



Building Homes Together

A campaign to strengthen Chittenden County communities

Year 1 Data Results – September 27, 2017

In 2016, the Building Homes Together (BHT) campaign launched with the support of well over a hundred municipal officials, businesses, nonprofits, Legislators and individuals. The BHT campaign set a target of creating 3,500 new homes in Chittenden County over the next five years, with 20% of them permanently affordable. Those goals translate to 700 new homes per year, with 140 homes affordable.

After the first year, The Building Homes Together campaign has successfully met one of its goals for creating new housing in Chittenden County—producing more than 700 new homes in the first year of its five-year campaign. A net total of 916 new homes¹ were added to the County in 2016. This includes 627 multi-family homes, 193 single family homes, 126 assisted living apartments, and 18 accessory dwelling homes. Forty-eight homes were demolished, equating to a net gain of 916.

We averaged 491 new homes annually from 2010 through 2015.

New Homes Constructed and First Occupied in Chittenden County ²						
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
305	431	547	424	630	609	916

However, the County fell short of the second goal of the campaign—to build 140 affordable homes annually for five years. The goal is to build new homes that are permanently affordable to households earning 60% or lower of the area median income for rental (a two-person household would have an income of \$39,600 to qualify and rent would be approximately \$900 including heat and hot water for a two bedroom), and 100% of the area median income or lower for homeownership (a two person household would have an income of \$66,000 to qualify). Only 65³ new affordable rental homes and 4⁴ new affordable ownership homes were built and first occupied in 2016.

Year	New Affordable as Percentage of Total New Home Construction				
	Total New Home Construction ²	New Affordable Home Construction ^{3&4}			Percentage of New Home Construction that is Affordable
		Rental Homes	Ownership Homes	Total	
2010	305	42	5	47	15%
2011	431	28	4	32	7%
2012	547	63	3	66	12%
2013	424	79		79	19%
2014	630	78	5	83	13%
2015	609	20	2	22	4%
2016	916	65	4	69	8%

Looking forward, 357 apartments are projected to be built in 2017⁵, with 52 designated as affordable⁵. We don't have a projection for other home construction, but with 357 apartments the pace is likely to remain strong in comparison to 2010-2011. In addition, there are a number of housing developments that include a significant number of affordable

¹ CCRPC data collection from Chittenden County municipalities on new homes first occupied in 2016. Mobile homes (6) and camps (1) are included in the single-family home category.

² CCRPC data collection from Chittenden County municipalities, 2014-2016 includes demolitions

³ VHFA housingdata.org database. Represents new homes first occupied in 2016.

⁴ Champlain Housing Trust



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homes slated for future years that will help achieve the goal, including Cambrian Rise in Burlington and City Center in South Burlington. However, the projection for new affordable homes still looks to be below the Building Homes Together goal of 140/year.

While the total construction goal was met in the first year, indicators still point to an undersupplied market:

Rental Vacancy Rate – We are still below a healthy rental vacancy rate. The long-term market vacancy rate in Chittenden County is 1.7%⁵. The rate has increased more recently, but the July 2017 rate dropped down to 2.5%⁵. Housing experts target a 3 to 5% rate to yield a healthy market for renters and owners alike.

Rental Apartment Vacancy Rate in Chittenden County (Annual Average, except for 2017)⁵

2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
0.7%	2.0%	1.6%	1.2%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	3.0%	3.3%	2.5%*

* 2017 rate is from July only, not an annual average of the July and December reported rate.

Employees Live Outside of the County - While the number of jobs has remained relatively steady in Chittenden County, there are 7,329 fewer workers living here now than in 2002. Only 65% of County employees lived here in 2014, down from 75% in 2002, indicating a lack of available, affordable homes within the County⁶. It will be helpful to update this data as soon as the Census provides the necessary data.

Rents – From 2012 to 2016 rents have risen on average 4% a year⁷ for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments in Chittenden County.

Economic Development – We still hear that employers are viewing rents and housing availability as being barriers to economic growth.

For more information and to sign on to the Building Homes Together campaign visit:
ecosproject.com/building-homes-together

⁵ Allen, Brooks & Minor Report, June 2017. A comprehensive semi-annual analysis of the real estate market.

⁶ Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics section of the Census Bureau. Last updated in 2014.

⁷ Allen, Brooks & Minor, Correspondence to Champlain Housing Trust dated September 7, 2017.