

# OUR BACKYARD

JANUARY 2021

## BIG PICTURE

## THE BROADER BENEFITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We've all heard the phrase "not in my backyard" before. It's a colloquialism used to signify one's opposition to the location of something considered undesirable in one's neighborhood. It's a phrase which represents a certain ideological perspective, one that is often shrouded in racial or class based animosity. NIMBYism, as it is often referred, presents a particularly pernicious obstacle to meeting local housing needs. What people who espouse this type of rhetoric don't understand is that folks are struggling in their backyard.

As a result of NIMBY behavior and the spread of misinformation, many are put off by the idea of an affordable housing development being built in their community. It's a common scene now to see local residents lined up behind the microphone at a community hearing, preparing words of disdain for a proposed affordable housing development. Often their concerns are understandable - they don't want crime in their neighborhood or decreased property values. They want to protect their investment in their homes. The issue with these arguments is that they're not based in reality.

Affordable housing can actually decrease crime rates and boost property values, according to a number of studies and analyses presented by The Center for Housing Policy. They show that affordable housing typically has either a positive or neutral impact on surrounding property values. Not only do affordable developments not decrease property values but they frequently inject new life and energy into communities spurring economic investment.

A report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) projects that the creation of 100 affordable rental homes would generate almost \$12 million in local income, over \$2 million in taxes and other government funding along with over 160 jobs in the first year.

The lack of low cost housing options in lower Middlesex County and the surrounding communities is an unfortunate reality, but a reality nonetheless. It's an issue which had gone unaddressed for decades until a group of concerned citizens decided to do something about it. We at HOPE don't believe it to be a choice, but rather an obligation to make sure that everyone who wishes to contribute to the prosperity our communities is afforded the opportunity to live in them. We want these folks in our backyard. We see their value everyday as school teachers, paramedics, grocery store workers, veterans, etc. The fight for affordable housing isn't about changing the character of our communities, it's about fixing something that is fundamentally broken in them. We need your help to fix it.

**Providing housing for the local workforce, especially lower wage earners**



**Revitalizing distressed areas**



**Directing economic benefits to the local community, such as increased jobs and sales taxes**



**Promoting economic and social integration while building community**



# THE PROBLEM



## NATIONALLY

Across the country there is a shortage of affordable renter housing. Nationally, only 36 affordable and available rental homes exist for every 100 extremely low-income renter households. Extremely low-income renter households are categorized as households whose income is 30% of their area median income. Since the recession, affordability has increased for homeowners but not for renters. The ability of renters to transition to homeowners is enormously contingent on their status of being 'rent burdened.'

Over the years before the housing crisis, 2001-05, 20 percent of renter households reported becoming homeowners; after the recession, 2009-15, that figure was just 13 percent, a decline of 40 percent. With fewer renter households becoming owners, demand for rental homes has increased quicker than the supply. The imbalance between the demand for affordable housing and the supply of low-cost rentals can be seen in metropolitan areas across the United States. Connecticut is no exception.

As reported by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), someone who works forty hours per week at the minimum wage and lives in a two-bedroom home at the fair market rent is cost burdened—meaning that they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing—in every state in the nation.

SOURCE: NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION

500,000+

PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT

75%

OF ALL EXTREMELY LOW INCOME FAMILIES PAY MORE THAN HALF THEIR INCOME ON RENT

7.2 MILLION

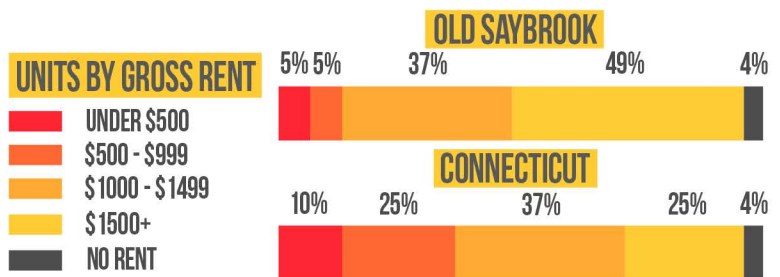
MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS ARE NEEDED FOR EXTREMELY LOW INCOME FAMILIES

## LOCALLY

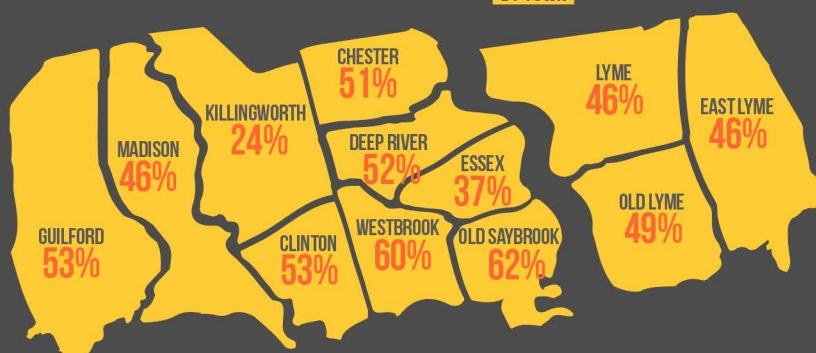
DATA PROVIDED BY PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES

The Lower CT River valley is a wonderful place to live and raise a family. However the rental market in this area is limited and often inaccessible for many who work here. For example, the 'Housing Wage' for Old Saybrook is \$27.87 according to data release by NLIHC. This is the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest rental home at HUD's fair market rent (FMR) without spending more than 30% of his or her income on housing.

As the price of rental units in our area has steadily increased over the past decade, wages have stagnated. According to 2019 statistics provided by the U.S Bureau of Labor, the median hourly wage in CT was \$23.33 with many essential workers making far less. For low-income folks who work in our area, they will either need to live elsewhere and commute long distances to save on rent or devote a majority of their income to housing resulting in them finding difficulty in affording other necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.



### COST BURDENED RENTERS BY TOWN



The term 'Cost Burdened Renter' applies to anyone spending more than 30% of his or her income on housing according to HUD. The share of 'cost burdened renters' in our area is staggering. According to a 2017 report presented by the Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) at Harvard University, households with severe cost burdens spent 13 percent less on food, 40 percent less on healthcare, and 23 percent less on transportation each month than their non-burdened counterparts. Severely cost burdened households with children spent less than \$700 on average for all non-housing costs per month.

The effect this has on child development is very real. Studies show that living in low-quality housing or a cost-burdened household is linked to emotional and behavioral issues in children. Additionally, kids whose families move frequently perform worse on tests and generally have lower academic achievement. Housing stability is such an important driver for children's growth and educational outcomes.

# THE SOLUTION

AT HOPE, WE HAVE A STRONG TRACK RECORD OF CREATING HIGH-QUALITY, WELL MAINTAINED, AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAT MATCHES THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH IT SERVES.

## FERRY CROSSING



Ferry Crossing is a stunning example of the potential for affordable developments on the Connecticut shoreline. Having opened in the Summer of 2012, the Ferry Crossing development is made up of 16 modern and functional rental homes.

The development includes 4 one-bedroom units, 8 two-bedroom units, and 4 three-bedroom units. All units are targeted to households earning at or below eighty percent of area median income. Ferry Crossing provides for deeper affordability than other multifamily developments in the region and includes some units for families earning below twenty-five percent of the area median.

## THE LOFTS AT SPENCER'S CORNER

The Lofts at Spencer's Corner is a beautiful multifunctional development in the heart of Centerbrook Village. The development is a creative solution to address both the need for more affordable housing and the opportunity to redevelop one of Essex's central commercial properties by creating a dynamic mixed-use housing/retail destination.

What was once an exclusively commercial condominium development now features 17 new affordable units of housing. This includes one, two and three bedroom apartments which will be exclusively available to low and moderate income individuals.



## WELLINGTON AT MADISON



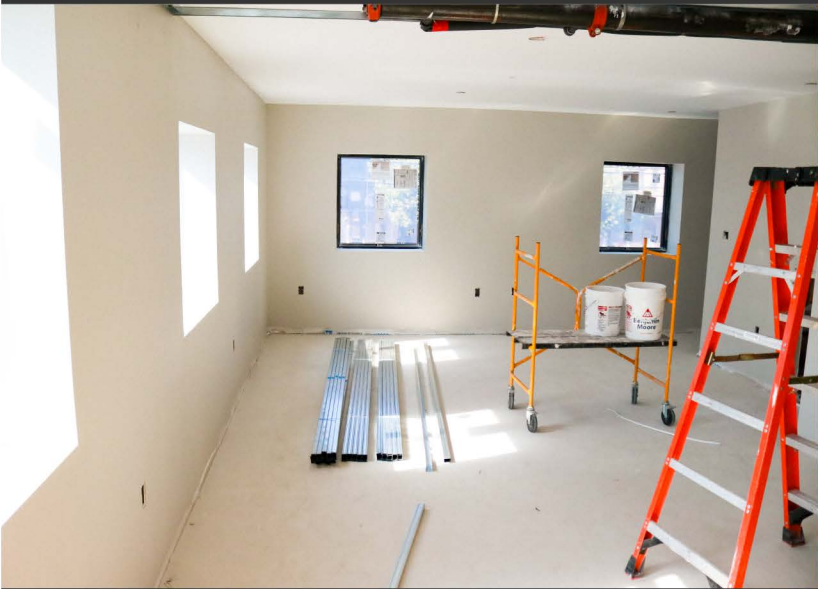
Wellington at Madison is an exciting project currently underway in Madison, CT. Located at 131 Cottage Road, the property currently includes 4 completed and occupied rental units and has been approved for the construction of 31 total units. Upon completion, 24 of the units will have rent set at affordable rates with the remaining 7 units being rented at fair market value.

HOPE Partnership is excited to work with The Caleb Group to make this development a reality. The project has received zoning approval from the Town of Madison and construction is expected to commence this year.



# SUPPORT HOPE

OUR PHILOSOPHY IS TO COLLABORATE WITH TOWN GOVERNMENT, BUILDERS, AND OTHER PRIVATE PARTNERS TO BUILD HOUSING THAT IS ATTRACTIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND APPROPRIATE TO THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD. IT IS THESE PARTNERSHIPS THAT ALLOW US TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND INCREASE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.



IF YOU, OR FOLKS YOU KNOW WOULD LIKE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE PURSUIT OF HOUSING EQUITY, WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS.

REACH OUT TO OUR OPERATIONS MANAGER, LORETTA MCCLUSKEY, BY EMAIL (LORETTA@HOPE-CT.ORG) OR GIVE US A CALL ((860) 388-9513)

WE ARE TRULY BLESSED TO HAVE CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS. WITHOUT THIS SUPPORT OUR WORK WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. YOUR CHARITABLE GIVING DRIVES OUR MISSION FORWARD AND PROVIDES US WITH THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO HELP THOSE IN NEED. IF YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART, VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO DONATE WHAT YOU CAN.



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