



BRIDGEPORT'S NEW DOWNTOWN



Downtown Bridgeport is on the cusp of becoming one of the Northeast's premiere urban centers.

With land, rail, and sea transportation options and a network of highways, it connects with other major cities up and down the seaboard. Incentives and creative financing are encouraging people to invest in the future of Downtown. Programs like *Bridgeport Creates* are fostering environmental sustainability, food commerce, and the arts.

A Hub of Thriving Business Both Old and New

Places like the Barnum Museum, People's United Bank, and Ralph n' Rich's have a rich history and help give Downtown its unique character.

People's United Bank opened its doors in 1842 and continues to be a major player in the region. What started as a single branch in Bridgeport has expanded to nearly 400 locations in Connecticut, New York, and several Northeast states. The building which makes up part of the city's skyline is still the headquarters for this successful bank. Attached to the People's United Bank is the Barnum Museum which highlights the life of the famous P.T. Barnum.

Another major part of the downtown area is Harbor Yard. It contains the Webster Bank Arena and the Bluefish Ballpark which both draw throngs of people every year. The ballpark is the home of the Bridgeport Bluefish and the University of Bridgeport Purple Knights

while the arena houses the Bridgeport Sound Tigers professional hockey team.

Restaurants like Ralph n' Rich's and Joseph's Steakhouse also draw people downtown, offering food and an atmosphere that are uniquely their own and have kept them going strong.

The arts are also very present in Downtown Bridgeport from the Downtown Cabaret Theatre to the artists working in Bijou Square. The Downtown Cabaret is a thriving, bring-your- own picnic style theater. It puts on major productions and hosts a children's theater.

Along with the Port Jefferson Ferry that takes passengers between Bridgeport and Long Island and the explosion of new housing in Downtown North, **Downtown Bridgeport is continuing to draw more businesses and seeing those that are long established thrive.**



Dear Reader:

Bridgeport's New Downtown—*The Bridge*, is the center of commerce and a growing new population for this vibrant city of 149,000 in the heart of Connecticut's Gold Coast along Long Island Sound.

The Bridge connects major commerce from banking industry players like RBS and People's United with culture and entertainment venues like The Bijou Theatre and Webster Bank Arena. It joins new retail spaces like Bass Pro Shops with dynamic new restaurants like Brewport. And it links the growing influx of city residents who want to be part of the action with prime downtown access points to mass rail, bus and ferry transit.

The Bridge is set to grow exponentially as new waterfront and high-end housing are developed, along with entertainment and residential retail. Join us at The Bridge.

Joe Ganim

—Bridgeport Mayor Joseph P. Ganim



Projects Underway in the New Downtown Bridgeport

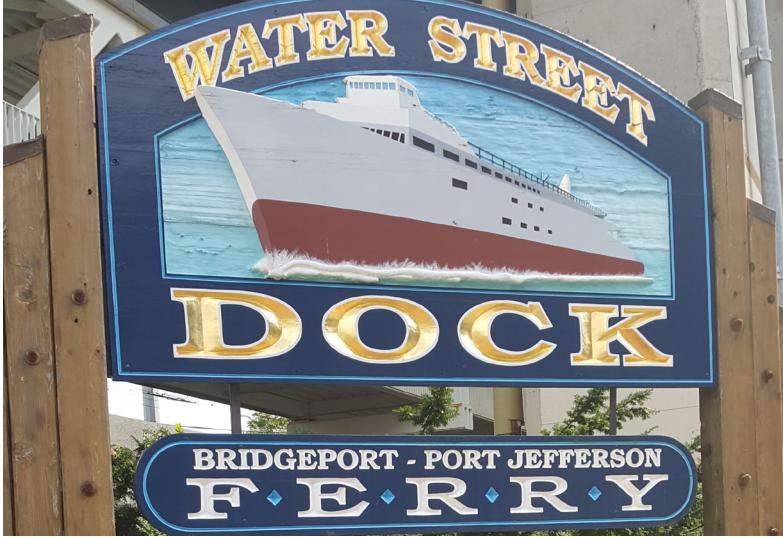
Alongside the businesses that have established themselves in Downtown, there is also a great deal of development happening. With new structures being built and historical buildings being rehabbed and repurposed into retail space and apartments, **more businesses and residents are being drawn into Downtown Bridgeport.**

One such development is a major, multi-phase project underway at **Steelpointe Harbor**. Working from the ground up, the first phase, which was completed in the fall of 2015, saw the creation of brand new retail space. These spaces were filled by Starbucks, T-Mobile, Chipotle, and a 150,000 square foot Bass Pro Shop, one of only eight in the Northeast. The success of these new operations has driven the next phases which intend to turn Steelpointe into an upscale boardwalk with dining, entertainment, and living options. **A Cinepolis movie theater and a Hampton Inn & Suites are both slotted to start construction next.**

A couple other projects that have been in the works for several years are the **Bijou Square Development** and the **Historic Arcade**. Bijou Square is home to the historic Bijou Theater and several other retail spaces.

This area is a mixture of established businesses, places just starting out, and planned projects. The Historic Arcade has been in Bridgeport since 1840 and was one of the first enclosed shopping centers in the U.S. and is one of the only ones left. Updated again in 2008, the Arcade features several businesses while continuing to try and fill the other open retail spaces.

Port Jefferson Ferry Terminal has a relocation and expansion in the works. While still in the early stages, this will move the terminal to Barnum Landing and make use of a vacant brownfield site. The plan is to open the terminal up to more commercial space, create pedestrian boardwalks, and street hardscape improvements.



Also in the early stages is a **high speed ferry** to connect Bridgeport to Manhattan which will open the city up to more tourism and allow residents an alternative route.

A "Tulip Museum" will be finding a home in the former Fairfield Uniform building in Downtown North. **Colorblends, a wholesale tulip retailer based in Bridgeport**, is converting the building into a multi-use space. The second floor will be Colorblends' offices while the first floor will be a combination of retail and gallery space. What is being referred to as the "Tulip Museum" will be a gallery of the company's tulip displays.

Three separate projects are bringing more residential space to the Downtown area. The Security Building is being transformed into ground floor retail space with 66 artist lofts above.

A similar development is happening at the former Jayson-Newfield Building with retail space and 104 new apartments. The City Trust Building development already has begun leasing one and two bedroom apartments.

Entertainment venues are also on the horizon to accommodate the boom in housing Downtown. **McLevy Square is going to see the opening of a German beer hall and a comedy club** along with more market-rate apartments. The original People's Bank is being transformed into the beer hall while the old Playhouse will become the Stress Factory comedy club.

The access point to Downtown Bridgeport from Route 8/25, **Lafayette Circle**, is going to be reconfigured. Lafayette Boulevard and Fairfield Avenue intersect directly, and area landscaping and wider sidewalks will also be put in place.

Restore, Repair, Renew & the Rise of Residential



Opportunities Downtown

Even with all the successful businesses and exciting projects underway Downtown, there are still many opportunities available for people who want to get in on the wealth of economic development.

There are many buildings with an abundance of history that are just waiting for the right investor to turn them into a thriving business. With so much potential in the area and tax incentives for those that create jobs and make property improvements, it is a great time to invest in Downtown Bridgeport.

Downtown North has the most amount of buildings available for renovations and potential businesses. Located on the north end of Main Street, it's the first thing people see when coming into Downtown. The Jayson-Newfield multi-use apartment/retail/project is a spurring development of this area.

A major way to draw tenants is the restoration of the Poli and Majestic theaters. Both opened their doors in 1922, with the Poli theater, the bigger of the two, mostly used as a vaudeville and silent movie house while the Majestic theater was used as a movie house.



These buildings, which are owned by the city, have been vacant since 1975, but still have the extravagant air and potential of the era in which they were built. Both theaters share the same city block and are connected by the former Savoy Hotel. The City is actively looking to sell the buildings to be restored and used for entertainment purposes again.

It's a great time to invest and be a part of Bridgeport.

McLevy Hall is another location with big potential. Located in McLevy Square across the street from City Hall, the building was built in 1854 and was used as the first City Hall of Bridgeport. It already has the setup to be used as offices, but has the potential to be used in a variety of different ways. Artists were the most recent tenants of the building. It overlooks the McLevy Green which has a weekly farmers market and is across the street from a major development.

The Old Southern Connecticut Telephone Building is also in the area and open for a similar type of development. Downtown Bridgeport also has waterfront property available in the form of the **former Derecktor Shipyard**.

Derecktor occupied the site until 2011 and then the property was briefly used by J. Goodison and Co. of Rhode Island to work on a U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat. The Derecktor company also used the site to build and maintain boats, but the site could be repurposed into something entirely different. Something with the advantage of being right on the Long Island Sound.

These are only a few of the great opportunities that Downtown Bridgeport has to offer. The rich history and the unique vision of the people that are putting in the work are what makes the Downtown special. Investing here is investing in a future that is looking very bright.



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