

# Priced Out in Fairfield County

## MORE HOMES, HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

**An adequate supply of safe, affordable rental homes is essential to a healthy region.** For a growing share of our population, however, renting a home in Fairfield County is too expensive. While incomes in the region have remained stagnant in recent years, rental costs continue to grow. At all income levels, renters are paying a higher share of their income on housing costs. Economic pressures, combined with policies that discourage new homebuilding, have contributed to a housing market that is increasingly unaffordable to all but the most wealthy renters.

As the county's renter population grows without enough new supply of rentals, higher income renters live in older units that, in a healthy housing market, would become cheaper to rent. This crowding out most severely impacts the county's lowest income households.

For example, in the Stamford area, a renter must earn **\$36.25/hour** to afford a typical 2-bedroom apartment. Unfortunately, the average wage for renters in the area falls short at **\$22.40/hour**.

Public policy at the local level can play a major role in lowering the cost of rent. **Here are some ways municipalities can bring down housing costs:**

**1) Adopt multi-family zoning near town centers and transit stations.** *By adding more homes to these high-desirability areas, the region's access to jobs will improve, and businesses in town centers will see a new wave of customers.*

**2) Allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs),** such as "in-law" apartments. *This is a form of multi-family housing that works with existing housing stock.*

**3) Preserve the town's existing stock of "missing middle,"** or small multi-family rental housing, and allow this form of housing to be developed in the future.

