



Housing Needs & Market- Data Analysis
 Town of Washington, CT
 DRAFT 10/15/20

Purpose:

To collect and analyze the best available data to inform the analysis of housing needs in Washington, CT- particularly those of households earning under 80% of the area median income who live and/or work in town.

Data Disclaimer:

No data set is perfect.

There is usually a lag. We are mainly using 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) data which is the most recent 5-yr average data available. When local and/or State data is available to inform us, we should utilize that data- some of that is included below.)

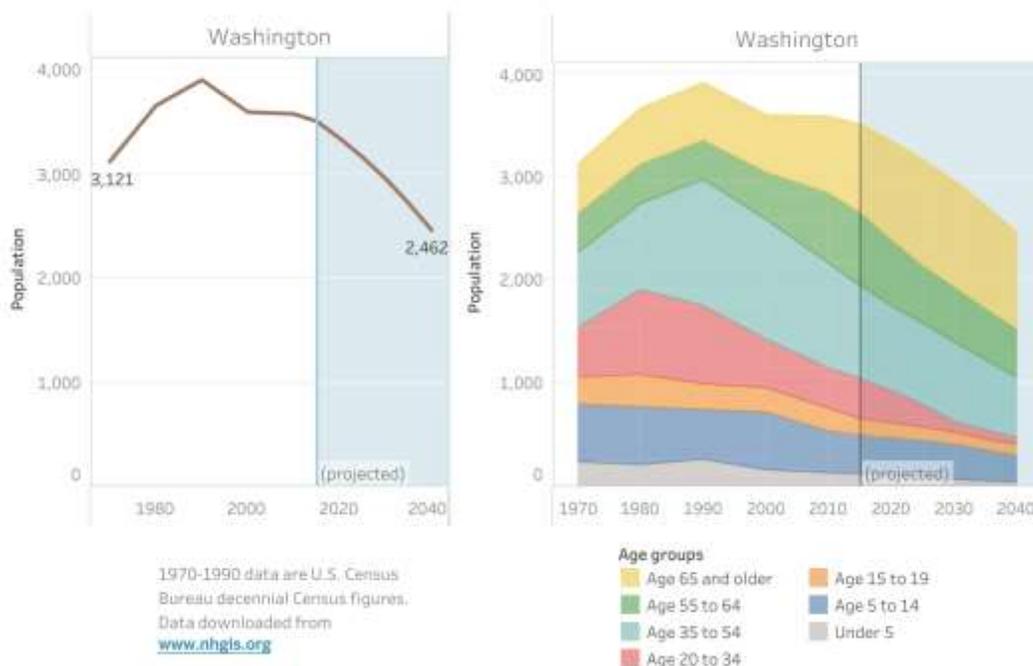
There is always missing data.

There can also be too much data (causing analysis paralysis).

When reviewing this data please consider the following questions:

- Does any of this data seem incorrect given conditions on the ground that you have direct knowledge of? (ACS data can be wrong!)
- Are there other questions that this data brings up for you? What other data would you like to see that would inform this analysis?
- Do you agree or disagree with the general conclusions that we have made based on the data available to us?

I. Demographic & Income Trends Overview



Population & Households- number, type

- Town’s population is likely to remain stable or decline slightly over the next 10 years according to population projections.
- The proportion of the town’s population that is over 65 yrs old is expected to increase creating a greater need for housing that meets the needs of this age segment.
- Currently there are approximately 3,428 (2019 DPH) residents living in 1,394 housing units (2014-2018 ACS)- 81% were owner occupied and 19% were renter occupied
- There has been a decline in the number of households with children.
 - In **2010** there were **334 households** with children (254 owner, 80 renter) and 690 without children [2010 ACS]
 - In **2018** there were **245 households** with children (137 owner, 108 renter households) and 655 without children [2018 ACS]
- There has been a significant increase in the number of housing units are considered vacant (those used seasonally or on weekends) from 348 in 2000 to 868 in 2018.

of vacant housing units (includes “seasonal, occasional, and recreational” use homes)

2000	2010	2018
348	438	868

- A majority of Washington’s housing units are single family 88.5% (2,000 units) which is generally a more expensive type of housing to build and maintain. The ACS data shows that 129 units (5.7%) are in 2-unit buildings, 67 units (3%) are in 3 to 4 unit buildings, and 26 units (1%) are in 5 to 9 unit buildings.

1-unit, detached	1967
1-unit, attached	34
2 units	129
3 or 4 units	67
5 to 9 units	26
10 to 19 units	0
20 or more units	39
- 70% of the housing units in Washington have 3 or more bedrooms while only 27% of the town’s households have children. The average household size is 2.3 people.

New Housing Created

- Over a 9-yr period 2009-2018 a total of 77 new housing units were created; 51 were single family (median lot size = 7 acres), 24 were accessory apartments, 2 were apartments [Source: Land Use office via: Wayne Hileman]
- Building permit data- **Why is this so different?** [DECD]

Location	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Washington	6	4	4	3	5	8	6	4	4

- New single-family homes in Washington are becoming ever larger and are being located on ever larger lots. [Source: Land Use office via: Wayne Hileman]

Incomes & Cost Burdened Households

- Town median incomes have increased from \$67,417 in 2010 [Census] to \$97,604 in 2018 (compared to 2018 Litchfield County \$78,314 and State median income of \$76,106)
- Median home values (ACS vs Zillow) from \$534,900 in 2010 to \$421,300 in 2018 (ACS) – \$585,900 (2010 Zillow) to \$596,516 (2017 Zillow)

- Median gross rent (Zillow rents not available for Washington) \$1,338 (ACS 2014-2018)
- In 2018: 38% of households reported paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs- 30% of renters and 40% of owners. (In 2010 41% (692 households) reported paying more than 30%- 41% of renters and 41% of owners.)

II. Access to Homeownership

1. What does ownership housing in Washington cost?

A majority of the homes sold between 2001 and 2017 have been over \$400,000. In order to afford a home price of \$400,000, you'd need an income of at least \$100,000. The median home sales price in Washington has risen from \$377,500 in 2015 to \$528,500 in 2019 (SMART MLS 2019 Annual Report). The year to date (Aug. 2020) median home sales price is \$718,750 (SMART MLS monthly report). To afford a home that cost \$528,500, your household would need to earn approximately \$140,000.

- 875 households in Washington are estimated to earn under \$125,000/year

Location	Price Range	2001	2007	2017
Washington	\$100,000 to \$199,999	10	0	1
Washington	\$200,000 to \$299,999	9	3	9
Washington	\$300,000 to \$399,999	9	7	14
Washington	\$400,000 and Over	20	25	27
Washington	Less than \$100,000	1	0	0

[Distribution of Home Sales 2001-2017- CT OPM 2001-2017; accessed via CTdata.org)



Median Prices in Washington, CT (SMART MLS Annual Report)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
\$377,500	\$460,000	\$390,000	\$388,000	\$528,500

2. **Could a household who is currently renting a home in Washington afford to purchase a home here?**

The median income of a household renting a home in town in 2018 was \$83,214. That means 50% of renter household earn less than that and 50% of households earn more than that. This means at least 50% of renters could not afford the median priced home.

Many homes that are under the median price are older homes that need a great deal of investment; so though there are lower priced homes on the market, many of them become unaffordable to renter households if they require a lot of costly maintenance or repairs.

3. **What ownership opportunities are currently available to households earning 100% AMI or 80% AMI?**

(80% AMI in 2019 is \$57,456 for a single person and \$73,872 for a 3-person household)

- 3 ? affordable homeownership units recently developed by Washington Housing Trust. (Deed restricted to remain affordable to households under ___ AMI).
- Habitat for Humanity Project (FKA Myfield) - 8 lots, one home built. (According to Housatonic Habitat for Humanity website these would be open to households earning under 66% AMI- \$45,000- \$70,000.)

III. Workforce Rental Housing Needs

According to the CT Dept. of Labor (2017) Washington had 218 employers that employed 1,559 workers with an average annual wage of \$47,751.

1. **How much in rent can local teachers, grocery store employees, and service workers afford to pay?**

Litchfield County's "Housing Wage" (they calculate these by county or metro area not by town) is \$22.69. This means that a household needs to earn at least \$22.69 to afford a typical 2-bedroom apartment in Litchfield County. Median gross rental cost county-wide is \$1,036; while in Washington it is estimated at \$1,338 (2018 ACS). This means you'd need to earn more than \$22.69/hr to afford the median rent in a Washington rental.

Currently (10/15/20) There are three houses listed for rent on Zillow- 1) \$45,000/mo 2) \$25,000/mo and 3) \$12,500/mo. Realtor.com shows 6 rentals available ranging from \$5,900/mo to \$45,000/mo. **(Can we interview some local realtors about the rental market over the last five years in terms of what the normal range of rents are in town and how many units they see in a typical year renting for less than \$1,100/mo?) And/or if we decide to do a resident housing needs survey- we could ask about this.**

Incomes: (info from Michelle Gorra)

- Region 12 School District
 - Step one Teacher with BA - \$49,630
 - Step one Para - \$18.49/hour x 5.75 hours x 188 days = \$19,987.69
 - Step one Custodian \$21.39/hour x 40 hours x 52 weeks = \$44,491.20
- The Market starts their new employees between \$13-\$15 per hour.

- **What other local employers would be good to ask what hourly rate their employees earn? Washington Supply Co?**

Gross Rent (2018: ACS 5-yr Estimates Data)

Less than \$500	0
\$500 to \$999	32
\$1,000 to \$1,499	132
\$1,500 to \$1,999	22
\$2,000 to \$2,499	35
\$2,500 to \$2,999	9
\$3,000 or more	10
Median (dollars)	1338
No rent paid	28

2. What housing is available to people who work in town, earn under 80%AMI, and would like to rent?

Current inventory of “Assisted” Affordable Rental Housing-

Below are the two main sources of deed-restricted affordable rental housing available in town, both are owned by the Washington Community Housing Trust:

- Dodge Farm- 14 units, built in 1995, 1 handicapped accessible unit
- Church Street Apartments- 11 units, built in 2005, 3 handicapped accessible units
(Note- there is also Affordable senior housing at Riverwoods Apartments (12 units) but those are listed below in the “Senior Housing” section)

Dodge Farm 16 Brinsmade Rd	Washington Community Housing Trust	yes	14	1	1995	no	HUD Section 8 Program Income Limits	A
16 Church St. Apts 16 Church St	Washington Community Housing Trust	yes	11	3	2005	no	HUD Section 8 Program Income Limits	A

- **vacancy rates/ waiting lists at these two locations- waiting for info from CREM (requested)**

Effect of Vacation/ Short-term Rentals- As discussed earlier in this report, Washington has 868 “vacant” housing units. Many of these are used seasonally or occasionally. In the past more of these might have been rented for a whole year or part of a year to people who work in town. Due to Airbnb and other online platforms that have made short- term vacation rentals easier to find and manage, many of the units that might have been rented longer-term to workers are being rented short-term instead at higher nightly costs.

IV. Senior Housing Needs

1. How many residents over 65yrs old does Washington have?

Washington has approximately 971 residents that are over 65 years old (2018 ACS 5-yr), 638 households include a resident over 65 yrs old (about 46% of all occupied housing units).

- 111 residents over 65 yrs old are estimated to have a disability.

2. What are the housing options in Washington for seniors earning under 80% of the area median income?

Current inventory of “Assisted” Affordable Rental Housing for Seniors-

Riverwoods Apartments, owned by the Washington Community Housing Trust, is currently the only “Assisted” housing specifically for seniors available in town. Riverwoods, located in the Depot, has **12 apartments** open to residents 55 and older- (8) 1-bedroom apartments and (4) 1-bedroom apartments with a den. Seniors can also live in the “Assisted” units listed above (Dodge Farm and Church Street).

- # of other senior housing units/ADA compliant units/active adult or assisted living?
- # of seniors with incomes below 80% AMI?
- It would be good to interview the town’s senior services staff to ask what housing needs they see for seniors in town and/or address this in a resident input survey.