

2012 RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY COST COMPARISON



A Collaborative Effort By:

Jamesstown Strategic Planning and Partnerships Commission
(Gregory Rabb and Jennifer Satalino – Co-Chairs)

***Jamesstown Strategic Planning and Partnerships Commission–
Neighborhood Revitalization Sub-Committee***
(Leonard Faulk - Chair)

Jamesstown Urban Renewal Agency
(Steven Centil – Executive Secretary)

INTRODUCTION:

The following *2012 Residential Occupancy Cost Analysis* compares the cost to occupy a single family residential structure in the City of Jamestown with several neighboring areas including; the Village of Falconer, the Village of Lakewood, the Town of Ellicott (Jamestown West) in both the Jamestown and Southwestern School Districts, and the Town of Busti in the Southwestern School District. This study examines the total cost to occupy a home in the subject jurisdictions by analyzing total real property taxes and special district charges coupled with electric, water, and sewage utility costs that are paid by any homeowner regardless of location. The information used to prepare this analysis was provided by; the City of Jamestown Assessor's Office; the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities; Chautauqua County; and actual billing statements for National Grid and the South Sewer District and South and Center Sewer District.

For comparative purposes, taxes were calculated for full market values of \$70,000 and \$100,000 on existing structures. Additionally, a graphical analysis is also presented that examines the average square footage of existing homes sold since 2007 at each of the aforementioned price points in the City of Jamestown, the Village of Lakewood, and the Town of Busti. This study also compares the total costs of occupying newly-constructed homes assessed at \$150,000 and \$200,000. All of the aforementioned values are reflected in the attached tables and charts.

Along with City, Village, Town, County, School, and special district taxes, all area residences must also pay for utilities including; natural gas, electric, water, and sewer. Residents of the City of Jamestown receive electric, water, and sewer services through the City's Board of Public Utilities (B.P.U.). The City also provides select utility services to the Village of Falconer, Village of Lakewood, and parts of the Towns of Ellicott (Jamestown West) and Busti. For the purposes of this analysis the utility usage figures were based on the average monthly volume of electric, water, and sewer services used by a family of four (two adults, two children) as provided by the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities.

SPECIAL NOTES:

The following is important to note with regard to this analysis:

Natural Gas:

For the purpose of this study natural gas is considered to be the primary residential heating source. As natural gas is part of a regulated industry, the cost associated with the use of gas for home heating purposes is constant across the municipalities examined and would have no impact on a comparative cost analysis.

Sewer Districts:

The Village of Lakewood, Town of Ellicott (Jamestown West), and the study portion of the Town of Busti are located in the South Sewer District which was the first of the two

systems developed and operated by Chautauqua County. Residents pay a flat quarterly fee of \$74.50 for a “gravity” system and \$106.50 for a “vacuum” system in the county’s South and Center Sewer Districts, (i.e. Bemus Point, Greenhurst, etc.).

Travel Expenses:

While this study recognizes that the cost of travel would naturally be higher for those families living outside the City of Jamestown who are driving additional distances to frequently visited destinations in the City (i.e. employers, churches, City parks, JCC, JBC, the Jamestown Savings Bank Ice Arena, Diethrick Park, Reg Lenna Civic Center, Little Theater of Jamestown, James Prendergast Library, WCA Hospital, medical offices, County, State, and Federal government offices, etc.) it would be too arbitrary and difficult to quantify this additional expense to suburban dwellers and thus, the impact of additional travel expenses is not included in this comparative cost analysis.

Homeowner’s Insurance:

The cost of fire hazard insurance was taken into account in this analysis and found to have little bearing on a cost comparison since all municipalities examined are serviced by the City of Jamestown’s water system and are considered by the insurance industry to be “protected” areas. Although Jamestown has the most favorable fire “protection class” rating of 3, all other areas examined in this study pay similar insurance rates, as such costs are based primarily on the availability of water, whether or not a residential structure is within 1000 feet of a fire hydrant, and whether the structure lies within 5 miles of a fire station. Areas located outside the study area (i.e. rural Ellicott, Busti, Kiantone, etc.), which are not currently on the City of Jamestown’s water system, pay a noticeably higher fire hazard insurance rate.

STAR Program:

The impact of New York State’s School Tax Relief (STAR) program is included in this analysis and is calculated by multiplying the school tax rate of each respective municipality by 30.

New Construction:

This study considers and illustrates the advantage of new home construction within the City of Jamestown. Pursuant to two adopted Home Rule amendments to the New York State Real Property Tax Law, the City and Jamestown Public School system real property assessments on new homes built in the City of Jamestown are cut in half in year one and phased-in over a ten-year period in 5% per year increments. The analysis for this study looks at newly-constructed homes valued at \$150,000 and \$200,000.

421-f Exemption:

In 1998, the City of Jamestown adopted a local law implementing the 421-f tax exemption policy pursuant to New York State Real Property Tax Law (RPTL) which allows for tax abatement on certain residential property improvements made to City of Jamestown homes. In 2009, Chautauqua County also adopted the 421-f policy, thus providing tax abatements from both City and County taxes on improved homes within the City of Jamestown that meet the criteria below. Of the municipalities compared in this analysis, only Jamestown and Busti offer relief from both municipal and county taxes for improvements made to residential properties and this exemption is applied to the 'incremental increase' in a property's assessed value attributed to reconstruction, alteration, and improvements made to one and two-family residential properties.

421-f Exemption Criteria:

- Minimum Improvement Value = \$5,000
- Maximum Improvement Value = \$80,000
- Greater portion of the property (based on square footage) must be at least **five (5) years old**.
- Improvements must be to residential structure. Stand-alone structures such as detached garages and swimming pools do not qualify.
- Ordinary maintenance and repairs do not qualify.

421-f Exemption Term and Exemption Percentages:

Eight (8) year exemption decreasing by 12.5% per year

- * Year 1 – 100% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 2 – 87.5% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 3 – 75.0% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 4 – 62.5% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 5 – 50.0% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 6 – 37.5% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 7 – 25.0% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 8 – 12.5% Exemption on 'incremental increase' in assessed value
- * Year 9 – 0% Exemption (Full Taxes Due)

Application for the 421-f tax exemption can be made by calling the City of Jamestown Assessor's Office and requesting an application after getting a building permit for the project from the City of Jamestown's Zoning and Building Code Enforcement Officer.

CONCLUSION:

The widely held notion that the cost of residential living in the City of Jamestown is considerably higher than the cost of living in surrounding, suburban areas has long been a point of discussion in the public arena. The results of this analysis, however, clearly do not support this perception and in many instances, illustrate that the cost of residential occupancy in the City is comparable and even favorable to that of the suburban counterparts. Additionally, residents living within the City of Jamestown enjoy access to a number of additional benefits not available in many of the outlying villages and towns, including:

- 24-hour, full-time professional police protection with lower response times
- 24 hour, professional, full-time fire and EMS services with lower response times
- Lower “in-City” utility costs
- Lower travel expenses due to proximity to frequently visited destinations
- Expanded educational offerings in the public school system
- Curbside garbage, recyclables, yard waste, and Spring/Fall clean-up services
- Availability of 421-f Exemption on City of Jamestown and Chautauqua County Taxes for Qualifying Residential Property Improvements.

Finally, it should be noted that there are a series of facilities and services located in and hosted by the City of Jamestown which are “off the tax rolls” and as such, are additionally supported by City of Jamestown property owners through their property tax payments. All of these community assets however, are available to and used by Greater Jamestown Region residents at no tax cost. Included are the following:

- W.C.A. Hospital
- James Prendergast Library
- Jamestown City churches
- Diethrick Park
- Jamestown’s storm water management system
- Jamestown Municipal Parks System
- Reg Lenna Civic Center
- Robert Jackson Center
- Fenton History Center
- YMCA/YWCA
- Boys and Girls Club
- Jamestown Savings Bank Ice Arena
- The Resource Center
- County, State, and Federal office facilities
- Lutheran Social Services Campus
- Jamestown Community College
- Roger Tory Peterson Institute
- Etc., Etc.

Even with the additional cost incurred by City taxpayers for the provision of municipal services to these tax exempt entities and facilities, the total cost of residential occupancy within the City of Jamestown is comparable, and in some instances, even favorable to that of the suburban counterparts included in this analysis.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

It is well known that Chautauqua County has one of the most affordable housing markets in the country, but it is less known that the City of Jamestown is competitively situated in our region in terms of housing occupancy costs including taxes and utilities. As Jamestown launches a new plan to highlight its many attractive neighborhoods and increase the overall reinvestment in owner-occupied and rental properties, a new analysis of residential occupancy costs has been released. The misperception that the cost of residential living is much higher in Jamestown than surrounding municipalities is challenged by careful analysis. This analysis demonstrates that Jamestown's housing operational costs are actually comparable to that of its suburban counterparts and, in some cases, less costly.

Some might have believed that because Jamestown provides a whole range of city services including full-time professional police and fire services, weekly curbside garbage pickup, weekly recycling, yard waste pick-up and drop-off services, Spring and Fall clean-up services, and expanded and high quality educational offerings in its public school system, that total residential occupancy costs would be much higher than municipalities that cannot and do not offer all of these services. When one considers the fact that Jamestown serves as the "economic and job center" of the area and in so doing offers considerable "off the tax rolls" property for the use and betterment of the entire region, then it is truly impressive that Jamestown's occupancy costs are so competitive. Community assets available to the Greater Jamestown Region include, but are by no means limited to; W.C.A. Hospital; Jamestown Community College; County, State, and Federal Office facilities; the Jamestown Board of Public Utilities, that also provides low-rate electric, water, and sewer services to several surrounding municipalities; as well as numerous cultural attractors such as the Jamestown Savings Bank Ice Area, Roger Tory Peterson Institute; Luci/Desi Museum; Robert Jackson Center; Reg Lenna Civic Center; Fenton History Center, etc.).

Coupling all real property taxes that are charged in cities, villages, towns, schools, special districts, and Chautauqua County, with utility costs (electric, water, and sewage), Jamestown's occupancy costs (\$4,285.46) for a house valued at \$70,000 is lower than houses of the same value in the Village of Lakewood (\$4,391.00) and the Town of Busti (\$4,293.68). Not only are the total occupancy costs lower, but the average \$70,000 house in Jamestown contains more square footage (1,406 sq. ft.) as compared to similar value houses in the Village of Lakewood (1,164 sq. ft.) and the Town of Busti (1,388 sq. ft.). Lower total residential occupancy costs including taxes and utilities for homes valued at \$70,000 exist in Village of Falconer (\$4,003.80), Town of Ellicott - Southwestern Schools (\$3,204.09) and Town of Ellicott - Jamestown Public Schools (\$3,186.32).

The City of Jamestown and Jamestown Public School System's incremental, ten-year, tax abatement program for newly constructed, single-family houses makes new home occupancy costs in Jamestown very competitive in our regional market. In year one of this unique tax abatement for new houses, the total residential occupancy costs, including

taxes and utilities, for a **\$200,000** newly constructed home in the City of Jamestown (land value = \$15,000) is **(\$7,473.47)**. The comparative residential occupancy costs of **\$200,000** newly constructed homes for surrounding communities are: Village of Falconer **(\$9,850.81)**; Village of Lakewood **(\$9,755.82)**; Town of Busti **(\$9,080.51)**; Town of Ellicott - Southwestern Schools **(\$8,185.57)**; and Town of Ellicott - Jamestown Public Schools **(\$8,122.65)**. During the aforementioned ten-year tax period, the amount of tax abatement for new houses in Jamestown is lessened and at the end of the ten years these houses are taxed at the full value rate.

The affordability, quality neighborhoods, great schools, fine public services, and wonderful quality of life that exists in Southern Chautauqua County affirms our region as one of the best places to live in the country. This current study demonstrates that Southern Chautauqua residents have the choice of many fine places to live in our region and that the City of Jamestown ranks very favorably as a choice location when considering its very competitive housing occupancy costs.

The "***2012 Residential Occupancy Cost Comparison***" is a collaborative project of the Jamestown Urban Renewal Agency and the Jamestown Strategic Planning and Partnership Commission and its Neighborhood Revitalization Sub-Committee.

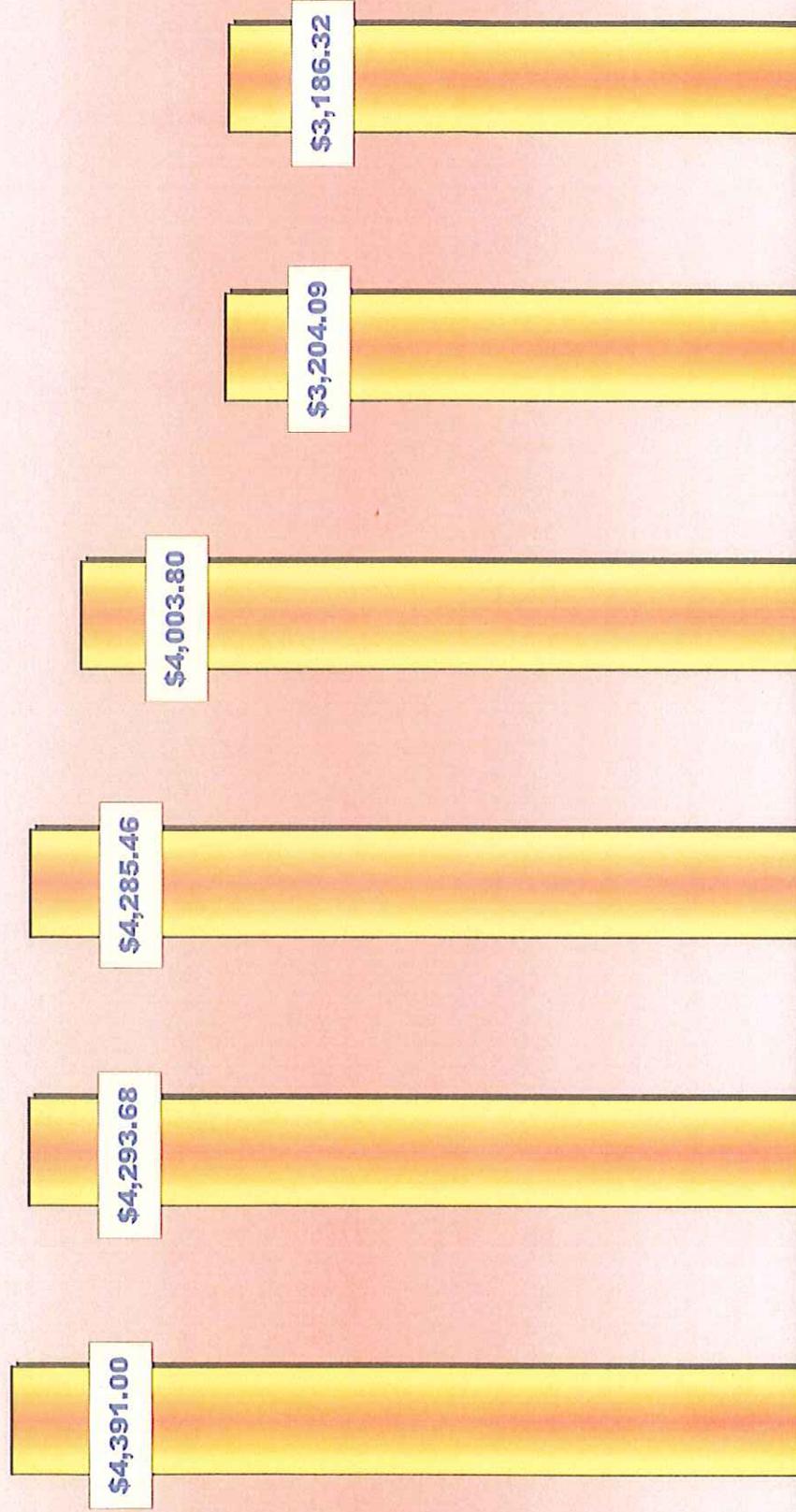
2012 - Residential Occupancy Cost Analysis - Rates

	City of Jamestown	Village of Falconer	Village of Lakewood	Town of West Ellicoit (SW)	Town of West Ellicoit (J)	Town of Busti (SW)	Parameters
City Tax	\$21.412341	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Identity
Village Tax	N/A	\$8.570000	\$7.152388	N/A	N/A	N/A	Average Use
Town Tax	N/A	\$4.004964	\$0.796434	\$4.127949	\$4.127949	\$2.706533	Family of Four
County Tax	\$9.229388	\$9.222429	\$9.222499	\$9.222430	\$9.222499	\$9.222499	2 - Adults
School Tax	\$19.693192	\$18.426816	\$19.827438	\$19.827438	\$19.693192	\$19.827438	2 - Children
Special District Charges	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1.177180	\$1.000018	\$1.256174	
Combined Tax Rates	\$50.334921	\$40.324209	\$36.998759	\$34.354997	\$34.043658	\$33.012644	
STAR Exemptions							30 x School Tax Rate
Electric	.0650 per kwh	.0650 per kwh	National Grid = \$.122494 per kwh - \$16.21 SC	.0650 per kwh	.0650 per kwh	National Grid = \$.122494 per kwh - \$16.21 SC	921
Water	\$1.89 per 100 cu. ft.	\$2.83 per 100 cu. ft.	\$3.78 per 100 cu. ft.	\$2.83 per 100 cu. ft.	\$2.83 per 100 cu. ft.	\$5.03 per 100 cu. ft.	units
Sewage	\$3.12 per 100 cu. ft.	\$5.25 per 100 cu. ft.	South Sewer District = \$74.50 per quarter	South Sewer District = \$74.50 per quarter	South Sewer District = \$74.50 per quarter	South Sewer District = \$74.50 per quarter	9.057803468

Note: Monthly electric rates include the basic monthly service charge

Monthly Service Charges	Water	Sewer
Jamestown	3.89	3.60
Falconer	5.84	5.60
West Ellicoit	5.84	N/A
Lakewood	11.56	N/A
Busti	15.38	N/A

2012 RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY COSTS AT MARKET VALUE - \$ 70,000

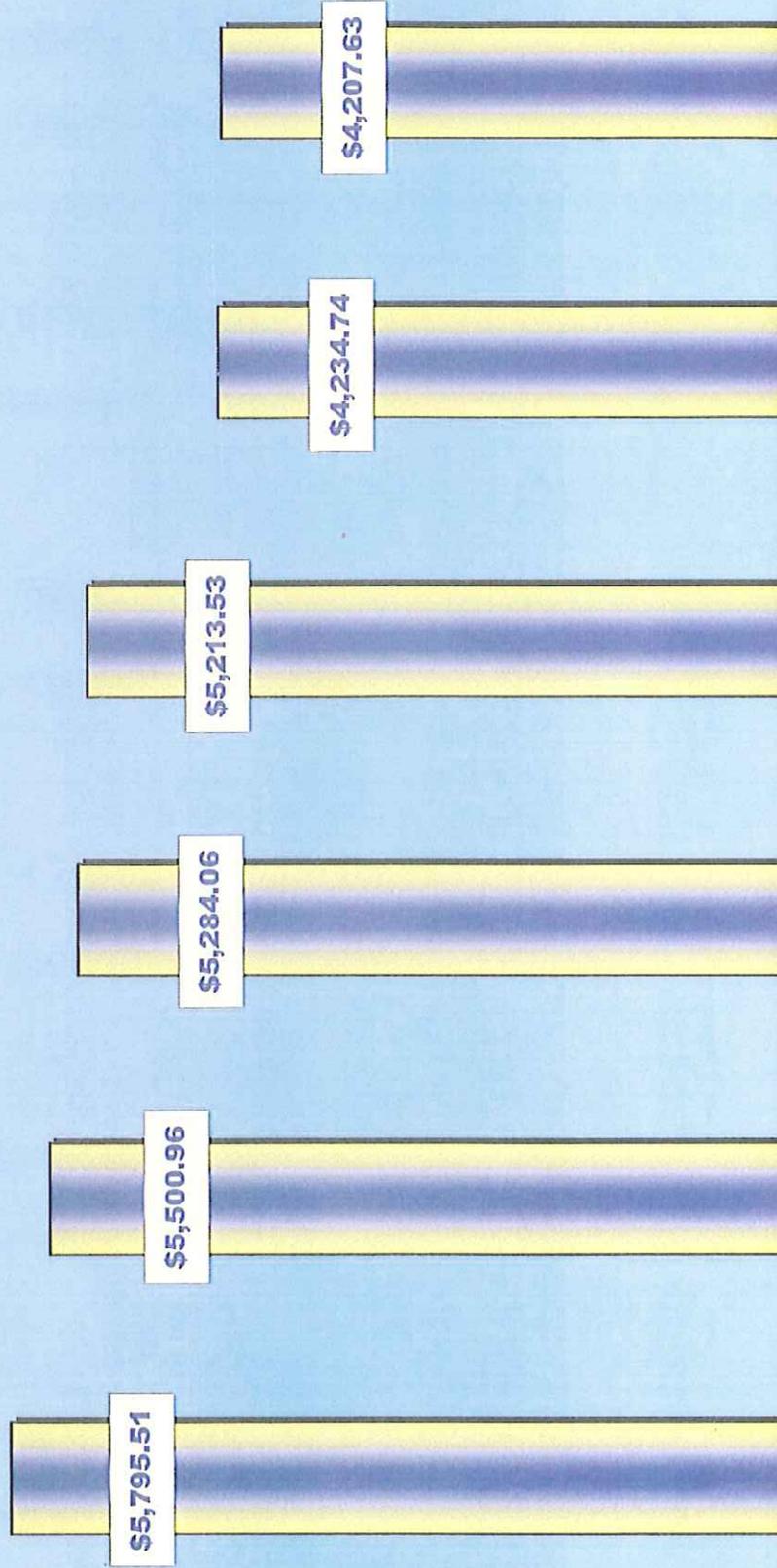


Village of Lakewood Town of Busti City of Jamestown Village of Falconer Town of Ellicott (SW) Town of Ellicott (J)

2012 Residential Occupancy Costs at Market Value \$70,000

	City of Jamestown	Village of Falconer	Village of Lakewood	Town of West Ellipticott (SW)	Town of West Ellipticott (J)	Town of Busti (SW)
City Tax	\$1,498.86	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Village Tax	N/A	\$606.90	\$500.67	N/A	N/A	N/A
Town Tax	N/A	\$280.35	\$55.75	\$288.96	\$288.96	\$189.46
County tax	\$646.06	\$645.57	\$645.57	\$645.57	\$645.57	\$645.57
School tax	\$1,378.52	\$1,289.88	\$1,387.92	\$1,387.92	\$1,378.52	\$1,387.92
Special District Charges	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$82.40	\$70.00	\$87.93
Total Gross Tax	\$3,523.44	\$2,822.69	\$2,589.91	\$2,404.85	\$2,383.06	\$2,310.89
STAR Exemption	(590.80)	(552.80)	(594.82)	(594.82)	(590.80)	(594.82)
Net Tax	\$2,932.64	\$2,269.89	\$1,995.09	\$1,810.03	\$1,792.26	\$1,716.07
Electric	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32
Water	\$252.11	\$377.68	\$549.58	\$377.68	\$377.68	\$731.29
Sewage	\$382.32	\$637.84	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00
Total Utility Costs	\$1,352.82	\$1,733.90	\$2,395.91	\$1,394.06	\$1,394.06	\$2,577.61
Total Cost	\$4,285.46	\$4,003.80	\$4,391.00	\$3,204.09	\$3,186.32	\$4,293.68

2012 RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY COSTS AT MARKET VALUE - \$ 100,000

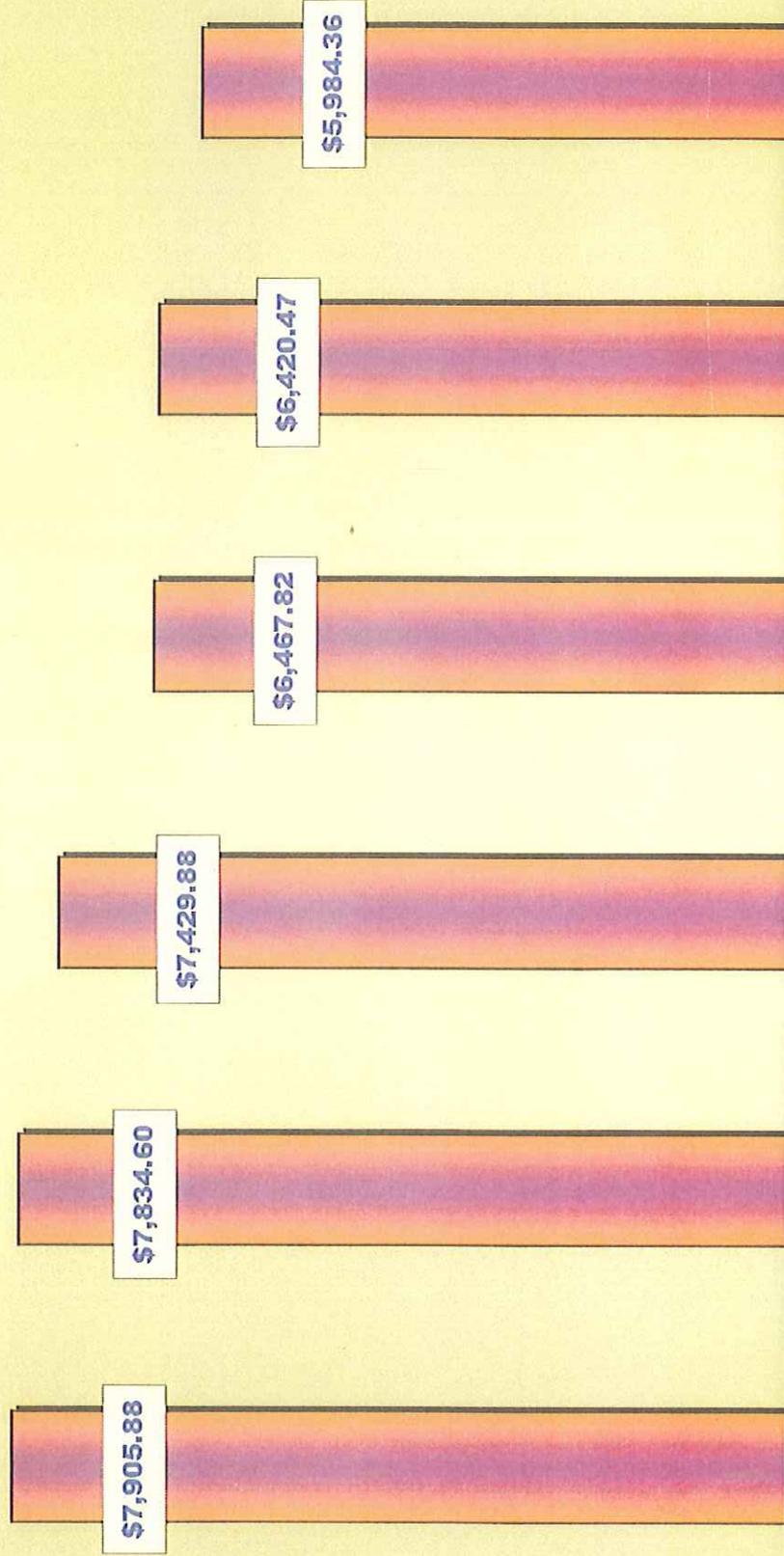


City of Jamestown Village of Lakewood Town of Busti Village of Falconer Town of Ellicott (SW) Town of Ellicott (J)

2012 Residential Occupancy Costs at Market Value \$100,000

	City of Jamestown	Village of Falconer	Village of Lakewood	Town of West Ellicott (SW)	Town of West Ellicott (J)	Town of Busti (SW)
City Tax	\$2,141.23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Village Tax	N/A	\$867.00	\$715.24	N/A	N/A	N/A
Town Tax	N/A	\$400.50	\$79.64	\$412.79	\$412.79	\$270.65
County tax	\$922.94	\$922.24	\$922.25	\$922.24	\$922.25	\$922.25
School tax	\$1,969.32	\$1,842.68	\$1,982.74	\$1,982.74	\$1,969.32	\$1,982.74
Special District Charges	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$117.72	\$100.00	\$125.62
Total Gross Tax	\$5,033.49	\$4,032.42	\$3,699.88	\$3,435.50	\$3,404.37	\$3,301.26
STAR Exemption	(590.80)	(552.80)	(594.82)	(594.82)	(590.80)	(594.82)
Net Tax	\$4,442.69	\$3,479.62	\$3,105.06	\$2,840.68	\$2,813.57	\$2,706.44
Electric	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32
Water	\$252.11	\$377.68	\$549.58	\$377.68	\$377.68	\$731.29
Sewage	\$382.32	\$637.84	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00
Total Utility Costs	\$1,352.82	\$1,733.90	\$2,395.91	\$1,394.06	\$1,394.06	\$2,577.61
Total Cost	\$5,795.51	\$5,213.53	\$5,500.96	\$4,234.74	\$4,207.63	\$5,284.06

**2012 RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY COSTS AT MARKET VALUE
\$ 150,000 NEW CONSTRUCTION - YEAR 1**

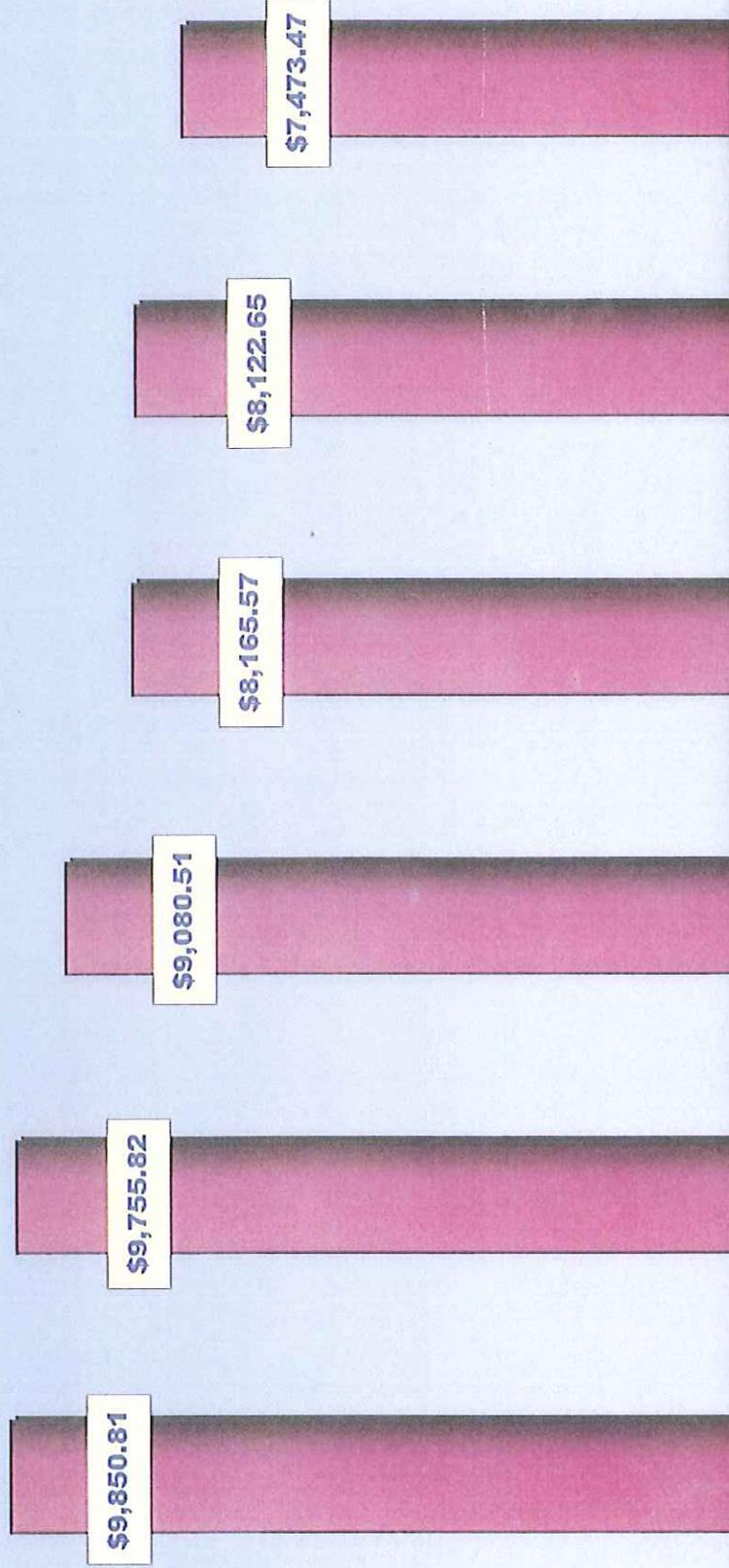


Village of Lakewood Village of Falconer Town of Busti Town of Ellicott (SW) Town of Ellicott (J) City of Jamestown

2012 Residential Occupancy Costs at Market Value - \$150,000 - New Construction - Year 1 (Land Value = \$15,000)

	City of Jamestown	Village of Falconer	Village of Lakewood	Town of West Ellicott (SW)	Town of West Ellicott (J)	Town of Busti (SW)
City Tax	\$3,533.04	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Construction Exemption - City	(\$1,605.93)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Village Tax	N/A	\$1,430.55	\$1,180.14	N/A	N/A	N/A
Town Tax	N/A	\$660.82	\$131.41	\$681.11	\$681.11	\$446.58
County tax	\$1,522.85	\$1,521.70	\$1,521.71	\$1,521.70	\$1,521.71	\$1,521.71
School tax	\$3,249.38	\$3,040.42	\$3,271.53	\$3,271.53	\$3,249.38	\$3,271.53
New Construction Exemption - JPS	(\$1,476.99)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Special District Charges	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$194.23	\$165.00	\$207.27
Total Gross Tax	\$5,222.35	\$6,653.49	\$6,104.80	\$5,668.57	\$5,617.20	\$5,447.09
STAR Exemption	(590.80)	(552.80)	(594.82)	(594.82)	(590.80)	(594.82)
Net Tax	\$4,631.55	\$6,100.69	\$5,509.98	\$5,073.75	\$5,026.40	\$4,852.27
Electric	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32
Water	\$252.11	\$377.68	\$549.58	\$377.68	\$377.68	\$731.29
Sewage	\$382.32	\$637.84	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00
Total Utility Costs	\$1,352.82	\$1,733.90	\$2,395.91	\$1,394.06	\$1,394.06	\$2,577.61
Total Cost	\$5,984.36	\$7,834.60	\$7,905.88	\$6,467.82	\$6,420.47	\$7,429.88

**2012 RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY COSTS AT MARKET VALUE
\$ 200,000 NEW CONSTRUCTION - YEAR 1**

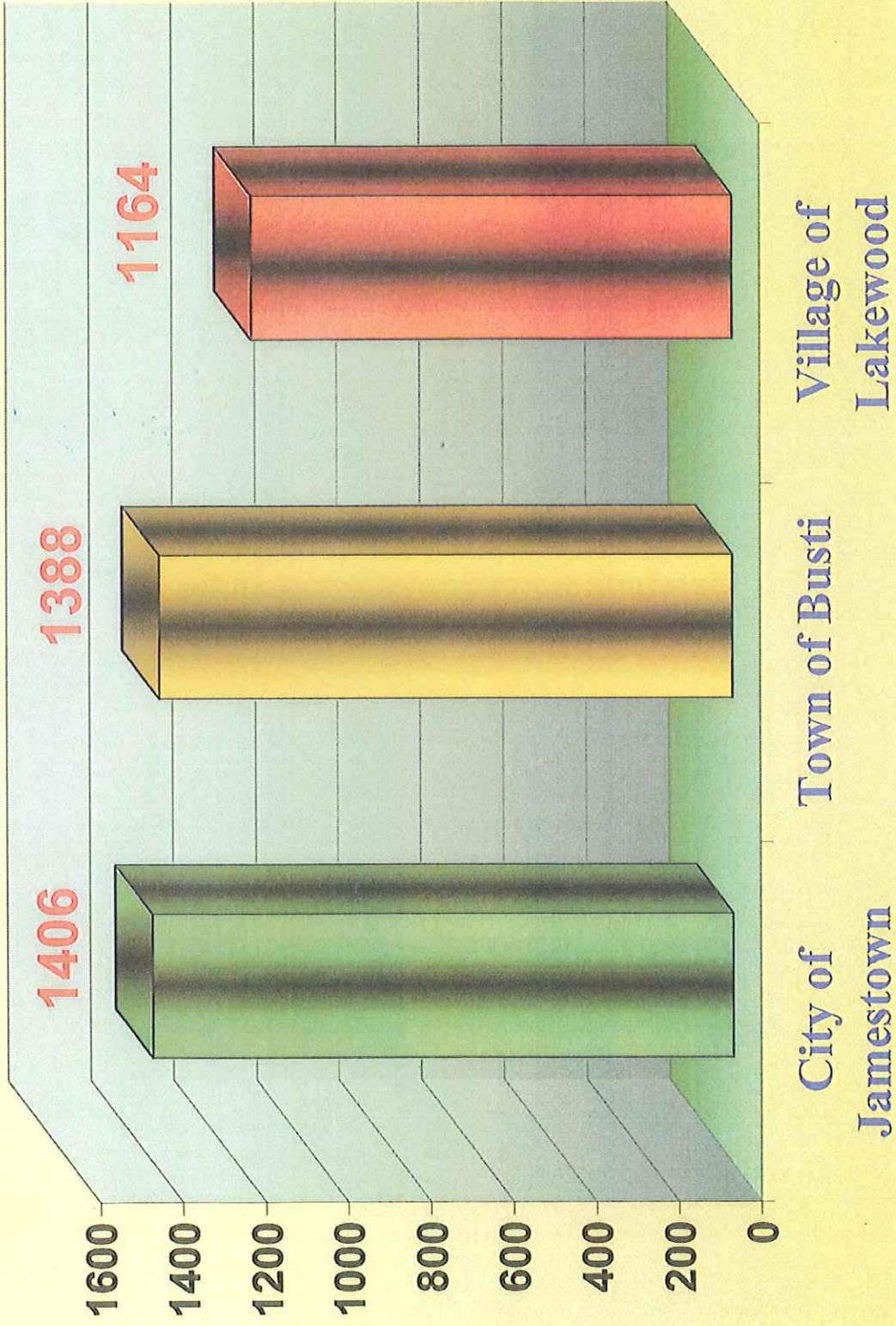


Village of Falconer Village of Lakewood Town of Busti Town of Elllicott (SW) Town of Elllicott (J) City of Jamestown

2012 Residential Occupancy Costs at Market Value - \$200,000 - New Construction - Year 1 (Land Value = \$15,000)

	City of Jamestown	Village of Falconer	Village of Lakewood	Town of West Ellicott (SW)	Town of West Ellicott (J)	Town of Busti (SW)
City Tax	\$4,603.65	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Construction Exemption - City	(\$2,141.23)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Village Tax	N/A	\$1,864.05	\$1,537.76	N/A	N/A	N/A
Town Tax	N/A	\$861.07	\$171.23	\$887.51	\$887.51	\$581.90
County tax	\$1,984.32	\$1,982.82	\$1,982.84	\$1,982.82	\$1,982.84	\$1,982.84
School tax	\$4,234.04	\$3,961.77	\$4,262.90	\$4,262.90	\$4,234.04	\$4,262.90
New Construction Exemption - JPS	(\$1,869.32)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Special District Charges	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$253.09	\$215.00	\$270.08
Total Gross Tax	\$6,711.45	\$8,669.70	\$7,954.73	\$7,386.32	\$7,319.39	\$7,097.72
STAR Exemption	(590.80)	(552.80)	(594.82)	(594.82)	(590.80)	(594.82)
Net Tax	\$6,120.65	\$8,116.90	\$7,359.91	\$6,791.50	\$6,728.59	\$6,502.90
Electric	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32	\$718.38	\$718.38	\$1,548.32
Water	\$252.11	\$377.68	\$549.58	\$377.68	\$377.68	\$731.29
Sewage	\$382.32	\$637.84	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00	\$298.00
Total Utility Costs	\$1,352.82	\$1,733.90	\$2,395.91	\$1,394.06	\$1,394.06	\$2,577.61
Total Cost	\$7,473.47	\$9,650.81	\$9,755.82	\$8,185.57	\$8,122.65	\$9,080.51

Average Square Footage - Sales Price \$70,000



Average Square Footage - Sales Price \$100,000

