



# Building Homes Together

*A campaign to strengthen Chittenden County communities*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Mixed Results for First Year of Building Homes Together Campaign

*The campaign is meeting overall housing production targets,  
but falling short on the percentage that are affordable*

**South Burlington, Vermont** – Governor Phil Scott joined municipal officials, nonprofit leaders, lawmakers and housing developers Wednesday to applaud progress toward meeting residential building targets in Chittenden County, while acknowledging that more needs to be done to increase the number of affordable apartments and for-sale homes available to working people.

The Building Homes Together (BHT) campaign, launched by the Champlain Housing Trust, Housing Vermont and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission in 2016, set a target of 3,500 new homes to be constructed over five years, with 20% of them being permanently affordable. The campaign goals are supported by over 100 community leaders and public officials.

In 2016, Chittenden County saw a net increase of 916 new homes including accessory dwellings, assisted living apartments, apartments and homes for sale. This is nearly twice the average annual production of homes during the past five years. Despite this increase, there were only 69 new affordable homes added in 2016, or 8% of the total.

“The construction of new homes is an important part of our efforts to increase availability of affordable housing statewide, and is great for our economy, employers and citizens. I am pleased to see progress made in Chittenden County, but we have more work to do here and across Vermont,” said Governor Phil Scott. “This data illustrates our continued need for more moderately priced homes to ensure Chittenden County is affordable for low and middle-income Vermonters. I believe the \$35 million Housing for All bond I proposed, and the legislature passed, this year will help us make more progress in Chittenden County, and across the state.”

The BHT campaign uses certificate of occupancy data collected directly from municipalities as the basis for the reported numbers. Looking ahead, it appears there will be approximately 360 new rentals added to the market in 2017 with 52 of them affordable. There are no accurate data available to project the number of new homes for sale that will be occupied in 2017.

In 2018, the first affordable homes will be built using the innovative bond funding authorized by the Legislature this year. Nonprofit organizations described willingness to build over 300 affordable homes almost immediately.

“The data show us that, yes, there has been a building boom in Chittenden County this year,” said Charlie Baker, Executive Director of the CCRPC. “However, the July vacancy rate of 2.5% is still lower than we’d like to see for a healthy housing market. Rents also continue to rise at almost 4% a year.”

“There’s an imbalance in the market. We really need an influx of capital if we are truly going to make Chittenden County more affordable,” added Nancy Owens, President of Housing Vermont.

“We get more than ten applications for every available apartment,” said Brenda Torpy of the Champlain Housing Trust. “If we are going to house our workforce or eliminate homelessness and protect the most vulnerable, the time is now to invest.”

The BHT campaign held their announcement on Market Street in South Burlington, site of the long-planned City Center. Multiple buildings are planned by developer Snyder Homes over the next several years. The first to be built is Allard House, senior housing that will be owned and managed by Cathedral Square. Ground breaking is expected in the next two weeks.

For more information on Building Homes Together, or to sign on to the campaign, please visit: <http://www.ecosproject.com/building-homes-together/> or contact Chris Donnelly: [chris@champlainhousingtrust.org](mailto:chris@champlainhousingtrust.org) or (802) 310-0623.

*What other officials are saying about the progress and mission of the Building Homes Together campaign:*

**Vermont Senate President Pro Tempore Tim Ashe**

“It takes many strategies over many years to make progress on the big stuff like our chronic housing shortage. Several years ago, Ginny Lyons and I worked hard with the South Burlington City team to enable the creation of South Burlington's TIF district. We applaud them for making the vision a reality. Despite criticism from some partisan groups, the Legislature maintained funding for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board when it was under threat, steadily expanded the Downtown and Village Credit program, funded an innovative down payment assistance program at VHFA, and so much more. Without this foundation in place, the goal of 3,500 new homes would be a pipe dream. It’s important to recognize the critical role public investment plays in meeting community needs.”

**Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger**

“The road to greater housing affordability and remaining an equitable, diverse community requires both increased housing opportunities for our most vulnerable and getting our land use policies right to encourage much greater production of new homes overall. Burlington is committed to this dual strategy and is grateful for its partnership with the Building Homes Together coalition pushing for the same solutions countywide. With the passage of last year’s Housing For All bond, major projects underway throughout the county, and growing awareness of the importance of increasing Chittenden County homes, this crucial effort has exciting momentum.”