

City of Bridgeport
Plan of Conservation and Development
Stakeholder Interview
Social Advocacy Organizations
July 26, 2018

Attendees:

- Bernadette Baldino – Bridgeport Libraries, Literacy Volunteer’s Association, and Homes for the Brave
- Monette Ferguson – ABCD – Action for Community Development, youth services, supportive services
- Michael Patota – Child and Family Guidance Center – Organization primarily focused on dealing with child and family trauma
- Bob Francis – RYSAP – Gang intervention programs, mediation services to the courts, opioid abuse education programs

The statements below are a summary of the opinions expressed by those interviewed. The statements do not necessarily reflect City policy or objective facts.

The City of Bridgeport offers cultural vibrancy, a convenient and accessible location in the region, great colleges, and has immense potential to grow in the future. A few key challenges affect Bridgeport, including community violence, a lacking education system, and a lack of diverse jobs and affordable housing. Its problems are exacerbated by negative perceptions that make the city seem more challenged than it is to both residents and those in the surrounding region. The city would benefit from encouraging the work of non-profits and ensuring appropriate allocation of funds to benefit underserved residents. There should be cohesive collaboration between neighborhood groups, non-profits, and the government to encourage upward mobility for all residents of Bridgeport and a full effort to break the cycle of poverty in families and neighborhoods. Focusing on training programs as alternatives to college, and transitional housing would aid this effort.

Vision for Bridgeport:

- The city needs to better support community organizations
- Need to create a friendlier environment for the non-profits and should be better at sharing information with non-profits
- Bridgeport needs more taxable properties
- There is no big convention center in southern Connecticut and it could be here in Bridgeport
- Every school in the city should have Pre-K programs
- NRZ groups feel like they are ignored by government and need more neighborhood investment
- Try and keep millennial workers in Bridgeport by providing jobs for them
- Need transitional residential buildings for people to help them move forward
 - Don’t just put them into Section-8 housing forever
 - Encourage upward mobility
- Need to get more workers back into the trades
 - College isn’t for everyone
- 20% of people in the city are employed by non-profits; these groups really have hand on the pulse of the city
- Capitalize on the “Parks City” identity

