

Proposed New Haven Green Deal

by Urn Pendragon

Truth in reality, good quality housing is out of the reach of most Americans. This issue is not exempt in New Haven. The average age of housing most low-income Elm City residents live in, is 50-years old or more. Lower the rental cost, the older is the probable age of the structure. Newhallville, the Hill, East Shore, Dwight and Dixwell have been identified as areas with the highest concentrations of evictions, likely due to low incomes.

In New Haven, as reported by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) in 2018, 25.6% of people live in poverty. Out of a population of nearly 129,779 residents, that's almost 33,482 people who struggle to pay an average rent of \$1,137.00 with an annual income between \$39,191 to \$24,688. The percentage of rent being spent ranges from 35% to 55% of monthly paychecks, and that's not accounting for taxes deducted before earnings, nor the cost of utilities.

The local environment is in no better shape. In a report released by the city of New Haven in a report titled, "[Climate and Sustainability Framework](#)", reports that the city released 1.4 metric tons of CO₂ in 2015. Despite a 6% reduction since 2009, and a projection of being clean by 2050. It is far too late when considering that scientists have released a global deadline in 12 years. The report was signed by the current New Haven mayor, Toni Harp.

Counter arguments have been made that investments into renewable energies and affordable housing cost too much. That the people will have to pay the price tag. That the city will have to bear the entire burden of the urban projects. That the state of Connecticut lacks the money and political will. That property values will be affected. That New Haven and Connecticut will become a welfare state and attract the homeless. That economic growth should rely only on market-rate housing and new businesses like hotels. That a greener New Haven is an unrealistic pipe dream. That the current mayor said about creative ideas to solve the city budget, "[I can't afford to deal with fantasies ... And I can't simply believe that there is somewhere a money fairy that is going to magically balance our budget.](#)" Does this mean alternative funding cannot be found for

programs to solve ballooning housing and environmental problems? Or does Mayor Harp not want to be bothered with new projects that could really address or solve these issues? Because as it stands, replacing aging affordable housing garners interest of no more than 10% of new construction, IF there is a set aside at all.

So how do we address these issues? What will it truly solve? Why isn't there a common-sense policy being enacted? Who knows how, or if, this will patch-up the divide between the two New Havens? No promises can be made if a New Haven Green Deal will truly solve these complex social and economic issues but could go a long way towards solving a portion of it. The Boards of Alders' [New Haven Affordable Housing Task Force, on April 1st 2019](#), adopted the goals put forth by non-profit advocacy groups, all of the accumulated proposed plans, including the section on inclusive housing proposed from my thesis.

Inclusive Affordable Housing

Gentrification, income disparity, class inequity, NIMBYism and developer greed are many of the reasons why people who earn little money, those who cannot work, the retired elderly and people who are physically handicapped, become pushed out of their homes. Gentrification is a symptom of irresponsible housing development. And gentrification is the attempt by the middle and upper-class to move back into cities from the suburbs and rural areas.

Income disparity happens when people do not earn similar annual incomes. The artificial separation of communities of people because of differing amounts of money seems like cruel inhuman torture. Divisions between people who are so alike because of money, is something we can change, if we choose to do so.

Class inequity is a further division of people from each other, based on a conscious decision not to share, nor socialize between communities. So, when affordable, fair housing or another construction project begins to make housing affordable, there is a selfish barrier that pushes them away. When people of a neighborhood do not want lower-cost housing in their area, NIMBYism is that barrier (Not In My Back Yard). Which brings about

another topic, that of the mindset that people who own expensive property, do not want affordable housing in their neighborhoods because it will drag down their housing values.

Which brings forward the topic of crime rates. Crime is not caused by low-income and poor housing, but is at its highest, possibly due to despair. Aging, older housing stock is related to the poor and low-income families but does not need to be.

Inclusive zoning is a solution to bring together people from divided housing and detached communities. The intent to reunify split neighborhoods along the lines of money, ethnicity and education, goes beyond just the will to end segregation. Uniting people from different walks of life, stabilizes housing by doing away with “projects” and superblocs that appear poorly maintained.

Among the public’s understanding of affordable housing, is that it will cost taxpayers their hard-earned money to pay for housing that the poor do not have the right to. This type of hateful rhetoric is ignorant on the facts about inclusionary funding. The costs are spread out among the city, the federal government, state housing funding, taxation and the developer. The developer bears largely the responsibility to construct income-sensitive housing by sharing the expenses with the city. It needs to be made known to people, that a city DOES NOT bear a majority of the costs. There are tax incentives, state & federal subsidies via grants, and community-wide investors that invest in additional cost-savings. City expenditures from its budget drop over time while increases in economic growth will continue to climb.

Inclusive ordinances beautify the architectural appearance of a city. On the surface, after inclusivity provisions, educational districts look the same, but in fact bridge the expanses of segregation brought by historically intentional gentrification. This type of housing [brings disadvantaged families closer to better quality education.](#)

Clean Green Energies

Beyond producing carbon-free electricity, clean renewable power generation slowly cuts the umbilical cord reliance on fossil fuels. As stated

before, New Haven is projected to be a clean energy city by 2050, which is too late, in the face of [the 12-year warning by scientists](#). With the impending climate crisis, switching over to and funding renewable energies, must happen now, not in 2050. Besides the reduction in CO2 emissions, [green energies provide more jobs than those in coal, petroleum and natural gas](#).

Not known to most of the people in the public, is that clean energy drives down monthly electric bills, and stabilizes pricing for years. Credits earned by a city from wind and solar farming, can be deposited into an account that can be used for future funding more green energy installations, infrastructure repair, affordable housing and public schools. As a bonus to ending reliance on fossil fuels, renewable energy technology reinforces the power grid. Most importantly, having a green energy deal acts as an attractant to companies to invest in New Haven.



Solar and wind farms take up far less land that do not endanger the local environment. **Coal-fired plants** take up an average of 2,688.5 acres, needing basic support buildings and land for coal piles, plant site, cooling towers, railyard, and fly-ash ponds. **Oil-fired plants** take up an average of 1457.9 acres, needing basic support buildings and land for plant site, oil field, pipeline and refinery. **Natural gas-fired plants** take up an average of

475.5 acres, needing basic support buildings and land for plant site, gas field and pipeline. **Nuclear plants** take up an average of 358.3 acres needing basic support buildings and land for fuel cycle & water cooling but pose potentially irreversible damage to the environment.

Solar panels and wind turbines have zero carbon emissions, take up as much land as natural gas-plants, and can be spread out onto any type of land without endangering the public. This can include housing backyards, rooftops, skyscraper tops, parks and in a downtown location.



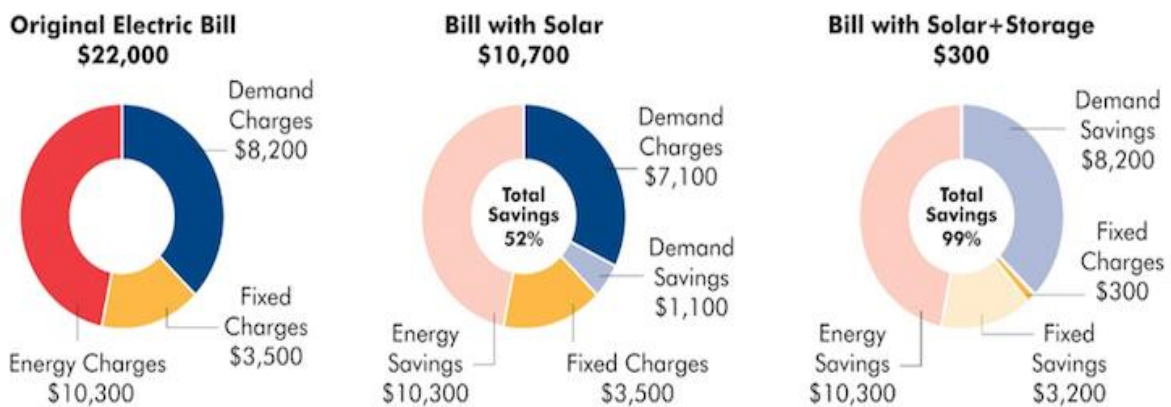


“Green-ing” Affordable Housing

A common-sense question about why local, state or federal agencies should care about installing renewable energy as part of affordable housing, has become the focus of increasing interest in research studies. The answer is very simple, without a simple explanation as how to implement such an initiative. Fortunately, the Queens in New York City, Northeast Denver and the entire state of California have become trailblazers. However, it is important to note, that greening affordable housing and extending renewable energy as a measure to provide ongoing, long-term power energy credits, can be added to a municipality’s annual GDP.

Building on the point of creating an urban environment supportive to fair housing practices, lies the point of affordable living expenses. Typically, as is practiced nationwide in the United States, monetary subsidies are employed to prop-up household usage of electrical, water, and petroleum-based heating utilities for low-income families. By including photo-voltaic solar cells into existing and new construction of inclusive housing residences, decreases the financial strain on a municipality’s public assistance programs. Further, small wind turbines that produce up to 50% of the rated power for a home’s solar array, can augment electrical output during low solar production, and generate further net monetary credits.

Cost savings designed to spare low-income and disadvantaged communities is at the heart of a successful proposed energy plan, not only in the favor of a municipality, but for property owners and assistance programs. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) signed and implemented legislative proposal AB 693. To highlight pivotal key points, the formulation involved the Federal investment tax credit (ITC), the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) and on-site energy storage devices. The savings amount to 30% with only ITC, 30% with only LIHTC, 50% with ITC and LIHTC combined, and 99% when implementing energy storage in a multi-family affordable housing community.



Shows original electric bill without credits, bill with solar improvement, and bill with solar improvement + on-site storage

Gift to New Haven

In the weeks to come, there will be a press release on the basics of the New Haven Green Deal. It will be my gift to the good people of the city. It shall become public domain accessible. In the meantime, the New Haven Independent will have a downloadable version [here](#) that you can access. The proposal will not be owned by the city nor become the property of city hall. But, can be implemented by New Haven in any way it sees fit, using any portion of the proposal. Please use this gift and the information in it wisely to change New Haven for the better. There will be further reports on the city budget, public safety and the school system.

I love New Haven! Take care and be well.