, and bisected by I-95 and the Amtrak/Metro-North rail line, the East Side is strategically located, but functionally divided. Education and health care provide the largest number of jobs in the neighborhood, but the average wage of approximately \$37,000 earned by East Side workers in this sector is substantially lower than the industry norm in the city.

The East Side had 13,095 residents in 2000. The majority of residents were Hispanic (67%), followed by Black non-Hispanics (24%), White non-Hispanics (6%) and Asians (3%). Approximately 15 percent of neighborhood residents were foreign-born. In 2000, the neighborhood had 4,577 housing units, over 90 percent of which were built before 1980. The majority of housing in the neighborhood (67%) is multifamily, and is mostly renter-occupied. Nearly one in five housing units in the neighborhood is considered overcrowded, which is the highest rate of overcrowding in the city. In addition, 40 percent of East Side households do not have access to an automobile. The East Side contains the East Main Street Historic District, the East Bridgeport Historic District and the Pembroke City Historic District.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks the East Side last among the city's neighborhoods in terms of quality-of-life. The neighborhood has some of the highest crime rates and lowest income levels in Bridgeport. There are four elementary schools in the East Side – the Barnum, Garfield, Waltersville and Luis Munoz Marin Schools – and the area is served by Harding High School. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, the East Side places ninth in both Grade 4 and Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neigh-



borhood Education Index places the neighborhood ninth out of the ten city neighborhoods it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. The CCEA Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the East Side fourth out of the 13 neighborhoods it evaluates.

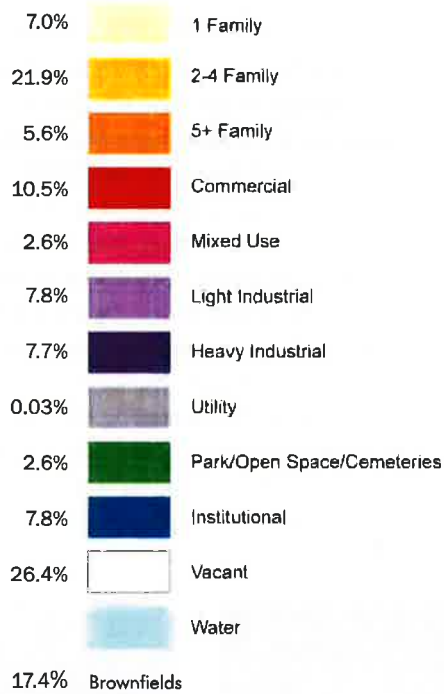
**Neighborhood Planning and Development**

The East Side is currently working to prepare a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) Plan, which will identify programs and strategies to improve the area's physical and social well being. Revitalization in the neighborhood is expected to be stimulated by the proposed mixed-use Steel Point development. This development will serve as a catalyst for rehabilitation and development in the neighborhood and is expected to benefit property values. In addition, new single-family housing is being developed on the former Father Panik Village site. This new housing, which will be located on the site of what was once the most dangerous public housing projects in the city, will have a positive impact on the residential character and quality of housing in the area.





**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**

1. Steel Point
2. Barnum & Waltersville Elementary Schools
3. Remgrit

**East Side**

<b>Population</b>	13,095
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	12.5%
19 years & under	40.3%
65 years & under	5.9%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	33.5%
White	6.1%
Black	23.9%
Asian/Other	3.5%
Hispanic	66.5%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$40,344
Persons Below Poverty	34.1%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	16.2%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	53.7%
HS Graduate	28.0%
Some College	15.0%
College Degree+	3.3%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	5.42%
Grade 6	7.90%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	374
Math	370
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	20.80
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	13.84
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	4,577
Owner Occupied	20.5%
Renter Occupied	66.8%
Vacant Units	12.7%
Built Last 20 Years	11.4%
With 1+ Cars	59.1%
Overcrowded Units	17.0%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$150,578
Multifamily	\$240,510
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	1.1%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	605
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	239
No. of Foreclosures*	2

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test



**ENTERPRISE ZONE**

The Enterprise Zone<sup>1</sup> is located to the north of the Downtown, bordering the Pequonnock River. As an old manufacturing area, the neighborhood is characterized by more commercial and industrial development than residential. In 2000, there were only 872 residents in the Enterprise Zone. The neighborhood was predominantly Hispanic (47%), followed by White non-Hispanic (22%), Black non-Hispanic (19%) and Asian (12%). Over one-third of residents in this area are foreign-born. Nearly 30 percent of the resident labor force in the Enterprise Zone is unemployed, and over 30 percent of area residents live below the poverty line.

In 2000, the Enterprise Zone contained 2,470 jobs paying an average wage of \$48,000, which is slightly more than the citywide average. Four out of every ten jobs were in manufacturing. The neighborhood is fully within the designated Connecticut Enterprise Zone, which provides tax incentives and cost savings to businesses that locate in the area.

The Enterprise Zone does not contain any elementary schools, and no school data are available for this area. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, indicates that the Enterprise Zone has the highest crime rate in the city.



**Neighborhood Planning and Development**

The Enterprise Zone has experienced a steady downward trend in building permits issued between 1998 and 2003, but began to see a slight increase in 2004. Among the city's 13 neighborhoods, it ranked eleventh in average annual growth of permits over the past 14 years and ranked last in total volume of permits.

Like many older industrial cities across the country, Bridgeport must prepare for the transformation of traditional manufacturing areas like the Enterprise Zone to a higher-value mixed-use area. This neighborhood is highly visible from Route 1-95 and the Amtrak/Metro-North railroad line, and the image it conveys of the city has a significant impact on the region's impression of Bridgeport. In order to capitalize on the visibility of this area and its potential, public infrastructure must be upgraded to attract private investment. Existing low-income households in the neighborhood that will likely be displaced by redevelopment should be provided with relocation assistance to ensure that they find affordable housing elsewhere in the city.

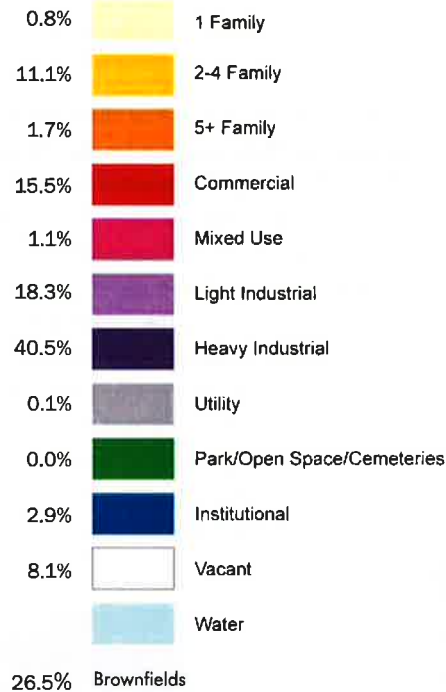


<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone neighborhood discussed in this profile are not the same as the boundaries of the State-designated enterprise zone, which provides tax incentives for development.





**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**  
 1. Bridgeport Brass  
 2. Bridgeport Machine Complex

**Enterprise Zone**

<b>Population</b>	872
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	6.3%
19 years & under	30.4%
65 years & under	10.9%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	52.6%
White	21.4%
Black	19.3%
Asian/Other	11.9%
Hispanic	47.4%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$41,256
Persons Below Poverty	34.2%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	28.9%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	60.3%
HS Graduate	17.3%
Some College	15.8%
College Degree+	6.6%
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	254
Owner Occupied	26.4%
Renter Occupied	73.6%
Vacant Units	0.0%
Built Last 20 Years	0.0%
With 1+ Cars	71.7%
Overcrowded Units	11.4%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$155,500
Multifamily	\$265,955
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	0%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	145
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	3
No. of Foreclosures*	0

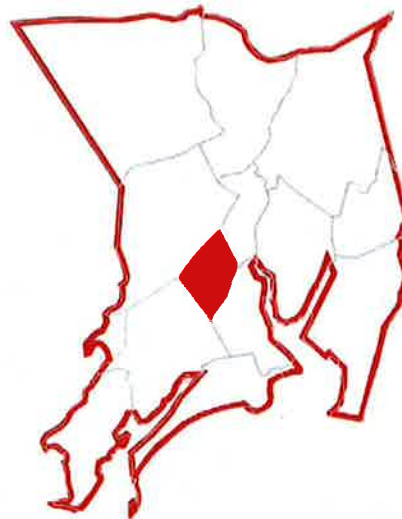
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## HOLLOW

The Hollow neighborhood is located near the center of Bridgeport, northwest of Downtown. It is bounded by North Avenue (Route 1) to the northwest, Park Avenue to the southwest, Washington Avenue to the East and Main Street to the northeast. This small neighborhood consists of approximately 0.42 square miles but has a population of 9,562, according to the 2000 Census, making it the most densely populated neighborhood in the city. The Hollow neighborhood has an unemployment rate of 11.3 percent, and one-quarter of its residents live below the poverty level.

The Hollow has historically been an immigrant neighborhood since it was settled by Irish and English immigrants in the late 1830s. Today, 30 percent of the area's residents are foreign-born, and nearly half of all residents (44%) are Hispanic. Other significant immigrant populations include Portuguese, Brazilian and Cape Verdean residents. The rest of the neighborhood is comprised of Black non-Hispanics (28%), White non-Hispanics (16%) and Asians (12%). In 2000, the area had 3,477 housing units, over 95 percent of which were built more than 20 years ago. The overall character of the neighborhood is multifamily residential, and approximately 77 percent of housing units are renter-occupied. The Hollow has no land area devoted to parks or open space, but contains Sterling Hill Historic District.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks the Hollow seventh overall in terms of quality-of-life compared with Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. While the neighborhood has seen some small improvements in its standardized test scores in recent years, crime rates and income levels have not shown similar progress. There are two elementary schools in the Hollow – the Columbus and Webster Schools – and the neighborhood is served by Bassick High School. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, the Hollow places tenth in Grade 4 state testing and eleventh in Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Education Index, which considers school resources and graduate accomplishments as well as test scores, places the neighborhood fourth out of the ten city neighborhoods it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the Hollow fifth out of the thirteen neighborhoods it evaluates, indicating a fairly high level of crime versus the rest of the city.



### Neighborhood Planning and Development

The Hollow has prepared a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) Plan that includes land use and zoning recommendations, which has been adopted by the City Council. The purpose of the plan is to improve the physical condition of properties in the neighborhood by implementing strategies to eliminate blight and barriers to investment. Major issues identified in the plan include the presence of blighted buildings and vacant lots, poor quality infrastructure, housing density and lack of strategic planning. Major short- and long-term strategies pertaining to planning and development that are outlined in the plan include:

#### Short-Term Strategies:

- *Coordinate site design of new school*
- *Identify strategic re-use of non-conforming lots*
- *Eliminate blight by eliminating deteriorated properties*
- *Develop strategies to fund property acquisition*
- *Collaborate with private developers to rehabilitate blighted structures*
- *Improve infrastructure including sidewalks and street paving*
- *Conduct assessment of traffic and parking*

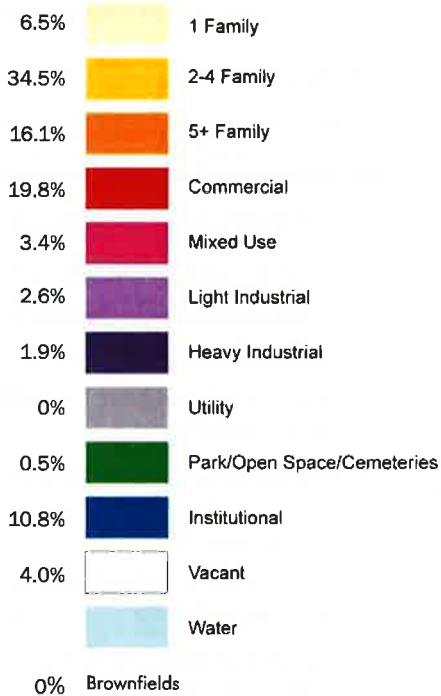
#### Long-Term Strategies:

- *Develop homeownership strategies aimed at not increasing density*
- *Develop programs to replace sidewalks, curbs, infrastructure and lighting*
- *Educate business to access tax incentives and funding opportunities*
- *Develop capacity in non-profit organizations interested in rehabilitating structures*
- *Relocate appropriate businesses out of residential areas*





**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**

1. Ostermoor Mattress Factory Apartments
2. Harral Square
3. North End Elementary School

**Hollow**

<b>Population</b>	9,562
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	12.8%
19 years & under	35.4%
65 years & under	7.1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	56.2%
White	16.3%
Black	27.7%
Asian/Other	12.2%
Hispanic	43.8%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$48,486
Persons Below Poverty	25.2%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	11.3%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	52.3%
HS Graduate	26.4%
Some College	14.6%
College Degree+	6.7%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	11.6%
Grade 6	16.8%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	352
Math	345
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	19.90
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	16.10
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	3,477
Owner Occupied	14.1%
Renter Occupied	76.8%
Vacant Units	9.0%
Built Last 20 Years	5.5%
With 1+ Cars	63.1%
Overcrowded Units	14.4%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$167,662
Multifamily	\$268,300
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	0%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	455
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	182
No. of Foreclosures*	1

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test

**NORTH BRIDGEPORT**

North Bridgeport is located in the northeast corner of Bridgeport and borders the neighboring Town of Trumbull. The area is predominantly single-family residential and has a significant amount of park/open space area, including Beardsley Park and Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo. Nearly one-third of the land area in North Bridgeport is characterized as vacant, reflecting the Lake Success (Remington Woods) property, which is a significant brownfield site. The area is home to the Lakeview Village Historic District.

In 2000, North Bridgeport had 11,505 residents. The majority of residents were White non-Hispanic (40%) followed by Hispanic (28%), Black non-Hispanic (27%) and Asian (5%). Approximately 17 percent of the neighborhood’s residents were foreign-born. In 2000, the area had 4,571 housing units, 70 percent of which were constructed before 1980. Housing occupancy is split evenly between owners and renters. North Bridgeport is not a major employment center in the city, providing less than 3,000 jobs.

CCEA’s Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks North Bridgeport fourth overall in terms of quality-of-life compared to Bridgeport’s other neighborhoods. In recent years, North Bridgeport has experienced decreasing crime rates and increasing educational performance. There are two elementary schools in the neighborhood – the Beardsley and Hooker Schools – and the area is served by Harding High School. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, North Bridgeport places fourth in Grade 4 state testing and fifth in Grade 6 state testing. CCEA’s Neighborhood Education Index places the neighborhood fifth out of the ten city neighborhoods it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. This is a significant improvement from its



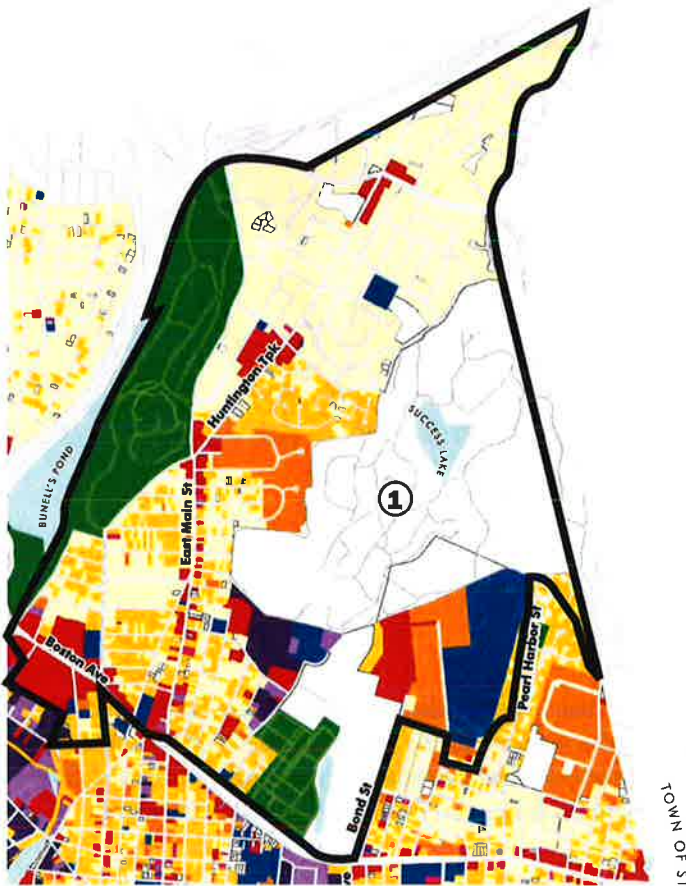
position in eighth place in 2001. CCEA’s Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the area eleventh out of the thirteen neighborhoods it evaluates, indicating a low level of crime in North Bridgeport relative to the rest of the city.

**Neighborhood Planning and Development**

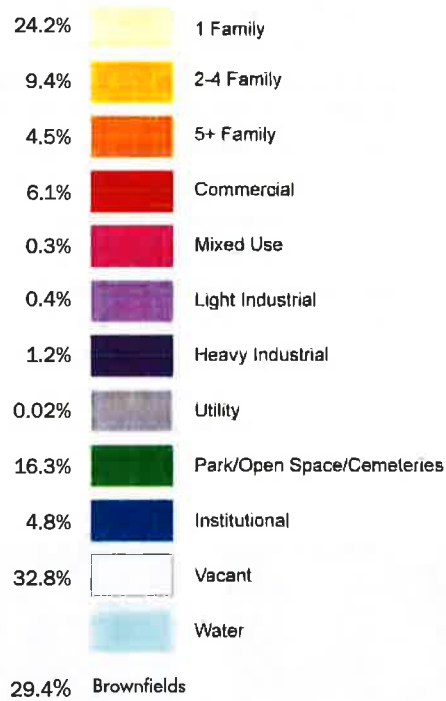
North Bridgeport’s primary planning issue is the reuse of the extensive Lake Success property. This nearly 400-acre site presents significant challenges in terms of both development and preservation of open space due to the presence of contamination on the site resulting from its former use by Remington Arms. The City proposes that this area be redeveloped as a business or industrial park with at least 25 percent of the site preserved as open space. Such use is consistent with a realistic adaptive reuse strategy for the site, taking into account existing contamination and required remediation. The North Bridgeport community has not yet engaged in a neighborhood-level planning process to identify a vision for its future.







Existing Land Use



**Proposed Development**  
 1. Lake Success Business Park

North Bridgeport	
<b>Population</b>	11,505
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	7.5%
19 years & under	26.0%
65 years & under	18.0%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	71.6%
White	39.7%
Black	27.0%
Asian/Other	4.9%
Hispanic	28.4%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$55,971
Persons Below Poverty	8.5%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	8.0%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	32.9%
HS Graduate	30.0%
Some College	27.1%
College Degree+	10.0%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	10.7%
Grade 6	3.2%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	374
Math	370
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	25.58
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	16.76
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	4,571
Owner Occupied	49.2%
Renter Occupied	46.1%
Vacant Units	4.6%
Built Last 20 Years	12.9%
With 1+ Cars	83.6%
Overcrowded Units	4.3%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$225,201
Multifamily	\$274,611
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	24.5%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	282
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	76
No. of Foreclosures*	0

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test

## NORTH END

The North End neighborhood borders the towns of Trumbull to the north and Fairfield to the west. It is adjacent to Reservoir/Whiskey Hill on the east and Brooklawn/St. Vincent on the south. The neighborhood is primarily single-family residential, with some pockets of higher-density residential uses in its western portion and a commercial strip along Main Street. The area has a significant amount of park/open space area, including three large parks: Veterans Memorial Park, Puglio Park and Elton Rogers Park. Lake Forest is a major water body that is located in the neighborhood.

The North End had 21,566 residents in 2000. The majority of residents were White non-Hispanic (61%), followed by Black non-Hispanic and Hispanic (16% each), and Asian (7%). Approximately 21 percent of the neighborhood's residents were foreign-born. In 2000, the neighborhood had 8,717 housing units, approximately 85 percent of which were built before 1980. Most housing units in the neighborhood (69%) are owner-occupied. Over one-third of jobs in the North End in 2000 were in education and health services, reflecting the area's proximity to St. Vincent's Medical Center. This sector typically pays a relatively low wage, but in the North End, workers in education and health services earn more, or nearly \$48,000 annually.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks the North End first among all of the city's neighborhoods in terms of quality-of-life. This high ranking reflects the neighborhood's low crime rates, high incomes and strong educational performance relative to other Bridgeport communities. There is one elementary school in the North End – Winthrop School – and the area is served by Central High School. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, the North End places first in both Grade 4 and Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's

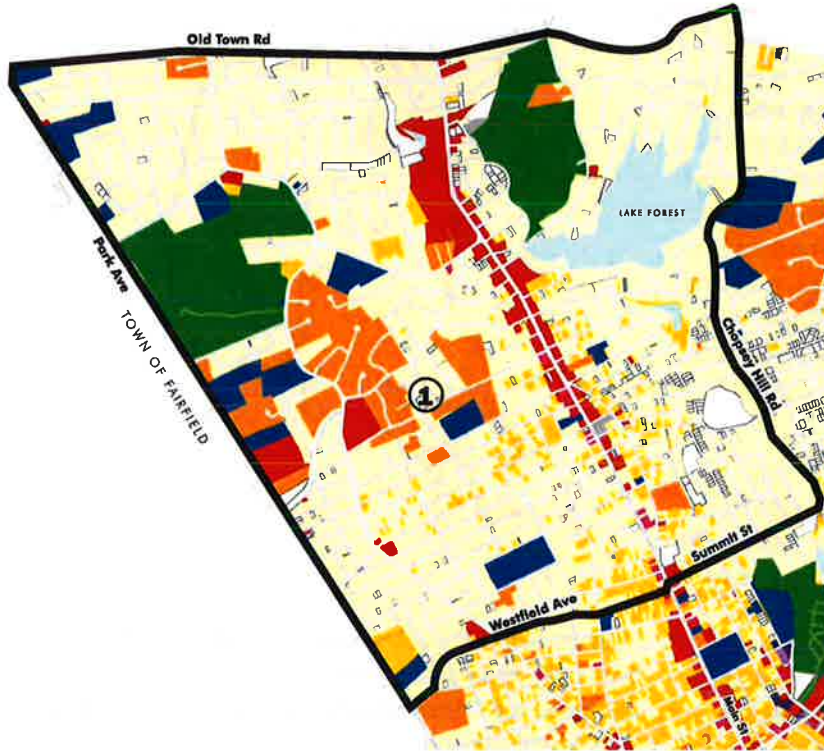


Neighborhood Education Index places the neighborhood first in the city in terms of educational quality. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the area twelfth out of the thirteen neighborhoods it evaluates, indicating low crime relative to other city neighborhoods.

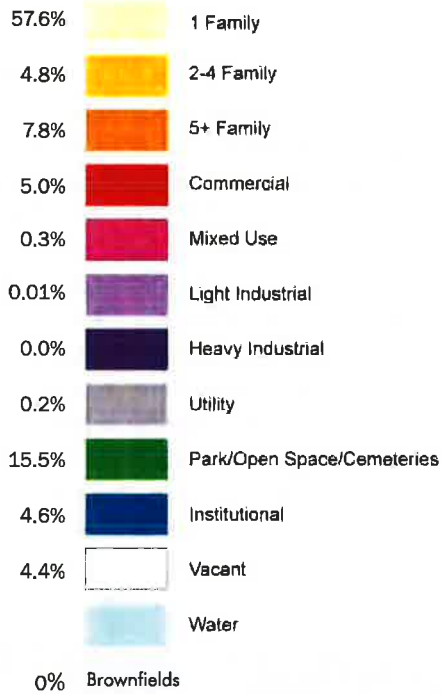
### Neighborhood Planning and Development

With the best educational performance in the city and one of the lowest rates of crime, the North End is one of Bridgeport's most desirable neighborhoods. It borders other solidly residential areas and the relatively affluent towns of Fairfield and Trumbull. The North End experienced a steady rise in the number of building permits authorized from 1993 to 2004, but saw little increase in building permit activity between 2004 and 2006. It is expected that the North End will maintain its status as a desirable residential neighborhood with continued property value appreciation. However, with this demand comes a need to ensure that new buildings are of the highest quality design and are sensitive to their environmental surroundings.





**Existing Land Use**



**North End**

<b>Population</b>	21,566
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	6.7%
19 years & under	24.2%
65 years & under	17.7%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	83.9%
White	60.7%
Black	16.4%
Asian/Other	6.9%
Hispanic	16.1%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$68,258
Persons Below Poverty	8.0%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	6.7%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	24.8%
HS Graduate	34.3%
Some College	23.9%
College Degree+	17.0%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	22.6%
Grade 6	35.1%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	436
Math	427
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	24.30
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	17.25
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	8,717
Owner Occupied	69.0%
Renter Occupied	27.5%
Vacant Units	3.4%
Built Last 20 Years	15.5%
With 1+ Cars	91.0%
Overcrowded Units	3.6%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$278,963
Multifamily	\$327,383
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	27.2%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	324
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	120
No. of Foreclosures*	0

**Proposed Development**  
1. 536 Peet Street Residential

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
\* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test



### RESERVOIR/WHISKEY HILL

The Reservoir/Whiskey Hill neighborhood borders the town of Trumbull to the north and the neighborhoods of North Bridgeport and the North End to the east and west. The neighborhood is predominantly characterized by single-family homes, and nearly ten percent of its land area is occupied by institutional uses. Almost eight percent of Reservoir/Whiskey Hill's land area consists of parks and open space; however, Park Cemetery represents much of that total.

In 2000, Reservoir/Whiskey Hill had 9,181 residents. The majority of residents were Black non-Hispanic (56%), followed by Hispanic (21%), White non-Hispanic (18%) and Asian (5%). About 14 percent of the neighborhood's residents were foreign-born. In 2000, the area had 3,106 housing units, 80 percent of which were built before 1980. Most housing units in Reservoir/Whiskey Hill (65%) are owner-occupied. In 2000, one in three area jobs was in education and health; however, the sector paid an average annual wage just below the neighborhood's median of \$40,283.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks Reservoir/Whiskey Hill second overall in terms of quality-of-life compared with Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. Growth in educational performance and rising incomes have helped to stabilize the neighborhood over the past five years. There are two elementary schools in Reservoir/Whiskey Hill – the Cross and Hallen Schools – and the area is served by Central High School. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, Reservoir/Whiskey Hill places fifth for Grade 4 state testing and sixth in Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Education Index places the neighborhood sixth out of the ten city neighborhoods that it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the



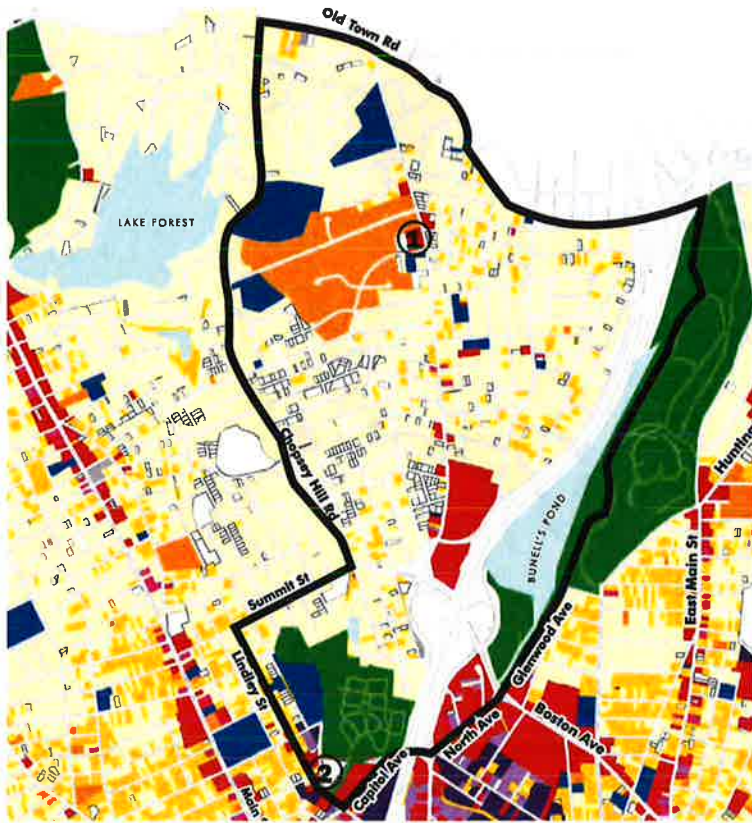
area ninth out of the thirteen neighborhoods it evaluates, indicating a relatively low level of crime in this area compared with the rest of Bridgeport.

#### Neighborhood Planning and Development

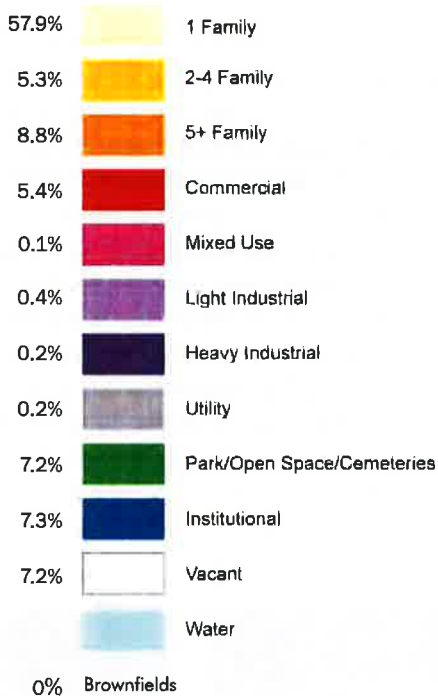
Reservoir/Whiskey Hill demonstrates both strengths and weaknesses in terms of quality-of-life. While educational performance is improving and crime levels are decreasing, these issues continue to affect the desirability of the neighborhood. Reservoir/Whiskey Hill has recently seen an upward trend in building permit authorizations, and has ranked third among all neighborhoods by the rate of increase since 1993. Nearly one-third of permits were issued for new buildings, or more than twice the citywide average. The neighborhood is likely to attract additional residential development, but it continues to require improvement in safety and education, as well as greater opportunities for neighborhood shopping.







**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**  
 1. Reservoir & Yaremich Residential  
 2. 660 Lindley St. Industrial

**Reservoir/Whiskey Hill**

<b>Population</b>	9,181
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	8.7%
19 years & under	34.7%
65 years & under	8.8%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	78.8%
White	18.0%
Black	56.1%
Asian/Other	4.7%
Hispanic	21.2%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$70,563
Persons Below Poverty	11.1%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	5.9%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	27.8%
HS Graduate	36.8%
Some College	24.4%
College Degree+	11.1%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	7.2%
Grade 6	18.8%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	436
Math	427
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	15.83
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	14.09
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	3,106
Owner Occupied	65.3%
Renter Occupied	28.2%
Vacant Units	6.5%
Built Last 20 Years	20.5%
With 1+ Cars	85.9%
Overcrowded Units	5.6%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$242,083
Multifamily	\$325,020
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	5.5%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	283
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	63
No. of Foreclosures*	1

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test

## SOUTH END

The South End neighborhood is located on a peninsula between Cedar Creek and Long Island Sound. It is directly south of I-95 and the Downtown, bordering Bridgeport Harbor with views of Pleasure Beach and the Port of Bridgeport in the East End. The largest land use in the South End is parks/open space due to the presence of Seaside Park. Other major land uses are institutional, largely attributable to the University of Bridgeport, and industrial, mainly concentrated along the neighborhood's periphery. Residential uses are located in the northern portion of the neighborhood and are predominantly medium- and high-density. In 2000, there were 1,270 jobs located in the South End with an average annual salary of \$58,721 in 2006 dollars. The education and health sector is the largest employment sector in the neighborhood, followed by manufacturing. Over 35 percent of South End residents are unemployed.

In 2000 the South End had 4,697 residents. The ethnic/racial composition of the area was fairly balanced relative to other city neighborhoods. Hispanics made up 37 percent of the population, followed by Black non-Hispanics (29%) and White non-Hispanics and Asians (each 17%). About 20 percent of the neighborhood's residents were foreign-born. In 2000 the South End had 1,740 housing units, 95 percent of which are over 20 years old. Most of the area's housing units (65%) are renter-occupied. The South End has four historic districts: Seaside Park, Marina Park Historic District, Barnum/Palliser Historic District and Seaside Village Historic District.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, does not rank the South End due to the absence of income trend data. However, according to the Census, average household income in the neighborhood was \$40,236 in 2006 dollars, and nearly 40 percent of the population lived below the poverty level. The South End has one elementary school – Roosevelt School – and is served by Bassick High



School. Compared with the balance of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math performance, the South End places last in both Grade 4 and Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index for 2006 ranks the South End eighth out of the thirteen neighborhoods it evaluates, which is a substantial improvement over 2005 when the neighborhood ranked first for overall crime compared with the rest of the city.

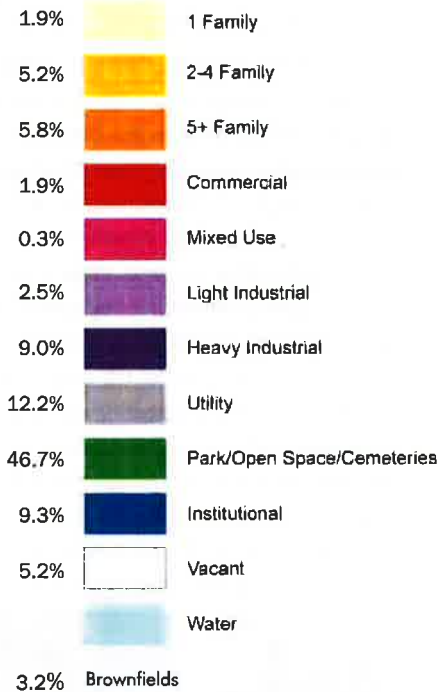
### Neighborhood Planning and Development

Among all of Bridgeport's neighborhoods, the South End shows the most promise for marked improvement due to its close proximity to the Downtown and its significant latent assets, including Seaside Park and the University of Bridgeport. Developers have already begun to express interest in its waterfront sites for mixed-use, market rate development. Vacant industrial buildings are being rehabilitated for adaptive reuse. Recreational amenities offered by Seaside Park, improvements in the educational tenor of UB and accessibility to sports and entertainment activities at Harbor Yard have the potential to attract new residents with greater disposable incomes to the area. To maximize the benefits of this new development interest, the South End is working to prepare a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) Plan that will outline the neighborhood's vision for its future.





**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**  
 1. Remington Shaver Site  
 2. Soundgate  
 3. Seaside Park

**South End**

<b>Population</b>	4,697
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	11.0%
19 years & under	34.3%
65 years & under	7.2%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	63.6%
White	17.3%
Black	29.2%
Asian/Other	17.1%
Hispanic	36.4%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$40,236
Persons Below Poverty	38.2%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	35.4%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	44.0%
HS Graduate	22.80%
Some College	15.7%
College Degree+	17.5%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	3.2%
Grade 6	3.6%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	352
Math	345
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	21.3
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	17.2
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	1,740
Owner Occupied	23.2%
Renter Occupied	64.6%
Vacant Units	12.2%
Built Last 20 Years	5.6%
With 1+ Cars	55.2%
Overcrowded Units	11.4%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$255,000
Multifamily	\$251,276
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	28.9%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	135
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	69
No. of Foreclosures*	0

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test



### WEST END/WEST SIDE

The West End/West Side neighborhood borders the Town of Fairfield and the Black Rock neighborhood. It is bisected by I-95 and upland from Cedar Creek, with views of Seaside Park. The neighborhood is largely medium-density residential (2-4 family homes), but also contains industrial uses, which are mainly concentrated south of Railroad Avenue in the western portion of the community. Commercial uses are located along Fairfield Avenue, State Street and Brooklawn Avenue. The neighborhood does not contain many significant parks or open space areas, with the exception of Went Field. Nearly 11 percent of the area is brownfields. West End/West Side contains part of the Stratfield and Division Street Historic Districts, as well as all of the Railroad Avenue and Bassickville Historic Districts.



In 2000, West End/West Side had 17,514 residents, the majority of whom were Hispanic (41%), followed by Black non-Hispanic (34%), White non-Hispanic (15%) and Asian (10%). Approximately 24 percent of the neighborhood's residents were foreign-born. In 2000, West End/West Side had 5,898 housing units, over 90 percent of which were at least 20 years old. The neighborhood is predominantly renter-occupied, with renters accounting for 70% of the population. The neighborhood's unemployment rate was 14 percent in 2000, and 27 percent of residents lived below the poverty level. Manufacturing jobs in West End/West Side represented over 21 percent of Bridgeport's total, and employees in that sector earned more than the neighborhood's average household income.

CCEA's Neighborhood Development Index, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, ranks West End/West Side next to last in terms of quality-of-life compared with Bridgeport's other neighborhoods. The area has one of the highest crime rates in the city and shows poor educational performance. There are three elementary schools in the neighborhood – the recently opened, state-of-the-art Cesar Batalla School, the Bryant School and the Curiale School. The area is served by Bassick High School. Compared with the rest of Bridgeport for reading, writing and math

performance, West End/West Side places seventh in Grade 4 state testing and ninth in Grade 6 state testing. CCEA's Neighborhood Education Index places the neighborhood seventh out of the ten city neighborhoods it evaluates in terms of overall educational quality. CCEA's Neighborhood Crime Index ranks the area seventh out of the thirteen neighborhoods it evaluates, marking a substantial improvement in the area's crime rate between 2005 and 2006.

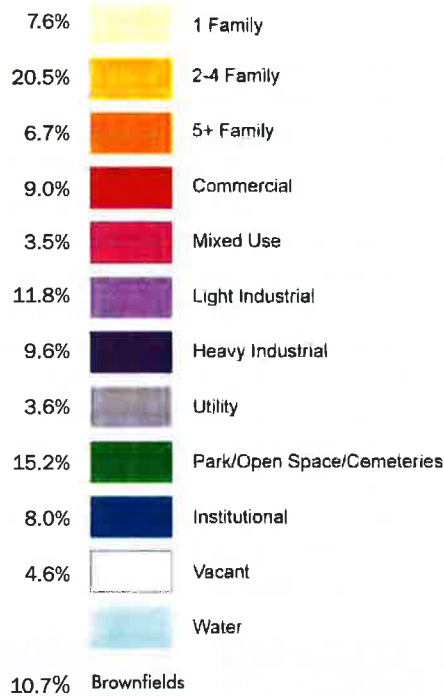
#### Neighborhood Planning and Development

West End/West Side is currently working to develop a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) Plan, and the community has begun to identify land use objectives and potential zoning changes for the neighborhood. West End/West Side has a new elementary school, Cesar Batalla, which opened in early 2007 and provides state-of-the-art classroom facilities. The school grounds include playing fields that are open to the public after school hours. Despite strong locational attributes, however, quality-of-life factors including crime, income and education currently have a negative impact on the development potential of this neighborhood. While educational opportunities are improving, residents are in need of higher paying jobs and home ownership opportunities. It is anticipated that the community's NRZ plan will address these issues and provide strategies for revitalization.





**Existing Land Use**



**Proposed Development**

1. Former Park City Hospital Residential Conversion
2. ASAP Bedliners
3. State Street Commercial

West End/West Side	
<b>Population</b>	17,514
<b>Age</b>	
5 years & under	13.2%
19 years & under	40.0%
65 years & under	6.4%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Non Hispanic	58.6%
White	14.6%
Black	33.7%
Asian/Other	10.4%
Hispanic	41.4%
<b>Income</b>	
Household Avg. (2006)	\$44,928
Persons Below Poverty	27.4%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	13.9%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	46.5%
HS Graduate	31.2%
Some College	16.1%
College Degree+	6.2%
<b>Students meeting CMT<sup>1</sup> goal (2006)</b>	
Grade 4	9.64%
Grade 6	7.80%
<b>Avg. SAT Score (2006)</b>	
Verbal	352
Math	345
<b>Students per Classroom (2006)</b>	24.76
<b>Students per Teacher (2006)</b>	16.90
<b>Housing</b>	
Total Units	5,898
Owner Occupied	20.1%
Renter Occupied	70.2%
Vacant Units	9.7%
Built Last 20 Years	11.5%
With 1+ Cars	62.6%
Overcrowded Units	12.4%
<b>Avg. Sales Price (2004-2006)</b>	
Single Family	\$189,056
Multifamily	\$268,431
<b>Parks/Open Space (2006)</b>	
Percent of City Total	1.7%
<b>Crime (2006)</b>	
Reported Felonies	777
<b>Blight (2005-2006)</b>	
No. of Citations	200
No. of Foreclosures*	0

Data are from Yr. 2000 unless otherwise indicated.  
 \* Represents foreclosure by the City; does not include foreclosures by private financial institutions.  
<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Master Test





# 12.0

## INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION

### **POLICY**

*Realize the potential of the city's existing capacity.*

### **GOALS**

- 1 Maximize the efficiency of Bridgeport's existing utility infrastructure.*
- 2 Enhance the city's circulation and transit networks to support growth.*
- 3 Encourage connections throughout Bridgeport to Wi-Fi, wireless and other leading technological systems.*
- 4 Encourage low impact development that is designed to reduce stormwater runoff.*

### **12.1 | SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

To facilitate planning and implementation of utility infrastructure improvements, the City of Bridgeport should prepare a contact list of local service providers for prospective developers, residents and business owners. By identifying the proper contacts and providing lists in various City departments and the municipal website, prospective and ongoing projects may proceed more efficiently without costly delays. Critical utility services and infrastructure systems in the City of Bridgeport are as follows:

### Wastewater Treatment

The City of Bridgeport's two wastewater treatment facilities, located on the east and west ends of the City, are adequate to serve sanitary flows generated by the city, as well as flow from neighboring communities that currently purchase capacity within the treatment system. However, the capacity is overburdened during heavy rainfall events, since a majority of the City's storm and sanitary systems are combined. The treatment plants do not have the capacity to treat sanitary and storm flows at the same time, and this results in a discharge of partially treated and disinfected waste to local waterways, including Long Island Sound, via several combined sewer overflow structures (CSOs). Discharge of sanitary waste from individual properties has also been disrupted during periods of peak flow. The City is in the process of implementing the Phase II CSO elimination project, which is expected to cost approximately \$60 million to complete (based on year 1997 construction cost estimates).

The program is funded 50 percent through low-interest loans granted and overseen by the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP), with the remaining 50 percent funded through U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants. There are approximately 39 CSO locations remaining on the City system, out of a total of more than 150 when the program began. The program will eventually eliminate all but 13 of the overflows.

Cost for sewer separation projects are high, and local and state funding is limited. A four-step alternative approach, in lieu of complete separation, which may help to alleviate constrained areas within the city, is as follows:

#### 1) Conduct Flow Metering

This involves the installation of meters in strategic system locations during the spring season to determine system peaks.

#### 2) Conduct Hydraulic Modeling

Hydraulic modeling can be a relatively simple process if reliable as-built documentation of the current sewer system(s) exists. Models with real-time control and spatial (GIS) compatibility are preferred. For large municipal systems, a well-constructed model will pay for itself by saving significant capital dollars.

#### 3) Conduct Field Investigations

As-built plans are rarely fully accurate; it is necessary to field check existing conditions. For example, some sewer video work for pipes and manned entries of structures (manholes, siphon chambers, regulators, etc.) may be beneficial. This task also identifies system irregularities such as sediment build-up and blockages required to best simulate the true existing conditions model.

#### 4) Conduct Alternatives Analysis

Municipalities often advocate singular solutions such as universal separation or large central storage facilities. This approach requires significant capital investment and often leads to delay in implementing much-needed improvements. Localized solutions may dramatically decrease capital cost by using a myriad of techniques within the system, given the specific sub-basin characteristics. Alternatives may include:

- **Flow Slipping:** Install catch basin inlet controls that "slip" stormwater flow along the gutter line particularly in areas with significant topographical change. Slipped flow is then picked up in topographic troughs providing temporary separation in these areas.
- **Elimination of Hydraulic Bottlenecks:** Replace smaller pipes with larger pipes in areas where model shows flow restrictions.
- **Satellite Storage:** This technique involves peak detention and post event pump out tanks. Pumps are paced so that the pump cycle is activated when hydraulic grade line drops. Tanks are typically constructed of box culvert sections to fit a rectangular street footprint.

### Communications Technology

Fiber-optic networks are critical to attract and sustain business as well as to provide free wireless service for school children and low-income residents to expand educational and employment opportunities. Some fiber-optic vendors distribute service through AT&T conduits. Though these conduits are congested in some areas, fiber-optic service in Downtown Bridgeport is sufficient at this time. AT&T is in the planning stages for technology and distribution upgrades throughout the state of Connecticut, and the city is a target service area. Though the utility tends to follow demand, new zoning maps should be provided to utility providers so that future plans may be solidified and/or expedited to stay ahead of local demand. Other vendors have an independent network or share with AT&T and currently have no limitation to service in the Downtown area.

Cellular communications service providers continue to seek creative ways to expand and upgrade coverage area. Antennae attachments to steeples and high-rises in addition to towers on the landscape are profuse. Bridgeport should incorporate a telecommunications ordinance into its Zoning Code to provide guidelines and requirements to direct the location, type and appearance of these installations and provide the Planning and Zoning Commission with the authority to review site plan applications for such structures.

Wherever possible, all telecommunications infrastructure should be located underground. As the City seeks to expand its communications network, it should prepare for private-sector provision of wireless service throughout the city, starting with the Downtown. This preparation should include coordination with wireless providers to allow them to lay conduit in the ground for future fiber-optic cable when the ground is opened, even if the street-opening is unrelated to fiber-optics. The City should also work with these providers to understand their needs regarding the mounting of wireless access points on light poles and rooftops and should address such needs in its new telecommunications ordinance.

### Natural Gas

Existing natural gas service networks are adequate to serve known development projects, including the proposed Steel Point site. The utility may need to extend high-pressure mains, and this work should be coordinated with any storm and sanitary separation projects initiated by the City. Natural gas upgrades will follow demand, and rarely are facilities upgraded or expanded based on speculative projects only. Future upgrades are planned and have been coordinated with the State of Connecticut for future roadway upgrades on state-owned Fairfield Avenue and State Street.

### Water Supply

Water distribution by Aquarion is more than sufficient within the city of Bridgeport. The system, though dating back to the early 1900s, was constructed to supply major industrial plants where demand far exceeded today's level. At one time, the system served a 70 million-gallon-per-day demand; current demand is 45 million gallons per day. Aquarion currently replaces approximately 1,500 linear feet of main per year, essentially due to the age of the system and to simply avoid future breakage and service disruption. The utility does not build on speculative projects but continues to communicate regularly with the City for the timely upgrade of existing facilities or extension to new development.

### Power Distribution

Electrical supply by United Illuminated (UI) is dictated by demand. Downtown Bridgeport is currently fed underground and is adequately served to meet existing and future demand. Installation of the 345-kva upgrade is ongoing, and work is scheduled for completion in August 2008. UI will require the placement of large vaults throughout the Downtown area to maintain the underground network. These vaults are often placed outside of the street right-of-way and on private property. The age and condition of the existing infrastructure may have consequences on the timing and delivery of new service to new development and renovation projects. Developers must allow adequate time to coordinate appropriate service connections to avoid building occupancy delays.





Yellow Mill Channel looking toward the East End | Source: BFJ Planning

## 12.2 | STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

As an urban, coastal city, Bridgeport faces numerous challenges regarding the conveyance and treatment of stormwater flows. Most floodplain areas within the city, especially in the low-lying coastal zone, were filled-in in the early part of the last century as harbors and factories were built along the coast and nearby inlets. Floodplains were increasingly channelized, and developments were constructed along the newly formed riverbanks. As the city continued to expand away from the industrial center, land was cleared and leveled to make way for new residential and commercial developments. This had the effect of increasing stormwater flow rates to the downstream areas where the narrow channels could no longer carry the flow. The City has studied several of these areas in detail over the past 20 to 30 years.

Historically, stormwater management has focused on how to best convey storm flows and thereby reduce flooding. In the last few years, however, new stormwater regulations introduced by the state and federal governments have begun to focus on the quality of stormwater

discharge. Consistent with its focus on a cleaner and greener environment as discussed throughout this Master Plan, the City's goals for stormwater management are to 1) Achieve a consistent, uniform procedure for reviewing stormwater management plans and 2) Achieve consistent, uniform, stormwater management regulations that provide the maximum environmental benefit without putting undue strain on existing resources.

Action items that are necessary to achieve these goals are outlined below. Strategies for implementing these actions are discussed in Chapter 15.

**“The City should provide incentives for water quality improvements such as rain gardens or barrels, drywells, reduced lot coverage or impervious surface area.”**

## ACTION ITEMS

**Stormwater Regulations Zoning Regulations** should refer to the Water Pollution Control Authority's (WPCA) stormwater regulations, which require on-site detention to accommodate a 50-year storm, with 24 hour holding capacity. This will enable technical review and approval of stormwater issues by appropriate staff.

**Link Certificate of Occupancy to Storm and Sanitary Sewer Connections** Currently, the City requires as-built drawings for stormwater systems, but does not always issue a final Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for new construction or renovation projects. Typically, a CO is issued only if a mortgage company is involved in the land improvement. The City should require that a final CO be issued before any structure can be occupied or open to the public. This final CO should not be granted until storm and sanitary sewer connections as shown on as-built drawings have been inspected and approved by the City.

**Implement Stormwater Capital Improvement Program (SWCIP)** The City should examine and prioritize flood mitigation projects including a reasonable timeline for implementing the projects. Projects should be coordinated with other significant capital improvements (roadway, utilities, railroad, sewer separation, etc.).

**Budget for Stormwater Capital Improvement Projects** The City should provide a separate budget line item for funding of stormwater projects to support implementation of the Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan.

**Notify all Utility Companies in Advance of Major Capital Improvement Projects** The City should formalize the process by which it notifies utility companies prior to significant street or storm and sewer projects.

**Provide Right-of-Way for City Emergency Maintenance** The City should create a new ordinance which allows City personnel to enter private property temporarily for emergency stormwater maintenance purposes. Routine maintenance of existing stormwater facilities would continue to be the responsibility of the landowner.

**Implement Citywide Stormwater Quality Improvements** Stormwater quality improvements should be required for all properties, including properties that do not lie in a coastal zone or contain on-site wetlands, streams or watercourses. These properties should be required to implement a minimum requirement to treat stormwater through primary or secondary best management practices or BMPs. All properties should be subject to the requirements, with all properties of 0.5 acres and larger required to adhere to the requirements.

**Provide Incentives for Water Quality Improvements** For minor building or residential property improvements that do not require a site plan application, the City should provide incentives for water quality improvements that exceed the minimum requirements discussed above, such as rain gardens or barrels, drywells, reduced lot coverage or impervious surface area, etc.

**Attach Citywide Stormwater Assessment to Properties** The City should consider a citywide stormwater assessment, similar to sidewalk or sewer assessments, applicable to all properties except single-family residential lots 0.5 acres or less. Properties that implement stormwater quality measures or exceed stormwater quantity requirements as noted in the Stormwater Manual would be exempt from the assessment.

**Increase Fees and Fines for Stormwater and Sanitary/ Combined Sewer Connections** The City should consider increasing connection fees to be more in line with other municipalities. The City may also impose fees on connections to dedicated storm lines based on the size of a specific parcel or the parcel's flow rate.

**Provide New City Ordinance for Levying Fines** The City should consider a new ordinance that allows the various City commissions to levy and collect fines for violations of stormwater provisions.

### 12.3 | TRANSPORTATION

The City of Bridgeport is strategically located along the coast of Long Island Sound and accessible by State and Interstate highways, regional and local rail service, ferry, local bus transit and air travel. The primary challenge facing regional transportation service is highway congestion specifically during morning and evening peak commuting hours. To this end, the need to enhance highway capacity and rail facilities are well documented and many improvements are underway or in the pipeline. The following section provides a summary of existing transportation infrastructure and services that impact the environment, economic development, land use and quality of life in the city. Figure 12-1 provides a transportation map of the Bridgeport, showing the location of major roadways, the railroad and water channels.

#### Interstate Highway

Interstate I-95 is the main north-south route for passenger and commercial traffic in the State of Connecticut. Highway operational improvements are underway throughout Fairfield County, including the future reconstruction of the Moses Wheeler Bridge over the Housatonic River. The reconstruction of I-95 within Bridgeport and south of this river is essentially complete. Following these improvements, local connections, signage, pedestrian ways and landscaping enhancements are needed.

#### State Highways and Routes

##### *Merritt Parkway (Route 15)*

The Merritt Parkway essentially runs parallel to I-95 and is located just north of the Bridgeport border in Trumbull. Commercial traffic is prohibited. The Parkway provides access to Bridgeport via multiple exits including Park Avenue, Main Street, Route 8 and Route 25. Recent interchange improvements at Route 111 (Main Street) have significantly improved capacity, safety and local access to Bridgeport.

##### *State Route 8*

From the north, Route 8 merges with Route 25 in Bridgeport and provides a direct connection to I-95 where the route terminates. The highway provides passenger car and commercial vehicle access to the Naugatuck Valley and points north and is a major commuter route to and from Bridgeport, southern Fairfield County and New York.

##### *State Route 25*

From the northwest, Route 25 merges with Route 8 in Bridgeport and provides direct connection to I-95 where the route terminates. Route 25 is also a significant commuter route within the Greater Bridgeport area. Route 25 is a multi-lane divided highway to Route 111 in Trumbull. Route 111 provides access to Monroe and Route 34 to the north.

##### *Local State Routes*

Other State routes include Route 127 (East Main Street from Trumbull to Route 1), which links the North Bridgeport neighborhood to Beardsley Park and Main Street (Route 111) in Trumbull, connecting commercial and employment destinations.

Fairfield Avenue and State Street are state-maintained local roadways in Downtown Bridgeport and provide east-west access and on-street parking. These roadways are critical components to Bridgeport's transportation network, serving as alternate routes for any detours on I-95. Likewise, North Avenue and Boston Avenue are part of Route 1, a major state roadway that is also a bypass route in the event of an I-95 shutdown.

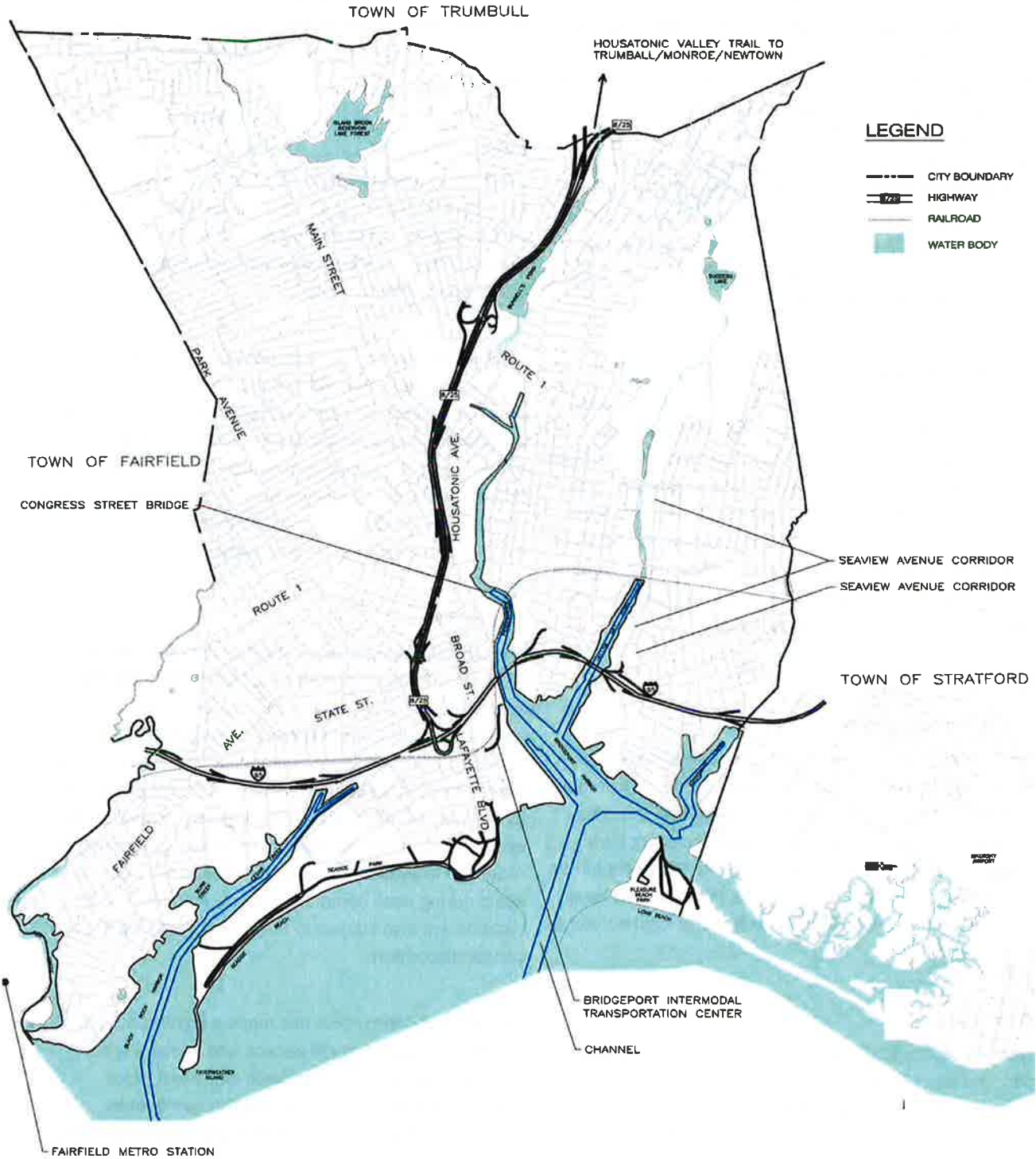
#### Rail Service

The City of Bridgeport is serviced by the Metro-North Commuter Railroad and Amtrak. Metro-North provides service north to New Haven and express and local service south to Grand Central Terminal (GCT) in New York City. The approximate commute time to GCT is 1.25 hours. Rail service is also provided at Bridgeport Station, to and from Waterbury. Service is generally reliable; however, the age of the rail fleet has resulted in occasional reduction in available cars, and hence, a reduction in seats during peak commuting hours. Air-conditioning systems are also subject to down-time, resulting in passenger discomfort.

The State of Connecticut has made a significant commitment to upgrading rail service and increasing seat capacity and ridership. The State plans to replace existing rail cars and to introduce the new fleet by 2010. Major track and powering improvements are also proposed that will upgrade aging infrastructure. The City of Bridgeport and the State have maintained adequate parking for rail commuters compared with capacity in



Figure 12-1 | Transportation Systems Map



Source: Stantec



neighboring communities and stations. Recent enhancements in the vicinity of the rail station include planned new elevated pedestrian access from the new Bridgeport Bus Station and Harbor Yard Parking Garage.

In addition, Bridgeport's rail station is potentially suited as a stop of Amtrak's Acela high-speed train service, given the track curvatures north and south of the station, the interconnectivity of the various travel modes at the new inter-modal center and the linkage with Long Island via the ferry service.

#### **Passenger and Vehicle Ferry Service**

The Port Jefferson Ferry is located adjacent to the Bridgeport Rail Station. The ferry provides an attractive alternative for pedestrians and passenger-car and commercial vehicle customers seeking to avoid southern Fairfield County, Westchester, New York City and Long Island traffic. The ferry provides indoor and outdoor seating, food concessions and a relaxing alternative to driving. Parking facility availability and convenience, visibility of the terminal from Downtown Bridgeport and wayfinding are often identified as in need of improvement. The ferry is ideally situated to offer maximum value to its users. Its location offers connectivity to the inter-modal center – with bus terminal and rail connections – as well as to the growing central business district – with new residential, entertainment, retail and entertainment venues.

The City is considering a high-speed ferry service to Stamford and New York City. Feasibility, including the cost, timing, frequency, reliability and landing locations among other factors are being evaluated.

#### **Bus Transit**

The Greater Bridgeport Regional Transit Authority (GBTA) opened a new bus station in September 2007 as part of Bridgeport's inter-modal center. The station is located at Stratford Avenue and Water Street in Downtown Bridgeport. Bus transit routes will be modified to accommodate a pulse point operation. Essentially, bus routes will be coordinated so that all arrivals to and departures from the station occur within a narrow timeframe, effectively reducing time of travel and improving passenger transfers between routes.

GBTA currently operates 17 routes with varying times of operation. New routes and flexible service were added in 2007. New route names are as follows:

- *Route 1 - P. T. Barnum Apartments to City Line*
- *Coastal Link/Route 2*
- *Route 3 - Downtown Bridgeport to Westfield Shoppingtown Trumbull via Madison Ave.*
- *Route 4 - Downtown Bridgeport to Westfield Shoppingtown Trumbull via Park Ave.*
- *Route 5 - Seaside Park to Hawley Lane Mall in Trumbull via Seaview Ave.*
- *Route 6 - Seaside Park and Trumbull Ave. via Noble Ave.*
- *Route 7 - Carolton Hospital via Commerce Drive*
- *Route 8 - Downtown Bridgeport to Westfield Shoppingtown Trumbull via Main St.*
- *Route 9 - Downtown Bridgeport to Trumbull Center and Monroe via East Main St.*
- *Route 10 - Downtown Bridgeport to Stratford Square/Lordship in Stratford*
- *Route 11 - Downtown Bridgeport to Fairfield Woods Road in Fairfield via North Ave.*
- *Route 12 - Downtown Bridgeport to Westfield Shoppingtown Trumbull via Trumbull Ave.*
- *Route 13 - Downtown Bridgeport to Success Village via Stratford Ave.*
- *Route 14 - Local Trumbull Service*
- *Route 15 - Downtown Bridgeport to Derby Train Station via Nichols Ave. and Bridgeport Ave.*
- *Route 16 - Downtown Bridgeport to the Dock Shopping Center in Stratford via Barnum Ave.*
- *Route 17 - Downtown Bridgeport to Success Village via Boston Ave. and Bond St.*
- *Route 18 - Westfield Shoppingtown Trumbull to Hawley Lane Mall in Trumbull*
- *Stratford Flexible Service - As described by the GBTA, the Authority "will be introducing two new local Stratford routes providing a flexible community bus service known as a point deviation service. These buses will operate on a schedule between time points but do not have a regular route. Riders will be able to board the buses at any time point according to a published schedule, and will also be able to make reservations, up to one day in advance, for a pick-up at a location other than the time points."*

### Air Service

Major airports in the Bridgeport vicinity include LaGuardia and Kennedy Airports both in Queens, New York; Bradley International in Windsor Locks, Connecticut; and Newark/Liberty in Newark, New Jersey. Each facility is a minimum of 50-minute commute time from Downtown Bridgeport. Other airports with significantly fewer carriers and commercial routes yet perhaps more convenient access to and from the airports include White Plains Westchester County Airport and Tweed New Haven Airport. Sikorsky Airport in Stratford, which previously had regularly scheduled commuter air service, has limited facilities and now generally accommodates private small corporate and recreational aircraft. Improvements to this airport's runway, safety areas and terminal/hangar facilities are needed.

### Transportation Action Items

The city of Bridgeport is experiencing great interest from the development community. Proposed plans include residential, mixed-use, entertainment, education and transportation enhancement projects, especially in the Downtown area. Significant ongoing and anticipated transportation improvements in the Greater Bridgeport area, including the replacement of the I-95 Moses Wheeler Bridge and the construction of the new rail station (Fairfield Metro Station) in Fairfield, adjacent to Bridgeport's Black Rock neighborhood, will enhance highway travel, provide new options for commuters and create new centers for economic development.

### Traffic Plan

The City of Bridgeport should consider initiating a citywide traffic planning effort to identify available traffic capacity and development impact. The City may also consider providing background traffic data to prospective development teams to better forecast future traffic generation, plan geometric and traffic signal improvements appropriately and to maintain adequate levels of traffic service throughout the community. Such measures may allow the City to effectively link road improvements to new development. A key part of this traffic planning effort will include signage improvements throughout the city.

The City should also focus on signalized and non-signalized intersections with high occurrences of traffic accidents and plan, design and implement appropriate geometric, wayfinding and aesthetic upgrades. These intersection improvement projects may be pursued in

conjunction with specific development projects, perhaps funded by both private and public sources. Intersections identified by the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation within Bridgeport that have higher incident rates include:

- *State Street and Lafayette Boulevard*
- *Fairfield Avenue and Main Street*
- *Fairfield Avenue and Water Street*

Another traffic improvement that the City of Bridgeport should explore is the implementation of access management strategies. These measures are designed to reduce conflicts between vehicles by encouraging the consolidation of access points (e.g. driveways and curb cuts) along a roadway. This achieves more efficient traffic flow and safer roads.

### Alternative Modes of Transportation

The City should continue to promote the use of alternative modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycling, transit, train and ferry. The benefits include improvements in air quality, more efficient and economically feasible public transit, reduction in vehicular traffic and parking demand and ultimately a reduced cost for construction of parking infrastructure. Ongoing transportation improvements including the bus station, streetscape aesthetic enhancements, improved connectivity between commuter parking and transit facilities and commuter parking expansion in Downtown Bridgeport should continue. Pedestrian connectivity must be enhanced among Downtown Bridgeport and the transit center and the ferry terminal (including the potential new high-speed ferry terminal), as well as to the Arena, ballpark and South End particularly along Main Street, Broad Street and Lafayette Boulevard. In addition, the planned shared-use paths (Housatonic Railway Bikepath and Pequonnock Valley Greenway) should be completed, as envisioned in the current Regional Transportation Plan prepared by the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency, with the goal of linking them to the ferry dock, Seaside Park, Beardsley Park and Pleasure Beach.

As a means to enhance public transit with greater connectivity among the South End, Downtown and the East Side neighborhoods, the City should consider a road-based rubber-tire trolley concept. Consideration should also be given to expansion of the Downtown-based trolley system for connection to the new Fairfield Metro Station in Fairfield, adjacent to the Black Rock neighborhood of Bridgeport.

Perhaps more of a recreational and leisure-time amenity than a viable commuter option, the City of Bridgeport should consider a seasonal passenger ferry or water taxi service for connections among the inter-modal transportation center, Pleasure Beach, Seaside Park, Captain's Cove and Steel Point.

#### *Parking Plan*

To reinforce the City's commitment to alternative modes of transportation, reduce the cost of parking infrastructure and encourage better utilization of existing parking facilities, the City should consider options to reduce parking requirements. Creative use of car-sharing programs, shared parking capacity, commuter credits and fees in lieu of parking arrangements may be viable options to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The City should also prepare and implement traffic and parking management plans for Downtown Bridgeport specifically related to local entertainment events, activities requiring roadway closures and construction activity. Lines of communication should be established among police and traffic enforcement, economic development, planning, public facilities and traffic engineering representatives, as well as the Mayor's Office, regarding activities requiring specific traffic management measures.

#### *Roadway Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan*

The City of Bridgeport should formalize a roadway infrastructure capital improvement plan and priority list for public facility improvements (roads, curbs, sidewalks) that is coordinated with the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency's Transportation Improvement Program for federal fiscal years 2007-2011 and the Water Pollution Control Authority's sewer separation program. Specific improvements include the following:

- *Facilitate the replacement of the Congress Street Bridge linking Downtown to the East Side of Bridgeport. Provide pedestrian-friendly sidewalk widths on both sides of the bridge and sufficient shoulders to allow for safe bicycle passage. Target 2012 for completion of the new bridge construction.*



Lafayette Boulevard at Fairfield Avenue | Source: Stantec



- Consider a realignment of Lafayette Boulevard at Fairfield Avenue to improve access to Routes 25 and 8, improve pedestrian crosswalk safety and provide more attractive roadway frontage for new development, to further the long-term goal of attracting Class A office space along this corridor.
- Enhance highway exits and entrances within Downtown. Improve traffic operations at these locations and consider gateway treatments for highway entrances within the Downtown area. Provide clear and uniform wayfinding signage for transportation facilities including rail, bus, ferry and commuter parking services.
- Establish Water Street as a service and connector road. Enhance pedestrian crossings near the train station and at major intersections between Lafayette Boulevard and East Washington Avenue.
- Re-evaluate the proposed Seaview Avenue Transitway enhancements. Preliminary engineering recommends a typical suburban highway solution, whereas a tree-lined urban boulevard with sidewalks, bike and parking lanes is likely to be a more appropriate approach for this roadway. An urban boulevard would provide necessary improvements in traffic capacity, while also respecting the needs of adjacent neighborhoods with regard to traffic calming and community character. See also page 155.

In general, the City of Bridgeport may consider the following actions independently or as part of other roadway improvement projects:

- Incorporate tree-planting programs with roadway and transit-way improvements throughout the city, particularly along the Seaview Avenue corridor.
- Maintain two-way traffic on public roadways wherever feasible.
- Evaluate bridge clearances for the New Haven rail line and target specific locations for increased clearance. Increases may be considered to facilitate emergency evacuation, emergency vehicle access or to mitigate flood conditions for low-lying areas. Access to the South End and points north along the Seaview Avenue corridor should be considered.



Sikorsky Airport, East Terminal | Source: City of Bridgeport

*Air Travel/Sikorsky Airport*

The City of Bridgeport should work in conjunction with the Town of Stratford to improve operations and capacity at Sikorsky Airport. This airport represents a significant opportunity to improve regional transportation and stimulate growth. The airport’s existing runways are too short to accommodate commercial carriers. Bridgeport should work with Stratford as well as state and federal government officials to capitalize on this regional asset and explore opportunities to enhance the capacity of this facility to serve as an executive airport.

*Ferry Services*

As part of its efforts to increase regional transportation modal choice, the City is considering a high-speed commuter ferry service to Stamford and New York City. However, enhancements to rail and bus services should be Bridgeport’s top priorities in terms of regional transportation improvements, as they have greater economic viability and are not subject to the seasonal/weather-related issues that can hamper ferry services.



New Haven Rail Line | Source: Stantec



Metro-North Railroad  
Source: Stantec

### *Commuter Rail*

Bridgeport should establish a delegation of local and regional elected officials and business leaders to lobby Metro-North Railroad and the State Department of Transportation for improved express train service from New York City to Bridgeport, especially in light of recent transit center and parking upgrades in Downtown Bridgeport. Also, the City may evaluate the impacts of the new Fairfield Metro Station (Metro-North New Haven Line Rail Station), located in Fairfield adjacent to Bridgeport's Black Rock neighborhood, on local pedestrian circulation and safety, on-street parking and access to businesses in Bridgeport. The City should also explore the development of a second Metro-North station within Bridgeport, to be located on the East Side.

### *Greater Bridgeport Regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)*

The Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency, in cooperation with the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority, has completed the development of the regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) architecture for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region. ITS is a comprehensive system of real-time signage along thoroughfares leading to the highways, at parking garage exits, bus, rail and ferry stations, that provides roadway blockage data, arrival and departure information, bypass routes, etc. These plans are important in improving traffic flow within Bridgeport, and the City should work with the GBRPA in the implementation of the ITS as it relates to Bridgeport.

### *Greater Bridgeport and Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program*

The Greater Bridgeport and Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program for federal fiscal years 2007-2011 contains proposed highway and transit improvement projects programmed to receive federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration-between October 1, 2006, and September 30, 2011. The Draft Plan includes projects throughout the region. Individual projects that may have a significant impact on transportation within the city of Bridgeport include the following:

#### *Bridgeport Traffic Signal Modernization*

The signal modernization plan will upgrade outdated signal equipment and enhance the efficiency of traffic operation at intersections along major thoroughfares. These signal improvements will involve limited roadway construction and will increase intersection traffic capacity with moderate cost implications and limited property impact.

#### *Reconstruction of Fairfield Avenue and State Street*

Both roadways are one-way, east-west thoroughfares in Bridgeport. These State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) projects will improve roadway conditions and provide better access to Downtown Bridgeport, which is expected to experience increased traffic pressure from new development.



*Seaview Avenue Transitway*

Seaview Avenue is a north-south thoroughfare connecting Route 1, Exit 29 of I-95 and the Long Island Sound in the East End of Bridgeport. CDOT and the City are currently planning for the reconstruction of this roadway. The City should work with CDOT to ensure that the roadway is designed as an urban boulevard that supports through traffic along with on-street parking, bike lanes, sidewalks and street trees. This can be accomplished within the existing right-of-way and will ensure that the roadway serves the needs of both through traffic and local neighborhoods. See also page 153.



Seaview Avenue Corridor | Source: Stantec

*Replacement of I-95 Bridge over the Housatonic River (Stratford-Milford)*

Improvements to the I-95 Bridge east of Bridgeport will increase traffic capacity on this highway and enhance safety along this vital corridor in southern Connecticut.

*Extension of the Pequonnock Valley Greenway and Housatonic Railroad Trail*

The extension of the Pequonnock Valley Greenway and Housatonic Railroad Trail from Trumbull Center into Beardsley Park and ultimately into Downtown Bridgeport will add a viable alternative mode of transportation linking employment centers as well as a recreation amenity linking significant attractions and parkland.



Inter-modal Center (front view) | Source: Stantec

*Bridgeport Inter-modal Transportation Center*

The inter-modal center will improve the connection of bus and train services and access to commuter parking facilities. Because efficient commuter train service is important for Bridgeport's role as a regional business center, the new inter-modal center will spark downtown economic development. The transportation center also emphasizes the City's commitment to alternative modes of transportation.

*New Railroad Station in Fairfield*

The new railroad station in Fairfield, adjacent to Bridgeport's Black Rock neighborhood, along with the associated Fairfield Metro Center development and improvements to adjacent access roadways, will attract new businesses and people to the Greater Bridgeport area and provide more travel options for Bridgeport residents, commuters and business patrons.



Inter-modal Center (side view) | Source: Stantec



### *New Haven Rail Line Track Improvements and Catenary's Replacement*

Recent and ongoing improvements to the New Haven Line by CDOT will improve the reliability of the commuter rail service that is increasingly important for commuters and travelers between Bridgeport and employment centers in lower Fairfield County and New York City. Improved train service will provide an appealing alternative to automobile use, as I-95 and Merritt Parkway become increasingly congested during rush hours.

## 12.4 | INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

Like Downtown, economic development, and neighborhoods, infrastructure is one of the six overarching themes of the Master Plan. An efficient infrastructure system with the capacity to serve existing and new residences and businesses is central to Bridgeport's sustainability and its ability to attract new investment. The city's existing systems- its roadways, water, stormwater and sewer systems, gas and electric supply and communication lines- have sufficient capacity to meet current and future projected needs. But these systems are old and in many cases need to be upgraded to function efficiently and effectively. Newer technologies such as Wi-Fi and wireless communication services have not yet been fully integrated into the city's infrastructure system. In order to address existing deficiencies in its systems and prepare for new development, the City should continue to work to modernize its infrastructure. Sewer and stormwater separation projects should be continued, particularly in the Downtown, to reduce stormwater overflow into Long Island Sound, increase water quality, address existing overflow issues and create capacity for new development. A stormwater capital improvement plan should be implemented to correct flooding hotspots. Efficient coordination of utility upgrades should be required so that roads are opened only once for utility work on multiple systems. And utility lines should be placed underground wherever feasible to reduce the visual impact of unsightly utility lines that currently criss-cross city neighborhoods. Construction of Wi-Fi, wireless communications and other leading technology infrastructure should be encouraged, as well as technology to address emergency services "dead spots" that exist throughout the city as a result of its topography and building blockages.

Bridgeport's circulation network is also a critical component of its infrastructure. The adequacy and efficiency of roadways, transit, and pedestrian networks have a significant impact on quality-of-life in the city. Similar to its utility infrastructure, Bridgeport's roadway network has sufficient capacity to handle existing and projected traffic conditions. But this system, which focuses almost exclusively on the automobile, is in need of modernization to reflect multiple modes of transportation. Opportunities for people to walk, bike and utilize transit are crucial elements of a successful urban environment. In order to provide for better multi-modal transportation access several projects should be undertaken: A trolley connection should be provided to connect Downtown, Steel Point and Seaside Park; a boulevard transit-way should be created along Seaview Avenue; seasonal ferry services should be provided to link key waterfront areas; feasibility of a high speed ferry to lower Fairfield County and Manhattan should be considered further; the Congress Street Bridge should be replaced; and the feasibility of a second train station in the East Side should be explored. In addition, sidewalks should be provided in mixed-use areas and within a one-quarter mile radius of public schools.

## 13.0

## MUNICIPAL FACILITIES &amp; SERVICES

**POLICIES**

- 1 Reinforce public services.
- 2 Reorganize city properties for maximum efficiency and tax revenue.

**GOALS**

- 1 Ensure that residents have equal and adequate access to public services.
- 2 Consolidate municipal uses to promote tax generating development and encourage state, county and federal offices to do the same.

City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace | Source: City of Bridgeport

**13.1 | INTRODUCTION**

Municipal facilities are physical aspects of local government which include land, buildings and major equipment. These facilities include such governmental functions as education, public works, police and fire protection, recreation and libraries. The location, capacity and quality of municipal facilities, and the services they provide, are key considerations because they can direct and shape private development, help stabilize neighborhoods and enhance community character and quality of life.



City Hall Annex, 999 Broad Street  
Source: BFJ Planning

### 13.2 | CITY HALL

Most of Bridgeport's governmental administration occurs in City Hall, located at 45 Lyon Terrace, and City Hall Annex, at 999 Broad Street. Functions housed in City Hall include the Finance Department, City Clerk, Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, Treasurer, Town Clerk, City Engineer, Fire Marshal, Information Technology Services, Civil Service Commission, Labor Relations, Land Use Construction Review, Zoning, the Building Department and the Board of Education. City Hall Annex, a former Gimbel's department store, contains the Office of the Mayor; the Chief Administrative Officer; the Office of Policy and Management; the Office of Planning and Economic Development; the departments of Housing and Community Development, Neighborhood Revitalization and Public Facilities; and the City Attorney. Finally, Bridgeport's original city hall, McLevy Hall, at 202 State Street, houses the Registrar of Voters, Vital Statistics and Probate Court.

Although the development of City Hall Annex occurred because the City outgrew the space in the existing City Hall, having three centers of government activity (including McLevy Hall) results in a number of inefficiencies for staff and visitors, and consumes a significant amount of Downtown real estate. As discussed at the end of this chapter, the City should explore a consolidation of these and other municipal functions, as a way to enhance efficiency as well as return valuable property to the tax rolls.

Bridgeport Police Headquarters, 300 Congress Street  
Source: City of Bridgeport

### 13.3 | POLICE AND FIRE

#### Police

The Bridgeport Police Department headquarters is at 300 Congress Street. In addition to this facility, the department operates the West Side Precinct location, at 1350 State Street, as well as two substations on the north and east sides of the City, at 1395 Sylvan Avenue (which also houses the community services division) and 135 Clarence Street, respectively. The department's 911 dispatch center is located in the basement of City Hall, although it will be moving to the Emergency Operations Center to be located at the new Public Works Complex (discussed below). The Police Department is in the process of renovating its main headquarters, and the West Side Precinct building is approximately five years old. The substation facilities are in need of updating, particularly on the East Side. The Police Department also operates Police Officer Sector Terminals (POST), which are smaller substations within hospitals and shopping centers.





According to Bridgeport Police Chief Bryan Norwood, the department has about 412 officers, somewhat less than the number of officers called for by the Civil Service Rules and Regulations. Chief Norwood said that the department lost its training facility in 2004, and has not had a recruit class in several years. However, a new police academy recently opened at the former Newfield Elementary School on Newfield Avenue in the East End.

The Police Department's Office of Community Services is responsible for providing neighborhood organizations with training, outreach and project planning. It also oversees the Neighborhood Block Watch, Citizen Patrols and Neighborhood Reclamation programs, and national programs such as the D.A.R.E. drug prevention program. The Bridgeport Mounted Unit, which dates to at least 1918, was revived in 1998 and provides a unique police presence in and around the city's major attractions, such as Harbor Yard, parks and the Downtown area. The department's bicycle and Segway patrols also play a distinctive role. The Detective Division has units specializing in major crimes and special investigations, fingerprinting and arson. The division also operates the Regional Burglary Unit, which is staffed by investigators from Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe and Norwalk, and investigates burglaries in the region. In addition, the Harbor Patrol Unit's dive team patrols the harbor, providing surveillance and security escorts for the ferry and maintaining the security perimeter of the port.

Chief Norwood noted that there are several other police or security forces operating within Bridgeport. The Board of Education has 12 school resource officers who provide security services, and the Parks Department and Airport each have their own security force. While some level of cooperation exists between the Bridgeport Police Department and these other forces, better communication is needed.

The Board of Police Commissioners, a seven-member board appointed by the Mayor, has responsibility for establishing departmental policies, goals and objectives. Other roles of the board include reviewing and approving regulations recommended by the Chief of Police, conducting periodic operational reviews, hearing and deciding appeals from decisions of the Chief and acting as the City's traffic authority.

## Fire

The Bridgeport Fire Department has its headquarters at 30 Congress Street, which also houses Engine Co. #1 and #5. Other fire department facilities are:

- *Engine Co. #3/4: 233 Wood Avenue*
- *Engine Co. #6: 1035 Central Avenue*
- *West End Fire Station, Engine Co. #7/11: 245 Ocean Terrace*
- *Engine Co. #10: 950 Boston Avenue*
- *Engine Co. #12: 265 Beechmont Avenue*
- *Engine Co. #15: 104 Evers Street*
- *Engine Co. #16: 3115 Madison Avenue*

The Boston Avenue station opened in March 2007 to replace a nearby station at 268 Putnam Street. The new, \$2.5 million facility is adjacent to the Luis Munoz Marin School and is the first new fire station since the early 1980s. The station on Putnam Street will be used in the short-term for equipment storage, but the Fire Department hopes to refurbish the old firehouse into a museum for the Bridgeport Fire Department Historical Society and a fire safety education center for children. In general, the department reports that its other facilities are in good condition. However, the station on Beechmont Avenue in the North End is approximately 80 years old, and could thus be a candidate for replacement.



Engine Co. #12 on Beechmont Avenue | Source: City of Bridgeport

The Bridgeport Fire Department has 312 uniformed officers and 15 administrative civilians. The department is governed by a Board of Fire Commissioners, consisting of seven members appointed by the Mayor. The Fire Chief is assisted by three deputy chiefs: the deputy chief of operations oversees the department's two battalions (East Side and West Side), the deputy chief of administration handles maintenance and overall administration and the deputy chief executive officer handles discipline and investigations. Equipment consists of nine engines, four ladder trucks, one heavy rescue vehicle, two battalion chiefs and a fire/rescue boat.

The annual budget for the Bridgeport Fire Department is approximately \$23 million. The City's Civil Service Commission oversees recruiting and testing of Fire Department officers. From these recruits, the department sets a class of 20 to 24 officers for a 12-week training course. Due to limited training facilities in Bridgeport, the department uses a Fairfield facility, at no cost.

In terms of future needs, the Fire Department's main concerns are always updating its equipment and maintaining sufficient manpower to ensure adequate response times. Its mission statement sets a goal of a response timeframe of four minutes or less, and the department meets this goal about 98 percent of the time. The department reported that it currently has sufficient manpower and equipment to meet the goal. However, the Fire Department's future needs are likely to change as development projects currently underway are completed. In particular, the conversion and construction of higher-rise Downtown buildings for residential use will require more sophisticated fire suppression systems, the use of non-flammable materials and other systems. The department will need to be involved in the discussions of these preventative measures.

### 13.4 | HOSPITALS, EMS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

#### Hospitals

*St. Vincent's Medical Center*, located on about eight acres of land on Main Street in the central portion of the City, is a 400-bed acute care hospital and referral center for open-heart surgery, total joint replacement and cancer that serves southwestern Connecticut and Westchester County, New York. The hospital, a Daughters of Charity facility open since 1905, has a total staff of 2,000, including 450 physicians that represent a range of more than 50 specialty and subspecialty medical and surgical disciplines. *St. Vincent's* is a member of Ascension Health, a national nonprofit Catholic health system. The hospital's key service areas are cardiovascular disease, cancer services, orthopedic services, a bariatric (weight-loss) surgery center, a full-service emergency



St. Vincent's Medical Center | Source: BFJ Planning



Newly constructed firehouse on Boston Avenue | Source: City of Bridgeport Fire Department

department, women's and family services including a family birthing center, senior services and behavioral health services. In fiscal 2006, St. Vincent's performed 270 open-heart surgeries and 1,440 newborn births, and had 4,709 inpatient surgical visits and 46,776 emergency room visits. The hospital posted operating revenue of \$285.5 million and net income of \$33.3 million for the year. St. Vincent's is also a teaching hospital, affiliated with two medical schools, the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and New York Medical College.

St. Vincent's offers health-care educational programs through St. Vincent's College and its Graduate Medical Education Program. St. Vincent's College, with approximately 550 students, offers two-year Associate degrees in cardiovascular technology, general studies, medical assisting, nursing and radiography, as well as a number of continuing education certificates. The Graduate Medical Education Program offers residency training in internal medicine and radiology.

Surgical residents from New York Medical College do a quarter of their training in the program.

Most of the existing campus was built in the mid-1970s. While a two-story addition was constructed in the front of the existing main building in 2003, the majority of patient care is provided in space designed more than 30 years ago. St. Vincent's has experienced significant growth in its inpatient and ambulatory services; inpatient discharges reached nearly 20,000 in fiscal 2006, while occupancy levels have exceeded 80 percent in recent years. Given this growth, the hospital completed in 2005 a \$500 million facilities plan that provided a detailed inventory and assessment of existing and future space needs for all departments to meet the projected growth and demand for services. The plan involves a three-phase expansion process. The first phase, which will encompass approximately \$140 million, will involve the construction of a 125,000-square-foot building between the existing main building and the Central Utility plant. This building will house a new ambulatory cancer center, an expanded emergency department, the women's imaging center, physician offices and new conference rooms. The second

phase will involve a reconfiguration and expansion of a number of clinical care facilities located on the hospital's current main floor to create a more controlled public environment, improve wayfinding, allow for more streamlined admitting and discharge processes, expand and consolidate patient waiting and holding areas and ensure the separation of public and staff traffic corridors. This phase will also include structural reinforcement of the main hospital building for possible future vertical expansion. The final phase will encompass construction of a 620-car, six-story parking garage on the southwest side of the main campus, on what is now a surface parking lot. Construction plans also include the creation of surplus space in radiation oncology, medical oncology and the women's imaging center to accommodate future growth.

*Bridgeport Hospital*, on Grant Street in the Mill Hill neighborhood of Bridgeport, is a 425-bed private, not-for-profit hospital that is part of the Yale New Haven Health System,



Bridgeport Hospital | Source: BFJ Planning

together with Yale-New Haven Hospital, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital and Greenwich Hospital. The hospital, part of Bridgeport Hospital & Healthcare Services Inc., has approximately 2,300 employees, 520 active attending physicians, 227 medical/surgical residents and fellows in programs affiliated with Yale University's School of

Medicine. Bridgeport Hospital and

its Ahlbin Rehabilitation Centers affiliate provide almost 321,000 patient care visits annually, including 20,000 admissions. The hospital's specialized services include obstetrics, pediatrics, a burn unit, wound care, surgery, oncology, medicine, cardiovascular care, psychiatry, breast care, rehabilitation, critical care, sleep disorders and community care.

Bridgeport Hospital was founded in 1878 and opened in 1884, becoming the first hospital in Fairfield County and the third in the state. Annual operating expenses total \$280 million, including \$24.2 million for charitable care. In addition to the main hospital facility, satellite facilities affiliated with Bridgeport Hospital include radiology sites in Shelton, Fairfield, Stratford and Trumbull.



The Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing, the oldest nursing school in Connecticut and making up more than 10 percent of graduate nurses within the state, offers an intensive two-year hospital-based nursing program. In addition, the hospital offers a Nurse Anesthesia Program in conjunction with Southern Connecticut State University and Fairfield University, as well as graduate educational programs through the affiliation with Yale University School of Medicine. Bridgeport Hospital offers training programs in emergency medicine, medicine, OB/GYN, pediatrics, primary care, radiology and surgery, as well as three fellowship training programs: cardiology, gastroenterology and pulmonary/intensive care.

The hospital recently completed the first phase of a two-year, \$15 million emergency department expansion and renovation, financed entirely through community donations. This phase involved an 11,000-square-foot addition that houses the Children's Emergency Center and Urgent Care Center, and also includes new drop-off, reception and waiting areas. Additional patient parking has also been provided just outside the department entrance. The new addition increases the total amount of emergency department space to 25,000 square feet, nearly double the prior size. The next phase of the project will include renovations to the rest of the emergency department and installation of a CT scanner and decontamination area. When work is completed in 2008, the emergency department will have 52 patient rooms, 12 more than before.

Both St. Vincent's and Bridgeport Hospital have "Life-Star" airlifting capacity, and each hospital has a specialty area of expertise; St. Vincent's has its trauma center, and Bridgeport Hospital has its burn unit. Both hospitals also operate satellite walk-in medical centers throughout the region, which attracts to Bridgeport a number of medical-related facilities, such as medical offices, labs, therapy and treatment facilities, x-ray and diagnosis facilities, nursing homes and rehabilitation centers. The presence of these facilities makes medical technology one of the major industries in Bridgeport.

### Emergency Medical Services

The City of Bridgeport is part of the Joint Hospital Planning Council, which was founded by Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent's Medical Center to provide medical control for ambulances operating within the Greater Bridgeport area. The region encompasses Bridgeport, Fairfield, Stratford, Trumbull, Monroe and Easton. EMS within Bridgeport is provided by American Medical Response.

### Emergency Management

The Bridgeport Office of Emergency Management provides 24-hour emergency assistance by mobilizing personnel and resources, updating emergency operations plans, training emergency personnel, managing the emergency operations system and informing the public of emergencies and disasters. The office, located at the Fire Department headquarters, is staffed by a director, who reports to the mayor, and a part-time administrative assistant. Various other City agencies – including the Mayor's Office, Fire, Police, Public Facilities, Board of Education, Water Pollution Control and private organizations – make up the overall staff of the Office of Emergency Management.

## 13.5 | PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Bridgeport Department of Public Facilities has approximately 225 employees distributed among 11 divisions. The *Roadway Division* is responsible for maintenance of the City's 272 miles of road network, including snow-plowing, paving repairs, brush removal, street sweeping and leaf pickup. The division divides Bridgeport into four primary sectors, each assigned to one foreman for control. The *Sanitation and Recycling Division* covers 12 solid waste routes and four recycling routes throughout the city year-round, and also includes the operation of Bridgeport's transfer station. This division serves more than 52,000 households a week and collects more than 3,500 tons of solid waste in an average month and another 350 tons from condominiums. The *Lines and Signs Division* installs and maintains more than 50,000 street signs and way-finding devices. The *Maintenance Division* oversees some 1.3 million square feet in 65 buildings, including City Hall and City Hall Annex, historic buildings such as the Barnum Museum and McLevy Hall and restroom facilities and bathrooms at City parks. The *Parks and Recreation Division* maintains more than 67 parks, esplanades, traffic islands and streetscapes throughout the city, as well as the

Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course and recreation programs. The *Engineering Division* maintains data for all city traffic signalization and mapping of roadways and drainage systems, and processes applications for drainage-related permits. The *Construction Management Division* is managing the design and construction of Bridgeport's \$600 million school modernization program, which is rehabilitating or replacing more than 40 schools. The *Licenses and Permits Division* issues street, sidewalk licenses and street excavation and sidewalk permits. This division also reviews work taking place within the City's right-of-way. The *Harbor Master* manages Bridgeport's port commerce and port security and provides safety for the city's navigable waters. *Sikorsky Airport*, located in Stratford, encompasses over 500 acres and has built a significant corporate following in recent years. The *Connecticut Zoological Society* oversees Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, which covers 54 acres within Beardsley Park and is the state's only zoo.

The Public Facilities divisions are located primarily at City Hall and City Hall Annex. However, the City is planning to build a new facility for public works on Housatonic and North Washington Avenues, in the center of Bridgeport. This facility, which is expected to begin construction in

the summer of 2007 and to be completed in five to seven years, will consolidate the public facilities and parks and recreation operations, as well as a regional emergency operations/911 center.

Because of the significant number of City-owned buildings, the primary issue facing the Department of Public Facilities is maintaining these facilities, which requires an accurate inventory of their condition. Bridgeport is often in the position of not knowing what needs to be repaired until it breaks, and even the process of determining the City's total electricity usage is complex. A helpful tool to alleviate this situation could be a capital management software system, which allows assessment of facilities' market value (potential return on investment), to determine how much the City should spend on capital for these facilities. While such a program can be costly, it could allow the City to evaluate which properties it should consolidate or dispose of, as a means of minimizing both tax-exempt property and maintenance costs. At the very least, Bridgeport should undertake a Municipal Facilities Study to address the efficiency and adequacy of its facilities, as well as inventory what facilities are federal- or state-owned. Such a study would allow the City to evaluate which facilities could be consolidated to allow for the development of tax-generating uses.



WPCA Treatment Plant | Source: City of Bridgeport



The Burroughs & Saden Memorial Library, Main Branch | Source: BFJ Planning

### 13.6 | LIBRARIES

The Bridgeport Public Library was founded in 1881 by the Connecticut General Assembly and the Bridgeport City Council. The library purchased the collection of the Bridgeport Library Association, and in 1883 received as a gift a building at the corner of Main and John Streets. This building housed the library until 1927, when it moved to the Burroughs Library Building on Broad Street in downtown Bridgeport. Major renovations to the building were made in the late 1960s, and it was renamed the Burroughs and Saden Memorial Library in 2003, to honor George A. Saden, a retired Superior Court judge who had served on the library's board. The building has been identified as needing expanded facilities, and it should be included in the Municipal Facilities Study.

In addition to the Burroughs and Saden main branch downtown, the Bridgeport Public Library has four other locations within the city. The Black Rock branch, located on Fairfield Avenue, is undergoing extensive renovations and has been closed since the fall of 2003. This branch was constructed in 1932 and serves a neighborhood of approximately 23,500 residents and four schools (Black Rock, Longfellow, Longfellow Annex and St. Ann Schools).

Renovation planning began in 1997 to replace the original electrical, plumbing and heating systems, make the building ADA-compliant, add Wi-Fi connectivity and add space to increase the library's collections and programming efforts and provide community activity space. The current building is 6,953 square feet, and the renovations will nearly double its size, to 12,374 feet.

The Newfield branch is in a rented space at the intersection of Stratford and Central Avenues and primarily serves the residents of the East End. The branch owns about 23,000 books, 2,000 audiovisual materials and assorted magazines and newspapers. Electronic resources include Internet stations, word processors, one children's computer with educational games and eight laptop computers for the homework help program and training. The Newfield branch also has a community room, which seats 25 people and is used for library programming and for meetings of local nonprofit organizations.



The North branch is on Madison Avenue, in Puglio Park in the North End neighborhood of Bridgeport. The original branch was located on Main Street and opened in 1918; it was replaced by the current facility in 1995. The branch encompasses 19,800 square feet, with a collection of more than 45,000 volumes, as well as audiovisual materials and periodicals. It has 20 computers with Internet access, and two computers for use by children. The facility also includes a 150-person capacity community room, a conference room, two private study rooms and parking for 85 vehicles.

The Old Mill Green branch is located in a rented space in a shopping center on East Main Street and reopened in 1997 after a renovation. The facility is 4,175 square feet and has a collection of more than 26,000 titles, with a number of materials in Spanish. This branch is planned to be replaced as part of a larger \$7.2 million proposal in 1999, that also included the new firehouse on Boston Avenue and a new community center.

In 1999, the nine-member library board of directors and staff hired a consulting firm to assess library facilities, analyze current programs and services, gather community feedback and design a long-range plan of action to respond to changing community needs. The planning process included visits to every library branch, focus groups to learn how the libraries met or did not meet residents' needs, meetings with more than 50 staff members to identify areas where library service could improve and work with a long-range planning committee. Outcomes of the 2001-2005 long-range plan included improvements in safety, cleanliness and parking; extensions of library hours; plans for renovation or construction at all library branches; programs to increase teen and senior use of the library; staff development initiatives; enhancing information access and the library collection; technology use policies; and creation of a development office and Friends of the Library support group.



The Old Mill Green Branch Rents Space in a Shopping Center | Source: City of Bridgeport



The North Library Branch in Puglio Park | Source: City of Bridgeport

## 13.7 | RESIDENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

### Youth Services

The Bridgeport Department of Youth Services offers a range of recreational and educational services geared toward the city's youth. Its Lighthouse Program – co-sponsored together with the City, the Mayor and the Board of Education – brings together community sponsorship in Bridgeport schools to provide students with a safe and supportive environment after school, on Saturdays and during the summer. The program, which receives local, state and federal funding, operates at 29 school sites, each of which is operated by a partner agency under contract with the City. Sponsoring agencies include the YMCA, the Ralphola Taylor Center, Cardinal Shehan Center, ASPIRA and Hall Neighborhood House. Among the specific after-school activities provided are homework assistance, computer instruction, basketball, arts and crafts, swimming, theatre, dance and music. For older students, the Art and Humanities Community Learning Center program at Bassick High School offers health screenings, exercise programs, film school opportunities, library services and child-care instruction. In addition, the Lighthouse office

employs more than 200 youth aged 16 to 18 in its training and employment program.

In addition to this direct provision of services, the Department of Youth Services acts as a clearinghouse for information about recreation opportunities, events, daycare, scholarship programs, education and training, employment and advocacy programs.

### Senior Services

The Bridgeport Department of Aging aims to provide opportunities for the city's senior citizens for socialization, employment, volunteerism and information resources. The City maintains and operates three senior centers: the Eisenhower Senior Center on Golden Hill Street, the Black Rock Senior Center on Fairfield Avenue and the North End Bethany Senior Center on Thorne Street. The City also maintains the South End and Ralphola Taylor centers, which are operated by the YMCA.



Bridgeport Department of Youth's Lighthouse Program | Source: City of Bridgeport



North End Bethany Senior Center | Source: City of Bridgeport

Health services provided by the department include complete monthly medical examination by appointment, blood pressure screening, blood sugar and diabetic counseling, weight and diet counseling and seasonal flu shots. Most health services are free to Bridgeport residents aged 60 and over, although in some cases there may be minor charges.

The department provides a number of social services for Bridgeport seniors over age 60, including recreational activities, counseling on Medicare and Medicaid, energy/winterization assistance, housing counseling, adult day care referrals and applications for state and federal entitlement programs. Other social programs include the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), in which approximately 450 enrolled seniors volunteer at various nonprofit agencies, and the Senior AIDES program, which provides employment assistance for low- and very low-income Bridgeport seniors (55 years or older). This project receives federal funding for salaries for the seniors who are assigned to do community services at a nonprofit organization or a City office. The objective is to train seniors at these host agencies so that they may eventually be hired on at those agencies or another employer. The Senior Transportation Program provides transportation for Bridgeport seniors to the senior centers, shopping, field trips and other places of interest. Seniors are picked up at various sites throughout the city, such as senior housing and other designated central locations.

In addition, the transportation program allows seniors to attend daily senior center activities at the Eisenhower center, receive a nutritional lunch and get assistance in applying for programs. Finally, the Senior Chore service program provides free assistance with minor household chores for all Bridgeport senior citizens.

The Mayor's Commission on Aging consists of eight members, appointed by the mayor for two-year terms, who evaluate the senior services provided by the community – both public and private agencies – and make recommendations to the mayor regarding the development and integration of these agencies.

### Health and Social Services

The 17 work groups of Bridgeport's Department of Health and Social Services provide a range of services, from off-site outreach and inspections to on-site administrative support, health clinics and veterans' services. Formerly the City's welfare department and venereal disease clinic, HSS today protects, educates and administers to the public in many aspects of their health and well-being.

Most of the department's operations are located in the East Side, in the remaining building of the former Bridgeport Brass complex at 752 East Main Street. Vital Statistics, the department's working group that maintains and distributes birth, marriage and burial records, is located at McLevy Hall.

However, HSS's presence extends throughout the city. The department's sponsored dental and health clinics serving the school-age population are located at 34 public school sites in Bridgeport; its clinics provide a needle exchange service via a van that makes multiple stops in several neighborhoods five days a week; and its veterans' group transports people daily to the West Haven VA Hospital.

The four-story, 60,000-square-foot HSS building at 752 East Main Street is in poor condition, with multiple roof leaks. Although the building was minimally renovated to accommodate HSS, it is inadequate for its needs. Its mechanical, electrical and ventilation systems are in poor condition, and its public spaces are too small for an office and health-care facility. The conversion of a factory building into an office use has created a legacy of oddly configured spaces and cubicles that promote a sense of territorialism and lack of interconnectivity among



“Education is critical in the city; the quality of Bridgeport’s schools relates directly to the city’s image and its ability to attract investment.”

department staff. Also, incongruous and inappropriate adjacencies exist, e.g. drug users seeking help and children receiving school health physicals. While the utilization of space varies, the existing building provides more space than HSS requires.

McLevy Hall, home to the HSS’s Vital Statistics Group, is also shared among several other City departments. Vital Statistics stores and provides access to personal records that are stored in a fireproof vault. Although the location is convenient to other municipal departments, the building is not flexible, and Vital Statistics finds it difficult to accommodate its growing need for fireproof storage capacity.

Both HSS staff and its clients would benefit if all department working groups were in one location. For the staff, such an arrangement would facilitate management and communication. For the public, it would provide convenience, as personal documents such as birth certificates are often necessary for social services.

### 13.8 | WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

The City of Bridgeport has a Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), which is a quasi-public agency that operates, maintains and improves Bridgeport’s wastewater treatment facilities and the sanitary and storm collection system. The WPCA was established in 1988 and is managed by a General Manager and staff who report to a nine-member board, which includes the city engineer, the city attorney, the director of finance, the director of public facilities and five at-large members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The WPCA, located on Seaview Avenue on the East End, adopts its own budget and sets user fees, which fund the operations, maintenance and debt service costs of the systems. The City has a long-term contract with the Kelda Group LKGF for the operation of the wastewater treatment and field operations function of the WPCA.

### 13.9 | SCHOOLS

Schools in Bridgeport (see Figure 13-1) include traditional public schools, new charter schools and a set of private schools including the parochial school system of the Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport. Education is especially critical in the city; the quality of Bridgeport’s schools relates directly to the city’s image and its ability to attract investment. As a result, education has been identified as one of the planning themes in the City’s Master Plan.

Figure 13-1 | Schools Map



Note: This map does not include the proposed high school math and science magnet school, as this school is proposed to be located outside of Bridgeport.

Source: BFJ Planning

### Bridgeport Public Schools

It is important for the City to consider the Board of Education's plans and operations in its land use plans. Both groups must be aware of the goals, policies and trends of the other in order to work together. As shown in Table 13-1, below, the Bridgeport Public School District has 25 elementary schools (excluding Howe and Howe Annex, whose students were transferred to the new Cesar Batalla School in January 2007), three high schools, three alternative/opportunity programs (Bridgeport Learning Center, Park City Academy and Make the Grade Opportunity School) and an interdistrict vocational aquaculture school. Each of the high schools offers specialized programs within a traditional curriculum. Central High School has a "School Within a School" academic magnet school. Bassick High School has three "career academies" designed to prepare students for higher education and the work force and focusing on arts and media, business and finance and government and human services. Harding High School has four learning communities: the Medical Careers Magnet for students interested in health-care careers; the International Baccalaureate Program, which emphasizes global studies and offers college credits at a number of institutions; the law and public service program and the arts and humanities academy. In addition, five magnet schools (Park City Magnet School, the Classical Studies Academy, High Horizons Magnet School, Multicultural Magnet School and Six-to-Six Magnet School) operate in Bridgeport, along with three public charter schools (New Beginnings Family Academy, Park City Prep Charter School and Bridge Academy). Also, the district operates the Skane School early childhood education center. The Bridgeport system had a total of 15,730 elementary school students and 5,582 high school students as of September 2006, for a total enrollment of 21,312. The district employs a professional staff of 1,700. It receives approximately 80 to 90 percent of its operating budget from the state, with the state's funding formula based on the number of students in the Bridgeport system.

In 2003, faced with a deteriorating school facilities stock, the Bridgeport Public School system undertook a Facility Master Plan to review existing facilities conditions, establish educational and demographic needs and recommend a plan of action to create school buildings that would remain viable for the next 30 to 50 years. The plan sought to respond to the Board of Education's desire to discontinue the practice of leasing facilities as soon as practicable, while also incorporating the

Board policy of systemwide Pre-K to 8 schools and high schools. The Facility Master Plan found that Bridgeport's school buildings ranged in age from 12 to 120 years old, and many of these facilities are small and on very small sites. These size constraints make it difficult to accommodate Pre-K to 8 elementary schools, and therefore some schools serve only Pre-K to 3 or Pre-K to 6. Some schools have been recently renovated and are in a good state of repair, while a few have not had substantial upgrades for 50 to 60 years. Recommendations of the plan included:

- *School size: Pre-K to 8: 500 to 1,000 students; high school: 900 to 1,200 students*
- *School site size and functions*
- *Neighborhood schools to the greatest extent possible (students can walk to school)*
- *Expansion of the magnet school concept for both Pre-K to 8 and high school*
- *Additions to 10 Pre-K to 8 schools*
- *New construction on new sites for 11 Pre-K to 8 schools and two high schools*
- *New construction on an existing site for one high school*
- *Renovations to all schools that have not had recent improvements*

The projected cost, in 2003 dollars, for the Facility Master Plan to be carried out over the next several decades was \$260 to \$280 million for Pre-K to 8 for the west side of the city, \$220 to 4240 million for Pre-K to 8 for the east side and \$220 million to \$240 million for the high schools. A large portion of this amount, up to 75 percent, would be borne by the state under current legislation; historically, Connecticut has funded facilities projects on an 80 percent/20 percent match. However, after land acquisition, local initiative dollars (funds for spaces and programs not provided by the state) and other ineligible costs are included in the overall budget, the actual percentage covered by the state is reduced to about 75 percent. There is some indication that the percentage of the state share may be lowered in the future, possibly to a 50 percent/50 percent split.



Table 13-1 | Bridgeport Public School Enrollment, 2006-2007

School	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
<i>Traditional Primary Schools</i>											
Barnum		25	32	44	40	49	48	32			270
Beardsley	57	87	86	68	87	75	84	56			600
Blackham	33	77	76	70	83	86	113	128	241	223	1,130
Black Rock		57	57	38	49	48	56	44			349
Bryant	29	58	74	56	63	59	49				388
Columbus	29	99	122	112	107	141	114	123			847
Cross		46	47	43	42	34	32	42	83	73	442
Curiale		24	54	45	40	55	58	108	137	164	685
Dunbar		29	39	33	36	28	31	37	127	128	488
Edison	36	75	70	53	50	49	50	37			420
Garfield	23	58	40	28	42	39	34	26			290
Hall		40	50	46	48	37	43	57			321
Hallen		47	54	44	67	44	47	55			358
Hooker		49	42	47	42	55	49	57	61	55	457
Howe*		116	105	112	104						437
Howe Annex*						88	90	58	60	56	352
Longfellow	13	58	60	51	48	39	41	41	85	102	538
Marin	31	41	71	67	67	65	57	54	223	199	875
Madison		78	118	107	101	106	87	78			675
Maplewood Annex	14	73	50	18	22						177
McKinley	18	44	49	38	52	43	57	30			331
Read		89	85	82	79	88	91	90	164	171	939
Roosevelt	18	87	106	63	70	65	63	88	176	125	861
Waltersville	55	38	57	73	60	60	49	46			438
Webster	8	55	44	34	37						178
Winthrop		63	69	68	78	83	92	89	138	130	810
<i>Alternative/Opportunity/Magnet Schools</i>											
Bridgeport Learning Center/Sheridan			4	4	7	2	2	3	4	6	32
Classical Studies (Maplewood)		50	49	58	57	58	60	57			389
High Horizons		52	48	50	50	48	50	50	48	48	444
Make the Grade (Whittier)								6	13	14	33
Mead Hall									4	2	6
Multicultural		46	48	50	50	50	51	49	53	55	452
Park City Academy (Barnum Annex)									1	3	4
Park City Magnet	45	49	50	55	50	55	53	53	52	51	513
Skane	142	59									201
<b>Totals</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>1,769</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>1,657</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>1,651</b>	<b>1,594</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>1,605</b>	<b>15,730</b>

High Schools	9	10	11	12	Total
Bassick	327	487	303	239	1,356
Central	704	589	613	539	2,445
Harding	582	435	390	333	1,740
BLC/Sheridan	2	4	9	1	16
Mead Hall	7	2			9
Park City Academy	4	7	4	1	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>5,582</b>

**Note:** Table is as of September 29, 2006, and excludes Cesar Batalla School, which opened in January 2007. This school, with approximately 800 students, replaced Howe and Howe Annex, and absorbed some overflow from Black Rock and Curiale. Also excludes the three public charter schools and schools not operated by the Bridgeport Board of Education, such as Six-to-Six Magnet School, which is operated by Cooperative Educational Services at the same location as the High Horizons and Multicultural magnet schools.

Source: Bridgeport Board of Education, 2006

Based on the recommendations of the Facility Master Plan, the City and the Bridgeport Board of Education launched the Building Bright Futures program, which will involve the construction of five new Pre-K through 8 schools and renovations to a number of other schools. The new schools, built on sites averaging about 7 acres, are being designed to serve as neighborhood centers. For example, the new schools will use a “double fencing” concept that will enclose the school building separately from its grounds, so that the surrounding community can use the fields and playgrounds when the school is not in session, but the building itself remains secure. This arrangement can allow the City to provide space to neighborhoods that may be underserved by traditional parks and open space. This community use of the new schools may be particularly important for Bridgeport’s teens, who need places to meet and socialize, including sports facilities.

The first new school constructed under the Building Bright Futures program is the Cesar A. Batalla School, at State Street and Howard Avenue in the West End/West Side area of Bridgeport, which opened in January 2007. This 146,000-square-foot school serves about 800 students but has the capacity for approximately 1,080. Other new schools planned under the program are:

- **New Barnum Elementary School:** Intersection of Hallett Street and Martin Luther King Drive. 1,250 students, 172,000 square feet.
- **North End Elementary School:** Intersection of North and Lexington Avenues. 750 students, 105,000 square feet.
- **Jettie S. Tisdale Elementary School:** Intersection of Hollister and Carrie Streets. 750 students, 105,000 square feet.
- **South End Elementary School:** Intersection of Iranistan and University Avenues. 750 students, 115,640 square feet. This school, which will be located on the campus of the University of Bridgeport, will primarily serve as “swing space” for students during construction of the other new schools.

Bridgeport has also been approved for the construction of two new interdistrict host magnet schools, to serve students from Bridgeport, Easton, Monroe, Fairfield, Milford, Redding, Shelton, Stratford and Trumbull. A magnet elementary school with approximately 500 students will team with Sacred Heart University and the Discovery Museum and be located next to the museum. A 270,000-square-foot high school math and science magnet school with about 1,500 students is currently planned with Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo.



The New Cesar A. Batalla School, which opened in January 2007 | Source: City of Bridgeport

The planned additions and renovations in the construction program are Bassick High School, Blackham Elementary School, Central High School, Harding High School, JFK Campus (site of High Horizons, Multicultural and Six-to-Six magnet schools), Marin School, Beardsley School, the Regional Aquaculture School, Columbus School, Cross School and the Skane Center. Redistricting will likely be needed in fall 2008 to move students into the facilities.

The replacement of older, often historic, school buildings with modern facilities creates opportunities for adaptive reuse. For example, the former Waltersville School will become the Achievement First Bridgeport charter school, while the Newfield School has become a new police training facility. The older school properties are owned by the City, but the Board of Education must release them before they can be reused. As more of these facilities are replaced by new schools, their adaptive reuse will be an issue for discussion between the City and the Board of Education.

The Bridgeport Board of Education also allows use of school facilities by the public when the use does not interfere with school-related activities. Eligible users of school facilities include school-related agencies; federal,

state and municipal agencies; school employee groups; and non-school organizations, associations or individuals whose activities are related to civic, cultural, recreational or public welfare activities that benefit Bridgeport residents. Religious organizations may use the facilities on the same basis as the other user groups, *except* that the use for direct religious purposes will be subject to a fee schedule. User activities exempt from the fee schedule are school-related student activities; Bridgeport-based nonprofit youth organizations; Bridgeport youth or adult activities sponsored directly by the City; Bridgeport Board of Education parent-teacher organizations; City municipal agencies; and Board of Education employee group activities. These groups may be subject to custodial, security and cafeteria overtime costs.



The Park City Magnet School, on Chopsey Hill Road | Source: BFJ Planning



### Projected Enrollment

As shown in Table 13-2, enrollment in Bridgeport's public schools is expected to decline from the 2007-2008 school year to 2014-2015, decreasing by about 550 students, from 21,834 in 2007-2008 to 21,285 in 2014-2015.

Nearly all of this decrease stems from a reduction in enrollment for grades 10 through 12.

### Standardized Test Performance

Table 13-3 details the 2005-2006 performance of Bridgeport's primary school students on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), a standardized test administered to students in grades 3 through 8 that tests students in mathematics, reading and writing (to include a science component in the near future), and the performance of public high school students on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), a state-mandated standardized test that all students must take in their sophomore year. As shown in the table, Bridgeport schools significantly underperform the state averages for each of the curricular subjects, although the percentage of the district's students meeting the state goals is higher than Connecticut's lowest percentage.

Table 13-4 shows the recent performance of Bridgeport students on the SAT test. Although the district's performance on the test improved from 2000 to 2005, fewer of Bridgeport's high school students are taking the SAT, and their performance, particularly on the verbal portion of the test, remains substantially below the state average.

### Dropout Rates and Post-Graduation Activity

As shown in Table 13-5, the dropout rate for Bridgeport high school students, while well above the state level, improved significantly from 1999-2000 to 2004-2005. In addition, the vast majority of the City's high school graduates either pursued higher education or the military or civilian work force. However, this portion of graduates declined somewhat between 2000 and 2005, and the number of unemployed Bridgeport graduates increased slightly (as did the number of unemployed graduates throughout the state).

Table 13-2 | Bridgeport Public Schools Projected Enrollment, 2007-2015

Grade	Years							
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Pre-K	537	537	537	537	537	537	537	537
K	1,899	1,845	1,864	1,866	1,877	1,884	1,893	1,900
1	1,985	2,015	1,958	1,978	1,980	1,992	1,999	2,009
2	1,902	1,821	1,848	1,796	1,814	1,816	1,827	1,834
3	1,754	1,852	1,773	1,799	1,749	1,766	1,768	1,779
4	1,701	1,723	1,819	1,741	1,767	1,718	1,734	1,736
5	1,707	1,687	1,708	1,804	1,726	1,752	1,704	1,719
K-5	10,948	10,943	10,970	10,984	10,913	10,928	10,925	10,977
6	1,648	1,656	1,637	1,657	1,750	1,675	1,700	1,653
7	1,726	1,677	1,685	1,666	1,686	1,781	1,704	1,730
8	1,704	1,634	1,587	1,595	1,577	1,596	1,686	1,613
6-8	5,078	4,967	4,909	4,918	5,013	5,052	5,090	4,996
9	1,577	1,587	1,522	1,478	1,486	1,469	1,487	1,571
10	1,435	1,349	1,358	1,302	1,264	1,271	1,257	1,272
11	1,182	1,172	1,102	1,110	1,064	1,033	1,038	1,027
12	1,077	1,030	1,022	961	968	928	900	905
9-12	5,271	5,138	5,004	4,851	4,782	4,701	4,682	4,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,834</b>	<b>21,585</b>	<b>21,420</b>	<b>21,290</b>	<b>21,245</b>	<b>21,218</b>	<b>21,234</b>	<b>21,285</b>

Source: Bridgeport Board of Education, 2006

Table 13-3 | Bridgeport 2005-2006 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Performance

Connecticut Mastery Test % Meeting State Goal* In:		District	State	Of All Districts in State Lowest % Highest %	
Grade 3	Reading	22.7	54.4	10.3	91.3
	Writing	33.4	61.0	13.6	100.0
	Mathematics	27.4	56.3	13.6	90.0
Grade 4	Reading	23.6	57.8	17.5	89.7
	Writing	33.9	62.8	29.9	91.1
	Mathematics	22.7	58.8	22.4	92.3
Grade 5	Reading	27.6	60.9	19.5	92.0
	Writing	33.6	65.0	25.0	90.8
	Mathematics	31.3	60.7	18.2	89.9
Grade 6	Reading	33.5	63.6	26.6	92.8
	Writing	37.0	62.2	25.9	94.4
	Mathematics	29.5	58.6	12.5	95.1
Grade 7	Reading	33.8	66.7	26.9	95.0
	Writing	32.1	60.0	25.5	89.8
	Mathematics	23.2	57.0	19.2	93.0
Grade 8	Reading	33.8	66.7	13.3	93.6
	Writing	35.5	62.4	2.7	96.4
	Mathematics	19.2	58.3	0.0	93.6
Connecticut Academic Performance Test % Grade 10 Meeting State Goal* In:		District	State	Of All Districts in State Lowest % Highest %	
Reading Across the Disciplines		14.9	46.5	0.0	83.1
Writing Across the Disciplines		20.0	52.4	0.0	86.3
Mathematics		11.7	46.3	0.0	82.3
Science		8.6	44.6	0.0	85.3

Note: These figures were calculated differently than those reported in the No Child Left Behind Report Cards. Unlike NCLB figures, these results reflect the performance of students with scoreable tests who were enrolled in the district at time of testing, regardless of how long they were enrolled.

\*The state Goal level is more demanding than the state Proficient level, but not as high as the Advanced level, reported in the No Child Left Behind Report Cards.

Source: Bridgeport School District Strategic School Profile 2005-06, CT State Dept. of Education

Table 13-4 | Bridgeport SAT Performance, 2000 and 2005

SAT I: Reasoning Test	Class of 2000 District	Class of 2005 District	State
% of Graduates Tested	67.5	55.7	74.9
Mathematics: Average Score	394	405	512
Mathematics: % Scoring 600 or More	2.3	4.4	24.6
Verbal: Average Score	389	397	510
Verbal: % Scoring 600 or More	3.4	3.8	22.7

Source: Bridgeport School District Strategic School Profile 2005-06, CT State Dept. of Education

Table 13-5 | Bridgeport Dropout Rates &amp; Activities of Graduates, 1999-2000 through 2004-2005

Dropout Rates	District	State	Activities of Graduates	Class of	# In District	District %	State %
Cumulative Four-Year Rate for Class of 2005	18.9	7.4	Pursuing Higher Education	2005	665	70.8	82.3
2004-2005 Annual Rate for Grades 9-12	6.4	1.7		2000	643	77.8	78.5
1999-2000 Annual Rate for Grades 9-12	10.3	3.1	Employed or in Military	2005	203	21.6	13.9
				2000	156	18.9	17.6
			Unemployed	2005	13	1.4	0.9
				2000	11	1.3	0.7

Source: Bridgeport School District Strategic School Profile 2005-06, CT State Dept. of Education

### *Bridgeport Public Schools Strategic Plan*

The Bridgeport Board of Education adopted in April 2007 a Strategic Plan with a primary mission of graduating all students “college ready” and “prepared to succeed in life.” Other student performance objectives identified in the plan consist of 100 percent of Bridgeport public school students scoring at or above the state goal in the CMT, CAPT and other qualifying assessments, as required by law; a reduction in the student dropout rate to zero; and 100 percent of student compliance with the school and district rules or conduct and the district attendance and graduation/promotion requirements.

The Strategic Plan identifies a number of broad strategies to reach the student performance objectives, including implementation of differentiated instructional strategies and accountability models, building the capacity of each school to implement focused school education plans and creation of ways for families to be involved in the education of their children at home and at school.

### *Public-Private Partnerships*

The Bridgeport public school system has several partnerships with institutions of higher education, most at the high school level. The Aquaculture School has a partnership with the University of Connecticut allowing students from Bridgeport’s three high schools to receive college credit for course work, and the university offers early college entrance. Central High School partners with Monroe College in Norwalk through the Smaller Learning Communities grant. The Bridgeport public school system has long-standing relationships with Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University’s Upward Bound programs, in which high school students take courses on Saturdays during the school year and during the summer to encourage them to apply for college. Sacred Heart is also involved in the inter-district magnet elementary and high school building projects, and it offers early college entrance as well. Fairfield University is involved in Gear Up (“Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs”), a program supported by federal funds and designed to help low-income students prepare for success in college and to provide college scholarships for eligible high school seniors. Housatonic Community College allows students to take courses while attending high school, and also offers early college entrance. The University of Bridgeport sponsors the Bridgeport public school system’s college fair. It also allows the viewing of

student projects at its facilities as an open house for the community, and offers the winner a scholarship to the university.

Bridgeport was the first city in the state to offer the Adopt-A-School program. This partnership between local industry and the city’s schools provides a way for trained business executives to work with school staff and students on direct services to students, staff and curriculum development, management assistance and support services. Many of the major businesses in the city have now “adopted” a school.

While these public-private partnerships are a good start, they should be expanded, particularly to the elementary school level, as well as to more regional private companies. These partnerships should aim not only to prepare students for higher education, but also to ready them for future job opportunities in the city and region. In addition, partnerships between college- and university-level education programs and Bridgeport’s public schools should be explored to provide student teaching experience to teachers in training and additional free classroom support to the city’s public school students and teachers.

### *Private Schools*

In addition to its public school system, Bridgeport has an extensive network of private schools. The most significant portion of this private school system is the Diocese of Bridgeport, which operates six elementary schools, one high school and one special education school within the city.

### *Diocese of Bridgeport Schools*

#### *Elementary Schools*

In the city of Bridgeport, the Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport operates six elementary schools, with a combined enrollment of 1,373 students, grouped together in the Cathedral Education Cluster. This organization seeks to make a quality Catholic education more accessible for Bridgeport’s neediest students. The Diocese reports that 82 percent of its elementary school students in Bridgeport are minority students, and 40 percent are non-Catholic. Each school generally has a principal, nine to 10 teachers and related staff. St. Ambrose, the largest elementary school, has some grades with two classes, but all other schools have one class per grade. Enrollment and staffing statistics for the six Cathedral Cluster



schools for the 2006-2007 school year are shown below:

Table 13-6 | Bridgeport Cathedral Cluster Enrollment and Staffing: 2006-2007

	Enrollment											Staff		
	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
St. Ambrose	20	48	36	32	26	29	31	23	28	29	<b>302</b>	22	4	<b>26</b>
St. Andrew	20	25	24	25	24	22	23	20	25	25	<b>233</b>	10	5	<b>15</b>
St. Ann	30	24	24	11	13	18	19	18	24	20	<b>201</b>	15	2	<b>17</b>
St. Augustine	17	17	23	23	26	18	18	17	20	25	<b>204</b>	10	3	<b>13</b>
St. Peter	N/A	23	21	14	18	21	21	29	28	30	<b>205</b>	10	6	<b>16</b>
St. Raphael	20	24	22	22	23	23	26	19	24	25	<b>228</b>	11	6	<b>17</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>1,373</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>104</b>

Source: Diocese of Bridgeport Office for Education, 2007

At one time, the Diocese operated 17 parochial schools in Bridgeport, but it closed a number of them as enrollments fell. Several individual parishes in the city still own school properties and lease them to the Bridgeport Board of Education, including Holy Rosary and St. Patrick's. In the past two-year period, the Diocese has seen about 10 percent growth in its Bridgeport elementary schools, and expects 5 percent annual growth in the next two to three years. The Cathedral Cluster system is currently at 85 percent capacity, and as this level approaches 95 percent in the near future, according to the Diocese, it will have to become more selective or consider increasing the number of schools by reopening some closed facilities.

Tuition costs for the six Cathedral Cluster schools total \$2,550 per student. The Diocese estimates that it costs \$4,700 to \$4,800 to educate one student, and it must raise \$2.5 million to \$3 million per year to cover the funding difference. However, the per-student cost is less than the cost per student for the Bridgeport public schools. The Cathedral Cluster schools have a combined annual budget of approximately \$6.5 million. The schools offer reduced tuition to a number of students. The least that any student can pay is \$800 tuition, which is typically reserved for the neediest families, such as single parents making \$10,000 to \$14,000 a year. Another 40 percent of students receive some form of financial aid in addition to reduced tuition. Most of this aid is need-based, but the Diocese offers about 10 \$1,000 scholarships per year. The Cathedral Cluster schools also solicit donations for the Angel Aid program – in which donors support the education of up to five children as well as updated books, computers and other supplies – and the Patrons program, an adopt-a-school program in which donors contribute a minimum of \$100,000 a year.

Students in the six elementary schools take the nationally standardized Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education (ACRE) Test. On average, the Cathedral Cluster students perform better than 72 percent to 78 percent of all students taking the ITBS, and the system produced a 2 to 8 percentile annual increase in average student performance from 2003 to 2005. Direct comparisons with test scores for the Bridgeport public schools are not possible because the public schools use the Connecticut Master Test (CMT).

The greatest challenge the Diocese of Bridgeport faces for its Cathedral Cluster schools is fundraising, particularly receiving donations for capital repairs. Donors are less likely to contribute for large, long-term repairs such as boilers or new windows than for more tangible items. The Diocese is working to create an endowment to make the elementary schools permanently viable, which will involve significant fundraising.

The Cathedral Cluster has a positive working relationship with the Bridgeport public school system. The two superintendents have partnered to apply for a \$100,000 grant from General Electric to fund joint attendances at conferences, a pilot science program and professional development. The Diocese also provides supplemental education services to Bridgeport's public schools. Under this program, Diocese staff offer free after-school tutoring to public school students in the City; the Diocese is the first in the country to develop such a program.

### High School

Kolbe Cathedral High School, located in the Hollow neighborhood, is a co-educational high school with approximately 335 students. Admission is open to all students who qualify, based on a placement test and admission process. The professional staff includes religious and lay members. The present-day school, which dates to 1976, is the result of a merger of two high schools, Kolbe Boys High School and Cathedral Girls High School.

The school has 332 students: 96 students in the ninth grade, 73 in the 10th grade, 88 in the 11th grade and 75 in the 12th grade. Kolbe Cathedral has a capacity for 340 students, and an overall enrollment projection is 335 students. The school has 18 full- and three part-time teachers, as well as three administrators, two guidance counselors, one clergy and a full-time library media specialist.

Kolbe Cathedral's school day and college preparatory curriculum follow a 4 x 4 block schedule, consisting of four 80-minute daily classes each semester. Students can earn eight credits per year. Annual tuition is \$6,500 per student, which includes books. Approximately 40 percent of students receive financial aid, with grant awards ranging from \$500 to \$2,500. Also, the Shepherds Inc. program provides funding and mentoring to 60 students

whose needs cannot be met by the financial aid program. These students' grants are 85 percent of the tuition, with the rest paid by their family. About six students a year are awarded academic scholarships of \$5,000.

Kolbe Cathedral has contracted with an architectural firm to complete a master plan for its property (Kolbe Cathedral, St. Augustine Cathedral Parish and St. Augustine Elementary School), given that additional classroom space is needed. Near-term plans include renovation of two science labs. The school's operating budget is \$2.2 million.

Kolbe Cathedral's seniors, on average, score nearly 100 points higher on the SAT than the City average, according to the school, with an average total score of 893 (456 verbal and 437 math). The high school's honors seniors score much higher, with an average total score of 1060 (535 verbal and 525 math). Over the past six years, 98 percent of Kolbe Cathedral graduates pursued higher education.



The Gymnasium facility at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport | Source: Diocese of Bridgeport

### Special Education

St. Catherine Academy, located on the campus of the Diocese of Bridgeport's Catholic Center in the North End, serves the needs of adolescents and children aged five through 21 with intellectual deficiency and other developmental disabilities. The school, which was launched in 1999 with four students and one teacher, was accredited in 2001 by the state Department of Education and currently serves about 13 students. After completing a \$2.1 million capital campaign, St. Catherine plans to relocate to a larger facility at Holy Cross Church in Fairfield, which will allow it to increase enrollment by about 30 students.

### Other Bridgeport Private Schools

In addition to the robust Catholic school system operating in Bridgeport, the city has several other parochial schools:

- **Zion Lutheran School:** Coed Pre-K-7 school with approximately 150 students and seven teachers.
- **Fairfield County Seventh-Day Adventist School:** Coed 1-8 school with about 47 students and 11 staff members.
- **Love Christian Academy:** Coed K-12 school with about 80 students and seven staff members, affiliated with the Prayer Tabernacle Church of Love in Bridgeport.

### Private schools in the Greater Bridgeport region

The Bridgeport region is served by a number of private and parochial schools that provide an alternative to the region's public school systems.

- **Fairfield College Preparatory School:** Boys' high school in Fairfield with about 900 students, most from Bridgeport, Trumbull, Stratford, Norwalk and Fairfield.
- **Fairfield Country Day School:** Boys' K-9 school with approximately 270 students in Fairfield. Most students live in Fairfield, Southport and Westport.
- **Unquowa School:** Coed Pre-K-8 school in Fairfield serving about 170 students.
- **Abbie Loveland Tuller School:** Coed Pre-K-8 school in Fairfield with about 120 students. Affiliated with the National Association of Episcopal Schools.
- **Notre Dame Catholic High School:** Coed high school in Fairfield with approximately 680 students.
- **St. Joseph's High School:** Coed Catholic high school in Trumbull serving about 850 students.
- **Christian Heritage School:** Coed, interdenominational K-12 college preparatory school in Trumbull with more than 500 students.
- **Brunswick School:** Boys' Pre-K-12 college preparatory school with approximately 880 students in Greenwich.
- **Hillel Academy:** Coed Pre-K-8 Jewish school in Fairfield, with about 90 students.
- **King & Low-Heywood Thomas School:** Coed Pre-K-12 college preparatory school with about 650 students in Stamford. Nearly half of the students are from Stamford, with the rest from elsewhere in Fairfield County and Westchester County.
- **Mead School:** Coed Pre-K-8 school with about 150 students in Stamford.
- **Bi-Cultural Day School:** Coed K-8 Jewish school with approximately 430 students located in Stamford.
- **Laurelton Hall:** Catholic girls' high school with about 445 students in Milford.



## 13.10 | HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



A panoramic view of the University of Bridgeport  
Source: University of Bridgeport

### University of Bridgeport

The University of Bridgeport, adjacent to Seaside Park, was founded in 1927 as the Junior College of Connecticut. It became the University of Bridgeport in 1947, when the governor chartered it as a four-year university with authority to grant the baccalaureate degree. By 1950, the university had moved from its original Fairfield Avenue location to the present campus, which has grown from 22 to 50 acres. The university awarded its first Master's degree a year later, and launched its first doctoral degree program in 1979. Academic programs consist of the College of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies (the Schools of Business; Education and Human Resources; General Studies; Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; and Science, Engineering and Technology), as well as the Fones School of Dental Hygiene and the College of Chiropractic.

Thirty-two percent of the university's 4,200 enrolled students (1,700 undergraduates and 2,500 graduate students) are of minority background, while 16 percent are international students. However, the university has recently limited the number of scholarships awarded to international students in an effort to attract more domestic and local students. The University of Bridgeport has 200 full- and part-time faculty. Since 1999, student enrollment has grown by about 49 percent. Ninety percent of students who receive associate degrees enter health professional fields, while 26 percent of students who receive bachelor's degrees go into business, marketing or related fields.

As part of its Master Plan of Development, the University of Bridgeport is launching a construction and renovation program designed to remain competitive and attract new students. The plan includes construction of a new,

\$3.2 million clinic at the Fones School of Dental Hygiene housed within the university's health center. The university also plans to repair and upgrade the campus electrical grid; build a new athletic field; and complete quality-of-life projects such as residence hall renovations, new parking lots and streetscape improvements. The master plan is part of a set of three strategic planning priorities: enhancing teaching effectiveness and student achievement, improving university efficiency and effectiveness and building for the future.



Housatonic Community College in Downtown Bridgeport  
Source: Housatonic Community College

### Housatonic Community College

Housatonic Community College, one of 12 regional community-technical colleges in the state, was founded in 1967 and serves an 11-town area in southwestern Connecticut. The college moved to the present site in a former shopping mall on Lafayette Street in Downtown Bridgeport in 1997, and has seen strong enrollment growth since then. HCC offers 66 two-year degree or certificate programs, and a number of non-credit courses. The college employs 198 full-time staff and faculty to serve an undergraduate population of 4,431 students.



Rendering of Housatonic Community College's planned expansion  
Source: Housatonic Community College



# UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT MASTER PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

### PLAN LEGEND

	NON-UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS
	NON-UNIVERSITY PROPERTY
	NON-UNIVERSITY PROPERTY (SEASIDE PARK TRP)
	PROPERTY BOUNDARY LINES
	UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT PROPERTY
	UNIVERSITY PLAZAS AND WALKS
	EXISTING UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS
	FUTURE UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT



PROPOSED ATHLETIC FIELD



CONCEPTUAL CAPPA CENTER DESIGN



The University of Bridgeport Master Plan of Development, 2005 | Source: University of Bridgeport



In the fall of 2006, HCC launched a campus expansion to nearly double its size. The \$55 million project will involve adaptive reuse of a former Sears building and construction of 20,000 square feet of new space, adding over 170,000 gross square feet to the campus. The project, slated for completion in the fall of 2008, will allow HCC to accommodate about 5,500 students. The new facility will house the behavioral and social sciences, business and humanities departments, and will contain an events space accommodating up to 500 people.

### St. Vincent's College

Established in 1905, St. Vincent's is affiliated with St. Vincent's Hospital and offers two-year associate degrees in cardiovascular technology, general studies, medical assisting, nursing and radiography, as well as a number of certificate programs. The college, located on Main Street near the center of Bridgeport, has approximately 500 students, the majority of which are female and part-time.

### Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing

Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing, established in 1884, is the state's oldest school of nursing and offers two-year instruction in nursing, surgical technology, preoperative care and sterile processing. Located on the campus of Bridgeport Hospital, the school graduates one of the largest classes of nurses each year, representing more than 10 percent of graduate nurses within the state. BHSN also has a partnership allowing its graduates to receive an Associate in Science degree in nursing from HCC, upon completion of certain academic requirements.

## 13.11 | MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES POLICY

The facilities and services that the City of Bridgeport provides to its residents have a significant impact on quality of life. Police and fire protection services ensure health and safety; public schools educate the city's children; and institutions such as libraries, and senior centers provide activities and services for both the young and old. Together these facilities and services are a central support system for Bridgeport's families and local neighborhoods.

In order to ensure that the City provides the highest level of service to the community, it is essential that programs are well staffed and well funded. Residents must be protected from crime with a well trained police force that

has the manpower and technological expertise to keep neighborhoods safe. To ensure that neighborhood safety is maintained and enhanced, the City should continue and expand its community policing programs with neighborhood outreach, police substations and additional police to "walk the beat." The City should also continue efforts to build new, modern public schools and expand existing facilities. Capital investments in city schools are an important step in strengthening the public school system and enhancing the quality of education in Bridgeport. Housing and economic development initiatives should be targeted around the new schools to provide long-term neighborhood improvement. Similarly, investments in library facilities including branch construction and expansion are necessary to enhance residents' access to books, media and the Internet as well as enrichment programs. By providing safe communities with good schools and services, the City will be able to retain families and attract young professionals and empty nesters that will invest in their communities and strengthen neighborhoods.

In addition to enhancing and expanding public facilities, the City should work to consolidate municipal functions and increase the efficiency of existing facilities. In some cases City functions that are spread out in multiple buildings (for example, City Hall, City Hall Annex and McLevy Hall), could potentially be combined into one building. This would allow the City to sell excess property in prime locations, such as Downtown, to private owners and return these properties to the tax rolls. Implementation of plans to consolidate Bridgeport's public works functions is already underway and similar plans should be explored for the City's administrative functions as well as for the Board of Education. A Municipal Facilities Study would be valuable in beginning this process. Using the information from such a study, the City should also encourage the consolidation of county, state and federal facilities that are located within Bridgeport in order to reduce the amount of tax-exempt property in the city and return real estate to the tax rolls.

**“In addition to enhancing and expanding public facilities, the City should work to consolidate municipal functions and increase the efficiency of existing facilities.”**



# 14.0

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

“The nexus between the Future Land Use Plan and Zoning is that the Future Land Use Plan provides a basis for potential zoning changes.”

### 14.1 | WHAT IS THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN?

The Future Land Use Plan presented in this chapter (see Figure 14-1) graphically illustrates general future land uses in the City of Bridgeport based upon the policy recommendations that are made in this Master Plan of Conservation and Development. It provides an overview of preferred land use types and locations consistent with the City's vision for the year 2020. While the Future Land Use Plan recognizes existing land uses and environmental constraints, it also considers potential future development, infrastructure improvements and economic trends. In many cases, the Future Land Use Plan reflects existing land uses. However, in areas where existing land use designations are either obsolete or do not represent the highest and best use for an area as described in this Master Plan, the Future Land Use Plan proposes a new land use designation. The Future Land Use Plan recommends land use changes in those areas of the city where existing uses are incompatible with the policy recommendations of the Master Plan.

It should be noted that the Future Land Use Plan is not meant to be specific to every parcel. It shows general land use patterns for different geographic areas. For example, an area designated as residential may have specific lots that have retail stores or service establishments. While the existing land use map may pick up these specific uses, the Future Land Use Plan only shows the overall land use for the neighborhood.

## 14.2 | WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN AND ZONING?

The Future Land Use Plan presents an overall picture of the types and locations of different land uses throughout the city. It provides an overview of what types of uses should be located where and gives a general indication of the preferred intensity of land use. For example, for residential uses the Future Land Use Plan specifies three density classifications: low density/1 family, medium density/2-4 family, and high density/5+ family. These classifications provide a conceptual understanding of desired residential densities across the city. In contrast, the City's Zoning Code is much more specific with regard to residential designations. The current Zoning Code includes five residential zoning districts that are differentiated from one another by both density and minimum lot size.

The nexus between the Future Land Use Plan and Zoning is that the Future Land Use Plan provides a basis for potential future zoning changes. The Master Plan is the policy foundation for proposed changes to the City's Zoning Code. As explained in the state statutes, a zoning code must be based on a well-reasoned plan. Where proposed future land uses shown on the Future Land Use Plan are inconsistent with existing zoning, a zoning change is warranted. The proposed land uses shown on the Future Land Use Plan are used as a guide for determining new zoning designations for these areas. Such zoning changes are the next step in the planning process and can occur once the Master Plan has been adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

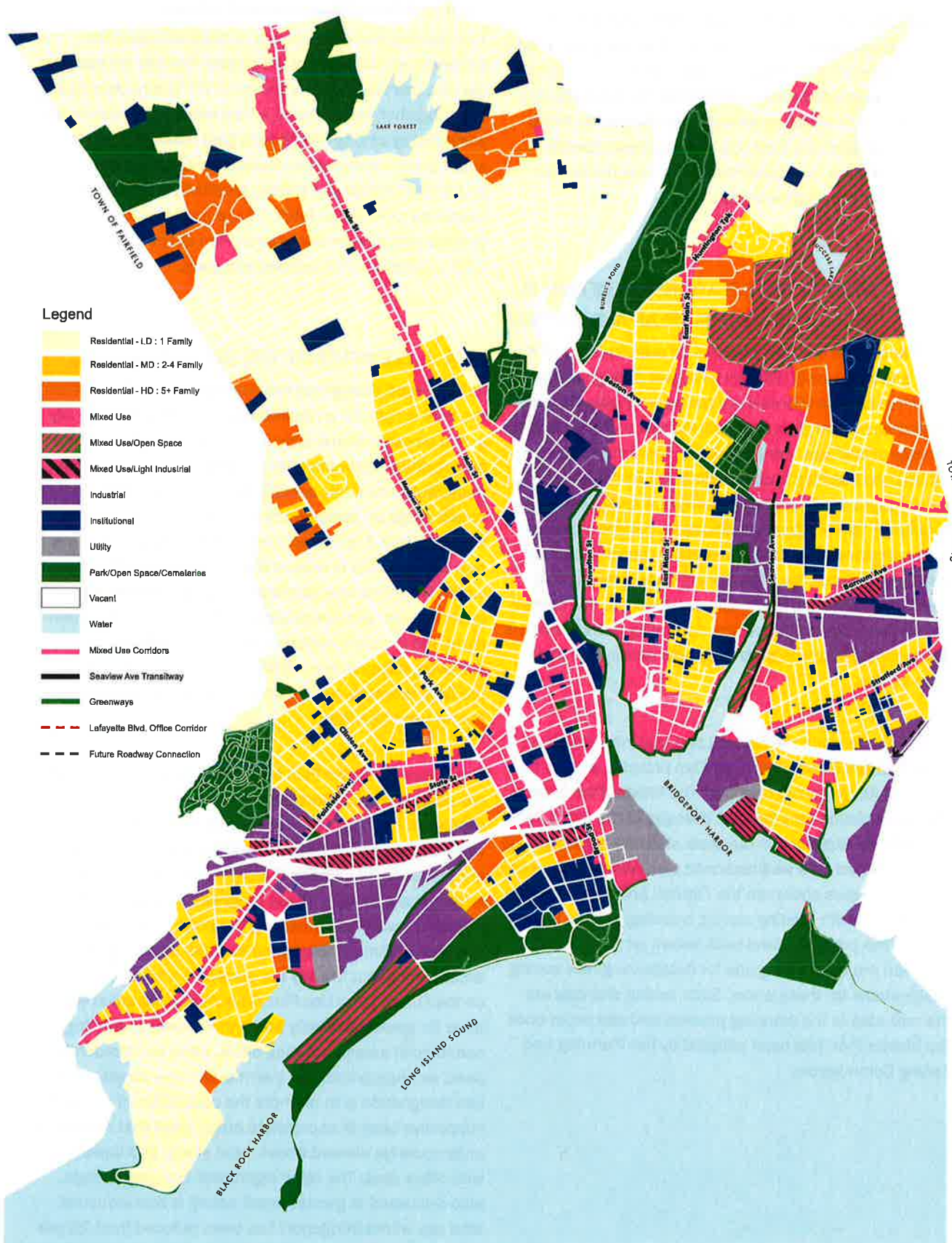
## 14.3 | PLAN POLICIES AND GOALS

The planning and development policies and goals described in each chapter of the Master Plan are the basis for the land use designations shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Together they describe a framework that encourages compatibility among neighboring land uses in the context of smart growth, sustainable development, high-quality design and environmental and historic sensitivity that complements the city's urban fabric. These policies and goals are outlined at the beginning of each Plan chapter; see Chapter 1 for a summary of all policies and goals.

## 14.4 | ELEMENTS OF THE LAND USE PLAN

As discussed throughout the chapters of this Master Plan, the time is right for a renaissance in Bridgeport. The city is at a crossroads and is poised to recapture its position as a regional destination for housing, jobs and entertainment. Both economic conditions in the region and the recent surge of development activity in the city indicate that investment is indeed coming to Bridgeport. The key now is for the city to ensure that uses are compatibly located and that new development projects meet high quality design standards and are sensitive to the environment and the city's historic character. The first step in achieving this goal is for Bridgeport to clearly articulate the type, intensity, and location of preferred uses on its Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan shown in Figure 14-1 is generally consistent with Bridgeport's existing land uses. No significant changes are proposed for most of the city's built-out residential areas. However, important changes are proposed for some of the city's industrial land and for large, vacant parcels. These proposed changes are the first step toward implementing the policies described in this Master Plan. As explained in detail below, significant areas throughout the city are shown as mixed-use areas on the Future Land Use Plan. This new designation will allow for greater flexibility and a mix of uses in existing commercial areas, including office, retail and residential uses, as appropriate. The intent of the new mixed-use land use designation is to promote the co-location of mutually supportive uses in appropriate areas, such that residential units could be allowed above retail stores and together with office uses. The other significant land use change, also discussed in greater detail below, is that industrial land use within Bridgeport has been reduced from 20 percent of the city's land area to approximately 10 percent.



**Legend**

- Residential - LD : 1 Family
- Residential - MD : 2-4 Family
- Residential - HD : 5+ Family
- Mixed Use
- Mixed Use/Open Space
- Mixed Use/Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Utility
- Park/Open Space/Cemeteries
- Vacant
- Water
- Mixed Use Corridors
- Seaview Ave Transitway
- Greenways
- Lafayette Blvd. Office Corridor
- Future Roadway Connection





The purpose of this reduction of industrial-classified land is to reflect the declining demand for industry. While industry continues to play an important role in the city, it is no longer Bridgeport’s leading economic sector. Therefore, many areas that have formerly been designated as industrial now appear as some version of mixed use on the Future Land Use Map. This will increase the city’s ability to capture jobs in projected growth sectors and attract investment that is consistent with Bridgeport’s modern economy.

The discussion below explains the land use designations that are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

**Residential Areas**

The Future Land Use Plan shows housing, the primary land use in Bridgeport, in three shades of yellow/orange. The different shades indicate varying residential density. High-density residential indicating structures with five or more units, is shown in orange; medium-density residential indicating two to four family structures is shown in medium yellow; and low-density residential indicating single-family homes is shown in light yellow. As the city is largely built-out, the Future Land Use Plan does not propose any large-scale changes to current residential land use classifications.

Areas where a new residential designation is shown include the currently vacant area south of Crescent Avenue west of Yellow Mill Channel and the commercial/industrial East End waterfront along the western side of Johnson’s Creek. These areas are now shown as either high or medium-density residential on the Future Land Use Map. Beyond these larger parcels, most new residential development within Bridgeport is expected to occur in mixed-use areas where retail, restaurant and entertainment uses are located in close proximity to housing. This is consistent with market trends and is key to attracting young professionals, empty nesters, and middle-income residents to Bridgeport and increasing the city’s fiscal capacity.

**Mixed-Use Areas**

The Master Plan policies support a substantial increase in mixed-use development within Bridgeport, particularly in the Downtown, along commercial transit corridors and on large, vacant properties such as Steel Point, the Seaside Park landfill and around Lake Success (formerly Remington Woods). This designation, together with design standards, is intended to encourage pedestrian activity and activate city streets. It encompasses a variety of uses including residential, commercial, office and retail, as well as open space. Industrial uses – both light and heavy – would not be allowed in areas designated for mixed use. An increase in mixed-use development will promote an urban lifestyle typical of thriving urban areas where residences and related commercial and entertainment uses support one another. In addition, it will provide flexibility for areas where development is likely to occur, but where the exact nature of such development is not yet known. In such cases, a mixed-use designation provides parameters for investment, while allowing for economic development

“ An increase in mixed-use development will promote an urban lifestyle typical of thriving urban areas where residences and related commercial and entertainment uses support one another.”

that is consistent with market conditions.

The Future Land Use Plan shows almost the entire Downtown area as mixed-use, indicated in pink. This is a substantial change from the existing land use

map which classifies this area as commercial, a designation that precludes housing. Institutional uses in this area are shown in blue, with the exception of City Hall Annex and Police Headquarters, which are shown as mixed-use to reflect the potential of these sites for redevelopment with tax-generating uses. The intent of this change is to promote implementation of the recommendations of the Downtown Plan, which are discussed in Chapter 8, including the creation of a “24/7” environment that is critical to attracting residents to Downtown housing. This designation will allow for adaptive reuse and new construction that includes residential, commercial, retail and restaurant uses. The mixed-use designation has also been applied to the areas immediately west and south of the Downtown in anticipation of a natural progression of mixed-use development interest in these adjacent areas.

In addition, several of Bridgeport's prime development sites are shown as mixed-use on the Future Land Use Plan. These areas include Steel Point on the lower East Side, the Pequonnock development site and 60 Main Street just south of Downtown. Development of Steel Point, Pequonnock and 60 Main Street is envisioned as a mix of residential, retail, restaurant and office uses.

It is important to note that there are a number of small business clusters throughout Bridgeport that serve their respective neighborhoods as well as a larger clientele in nearby areas. These existing mixed-use clusters may be shown as residential on the Future Land Use Map, because the City wishes to preserve the overall residential character of the surrounding area. However, the intent of this Master Plan is to continue promoting these neighborhood pockets of mixed use with a focus on New Urbanism ideals, including a diversity of uses and walkability. A residential designation of these areas on the Future Land Use Plan is not intended to preclude such a small-scale mix of uses. As discussed above, the map shows generalized land use patterns, and is not parcel-specific.

A separate mixed-use designation is provided for areas where the City wishes to encourage preservation of meaningful open space along with mixed-use development. Shown on the plan as pink with green stripes, these areas include the Seaside Park landfill site, Lake Success/former Remington Woods, the area along Yellow Mill Channel west of Seaview Avenue and a small portion of Pleasure Beach. Open space, housing and related commercial development is envisioned for the Seaside Park landfill site and a mix of open space, light industrial, commercial and office uses is expected on the Lake Success/Remington Woods site. The area west of Seaview Avenue could see a similar mix of complementary uses, with potential adaptive reuse of existing buildings. The majority of Pleasure Beach is indicated as open space, with a small portion (at the likely future site of a potential ferry connection) reserved for potential private mixed-use development, concession and lavatory facilities in support of open space/recreational use. This is consistent with Bridgeport's goal to increase its tax base while preserving open space areas and strengthening its reputation as a "Park City."

Another separate mixed-use designation denotes areas where the City envisions mixed-use development, along

with support for existing, viable light industrial uses. Shown on the plan as pink with black stripes, these areas include the "Smile" area located between I-95 and the railroad in the West End/West Side; areas along Fairfield Avenue and State Street, also in the West End/West Side; a small area south of the railroad in the South End; part of the East End waterfront along Seaview Avenue; and a southern portion of Barnum Avenue in the East End. The mixed use/light industrial designation is intended to allow for the continuation of existing light industrial uses that are clean, viable and supportive of jobs; while encouraging mixed-use development such as adaptive reuse, new residential uses, live/work space and artists housing. This land use designation can also serve as a buffer area between industrial uses and residential areas.

#### Mixed-Use Corridors

The Future Land Use Plan designates Bridgeport's main commercial areas as mixed-use corridors. These corridors include: Main Street, East Main Street, Stratford Avenue, Fairfield Avenue, State Street, Broad Street, Knowlton Street, Madison Avenue, Pequonnock Street, Barnum Avenue and Boston Avenue, as well as portions of Huntington Turnpike, North Avenue and Park Avenue. This designation is intended to promote these major thoroughfares as the commercial and retail centers of the neighborhoods they traverse and to recognize that these areas present opportunities for higher-density residential uses (e.g. apartments over retail uses or restaurants). Growth targeted to these areas will take pressure off of the city's denser residential neighborhoods, while growing Bridgeport's tax base. It will also provide for an appropriate concentration of non-residential and high-density residential land uses together along major roadways, rather than scattered throughout the city's neighborhoods. Creating such mixed-use corridors throughout the city will encourage pedestrian activity, which will enhance safety and quality of life, and reinforce these areas as the heart of their respective neighborhoods.

#### Lafayette Boulevard Office Corridor

Located on the western side of Downtown, Lafayette Boulevard has been designated specifically as an office corridor, as recommended in the Downtown Plan. The purpose of this designation is to encourage Class A office development along Lafayette Boulevard, which provides convenient access to and high visibility from I-95 and

Routes 8 and 25. Class A offices are typically located in office towers, which do not mesh with the aesthetic fabric of Main or Broad Streets, but which would fit well on the wider Lafayette Boulevard. It is proposed that the existing circle at Lafayette Boulevard be eliminated and that the roadway be straightened to run through the circle area in order to enhance the office development potential of this corridor and allow for better access to and from Exit 2 on Routes 25 and 8.

### Industrial

Industrial uses are shown in purple on the Future Land Use Plan; there is no distinction between light industrial and heavy industrial uses on the map. These areas would allow both light and heavy industrial uses. As discussed in the City's 2007 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Chapter 4.0 of this plan, this reduction of industrial land area reflects the need to reduce the total area occupied by industry, while increasing the productivity of existing industrial uses. This is consistent with existing economic conditions in the city as well as forecasts for economic growth. Providing for mixed-use and mixed use/light industrial development, which may include light industrial as well as commercial uses, in certain areas that have formerly been designated as industrial will increase the city's capacity to capture a variety of jobs in projected growth sectors and attract investment. Issues of existing industrial uses that do not conform to the Future Land Use Map can be addressed in a zoning update that will occur subsequent to the Master Plan adoption. At the same time, the industrial classification is indicated on the Future Land Use Plan in areas where industry continues to thrive. These areas include the West End/West Side, portions of the East End waterfront on Yellow Mill Channel and much of the Enterprise Zone neighborhood.

### Institutional

The Future Land Use Plan does not show any major changes to institutional uses in Bridgeport. While the construction of new schools, the potential shuttering of older schools and the consolidation of municipal uses may impact the location of the city's institutions in the future, such changes are currently speculative and thus not shown on the Future Land Use Plan. However, should these changes come to fruition such areas will likely be converted from institutional to residential or mixed-use, dependent upon market demand. The only locations

where institutional land uses have been modified on the Future Land Use Plan are City Hall Annex and the State Police Barracks on Lafayette Boulevard. These two sites are shown as mixed-use to reflect the City's desire to return these desirably located properties to the tax rolls. As the city's healthcare sector expands in the future based on projected growth in this industry, land area occupied by institutional uses, particularly Bridgeport's medical centers, is likely to expand.

### Parks/Open Space

Existing and proposed future parks/open space areas are indicated on the Future Land Use Plan in green. These areas include all existing city and state parks, cemeteries, recreation areas and passive open spaces, as well as new proposed greenways and preservation areas, consistent with the policy recommendations of this Master Plan. The Future Land Use Plan provides for the creation of four, new major greenways in the city that will recapture a substantial portion of Bridgeport's precious waterfront: the Seaside Park, Pequonnock Riverfront, Seaview Avenue and East End greenways. The Seaside Park Greenway will create a continuous open space pathway along Black Rock Harbor, from the western end of Seaside Park to Iranistan Avenue, and will also extend eastward from Seaside Park, past Main Street. The Pequonnock Riverfront Greenway will extend from the Port Jefferson ferry landing northward along the western side of the Pequonnock River to Lindley Street, and from River Street southward along the eastern side of the river, around Steel Point and northward up Yellow Mill Channel to Crescent Avenue. The Seaview Avenue Greenway will utilize a portion of the right-of-way of the planned Seaview Avenue Transitway and extend from I-95 northward along Yellow Mill Channel to Route 1 (Boston Avenue), and possibly into the Lake Success/Remington Woods area. The East End Greenway will extend from I-95 at the western side of Johnson's Creek, southward along the creek, and then across Bridgeport Harbor to a newly connected Pleasure Beach. This greenway will also extend westward along the harbor coastline, corresponding with the area designated mixed use/light industrial on the Future Land Use Plan. These four greenways will increase access to the waterfront, increase the city's open space inventory and provide open space access in neighborhoods that are currently underserved in terms of open space. In addition to these major greenways, smaller greenways are proposed along the frontage of Captain's Cove on Black Rock Harbor, and along Island Brook in the Reservoir/Whiskey Hill neighborhood, extending from an existing pathway in Svihra Park



northward to Summit Street. The long-term objective of the proposed greenways will be to link them to each other, to existing shared-path trails and to the larger parks of the city, with the goal of providing public access to the water. The greenways should be extended, where possible and practical, as close to the waterfront as possible.

As discussed under mixed-use above, several areas on the Future Land Use Plan are shown as mixed-use/open space. These areas include the Seaside Park landfill, the Lake Success/Remington Woods site; an area along Yellow Mill Channel west of Seaview Avenue; and a small portion of Pleasure Beach, at the likely location of a future ferry landing. The purpose of this designation is to allow for appropriate development on a portion of these sites, while also preserving important open space areas. As previously discussed, open space, housing and related commercial development is envisioned for the Seaside Park landfill site and a mix of meaningful open space, light industrial, commercial and office uses is expected on the Lake Success/Remington Woods site. The majority of Pleasure Beach is indicated as open space, with a small portion reserved for private mixed-use development including potential concession and lavatory facilities in support of open space/recreational use. The remainder of Pleasure Beach is intended to be preserved as open space, for public recreational use. Such uses could include fishing piers, camping sites, photoblinds for birdwatching, boardwalks and a municipal beach.

New open space areas shown on the Future Land Use Plan include the Old Mill Green area on Route 1 (Boston Avenue), from East Main Street to Seaview Avenue. Designation of this and other areas as open space on the Future Land Use Plan formalizes and preserves existing green areas as public open space.

### **Proposed Future Roadways**

#### *Seaview Avenue Transitway*

The Future Land Use Plan takes into account planned and potential infrastructure that could significantly affect land uses. The most significant of these is the planned Seaview Avenue Transitway, which will extend from I-95 north to Route 1 (Boston Avenue). The land use plan envisions this roadway as an urban boulevard, with street trees, ornamental lighting, sidewalks and parking to create a pedestrian friendly environment while serving as a vital connection to I-95 for the eastern portions of

Bridgeport. This roadway should be consistent with the character of a pedestrian-friendly, urban environment rather than as a suburban highway. This will provide access to the proposed Seaview Avenue Greenway and the waterfront from the East End. The Future Land Use Plan also contemplates the potential future extension of the Seaview Avenue Transitway as a local street or parkway from Route 1 to Lake Success/Remington Woods, to connect with future development expected to occur on the GE and Lake Success sites. This potential roadway extension is not intended to be a publicly funded construction project, but to be privately funded; an expansion would be funded by future development at the GE and Lake Success sites..

#### *Bruce Boulevard*

The other proposed roadway shown on the Future Land Use Plan is Bruce Boulevard, located on the eastern edge of Bridgeport at the Stratford border. Currently, this road extends from Stratford Avenue southward for a short distance. The Future Land Use Plan envisions that a new portion of Bruce Boulevard will be constructed from Read Street southward to connect with I-95. This would provide another critical connection to the interstate for both East End residents and the industrial and commercial uses along the Stratford line. The road would not exist between Read Street and Edwin Street, as this portion of the right-of-way has been abandoned.

# 15.0

## IMPLEMENTATION

### 15.1 | IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

While the Master Plan of Conservation and Development provides policies to guide future land use and economic development decision-making in the city, it is only the first step in achieving Bridgeport's goals for its future. Following adoption of the Master Plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City must implement the recommendations of the plan in order to put them into action.

Each chapter of the Master Plan concludes with a series of policy recommendations, which are conceptually summarized on the Future Land Use Plan. These policies address the myriad of issues facing the City everyday from housing, Downtown, and economic development to the environment, transportation and infrastructure. These issues are often addressed by a variety of departments and commissions that may or may not be directly coordinating with one another. The purpose of the Master Plan policies is to provide a cohesive framework for decision-making throughout the City. The overall objective of the policy recommendations provided in each chapter is to ensure that they speak to one another and that addressing an issue in one area will not create unintended impacts on another.

This chapter provides recommendations for achieving the policies that are laid out in this Master Plan. It describes regulatory and administrative changes that should be made in order to ensure that the City realizes its vision for the future. It concludes with a matrix that outlines short and long term action items to achieve the policy recommendations provided in each chapter of the Plan.

## 15.2 | REGULATORY CONTROLS

Regulatory controls are the City's primary tool for implementing its Master Plan, and the Master Plan provides the necessary foundation for making regulatory changes. As written in state statutes, changes to a municipal zoning code must be based on a "well-reasoned plan." While it is not possible, or necessarily desirable, to regulate absolutely all aspects of land development, strengthening land use controls including zoning, site plan, subdivision and stormwater regulations, is one of the most effective ways that the City can implement its Master Plan policies.

“Regulatory controls are the City’s primary tool for implementing its Master Plan.”

In developing the Master Plan policies, four general issues arose with how the City currently controls development:

- *Too many zoning districts,*
- *Scattered site zoning where districts are mapped on single parcels or for single uses,*
- *A lack of design-controls and resultant over-reliance on historic districts to regulate building design, and*
- *Weak review and approval procedures.*



## Zoning Districts

### *District Quantity and Function*

Bridgeport's Zoning Code contains an overabundance of zoning districts. The city has a total of 19 zones, including five residential districts, four districts that allow a mix of office and retail, three mixed-use downtown districts, three other mixed-use districts, two industrial districts, a floating planned development district and a lone district created just for the zoo in Beardsley Park. While some districts are widely mapped on large areas of the city, others address very specific uses and are mapped on single parcels. This approach is somewhat uncommon among zoning codes, as zoning districts generally delineate compatible uses within a zone and are not targeted toward one specific use. The overall effect of such scattered site zoning is that it reduces predictability, consistency and compatibility among land uses within neighborhoods. This can have a negative impact on property values as property owners rely on zoning to tell them what type of development they can expect in the vicinity of their property. Without this reliability, future development patterns are uncertain and can curtail property investment.

### *Residential Districts*

The regional market for high-end apartments and condos has begun to focus on Bridgeport's waterfront. Both this Master Plan and the Downtown Plan identify this trend as critical in attracting the young professional and empty nester markets that the city needs to enhance its tax base. In order to elicit the greatest value from this market potential, the City must determine appropriate locations for such housing and address issues such as height, density and public waterfront access. This type of housing will require either changes to the existing Residential High Density (R-C) zone to accommodate higher density apartments and condos, the creation of a new high-density residential zone, or a mixed-use zone that allows high density housing. In addition to young professionals and empty nesters, Bridgeport's housing strategy, discussed in Chapter 10, calls for attracting middle income populations in order to enhance the city's fiscal strength and diversify its population. This can be achieved by creating a range of housing choices, or "housing ladder" within the city that allows people to move from one type of housing to another as their incomes grow.

### *Non-Residential Districts*

Bridgeport's three existing Downtown districts will be replaced by new Downtown zoning regulations based on the 2007 Downtown Plan prepared by Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates. Draft Downtown zoning regulations have been prepared and are currently be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission and staff. An updated Planned Development District (PDD) zone was adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2006 and is not expected to require further revisions in the short-term. Bridgeport's five Office-Retail (OR) zones should be evaluated and updated to reflect the City's goals for commercial development and an increase in mixed-use development along many of its commercial and transit corridors. These districts should be revised to reflect an appropriate mix of uses consistent with the policies of this Master Plan and should include design standards.

### *Mixed-Use Districts*

Bridgeport currently has several mixed-use districts intended to address special land development needs in the city, including the Mixed-Use Educational/Medical (MU-EM) zone and Mixed-Use Perimeter (MU-P) zone and the floating Mixed-Use Waterfront Zone (MU-W), and Planned Development District (PDD). These districts need to be evaluated and potentially revised to support the policies of Master Plan, which include expansion of mixed-use areas in the city. In particular, the MU-EM zone may be modified and/or expanded to support projected growth in the health care sector and zoning for mixed-use corridors along Bridgeport's major thoroughfares will need to be created. An updated PDD zone was adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2006 and is not expected to require further revisions in the short-term.

### *Industrial Districts*

While the city's two industrial zones served Bridgeport's needs during its industrial heyday, they do not accurately reflect current market conditions and technologies of modern industry. As discussed in this Master Plan, industrial-zoned land area in the city should be reduced from 20 to 10 percent. In addition, industrial areas should be shifted away from waterfront and residential areas and certain industrial uses that are no longer compatible with a modern Bridgeport should be eliminated

from the zones' allowable uses. The industrial zoning districts should also be updated to provide appropriate bulk, performance and design standards. Non-industrial uses that lead to conflicts with industrial activities should be limited within the industrial zones. This rebalancing of industrial zoning in the city should support viable, environmentally-sensitive industrial uses that will continue to exist as significant economic development resources.

#### **Zoning, Subdivision, Site Plan and Historic Regulations**

Zoning dictates allowed uses and controls density and the scale of buildings on a site. Subdivision and site plan regulations guide the layout of lots, buildings, new roadways, and landscaping on a property. Together these regulations are the City's most effective tools for guiding development and ensuring that it is consistent with the policies of this Master Plan.

Zoning, subdivision and site plan regulations are administered by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) and the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Together these groups work to ensure that development within the city is consistent with established regulations as stated in the Zoning Code. When an applicant proposes to deviate from the City's zoning regulations due to a hardship associated with a property, he or she must seek a variance from the ZBA. The ZBA should be careful to restrict the granting of variances to those applications that meet the strict interpretation of hardship as defined by state law. All subdivision applications are reviewed by the P&Z Commission as well as site plan applications for zone changes, special use permits and activities located within historic districts and the coastal zone. While this is a good start, it is not sufficient oversight. Site plan review should be expanded to include most development applications for multifamily residences and commercial and industrial uses. Site plan review should not be required for single-family homes and multifamily residences containing two to four units. This would allow City staff and the P&Z Commission to exercise greater control over building placement on the lot, parking and landscaping, design quality and compatibility of multifamily, commercial and industrial buildings with neighborhood context without over-burdening the P&Z Commission.

The proposed expansion of site plan review is not intended to impede development, but to improve the quality of development. Site plan review can be administrative in

nature (i.e. "over the counter"), rather than using the traditional procedural methods that go through the Planning and Zoning Commission of Zoning Board of Appeals. The expansion of site plan review is meant to achieve better development with greater efficiency and accountability.

Site plan review would not eliminate as-of-right development, but would ensure that new development (and major additions and renovations) provide a net benefit to the street, neighborhood and the city overall. Clearly written review procedures and design controls would be helpful to applicants and reviewers alike, providing predictability and clarity and minimizing arbitrary actions. This could also allow the City to change some of its current special permit uses into as-of-right uses as a way of both streamlining the review process and exercising greater control over development applications.

Another tool that is employed to control design and character of development within Bridgeport are the city's 5 historic districts and 19 state and national register districts. It appears that one of the drivers for the creation of so many historic districts may have been a desire to provide greater site plan control within the city with historic districts used as a de-facto mechanism for providing some degree of oversight. The Zoning Code appears to offer substantial protection of properties within historic districts; however, in reality these districts provide the City with limited ability to control rehabilitation and new development. Only development within local historic districts requires a Certificate of Appropriateness; development within National Register-listed districts does not require such certification. Nor is a certificate required for properties that are located within the City's Historic Overlay (O-H) zone but are not included in the local historic district.

Historic district controls should be strengthened and clarified to fully capitalize on Bridgeport's historic resources. The key to effective historic preservation is to promote rehabilitation and protection of important historic buildings – particularly those in the Downtown area – while recognizing that not every old structure in the city merits preservation. Specific criteria should be developed to evaluate the historic integrity of older structures, which will prevent demolition of important buildings but allow for the elimination of non-historic, decaying structures that have become neighborhood eyesores that contribute to blight. The rules and procedures governing development in his-

toric districts should be clarified and supported to ensure that new construction complements the character of existing structures without deterring new development.

### Organization and Process

As part of the Master Plan process, Zucker Systems conducted an organizational review of the City's Office of Planning and Economic Development. This review included the P&Z Commission and ZBA and resulted in recommendations on how these boards can improve their operational efficiency and effectiveness as follows:

#### General Recommendations (Applicable to both P&Z and ZBA)

- Development applications requiring a zone change should be heard at a joint P&Z Commission/ZBA meeting. This would provide an opportunity for the P&Z Commission to provide the ZBA with advisory comments on whether or not a proposed zone change is prudent from a planning perspective based upon the applicant's proposed site plan before a variance is granted by the ZBA.
- There should be increased mandatory training for members of the P&Z Commission, ZBA, and the two Historic Commissions.
- Time limits should be placed on applicants' presentations at public hearings in order to ensure that adequate time is allocated for testimony from members of the public.

#### Planning and Zoning Commission

- The application checklist should be improved.
- The P&Z Commission should limit the amount of new material it is willing to consider during meetings.
- The P&Z Commission should discuss methods to control the time of its meetings. These could include a consent calendar (used when there is no need for any presentation; all consent items can be voted as a block at the beginning of the meeting), limits on speaker time and more efficient meeting facilitation.
- The P&Z Commission should take action on items immediately after closing the hearing.
- City staff and the P&Z Commission should explore alternative ways to present materials at meetings.

- The staff report should contain a clear and reasoned recommendation with conditions of approval as appropriate. Staff should attempt to resolve all issues prior to the P&Z Commission meeting.

#### Zoning Board of Appeals

- The ZBA should exercise special caution in issuing variances for use, parking and landscaping, and should be careful to restrict the issuance of variances to cases that meet the definition of hardship provided in state law.
- ZBA items should be set for hearing as soon as the application is received.
- The City Engineer and Water Pollution Control Authority should review ZBA items before the ZBA hearing.
- The Zoning Department staff should prepare concise staff reports for the ZBA, including findings and conditions of approval as appropriate. Staff should attempt to resolve issues prior to the ZBA meeting.
- The requirement to have ZBA applications notarized should be removed.
- The City should conduct a review of ZBA cases to determine if changes to the ordinances are needed and if the ZBA actions are consistent with the City's desired direction as described in this Master Plan.
- All ZBA applications that receive approval should be inspected to determine compliance with conditions of approval.

As part of the Master Plan development process the City's consultant team provided technical assistance to the P&Z and ZBA for development application review. The purpose of this technical assistance was to test out, on a trial basis, utilization of design standards in the review of projects in order to encourage higher-quality building and site layouts and consistency with adjacent properties and neighborhood context. The results of this trial have been positive and the ZBA and P&Z as well as project applicants have been responsive to recommended changes to building design and site layout, resulting in substantially improved development proposals. The design standards that were utilized for these reviews are outlined below and should be incorporated into the City's application review procedures as part of the Zoning Code update that will implement this Master Plan.



### Model Design Standards

A lack of adequate design standards for new development and major additions and renovations has been an ongoing problem in Bridgeport. Indeed, the inability of the Zoning Code to ensure adequate site plan review and implementation of design standards is a likely reason for the proliferation of historic districts and scattered-site zoning districts, which have not solved the city's urban design problems. The following design standards have been utilized by the City's consultant team in providing interim assistance with design review to the P&Z and ZBA. These standards have been effective in helping the P&Z and ZBA make informed decisions on building and site layout designs proposed by applicants, but could be modified by the City, as necessary and appropriate.

#### 1) BUILDING DESIGN

- *Scale and Proportion: The height, width, massing and general proportions of development, the ratio of wall surface to opening and the ratio of width and height of windows and doors should conform generally with other adjacent or nearby structures.*
- *Setbacks: The setback of the building, accessory structures and retaining walls should conform generally with other adjacent or nearby structures, resulting in a common street setback. Primary structures should be placed as close as practicable to the front yard setback line.*
- *Entries: Main building entrances should face the street and be easily identifiable and scaled to the size of the street that they face.*
- *Harmony of Architectural Features:*
  - > *Exterior architectural features should be in harmonious relationship to the rest of the structure and to the surrounding area. Unity and compatibility with adjacent structures is encouraged. Areas of review include the scale and general size of the structures in relationship to the existing surroundings; specifically, the structure's overall height, width, street frontage, number of stories, roof type, façade openings (windows, doors, etc.) and architectural details. Vertical and horizontal elements in the façade should relate to other adjacent or nearby structures.*
  - > *Building materials and colors should be selected that avoid jarring and incongruous contrasts, both within new development and when seen against existing structures.*
  - > *Treatment of the sides and rear of the structures should be comparable in appearance and amenity to the treatment given the street frontage elevation.*
  - > *The placement and proportion of windows and doors should be consistent with other adjacent or nearby structures.*
  - > *Roof forms and wall materials should relate well to the materials and construction of other structures.*
  - > *Structures situated at corners should "wrap" the corner by continuing façade elements on all street elevations, with such elements as the overall building material and window design, and horizontal features such as the cornice.*
- *Multiple Structures on Lot: In developments where there will be more than one structure on a single site, such structures, and their signage, landscaping and lighting, should be designed as an integrated part of an overall site design related to other surrounding development and topographical conditions. Applicants are encouraged to arrange multiple structures on a single lot so that structure facades are generally parallel to the frontage property lines along existing streets and proposed interior streets.*

## 2) PARKING, INTERNAL CIRCULATION AND CURB CUTS

- *Where practicable, parking should be located to the side and/or rear of the primary structure*
- *Where practicable, adjoining commercial lots should coordinate access across parking areas*
- *The number of curb cuts allowed on a property should be limited, particularly for properties located on large arterials*

## 3) LANDSCAPING ON THE LOT PERIMETER AND WITHIN THE PARKING AREA

### A. The proposed landscaping should

- *Visually bind the primary structure into the larger streetscape fabric or to soften the edge of a freestanding structure*
- *Provide shade, windbreak and glare reduction to pedestrians and parked cars*
- *Physically separate pedestrians from vehicles*
- *Provide pervious surfaces to assist in stormwater management*

B. A coordinated landscaped design is encouraged, incorporating open space and/or recreation if appropriate, walks, access drives, parking areas and lot perimeter. The following areas should be landscaped:

- *Along the public right-of-way*
- *Along the parking lot's perimeter*
- *Within the parking lot's interior*

C. *Existing parking areas should either install landscaped islands, or increase the number of landscaped islands to the maximum extent practicable.*

In addition, design standards specific to the Downtown have been created as part of the Downtown Zoning Regulations that P&Z is currently working to adopt. These and any other future area-specific standards could be folded into more general citywide standards.

### Zoning Incentives

As part of the Zoning Code update that will follow the adoption of this Master Plan, the City should adopt zoning incentives to encourage new market-rate development and mixed-use development and ensure that Bridgeport continues to provide housing affordable to its residents. As discussed in Chapter 10, the City's housing study prepared by czbLLC recommends the following zoning incentives to encourage additional growth of the private market's demand for housing in Bridgeport.

### 1) INCLUSIONARY ZONING ORDINANCE

An inclusionary zoning ordinance will allow the City to provide incentives to developers such as special permits and expedited application review to attract development to targeted areas, while raising new resources for the development of affordable housing units and neighborhood revitalization efforts. It is a tool that encourages market rate housing and extracts value from such development to be used to further affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization goals. Consistent with the State of Connecticut's affordable housing policy, the inclusionary zoning ordinance should require developers to provide ten percent of units as affordable either through construction on-site, off-site or contribution of an in-lieu payment to the Housing Trust Fund.

## 2) HOUSING TRUST FUND

Transforming many Bridgeport neighborhoods into communities of choice will require increasing local demand by rehabilitating existing properties, deconverting multi-unit properties back to single-family homes, and providing incentives for households at a range of income levels to purchase homes. Such activities can be sponsored by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or HOME funds, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs), or other public or foundation support. In addition to these traditional sources, a Housing Trust Fund should be set up to support such efforts. Developers building in areas targeted by the inclusionary zoning ordinance would have the option of contributing funds to the City's Housing Trust Fund in lieu of providing affordable housing units on- or off-site. The Fund could be designed to support a range of activities, such as intensive beautification projects and crime reduction efforts. Fund-sponsored activities within a particular neighborhood should be tailored to existing neighborhood market conditions and housing stocks.

## 3) COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

While the Housing Trust Fund will primarily focus on efforts to stimulate demand in the city's weaker neighborhoods, a new community land trust would be a mechanism to ensure that units remain affordable into the future as property values in the city rise. This land trust would be a new entity, incorporated as a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization based in the City of Bridgeport. It would acquire and renovate scattered site properties and sell the structures to residents at affordable prices. The czbLLC housing study proposes a goal of preserving 500 units of affordable owner-occupied housing by the year 2017 through direct acquisition and resale and another 250 through donations (City-owned properties or new privately developed units sold into the Trust).

By retaining control of the land, the community land trust would be able to reduce the sale price of affected units by the value of the land (as well as any other subsidies used to make the unit affordable to households at particular income levels). Owners of the homes on trust land would pay a monthly lease fee. As owners decide to move, they would sell their home in a conventional transaction. They would also be permitted to profit from capital gains on the property, based on a formula provided by the trust. The launch of community land trust could be seeded by a contribution from new develop-

ment taking place in the inclusionary zone. A portion of this contribution would be retained for administrative and legal costs and hiring land trust staff, while the remainder would be spent on acquiring and rehabilitating strategically located properties.

## 4) SMART GROWTH DISTRICTS

The City of Bridgeport should take advantage of recently adopted state legislation that provides new incentives for affordable housing through the creation of smart growth districts. This legislation allows municipalities to create districts targeted for a mix of higher density housing, including affordable housing, for families, individuals and persons with special needs. Such districts are eligible for grants for affordable housing through the State's Office of Policy and Management. Bridgeport should designate Downtown, Steel Point, 60 Main Street, and the industrial area between I-95 and the railroad- known as the "Smile"- as smart growth districts. Significant private investment is expected in these areas and such designation will help ensure that affordable housing is provided as part of new, market-rate development projects.

## 5) OPEN SPACE INCENTIVES

The City should consider providing incentive bonuses that would allow for increased building height in the Downtown in exchange for the provision of publicly accessible open space or payment in-lieu of open space to a Waterfront Recapture Fund. A Waterfront Recapture Fund would assist the City in creating the waterfront greenways recommended in this plan and would be designed to support a range of waterfront recapture activities, including property acquisition, environmental remediation, enhancement of public access, beautification and plantings.

## Interim Zoning Changes

As part of the Master Plan development process several zoning issues arose that required immediate attention. These included the City's definition of household, seasonal outdoor dining, temporary use permits and permits for outdoor filming. In order to address these issues, the P&Z adopted interim revisions to the Zoning Code to provide a new definition of household that addresses informal student living arrangements, and regulations that allow outdoor dining during the summer months, and temporary use of properties for special events. An



update of the City's Downtown zoning regulations that includes associated design standards based on the Downtown Plan is currently underway.

### 15.3 | ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

An overall goal of the Zoning Code update that will follow this Master Plan will be to make Bridgeport's code a more user-friendly and easy-to-understand document. The code's organization and administrative procedures should be reviewed and updated to ensure that Bridgeport's land use regulations are modern and efficient.

For example, the City's Zoning Code currently contains a section on coastal site plan review and another on soil and erosion control. Inland wetlands regulations are located elsewhere in the municipal code; these can be found, with difficulty, on the city's website but are not provided online along with the Code of Ordinances. Some municipalities find it useful to create a new section in the zoning code that pulls together all of their environmental regulations that affect development, such as steep slopes protection, erosion and sedimentation control, stormwater management, flood hazard control and inland wetlands protection. As new mandates are issued by state and federal agencies, these regulations are more easily updated, and their cross-impacts assessed, if they are found together in one place in the code. Further, if the municipality unifies its development regulations, such that zoning and subdivision are located together in one chapter of the code, then content and procedures can be streamlined.

Another important administrative change will be for the City to incorporate its "One-Stop Permit" requirements into the code. The One-Stop initiative is intended to help the public better navigate the City's permitting processes and has resulted in the implementation of a "One-Stop" permit software program and the co-location of permitting departments including the Building Department, the Department of Land Use Construction Review (LUCR), the Zoning Department, the Fire Marshal, and the City Engineer on the second floor of City Hall.

Finally, the City's official Zoning Map will need to be updated to reflect all zone changes that are made as part of the Zoning Code update. The City may also need to incorporate previously adopted zoning map changes that have not yet been put onto the official Zoning Map.

“Bridgeport's goals of economic development and urban design quality must be supported by the City's internal organizational structure.”

### City Staff

Bridgeport's goals of economic development and urban design quality, as outlined in this Master Plan, must be supported by the City's internal organizational structure. In their administrative review, Zucker Systems found that the City's planning, economic development, engineering, traffic, building, Water Pollution Control Authority and zoning functions currently operate based upon a culture of "silos," where departments function relatively well in their discrete tasks, but do not work together to achieve broader City goals.

Currently, most of Bridgeport's development activities are organized under the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED), which includes the Building Department, Economic Development Department, Land Use Construction and Review Department (LUCR), Neighborhood Revitalization Department, Planning Department and Zoning Department. Zucker Systems' report contains several recommendations for addressing organizational issues within OPED:

- *Reorganize OPED into five integrated divisions under a director and deputy director*
- *Clarify job functions*
- *Locate all OPED functions in one place*
- *Increase staffing of the Building, Zoning and LUCR Departments*
- *Enhance staff reports to P&Z and ZBA*
- *Strengthen the neighborhood planning function to support work on Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs)*

In addition, the report notes that the City's current Zoning Code operates under the assumption of suburban, greenfield development, rather than typical urban infill and redevelopment. As a result, variances are often needed and the ZBA becomes the best (or only) way to make development happen. The report recommends amending the Zoning Code to support urban infill development and redevelopment of brownfields, based on an analysis of ZBA case histories.

The City has already begun to implement some elements of the Zucker Systems recommendations; OPED has increased staffing levels to better meet growing

demands of proposed development in the building and zoning departments and staff level design reviews for applications have been provided to the ZBA and P&Z by the consultant team as part of the Master Plan project. This is a positive start, but such staffing support must be sustained and expanded if the City is to fully implement the goals and policies of the Master Plan. Utilizing the Zucker Report the City should develop a plan for implementing administrative changes and set priorities and a timetable for their fulfillment.

### 15.4 | STORMWATER STANDARDS

Bridgeport faces numerous challenges regarding the conveyance and treatment of stormwater flows. Historically, stormwater management has focused on how to best convey storm flows and thereby reduce flooding. In the last few years, however, the state and federal governments have introduced new stormwater regulations regarding the quality of stormwater discharge. While the solution to all of Bridgeport's flooding problems will take many years to fully implement, there are several near-term steps that may be taken to improve stormwater management within the city:

#### Stormwater Regulations

The Zoning Code should refer to the Water Pollution Control Authority's (WPCA) stormwater regulations. This will enable technical review and approval of stormwater issues by appropriate staff. Final sign-off (or conditional approval) should be required from either WPCA (for sewer lines and combined sewer/stormwater lines) or the Engineering Department (for dedicated stormwater lines) before the Planning and Zoning Commission can approve the application.

The Stormwater Regulations should be updated periodically by technical staff to ensure compliance with latest codes and mandates by state and federal authorities. Regulations should be made available online, at the Zoning office or wherever site plan applications are available to the public.

### **Link Certificate of Occupancy to Storm and Sanitary Sewer Connections**

Currently, the City does not always issue a final Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for new construction or renovation projects. Typically, a CO is issued only if a mortgage company is involved in the land improvement. The City should require that a final CO be issued by the Building Department prior to any structure being occupied or open to the public. Furthermore, as part of the final CO inspection process no Certificate of Occupancy should be issued unless or until the storm/sewer connection has been installed as shown and approved on the site plan documents. This can be achieved by implementing the following requirements:

- *Posting of a bond by the applicant or contractor for the stormwater management system. The bond should be estimated by the applicant or their representative and reviewed by technical City staff members.*
- *Proof of compliance with the approved stormwater plan consisting of inspection by City personnel prior to connection and backfilling and certification of compliance by an Engineer-of-Record.*
- *Maintenance agreement which would be filed on the City Land Records to ensure that current and future owners of the land will be responsible for maintaining the system.*
- *Submittal of a final "As-Built" plan to both WPCA and Engineering Department with certification by an Engineer-of-Record that the plan was installed per the approved plans. The As-Built plan should be submitted in mylar format and electronically (PDF) to the appropriate City department.*

### **Implement Stormwater Capital Improvement Program (SWCIP)**

The City should examine and prioritize flood improvement projects including a reasonable timeline for implementing such projects. Projects should be coordinated with other significant capital improvements (roadway, utilities, railroad, sewer separation, etc.). The program would be overseen by the Engineering Department and updated periodically as required.

### **Notify all Utility Companies in Advance of Major Capitol Improvement Projects**

The City should formalize the process by which it notifies utility companies prior to significant street or storm/sewer projects. For a period of two-years following the completion of any roadway improvement project, all utility contracts would be required to repair the affected area of roadway across the entire roadway width (not just the trench area). This would also apply to sidewalk areas or other areas in the City right-of-way but would not apply in emergency repair situations.

### **Provide Right-of-Way for City Emergency Maintenance Operations**

Bridgeport should create a new ordinance which allows City personnel to enter private property for emergency stormwater maintenance purposes. Routine maintenance of existing stormwater facilities would continue to be the responsibility of the landowner. For new site plan applications, the City should require that the area adjacent to any open stream (intermittent streams included) or channel remain clear of permanent structures for a minimum distance of 15 feet on each side of the centerline of the stream or channel. Buffers to regulated wetlands and watercourses should be firmly established by City regulations.

### **Provide Incentives for Minor Building or Residential Improvements**

For minor building or residential property improvements that do not require a site plan application, the City should provide incentives for water quality improvements such as rain gardens or barrels, drywells, etc. The incentives may include a reduced or waived fee on individual building permits. The improvement would need to be recorded on the property deed as a "Non-Taxed Real Estate Improvement" to ensure subsequent property owners maintain the system.

Additional fees and taxes imposed upon residents and businesses are the least desirable alternative. Should stormwater assessments be considered to fund a stormwater capital improvement plan, the City may consider 50 percent and 100 percent reductions in assessment fees for water quality and water quantity improvements, respectively, that are installed by property owners.



### **Implement Citywide Stormwater Quality Improvements**

A Stormwater Management Manual should include regulations pertaining to properties that may not ordinarily be required to make stormwater quality improvements (i.e., properties that do not lie in a coastal zone or contain on-site wetlands, streams or watercourses). These properties should be required to implement a minimum requirement to treat stormwater through primary or secondary best management practices or BMPs. Any area over 0.5 acres in size would be subject to the requirements.

### **Budget for Stormwater Capital Improvement Projects**

The City should provide a separate budget line item for funding of stormwater projects. This will allow for implementation of the Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan. It will also allow projects to be implemented, which may alleviate flooding of less than 100-year storm events (threshold typically required for state or federal funding). When applying for federal and state funding, it will be advantageous to demonstrate that the City has a dedicated plan in place and is following a logical long-term plan rather than performing “spot fixes.”

### *Attach Citywide Stormwater Assessment to Properties*

The City should consider a citywide stormwater assessment applicable to all properties except single-family residential lots 0.5 acres or less. Properties that implement stormwater quality measures or exceed stormwater quantity requirements as noted in the Stormwater Manual would be exempt from the assessment. Assessments are never popular, and it is recommended that simple site-specific interventions or actions by property owners allow them to obtain exemptions.

### *Increase Fees and Fines for Stormwater and Sanitary/ Combined Sewer Connections*

The City should increase connection fees to be more comparable with other municipalities. The City may also impose fees on connections to dedicated storm lines based on the size of a specific parcel or the parcel's flow rate. Reductions in fee may be tied to additional stormwater quantity or quality features that exceed Stormwater Manual requirements. The City may also consider imposing fines on non-compliant stormwater management plans. Failure to adequately maintain any system on private property may also result in either a fine to the property owner or corrective action by the City with subsequent charge to the property owner for services rendered.

### *Provide New City Ordinance for Levying Fines*

The City should consider a new ordinance that allows the various City commissions to levy and collect fines for violations. A section in the Stormwater Management Manual should outline what constitutes a violation (illegal connection, lack of maintenance, failure to install per approved plans, failure to obtain final inspection, etc.) with applicable fine amounts.

## **15.5 | ADDITIONAL STUDIES**

Not all of the Master Plan's goals and policies can be addressed by immediate legislative action. Further study will be required to address the following issues and determine their potential citywide and site-specific impacts.

### **1) Parks and Open Space**

The City should inventory and evaluate its existing parks and open spaces to determine the number and types of passive and active recreation areas and open spaces that exist in each of its neighborhoods as well as the costs of maintaining these areas. The purpose of the study is to determine neighborhoods in need of additional parks/open space, the types of facilities required, and the potential costs of acquiring, constructing and maintaining such spaces. The study should evaluate the City's capacity to maintain existing and any new proposed open spaces and provide a plan for increasing maintenance capacity if necessary. The study should also identify parcels within the existing open space network or new parcels that may be protected as natural open space or permanent preservation areas.

### **2) Municipal Facilities**

The City should undertake a municipal facilities study to address efficiency and potential consolidation of City-owned properties to reduce the amount of tax-exempt property in Bridgeport. This study should include an inventory of state- and federal-owned land and a capital management assessment of all City-owned buildings to determine their market value and potential return on investment. It should also explore innovative approaches to minimizing publicly-owned property, such as sale-leaseback arrangements.

### 3) Brownfields Study

The City should assess all of the Brownfield sites in its brownfields inventory. This assessment should include remediation and redevelopment strategies for key Brownfield sites as well as cost estimates for remediation. The study should identify potential funding sources for required remediation activities. The City should consider hiring a Brownfield specialist to oversee the remediation and redevelopment activities recommended by the study. This coordinator could also oversee the provision of incentives for the development of brownfields, using best practices.

### 4) Undersized, undevelopable parcels

The City should assess undersized, undevelopable parcels in its neighborhoods, which negatively impact on community character and contributes to blight. A strategy should be developed that allows for consolidation of existing lots, development of community gardens on undevelopable parcels, or other uses that will benefit local communities. Where appropriate, such lots could be utilized as parking areas to address parking shortages that exist in many of the city's core neighborhoods. Such areas could be either publicly or privately owned and operated. Maintenance and liability for these lots would be the responsibility of the property owner.

### 5) Bridgeport Coastal Plan

As discussed in Chapter 6, the City should update its Municipal Coastal Plan, which was last revised in 1982, to reflect the coastal policies expressed in this Master Plan.

### 6) Fiscal Impact Modeling

The City should require fiscal impact analyses for large scale development projects and should continue to implement a new fiscal impact modeling software program utilizing recently increased zoning fees for larger developments. Such analyses will provide the City with an understanding of how a proposed project will affect the City's budget, services, and resources once it is built out.

### 7) Transportation Planning Modeling

The City should also require traffic analyses for large scale development projects and should continue to implement a new traffic impact modeling software program utilizing recently increased zoning fees for larger developments. Such analyses will provide the City with an understanding

of the type of roadway improvements that will be required to support a proposed project, taking into account existing conditions and other anticipated development projects and improvements in the vicinity of the project site. This will allow the City to understand the traffic improvements necessary to support a proposed development and determine the share of such improvements that should be the responsibility of the applicant.

## 15.6 | CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Public investment has a major impact on development and redevelopment activities. Sufficient and well-maintained roadways, utilities, parks, recreational facilities, open spaces, schools, and municipal buildings are important factors in attracting investment to the city. Implementation of many of the recommendations of this Master Plan will require investment of public capital. The City should consider the specific plan recommendations outlined in the Implementation Matrix provided in Section 15.6 below in developing its annual capital improvement program through the year 2020.

## 15.7 | IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Table 15-1 provides a summary of action items that should be undertaken in order to implement the policies of this Master Plan. Actions are categorized as either short-, medium- or long-term. Short-term recommendations should be carried out within 12 to 18 months of adoption of the Master Plan and medium-term recommendations should be carried out within five years of adoption. Long-term recommendations have an implementation horizon beyond five years and will require advanced planning.

Table 15-1 | Plan Recommendations and Priorities

Zoning	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Update zoning code's organization and administrative procedures to make regulations more user-friendly and easy to understand	✓		
<b>Zoning District Regulations</b>			
Reduce the number of zoning districts	✓		
Change Residential High Density (R-C) zone to allow higher density apartments and condos, create a mixed-use zone that allows high density housing	✓		
Adopt new zoning regulations and design standards for the Downtown that encourage mixed-use zone that allows high density	✓		
Rezone Steel Point, Lake Success/Remington Woods, and the area between I-95 and the railroad (the "Smile") for some form of mixed-use development	✓		
Establish mixed-use corridors along Main Street, East Main Street, Stratford Avenue, Fairfield Avenue, State Street, Knowlton Street, Barnum Avenue, Broad Street, Madison Avenue, Pequonnock Street, Boston Avenue and portions of Huntington Turnpike, North Avenue and Park Avenue	✓		
Expand the mixed-use waterfront district to the north	✓		
Expand areas where health care/medical institutions are allowed in the city	✓		
Revise Office-Retail (OR) zones to reflect plan goals for commercial development & an increase in mixed-use development along commercial corridors	✓		
Designate Lafayette Boulevard as an office corridor	✓		
Rezone the East End waterfront and the area south of Crescent Avenue along the western side of Yellow Mill Channel	✓		
Reduce industrial-zoned land from 20 to 10 percent of total land area within the city	✓		
Shift industrial areas away from the waterfront and residential areas	✓		
Update industrial zoning districts to eliminate uses that are incompatible with a modern Bridgeport	✓		
Update industrial zoning districts to provide appropriate bulk, performance and design standards	✓		
Create performance standards for industrial uses	✓		
Develop adaptive reuse regulations that address inherent conflicts between industrial and residential uses	✓		
Create a mixed-use/open space zone. Map this zone on the Seaside Park landfill and Pleasure Beach	✓		
Create a mixed-use/light industrial zone. Map this zone on the "smile" area, portions of Fairfield Avenue and State Street and other areas as denoted on the Future Land Use Map	✓		
Establish greenways along the Pequonnock River, Johnson's Creek, Black Rock Harbor, Seaview Avenue, the western side of Yellow Mill Channel and within Remington Woods, along with the Captain's Cove frontage, Island Brook and portions of Bridgeport Harbor	✓		
Create public access requirements for waterfront properties	✓		
Limit impervious coverage allowed on a site	✓		
Update zoning map to reflect all recent changes	✓		
Adopt new telecommunications ordinance	✓		
Amend zoning ordinance to support urban infill development and redevelopment of brownfields	✓		
Assess undersized, undevelopable parcels in city neighborhoods and develop a strategy for reuse. Off-street parking should be a major component of this assessment		✓	
<b>Zoning Incentives</b>			
Adopt an inclusionary zoning ordinance	✓		
Create a Housing Trust Fund		✓	
Create a new community land trust		✓	
Create incentive bonuses to allow increased building height Downtown in exchange for publicly accessible open space or payment in-lieu of open space to a Waterfront Recapture Fund	✓		
Establish Smart Growth Districts consistent with state affordable housing legislation	✓		
Create incentives, using industry best practices, to facilitate the development of brownfield sites	✓		
Develop an expedited permitting process for green development	✓		
<b>Development Application Review</b>			
Expand site plan review to include most development applications, with the exception of single-family homes	✓		
Develop design standards for development application review	✓		
Improve the application checklist	✓		
Update development application forms to reference CT DEP's current Connecticut Coastal Management Manual, dated September 2000	✓		
Require inspection of approval ZBA actions to ensure applicants meet conditions of approval	✓		
<b>Planning and Zoning Procedures</b>			
Provide staff reports, including design review, P&Z and ZBA for all development applications	✓		
Allow for a point hearing of the P&Z and ZBA for all development application	✓		
Increase mandatory training for members of P&Z, ZBA and Historic Commissions	✓		
P&Z should limit amount of new material considered at hearings	✓		
P&Z should take action on items immediately after closing a hearing	✓		
Incorporate one-stop permit requirements into code	✓		
The City Engineer and Water Pollution Control Authority's comments on applications should be provided to the ZBA prior to the public hearing	✓		



<b>Historical and Cultural Resources</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Strengthen and clarify historic district controls and develop criteria to evaluate historic integrity of older structures	✓		
Consolidate the two historic district commissions for greater efficiency and effectiveness	✓		
Develop a procedure to inform property owners in historic districts of available grants and funding for rehabilitation of their properties	✓		
Create a local non-governmental arts council	✓		
Consolidate management of City-owned buildings that house cultural institutions	✓		
Create an arts incubator through a public-private partnership	✓		
Promote live/work artists' spaces in appropriate areas	✓		
Explore creation of a percent for art program	✓		
Explore tax incentives to promote film and sound production within the city	✓		
Explore streamlining the permit process for public events, concerts and other cultural events	✓		

<b>Environment</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Update the 1982 <i>Bridgeport Coastal Plan</i>			✓
Reduce point and non-point sources of water pollution to improve water quality classification of Bridgeport's coastal area from SC to SB		✓	
Manage and protect intertidal resources and their ecological functions		✓	
Enhance and/or restore degraded coastal natural resources			✓
Assess brownfield sites in the City's brownfields inventory to develop remediation and redevelopment strategies for key sites and cost estimates for remediation		✓	
Establish standards for green development on the Seaside Park landfill and other Brownfield sites		✓	
Develop a set of criteria to measure progress in meeting the City's target of reducing carbon emissions by 10 percent by 2020	✓		
Establish a tree planting program to achieve the goal of planting 3,000 new trees by 2020	✓		
Establish a program to assist residents in planting and adopting street trees		✓	
Add provisions requiring installation of street trees along private property frontage on public roadways to site plan regulations	✓		
Convert the municipal auto fleet to hybrid and biodiesel vehicles		✓	
Encourage private use of hybrid-fuel vehicles with priority for these vehicles downtown, at the inter-modal transit center and at other key areas of the city		✓	
Work with local energy companies to make their facilities cleaner and more efficient		✓	
Require use of green construction practices and materials for all new public facilities and schools		✓	
Provide tax incentives to encourage homeowners and businesses to use renewable energy sources		✓	
Develop regulations consistent with regional and state initiatives to encourage zero net energy use for new development			✓
Require utility providers to procure 20 percent of their electricity from clean energy sources by 2020			✓

<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Inventory and evaluate existing parks and open spaces to determine areas in need of additional park/open space		✓	
Re-establish pedestrian access to Pleasure Beach and restore Pleasure Beach for public use			✓
Improve access to parks, open space and the waterfront with better pedestrian, vehicular and transit access			✓
Require sidewalks in mixed-use areas and within a quarter-mile from schools		✓	
Create a sidewalk installation and replacement program to increase public access to parks		✓	
Provide public access to school play and open space areas during non-school hours		✓	
Create site development standards that ensure that at least 25 percent of the Lake Success/Remington Woods property is preserved as open space	✓		
Establish greenways along the Pequonnock River, Johnson's Creek, Black Rock Harbor, Seaview Avenue, the western side of Yellow Mill Channel, and within Remington Woods, along with the Captain's Cove frontage, Island Brook and portions of Bridgeport Harbor			✓

Downtown	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Develop design and phasing guidelines for significant TOD at the inter-modal transportation center	✓		
Replace parking structure/former bus station with mixed-use development		✓	
Designate Downtown as a Smart Growth District, per state legislation	✓		
Adopt form-based zoning for the entire downtown	✓		
Establish design guidelines for key sites	✓		
Promote housing and destination and entertainment uses on the Pequonnock site	✓		
Emphasize Main Street as a primary retail corridor and require ground floor retail in this area through zoning	✓		
Encourage and support small food stores, a green market, and retail and restaurant uses		✓	
Attract small-scale office tenants (e.g. architects, lawyers, etc.)		✓	
Create incentives to stimulate Class A office construction on Lafayette Boulevard			✓
Pursue lease guarantees for "mom and pop" businesses		✓	
Develop financing programs to assist entrepreneurs in securing financing for start-up expenses		✓	
Consolidate City offices at Congress Plaza and sell vacated sites			✓
Pursue joint development of Congress Plaza municipal complex with a master builder			✓
Relocate the central library to the vacant Majestic and Poli Theaters at Congress Plaza			✓
Encourage location of a four-year college at Congress Plaza			✓
Create a scorecard for private development with points for green design and public park and plaza improvements	✓		
Publicize the benefits of green roofs and energy-efficient buildings and create incentives to encourage their use in development projects	✓		
Adopt a green transit connector route that extends from Seaside Park through Downtown to Steel Point		✓	
Improve Broad Street connections		✓	
Allocate funds for roadway improvements in the South End		✓	
Create paths from Seaside Park along Long Island Sound and Broad Street to connect the waterfront to Downtown		✓	
Identify appropriate locations for bike lanes and bikeways linked to a larger greenway system		✓	
Close Main Street to vehicular traffic from South Frontage Road north to John Street on game and event nights	✓		
Create a unified parking management strategy	✓		
Create new parking opportunities and encourage better usage of existing parking facilities		✓	
Create a unifying design vocabulary for Main Street, I-95 and rail underpasses, Pequonnock site, Broad Street, banners and commercial signs		✓	
Enliven the I-95 underpass at Main Street with lighting and commerce		✓	
Create an Arena District in the vicinity of Harbor Yard	✓		
Night-light the smokestack, bridges and existing landmarks		✓	
Work with property owners to improve sidewalks and facades		✓	
Work with GBTA to improve bus shelters		✓	
Update the survey of structures eligible for listing on the National Register every five years		✓	
Amend zoning to further protect structures deemed eligible for National Register listing	✓		
Improve pedestrian connections to, from, and among the train station, bus station and ferry terminal		✓	
Work with Fairfield County Courthouse to make its front plaza design more pedestrian friendly		✓	
Work with HCC to open its interior courtyard to the Public		✓	
Work with People's Bank to improve its plaza, provide additional plantings, moveable seating, etc		✓	
Work to attract large-scale, multi-venue music events		✓	
Work with HCC to bolster the Housatonic Museum of Arts as an attraction		✓	
Foster relationships between HCC and UB so that HCC becomes a feeder school to UB			✓
Partner with HCC and UB on a significant public art initiative for the transit connection		✓	
Encourage UB to develop a "model" school in the South End			✓
Target the City-owned Stratford Avenue waterfront site in Downtown for recreation along the riverfront	✓		
Secure a 25-foot public easement along the riverfront		✓	

<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Encourage infill and high-rise development Downtown	✓		
Preserve historic structures for adaptive reuse	✓		
Build on existing CBD business clusters and reduce tax-exempt properties		✓	
Prepare for and encourage Class A office space		✓	
Support environmentally sound deepwater port uses	✓		
Improve public access to and recreational use of the waterfront	✓		
Encourage mixed-use development	✓		
Complete the inter-modal transportation network		✓	
Invest in transportation, utility and communications infrastructure		✓	
Capture regional growth industries by pursuing key growth sectors		✓	
Retain existing businesses	✓		
Build work-force preparedness through education and manpower training programs		✓	
Reclaim brownfield sites		✓	
Encourage housing diversity	✓		
Develop neighborhood commerce		✓	
Provide equitable community services		✓	
Encourage community involvement in planning efforts	✓		

<b>Housing</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Encourage market-rate housing development, especially in the Downtown area	✓		
Adopt inclusionary zoning to preserve affordability	✓		
Create a Community Land Trust and Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing		✓	
Create grant and loan programs to assist homeowners with property upkeep and maintenance		✓	
Use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs) to rehabilitate neighborhood housing	✓		
Create a first-time home buyer assistance program in partnership with a local non-profit agency		✓	
Support non-profit organizations' efforts to provide neighborhood in-fill housing		✓	
Designate Downtown, Steel Point, 60 Main Street, and "the smile" between I-95 and the railroad as Smart Growth Districts, per state legislation	✓		

<b>Neighborhoods</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Continue eliminating blight by supporting the City's existing Anti-Blight program	✓		
Create grant and loan programs to encourage property upkeep and maintenance		✓	
Encourage community policing efforts throughout Bridgeport's neighborhoods	✓		
Complete plans for building quality new schools that serve as community centers and strengthen neighborhoods		✓	
Provide parents with greater school choice		✓	
Support ongoing Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) planning efforts and implementation of NRZ plan recommendations	✓		

<b>Utilities</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Consider a proposed four-step alternative approach to controlling stormwater overflow in lieu of complete separation discussed in Chapter 12		✓	
Encourage under-grounding of utilities wherever possible	✓		
Ensure efficient coordination of utility upgrades with an "open the road only once" policy	✓		
Coordinate with wireless providers and allow them to lay conduit for future fiber-optic cable when the street is opened for other construction/maintenance work	✓		
Extend high-pressure mains as necessary in coordination with any City storm and sanitary sewer separation projects		✓	
Provide listing of service provider contacts to residents, prospective developers, and business and property owners	✓		



<b>Stormwater Management</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Create separate stormwater regulations that are referenced in the Zoning Code	✓		
Link approval of certificate of occupancy to storm and sanitary sewer connections		✓	
Implement Stormwater Capital Improvement Program		✓	
Formalize process for notifying utility companies prior to significant storm/sewer projects	✓		
Create a new ordinance that allows City personnel to enter private property for emergency stormwater maintenance	✓		
Provide incentives for water quality improvements for minor building or residential improvements	✓		
Implement citywide stormwater quality improvements		✓	
Levy a stormwater assessment for all properties except for single-family homes on 1/2 acre or less		✓	
Increase fees and fines for stormwater and sanitary/combined sewer connections	✓		
Create new ordinance that allows City to levy and collect fines for violations	✓		

<b>Transportation and Circulation</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Plan, design and implement geometric, wayfinding and aesthetic upgrades at the intersections of State Street & Lafayette Boulevard, Fairfield Avenue & Main Street, and Fairfield Avenue and Water Street, including the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and other best practices		✓	
Consider a rubber-tire trolley system to provide a transit connection between the South End, Downtown, and East Side		✓	
Consider seasonal passenger ferry or water taxi service between the inter-modal transportation center, Pleasure Beach, Seaside Park, Captain's Cove and Steel Point			✓
Consider options for reducing parking requirements, particularly in areas in proximity to transit, including shared parking, commuter credits, fees in lieu of parking and car-sharing programs	✓		
Develop and implement access management strategies to reduce conflicts between vehicles by encouraging the consolidation of driveways and curb cuts along major roadways	✓		
Implement a traffic and parking management plan for special events Downtown, utilizing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and other best practices	✓		
Formalize a roadway infrastructure capital improvement program and priority list for public facility improvements, including:			
Replace Congress Street Bridge		✓	
Realign Lafayette Boulevard at Fairfield Avenue		✓	
Enhance highway exits and entrances within Downtown		✓	
Establish Water Street as a service and connector road		✓	
Enhance pedestrian crossings near the train station and at major intersections between Lafayette Boulevard and East Washington Street		✓	
Synchronize traffic signals and walk signs in the Downtown		✓	
Reconstruct Seaview Avenue as an urban boulevard		✓	
Connect Bruce Boulevard to the I-95 entrance ramp		✓	
Explore providing high-speed ferry service to lower Fairfield County and Manhattan		✓	
Require sidewalks in mixed-use areas and a quarter-mile from schools	✓		
Establish delegation of local and regional elected officials and business leaders to lobby Metro North Railroad and State DOT for improved express train service from NYC to Bridgeport		✓	
Reconfigure local bus lines to improve access between housing and employment centers		✓	
Explore the feasibility of a second train station in East Bridgeport			✓
Develop and implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) concepts that target downtown Bridgeport		✓	
Construct the Housatonic Railroad Trail from Trumbull to downtown Bridgeport			✓

<b>Municipal Facilities and Services</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Enhance the police force with manpower, training, technology and community policing efforts		✓	
Continue revitalizing public school facilities		✓	
Support the library's plans for branch construction and expansion		✓	
Prepare a municipal facilities study to address efficiency and potential consolidation of City-owned properties		✓	
Implement plans for a centralized Public Facilities complex	✓		

<b>Organizational Management</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>Medium-Term</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>
Reorganize the City's Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) into five integrated divisions under a director and deputy director		✓	
Clarify OPED job functions	✓		
Co-locate all of OPED's functions		✓	
Evaluate streamlining the City's numerous boards and commissions in order to increase efficiency and participation	✓		