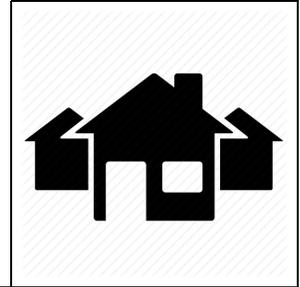


PLANNING FOR HOUSING CHOICES



Overview

The Town of Westbrook is preparing a housing plan for the community. This housing plan is recommended in the proposed 2021 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and is required by the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS Section 8-30j). At this time, it is anticipated the plan will include the following:

Inventory And Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present relevant housing demand / supply data 2. Evaluate housing needs / issues and identify impediments to housing choice and diversity
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Evaluate possible strategies to address issues
Community Input	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Seek community input on housing needs and possible strategies
Adopt Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Prepare housing plan and seek additional community input before reviewing / refining / adopting the Housing Plan

“Housing is absolutely essential to human flourishing.”

Without stable shelter, it all falls apart.”

**Matthew Desmond,
American Sociologist
Princeton University**

Overall Goal

Addressing changing housing needs and promoting diverse housing opportunities are priorities for the Town of Westbrook. People’s housing needs and desires change over the course of their lives and providing for a diverse mix of housing helps ensure that people of all ages and characteristics will be able to find housing in Westbrook to meet their needs.

GOAL

Seek to provide for a variety of housing choices in Westbrook for people and households of all ages and characteristics.

Reasons For Addressing Housing

Zoning Authority Requires Consideration Of Housing Needs

Westbrook, like all Connecticut municipalities, gets its ability to enact zoning from the State of Connecticut and the parameters are contained in the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS):

1. *Such regulations shall also encourage the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located ... (CGS 8-2)*
2. *Such regulations shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low- and moderate-income households, and shall encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified ... (CGS 8-2)*

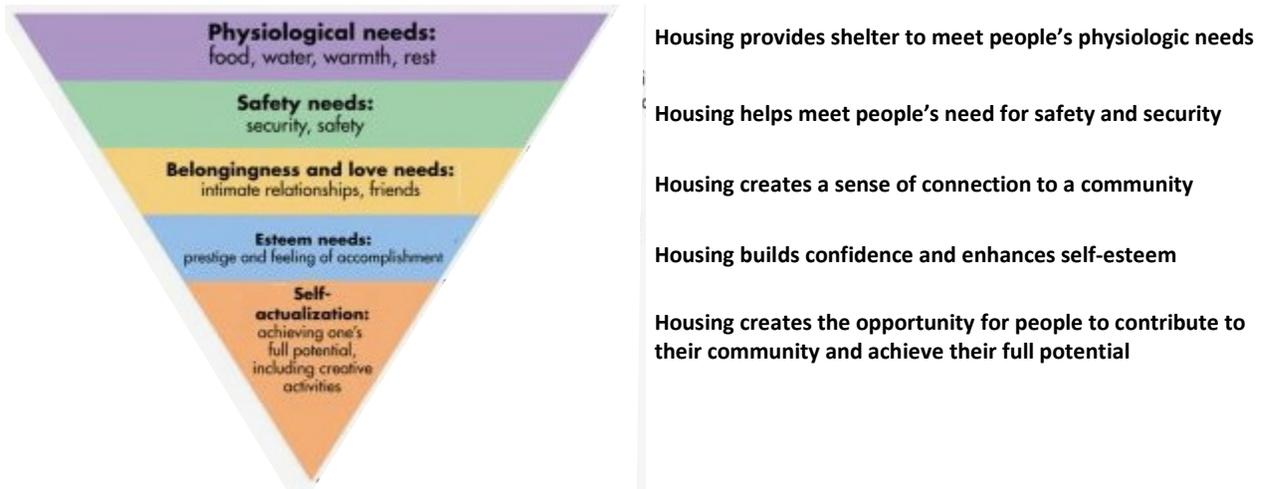
Plan Of Conservation And Development Must Consider Housing Needs

State statutes also require that Connecticut municipalities prepare a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) at least once every 10 years and the parameters relevant to housing include the following:

1. *In preparing such plan, the commission ... shall consider the ... (2) the need for affordable housing, ... (8) the needs of the municipality including, but not limited to ... housing (CGS 8-23(d))*
2. *Such plan of conservation and development shall ... (G) make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ... (H) promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ... consider allowing older adults and persons with a disability the ability to live in their homes and communities whenever possible. (CGS 8-23(e))*
3. *Such plan may show the commission's ... recommendation for ... the extent and location of public housing projects ... [and] programs for the implementation of the plan, including ...plans for implementation of affordable housing ... (CGS 8-23(f))*

Everyone Needs Housing

Everyone needs housing and for a variety of reasons. In fact, housing plays a part in almost every level of Maslow’s “hierarchy of human needs”:



And everyone wants housing that is affordable:

- For households earning more than the average income, they generally have the means to find housing that addresses their income and personal needs/desires.
- Households earning less than the average income, however, generally have a harder time finding decent housing they can afford or the cost burden of the housing they can find takes away from other life needs (health, transportation, etc.).

Some housing discussions focus mainly on the social responsibility related to addressing housing and housing affordability (equity, desegregation, etc.).

However, housing and housing affordability are also important to the local and regional economy. Research consistently shows that attractive, well-planned housing that is affordable to a range of socio-economic and age groups:

- Provides *housing for essential employees* (in areas such as emergency services, health care, education, government, retail, etc.),
- Helps retain and attract existing businesses,
- Increases jobs and consumer spending in the surrounding economy, and
- Helps people stay in a community they love through whatever circumstances they may find themselves in.



81% Agree ... The POCD should look at ways to address the housing needs of an aging population.

Strongly Agree	47%
Somewhat Agree	34%
No Opinion	6%
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	5%

65% Agree - The POCD should recommend that Westbrook seek ways to help younger people and families find appropriate housing in Westbrook.

Strongly Agree	33%
Somewhat Agree	32%
No Opinion	16%
Somewhat Disagree	10%
Strongly Disagree	9%

67% Agree - The POCD should look at ways to address the housing needs of modest-income households including service workers.

Strongly Agree	30%
Somewhat Agree	37%
No Opinion	13%
Somewhat Disagree	12%
Strongly Disagree	8%

POCD Housing Strategies

The on-line survey conducted as part of the POCD process found that residents would like to do more to:

- Meet the housing needs of an aging population, and
- Attract more young people and families in order to support the schools, replenish the supply of volunteers, and maintain a stock of people willing and able to invigorate the community with new ideas.

Housing cost is the main issue affecting both goals but not the only issue. The POCD recommends there be housing choices in Westbrook in order to:

- meet the needs of those who want to live here, and
- help meet the state goal that 10 percent of a community’s housing stock be subject to restrictions making it affordable to people earning 80 percent or less of area median income (Westbrook currently has 202 qualifying units and is at 5.1 % relative to the State goal).

POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Encourage Housing Diversity			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
	Page	Leader	Partners	
A. Seek ways to create affordable housing units to meet local needs.	39	AHC	HA	Town
B. Continue programs to help support aging in place.	40	SCSS		Town
C. Seek opportunities to retain “naturally-occurring affordable housing” and, if possible, convert them to protected affordable units.	41	AHC		Town
D. Establish / enhance relationships with housing advocacy groups (such as Habitat for Humanity).	41	AHC		Town

ACTION STEPS Encourage Housing Diversity			Legend On Inside Back Cover	
	Page	Leader	Partners	
1. Establish an Affordable Housing Committee.	39	PC		
2. Prepare an “Affordable Housing Plan” by July 2022.	39	AHC		
3. Consider amending the Zoning Regulations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more accessory apartments. • Allow for two-family dwellings in appropriate locations. • Incorporate “inclusionary zoning” provisions. 	40	ZC		AHC
4. Explore ways to address living conditions and safety / sanitary issues at naturally occurring affordable housing sites.	41	FRC		SCSS

We will discuss these concepts at the “kick-off meeting” on March 4!

Proposed Scope of Work

<p>1. Kickoff / Scoping Review –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Introductory meeting with Staff (collect data)b. Introductory meeting with Steering Committee to confirm expectations, goals/objectives, and schedule (1 in-person or ZOOM meeting)
<p>2. Prepare Baseline Information Report (Planimetrics) -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Demographic overview (existing and future age composition, income, race, etc.).b. Housing supply / demand overview<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing types – inventory / gap / locations• Housing price - inventory / gap / locations• Existing Sec. 8-30g affordable housing• Existing naturally occurring affordable housing (including mobile homes)c. Regulatory overview (where housing options currently permitted / how regulations may encourage/discourage housing choice, regulatory barriers, etc.)d. Physical / Infrastructure limitations (soil types, terrain, infrastructure, floodplain, sea level rise, etc.)e. Coordination with information, goals, and recommendations in the POCDf. Summarize issues identified from baseline research<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the housing needs? How many units?• Where might units be located based on factors relevant to housing diversity?• What types of units could be located?
<p>3. Review Meeting With Steering Committee - (1 in-person or ZOOM meeting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Review / discuss baseline information report
<p>4. Prepare Preliminary Strategies Report (Planimetrics) -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Summarize plan purpose and overall goals / objectives / visionb. Summarize baseline information / assessmentc. Suggest possible strategies to address goals / objectives / vision / issues<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What policies / action steps are needed to accomplish goals / objectives?• Who will be responsible for accomplishing policies / action steps?• When should action steps be completed?
<p>5. Review Meeting With Steering Committee - (1 in-person or ZOOM meeting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Review / refine preliminary strategies report
<p>6. Refine Materials / Prepare For Public Input (Planimetrics)</p>

7. Community Input / Feedback - (1 in-person or ZOOM meeting or 1 on-line survey)

- a. Meeting preparations / publicity
- b. Meeting topics
 - Housing choice / diversity
 - Housing types / locations
 - Types of housing might community consider for addressing housing needs

8. Review Meeting With Steering Committee - (1 in-person or ZOOM meeting)

- a. Review community input
- b. Review / refine preliminary strategies report
- c. Steering Committee “endorse” report

9. Finalize Affordable Housing Plan (Planimetrics) -