



New Haven Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plan

Co-Creation Team Meeting 1

Great Places to Live

August 5th, 2024, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM New Haven Public Library - Ives Branch

Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Cathleen Meaden	Columbus House
Ines Alvarez	Albertus Magnus
Marion Sachdova	Resident
Shawn Mykins	Resident
Johnnie McFadden	Resident
Frank Mitchell	Preservation Trust
Johnny Shively	Elm City Communities
Mason Smith	New Haven Renter
Lana Melonakos-Harrison	CT Tenants Union
Arlevia Samuel	EDA
Mark Wilson	EDA
Stephanie Camp	SCRCOG
Wildaliz Bermudez	City of New Haven Fair Rent Commission
Kevin McCarthy	Various
Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig	Yale Center for Environmental Justice
City Plan Team	
Laura Brown	Director of Planning
Esther Rose-Wilen	Assistant Director of Planning
Alex Castro	Planner
Camila Torres	City Plan Student Ambassador
Sana Salimi	City Plan Student Ambassador
Consultant Team	
Rory Jacobson	FHI Studio
Ken Livingston	FHI Studio

Meeting Summary:

FHI Studio conducted the first Great Places to Live Co-Creation Team meeting at 11:00 am on August 5th, 2024, at Ives Branch of the New Haven Public Library. Members of the Co-Creation Team were invited to participate based on their interests and experience. The meeting began with group introductions and followed with a presentation that focused on the following elements:

1. Introductions and Plan Overview (10 min.)
2. Community Engagement Program (5 min.)
3. Overview of Co-Creation Team Topics (10 min.)
4. Great Places to Live Discussion (70 min.)
5. Visioning (20 min.)
6. Project Schedule / Next Steps (5 min.)
7. Adjourn

Following the presentation, a discussion took place. Highlights from that discussion are documented on the following pages:

Key Themes

New Haven is dealing with significant housing challenges, including rising rents and housing costs, displacement of residents, homelessness, and deteriorating living conditions as corporate landlords dominate the housing market. To address these issues, the City should address affordable housing and resist displacement by promoting neighborhood cohesion and neighborhood level planning, support accessory dwelling units (ADU's) and infill on vacant lots, promote enforcement and landlord accountability, continue to support emergency housing strategies, and create more tools for intergenerational wealth building and collective ownership, such as community land trusts. There is also a need to improve public transportation, expand funding for housing rehab and clean energy, and mandate a livable wage for construction workers. Additionally, enhancing public schools, expanding access to neighborhood grocery stores, improving sidewalks and crosswalks, and upgrading city playgrounds are essential steps to elevating the overall quality of life in New Haven.

Do these trends resonate? What other analysis is needed to understand housing and neighborhood trends in the city? What are your thoughts on the availability of housing and housing affordability in New Haven?

- There has been a shift towards large LLC's taking over the rentals and owner occupied units
- Area median income does not tell the true story of life in New Haven
- Rents have increased drastically (no rent cap), and people are struggling. Many long time residents are being forced out to neighboring communities such as Hamden
- The quality of life in New Haven needs to be improved for all
- Many people are ending up homeless because they can no longer afford rising rents
- Seniors are getting priced out of the City and forced to move to other communities
- Corporate landlords charge higher rents, do not maintain properties, and are more likely to evict
- How do we think about ownership, who owns the housing in the city. There are lots of emerging ways for communities to collectively own and manage property that we should explore.
- Issue of blight and deplorable living conditions, landlords need to be held accountable. Absentee landlords are commonplace
- The age of much of New Haven's housing stock has implications for health of residents and climate implications
- Important to consider the regional housing market
- Deeply affordable housing is needed

- While we have a larger percentage of affordable housing compared to the state it is not enough for the 55% of New Haven residents who are cost-burdened
- The 436 unsheltered individuals in the city does not capture people who housing instability/who are couch-surfing
- What assumptions are corporate landlords and investors making about where rent is going? Example of the Realpage Inc lawsuit on pricing collusion.
- Interest rates are impacting affordability of ownership and rents
- Housing cost burden numbers do not reflect other household costs impacting livability like food and childcare
- Need to continue/expand/improve LCI's work to hold landlords accountable
- The age of our housing stock is also related to climate change and indoor air quality. Tenants need options to improve heating, cooling, air quality. Landlords are not upgrading and these costs get passed on to the tenants.
- What role can the city plan in financing housing acquisition and development with dollars from other sources?
- Neighborhood resilience comes from long-term residents knowing their neighbors, community leaders, where to get resources
- Housing has played a key part in creating economic injustice. Housing is a pathway to building intergenerational wealth. How can we ensure that groups historically excluded from home ownership benefit from future initiatives?

Are there projects that should be prioritized in the next ten years? What projects have been successful at supporting New Haven to be a great place to live? What are the barriers and challenges to ensuring that New Haven is a great place to live? What are some opportunities?

- The City needs to make it easier to do successful ADU's
- Infill needed on many of the City's vacant lots
- Free buses during Covid was helpful, that should be permanent
- Consider a community land trust, look at Somerville, MA as an example
- The City has programs for rehab and clean energy repairs, but funds are limited. This program is only available for owner occupied units
- The livable wage rate is \$28 an hour for a family to afford housing in New Haven. City should mandate that developers pay the construction workers who are building in the City at least \$28 an hour. Need to provide a living wage that allows workers to live where they work
- The New Haven Public School system needs improvements. After school programs are limited. Childcare and aftercare programs are expensive.
- Need to ensure that there are sidewalks and crosswalks in all neighborhoods, especially around the schools
- Address traffic safety issues including drag racing, street takeovers
- People who are unsheltered should have choice about where they stay.
- Need to address food deserts across the City and support the great programs and initiatives that rescue food
- Need for neighborhood grocery stores
- Improvements are needed at many of the City's playgrounds
- Job training for young people to go into the trades, other workforce development initiatives
- Neighborhood planning is needed so we can be more intentional about developments that come into neighborhoods
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Visioning Session

In a word or two or in a phrase, what is your vision for New Haven as a great place to live?

- Green spaces
- Green energy
- Community control
- Safe
- Truly pedestrian friendly
- Community gardens
- Exceptional public schools
- New Haven retains its beauty and aesthetics
- Rental caps
- Cultural preservation
- Inclusive benefits for all

- Diversity
- Climate savvy
- Flexible
- Civic engagement, ensuring that people know about events and opportunities
- Interconnections between neighborhoods
- Resource sharing
- Car light and pedestrian focused
- Equitable investment and hiring practices
- Autism programs
- Police accountability
- Nobody living on the streets
- Non congregate shelters, choice for people experiencing homelessness