

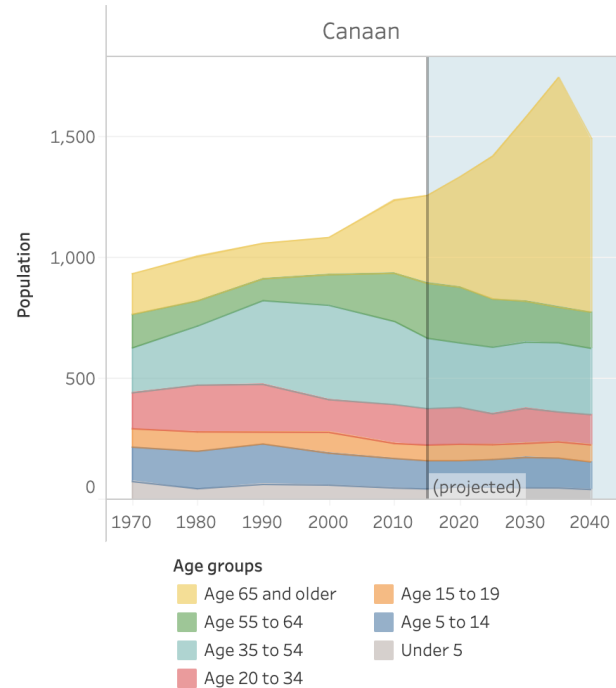
# Housing Needs Assessment

prepared by Janell Mullen, NHCOC Regional Planner

# Demographic Trends

The proportion of the population of those aged 65+ is going to continue to increase.

## Population and Age Distribution



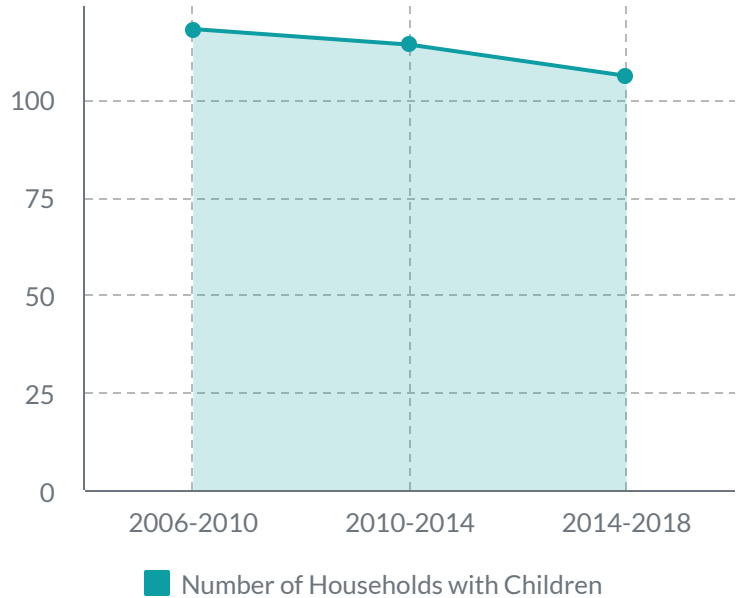
The population of the Town of Canaan is currently about 1,196 and is **projected to grow** by about 11.5% from 2020 to 2040.

Source- Connecticut State Data Center

# Demographic Trends

The number of households with school aged children is expected to decline.

## Canaan- Households with Children

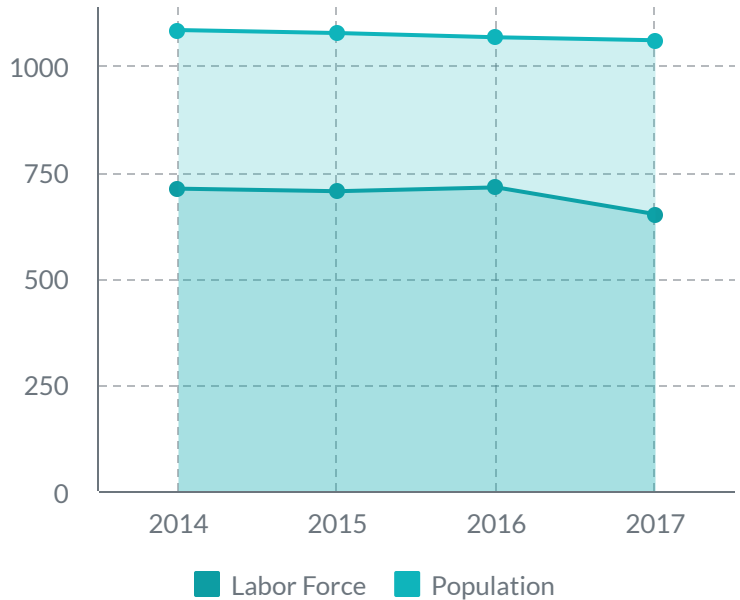


- The total number of households with children in town has been declining and is expected to continue to decline across the region.
- **106 households have children; 214 do not.**
- Most of the school districts in Litchfield County are projected to have fewer school aged residents by 2025.

# Demographic Trends

The labor force, or the number of people who are employed plus the number of people looking for work, is expected to decline as the population ages.

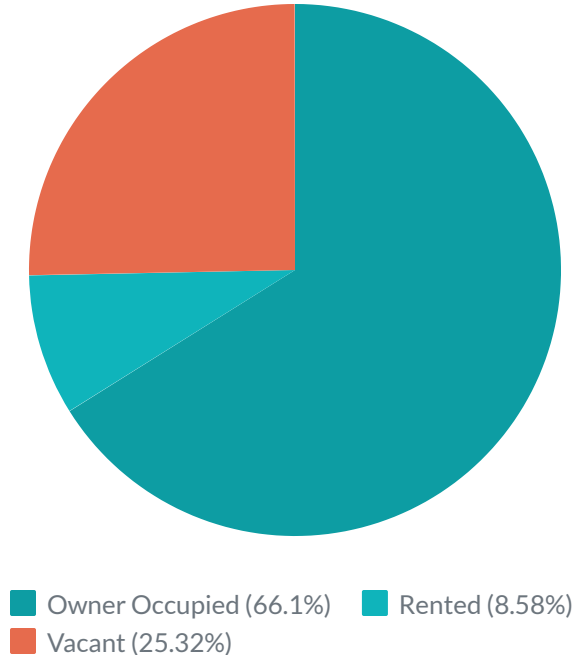
## Canaan Labor Force vs Population



- The labor force has been relatively stagnant over the years.
- The median age of residents is 52 years old.

# Existing Housing

There are currently **779 units** of housing in Canaan.

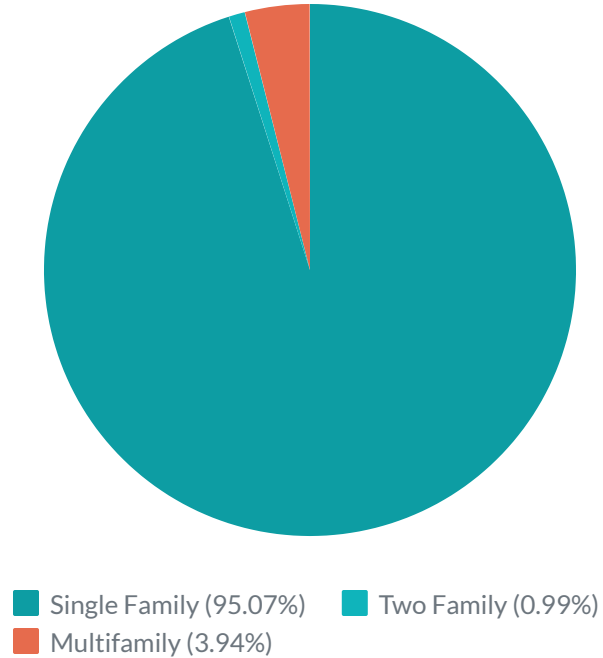


**"Vacant housing"** are units that are used seasonally, recreationally, and occasionally. In Falls Village, Pine Grove, Camp Isabella Freedman, along with other properties would qualify under this definition.

# Existing Housing

The majority (95%) of the housing units in Canaan are single-family which is generally a more **expensive** housing type to build, purchase, and maintain.

## Housing Unit by Type



According to Census Data, of the 779 housing units in town, 740 units are single-family homes, 8 are two-family units, and 31 units are multi-family.

# Existing Housing

Short-term rentals, often seen as an alternative to hotels, have been a controversial housing topic in many areas and changed the nature of rentals. They are not a housing solution, but do factor into understanding how housing is used within Town.



- AirBnB and other online platforms makes it easier to find and manage short-term rentals.
- A search performed on 2/23/21 provided me with four (4) options of short-term rentals ranging from \$175 - \$495 per night.
- No long term rentals are currently being advertised online as available in Falls Village (search conducted 2/23/21).

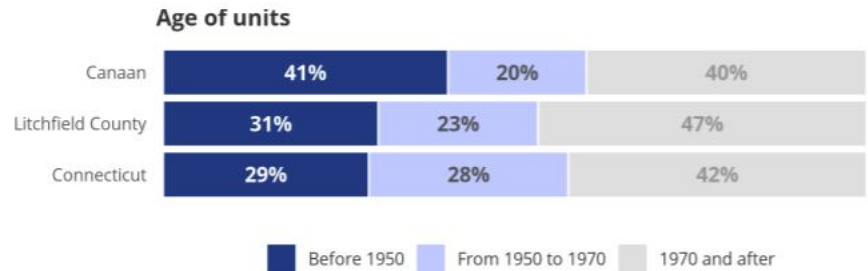
# Existing Housing

The age of housing is an important indicator for costs of maintenance and repairs.

Connecticut is the third most costly state in terms of home maintenance, where the average estimated yearly cost to maintain a home is \$17,782.

Source- [porch.com](https://www.porch.com)

## Housing Unit by Age



- In Falls Village, 60% of homes were built before 1970.
- Recent building permit data reveals no new builds since 2017.

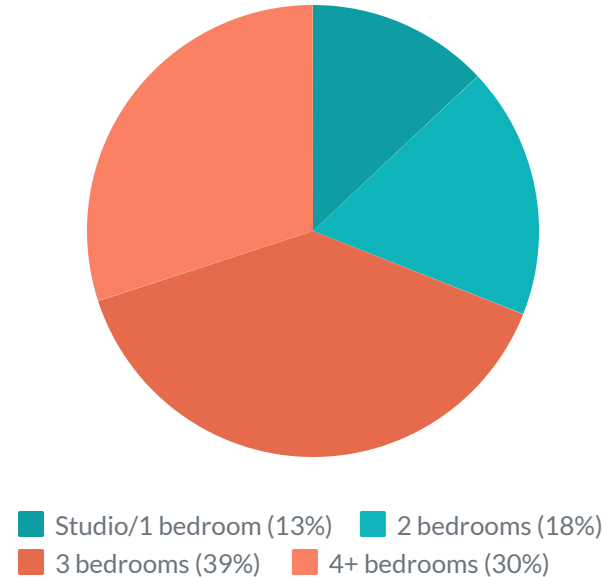
Data Source- PCS- Housing Profile



# Existing Housing

Over time, homes in the United States have tended to get larger. 60 years ago, the average household size was about 3.5 individuals while the average home was 900 square feet (sf). Today, the average household size is 2.5, while the average home is 3,000 sf.

## Housing Units by Number of Bedrooms



- Household units in Canaan tend to have three (3) or more bedrooms despite the fact that fewer households are having children.
- The average household size is declining, it is currently about 2.25.

Data Source- American Community Survey

# Access to Housing

The demand for homes in rural CT has overwhelmed our current supply, pushing home prices up throughout the region.

## Home Values in the Region

- The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a rush for real estate in Litchfield County that pushed the median price of a single-family home sales to record heights.
- A recent search on realtor.com, revealed 7 homes currently for sale in Falls Village. Two were priced around \$350,000, two were priced at \$500,000 - \$790,000, and three (3) were priced above \$1.4M.
- Home prices in the region are up over 20%.

# Access to Jobs

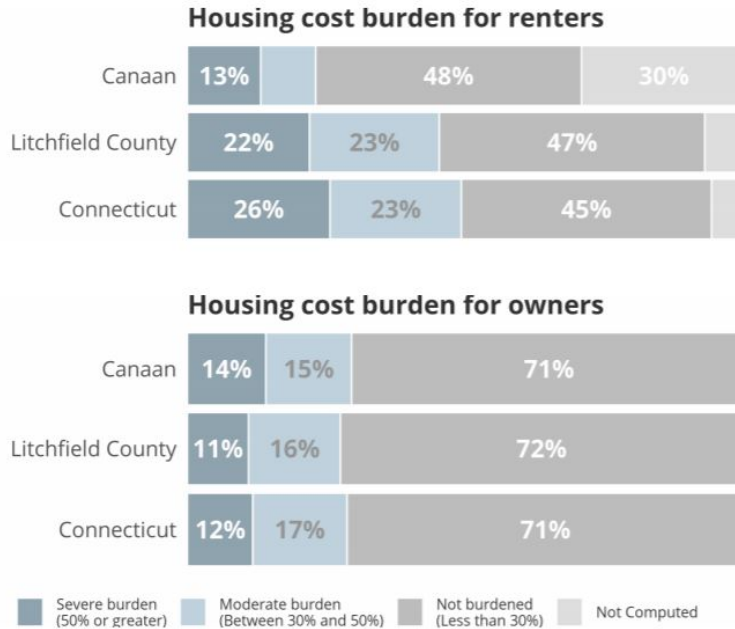
The global pandemic has created a "working-from-home economy", which may change local job opportunities/growth.

## Major Local Employers

- Housatonic Regional High School
- Sand Road Animal Hospital
- Hamilton Bookseller
- Regional Services Center
- Lee H. Kellogg School

Each year, the National Low Income Housing Coalition calculates the "housing wage", the hourly wage needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home without paying more than 30% of income on housing. **For all of Litchfield County, this is \$22.69.**

# Cost Burdened Households



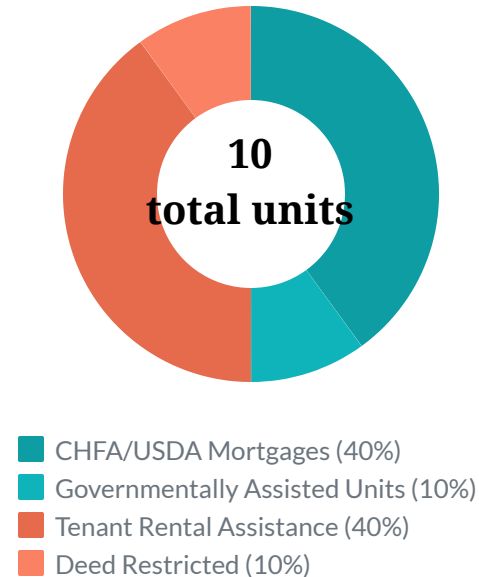
By definition, cost-burdened households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs. 52% of renters are cost burdened, while 29% of homeowners are burdened by the cost of housing in Canaan (Falls Village).

Source: Partnership for Strong Communities Housing Profile, 2020

# Existing Affordable Housing

Every year, the CT Department of Housing (DOH) calculates the percentage of affordable units in a municipality annually for the [Affordable Housing Appeals List](#).

## Affordable Housing Units



- Falls Village currently has 10 units or 1.28% of its housing unit qualify towards the state definition of affordable housing, which is a housing unit that costs no more than 30% of the occupants annual income, whereas the income is less than or equal to area median income (AMI) and dependent on household size, as adjusted annually.

# Housing Goals

Given that there are limited options for first-time buyers, renters, and seniors locally. . . what are our long-term housing goals?

As noted in the Plan of Conservation of Development of 2013:

- The demographic projections of the future were said to "pose a challenge to the Town's desire to remain a community with residents of all ages-- old, young, and in between".
- A range of housing options are needed in any town to meet the needs of families and individuals of different ages, household size, and incomes.
- The high cost of housing has affected Region 1 School District's ability to retain and recruit staff as well as attracting local fire and ambulance volunteers.

# Housing Goals

Given that there are limited options for first-time buyers, renters, and seniors locally. . . what are our long-term housing goals?

Strategies laid out in the **Plan of Conservation and Development (2013)** to address housing include:

- Form a local housing group of volunteers to proactively seek ways of meeting the housing needs of residents: rental and homeownership.
- Revise zoning regulations to allow for the conversion of larger homes into two-or-three family homes.
- Consider adopting an Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) to allow zoning flexibility to create well designed affordable and market rate housing.
- Continue to allow for two-family housing to provide for housing choice.
- Consider zoning regulation revisions that would allow multifamily housing in the Village Center.
- Promote accessory apartments by holding an outreach session at least once a year in Falls Village on how to create them. Continue to modify regulations as needed to encourage accessory apartments.

# Housing Goals

What does this data tell us about the town's housing needs and the potential strategies of our plan?

This assessment brings to light the need for:

- rental housing ?
- first-time home buyer options ?
- home maintenance mechanisms ?
- meeting seniors needs ?



# Next Steps

## **Next Steps**

Zoning Regulations assessment  
Strategies brainstorming  
Further information ?

## **Public Involvement**

Targeted interviews? Housing Forum?