

**Town of Fairfield**

**List of data and analysis of data used for this worksheet:**

* Partnership for Strong Communities Housing Data Profiles for Fairfield 2018: <http://www.pschousing.org/files/PSC_2018HsgProfile_Fairfield.pdf>
* “Analysis Of Impediments To Fair Housing Choice 10/2015”: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20320/2015_Analysis_of_Impediments.pdf>;
* Consolidated Plan: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20275/Consolidated_Plan_2015-2019_Final_Submitted_to_HUD-IDIS.pdf>”
* CERC Profile: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/18105/18264/39428/Current_CERC_Town_Profile.pdf>
* Fairfield Demographics: <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ct/fairfield/demographics>
* “Diversifying Fairfield’s Housing Portfolio”: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20316/AHC_Final_Report_103114.pdf>
* 2018 Annual Affordable Housing Committee Report: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20316/2018_Annual_Report.pdf>
* Fairfield Senior Advocates 5/23/2018 workshop, “A Conversation about Housing Choices for Seniors”, <http://www.fairfieldsenioradvocates.com/our-may-23-event.html>
* Fairfield, Connecticut Demographics Data, <https://www.towncharts.com/Connecticut/Demographics/Fairfield-town-CT-Demographics-data.html>
* Community Development Block Grant 2018-19 Annual Action Plan: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20275/CDBG_-_PY44_Annual_Action_Plan_(DRAFT).pdf>
* 6/26/2018 Transit Oriented Development Workshop Summary: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11028/12429/69549/70627/Summary_of_Fairfield_TOD_Public_Meeting_1.pdf>
* 6/26/2018 Transit Oriented Development Workshop Presentation: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11028/12429/69549/70627/Fairfield_TOD_june_26_presentation.pdf>

**Work Session Questions for July 11, 2018 Housing and Equity Work Session**

Completing this document lays the groundwork for completing actions in the Sustainable CT “Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing” and “Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts” categories. Certification requires completion of one action from each of Sustainable CT’s nine categories.

When applying for certification, if you choose, you may submit this document in lieu of Worksheet 2 for [8.1. Design and Implement a Housing Needs Assessment](https://sustainablect.org/actions-certifications/actions/#open/action/22) and in lieu of the Sustainable CT Equity Toolkit for [9.1. Optimize for Equity](https://sustainablect.org/actions-certifications/actions/#open/action/54). For your ease, please submit the same document for each of these two actions.

**Questions**

***Setting Goals***

**1. What does your Sustainability Team define as the three most important equitable community outcomes related to understanding your community’s housing needs (include possible community indicators that measure these outcomes)?**

1. *Extend Senior and Disabled Tax Relief program to enrich diversity of population*: This program is available for residents of Fairfield who are at least 65 years of age or totally disabled, the legal residence of the resident for which the tax relief is being claimed for is occupied by the resident more than 265 days of each year and have a qualifying total asset value (QTAV) not exceeding $650,000. The number of senior homeowners has increased by 6% over a 5 year period while the number of seniors who meet the income qualification for tax relief has decreased 6% over that same 5 year period. A recommendation would be to revise the high end of the credit program income eligibility range to $80K and revise the asset qualification by 5% ($650K to $682.5K).  
   Recommendations of the current Senior/Disabled Tax Relief Committee of the RTM are discussing the possibility to incorporate an increased income plus other changes in the program rules. The Committee may also propose an increase in the maximum asset level or its replacement with a maximum home or assessed value.
2. *Increase Affordable Housing Opportunities*The Town, working through its Affordable Housing Committee, has taken significant steps to increase housing opportunities, such as:

* Working with the Town Plan & Zoning Commission, enacted an inclusionary zoning regulation that requires projects with 10 or more dwelling units to set aside a minimum of 10% as affordable housing to persons or families with incomes at or below 80% AMI;
* Created an Affordable Housing Trust fund via ordinance passed by the RTM on 3/26/2018, See minutes <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/79/193/62136/minutes.pdf>.
* Proposed a new regulation to enact an inclusionary zoning fee of $5/$1000 of construction value on new construction and additions. See minutes: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/79/187/62116/Minutes_07-24-2018.pdf>

The Town also:

* Provided, via ordinance, a tax abatement to support the preservation of low and moderate income housing as well as to improve the tax relief program for the elderly and disabled homeowners in order to make it easier to for residents to understand the program and to apply. Both measures passed the RTM on 5/29/2018, See minutes: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/79/193/62136/minutes.pdf>.
* Working on changes in zoning regulations for Transit Oriented Districts to increase the number of rental units since Fairfield has a very low percentage of rental stock (23% 0-2 bedroom units). There are currently over 200 rental units being constructed in Transit Districts.

Fairfield Senior Advocates (FSA) is a group that has regular meetings open to the public, has:

* Instituted a working Housing Committee
* In collaboration with the Town, hosted a “Conversations About Housing Choices for Seniors” panel and workshop on 5/23/2018. This included, although was not limited to, “affordable housing”. See <https://www.fairfieldsenioradvocates.com/>.

Despite this progress, the Town acknowledges that there is still much more work to be done, particularly to provide additional units of accessible housing to respond to the needs of an aging population.

1. *Purposefully mixing diverse portions of our population, in particular youth & seniors*, *ethnicities, income levels, etc.*The Heritage India Festival offers residents a chance to experience Indian cuisine, dance, music, and other pieces form the culture. The admission is free to make the festival economically assessable to all. It is held on the Town Green to increase visibility. These factors allow minority groups to celebrate their heritage with all residents cultivating welcoming living environment for diversity. The McKinley World Fair celebrates world diversity through international arts, music, food, crafts and games. This year’s theme is FAMOUS LOCATIONS which can include natural or man-made landmarks. Every year the Fairfield Ludlowe High School seniors host a breakfast for the Town senior citizens the first Friday in June. It’s always a big hit! The Fairfield Bigelow Senior Center hosts events for teens to bring teens and seniors together.

We are using zoning regulations to increase the number of fully ADA compliant rental units to increase the mix of disabled persons into our rental population.

***Analyzing Data***

**Analyzing the data provided in your Partnership for Strong Communities Housing Data Profile and other relevant data sources, please the questions below.**

**2. Define diversity within your community. Specifically, what are the demographics of the target groups or those living, working, or socializing in your community? (for example, race, ethnicity, age, gender, physical disability, retired/working, vehicle/commuting needs, shift worker, dependents/not, homeowner/renter, income level, other)**

1. Race: While the Town is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, it is not as diverse as Fairfield County or the State as a whole. According to the most recent estimates from the American Community Survey (2012-2016), 89% of the population is white, while 2% are black or African American and 4% are Asian. 3% of the population is mixed race. 6% of the population is of Latino or Hispanic origin.
2. Ethnicity/Culture: Hungarian, Brazilian, Irish, East Indian
3. Age: The median age is 41 years, which is higher than Fairfield County or the State as a whole
4. Gender: The male population makeup is 48% compared to the female population at 52%.
5. Physical Disability: According to the [Town of Fairfield’s Consolidated Plan](https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20275/Consolidated_Plan_2015-2019_Final_Submitted_to_HUD-IDIS.pdf) for the fiscal years 2015-2019, which cited the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, it was estimated that there were 4,696 persons, or 7.9% of the population 5 years of age or older in Fairfield who reported some form of disability, including some 428 persons with income below the federal poverty level. The most prevalent disabilities reported include ambulatory (2059 persons), cognitive (1700 persons) and hearing (1630 persons) disabilities. Not surprisingly, more than a quarter of the population over 65 years of age report some form of disability. Several individuals interviewed for this report noted the need for more accessible, affordable housing in Fairfield.”  
     
   In addition, Fairfield’s Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing states, “impediment #5: There is a lack of affordable rental housing in Town, especially for persons with disabilities. Additionally, the HCV payment standard does not reflect market realities which limit housing choice. (The) recommendation: Encourage the preservation and/or creation of affordable rental units, support efforts by the FHA to increase its payment standard, and provide funds to disabled tenants to facilitate necessary modifications.”
6. Retired/Working: According to estimates from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS), there are 9,375 Fairfield residents who are 65 years of age or older. 25.8% of these older Fairfield residents (2,419 persons) are in the labor force. An estimated 24.7% of elderly Fairfield residents are employed (2,315 persons), while 1.2% or 113 elderly residents are unemployed. 74.2% of elderly residents (6,956 persons) are retired.
7. Vehicle/Commuting Needs: According to the most recent ACS estimates, 92% of the 30,423 Fairfield residents within the labor force commuted to work, most of whom (72%) drove alone by car, truck or van 12% took public transportation, while 7% worked from home. 5% of Fairfield workers commute to NYC. Fairfield workers spent an average of 34.1 minutes commuting to and from work.
8. Shift Worker: Of the civilian employed population of 28,582 persons, only 6% or 1,754 residents work in manufacturing. The largest segment of the employed population, representing 24%, work in educational and health care services, while another 18% work in professional, scientific or management fields. 78% of the civilian employed population is considered private wage or salaried workers, while 10% are identified as self-employed.
9. Dependents/Not: Higher Not; 38% with 18 yrs & under; 29% over 65yrs
10. Homeowner/Renter: 83% homeowner / 17% renter
11. Income Level: 2015 median household income $122,306 (45% higher than Fairfield County’s median household income of $85,233 and 74% higher than CT’s median household income of $70,331; Fairfield ranks 11 out 169 towns in highest household incomes; NB Fairfield has 20,233 households as of 2015)

**3. Which geographic areas/neighborhoods in your community most require an understanding/analysis of housing needs?**

1. Greenfield Hill: largest lot sizes - 2 acre zoning minimum due to septic / no sewer line, large houses, lots of houses for sale with no buyers so losing value, not near commerce – need creative zoning and other thoughts to make more attractive, e.g. cluster housing; has one small commercial district along with some farms and farm stands, historic farming area, e.g. Greenfield Hill Grange #133
2. Commerce Drive: TOD Workshop on 6/26/2018, see <https://www.fairfieldct.org/tod> for more information. The area has traditionally served as the Town’s manufacturing and industrial hub, but is undergoing a transition. The Town Plan & Zoning Commission enacted a TOD overlay zone in 2012 that allows for increased density (50 bedrooms /acre) in a mixed use setting with reduced parking requirements. The first development approved within the TOD overlay zone just opened with 101 apartments over 15,000sf of ground floor retail. A second phase with 160 apartments has been approved and is read to break ground this fall. There are several significant redevelopment sites with environmental issues. The former Handy & Harmon site was developed into a retail plaza, anchored by a Whole Foods. Other [brownfield sites](https://www.fairfieldct.org/redevelopmentsites) nearby present additional opportunities.
3. Downtown/Post Road: Fairfield Center, along with Black Rock Turnpike, is one of two principal shopping districts. The Exide property, a six acre brownfield site, situated ¾ mile from the downtown train station, is expected to be ready for redevelopment in 2019. Other sites in and around the downtown have been approved for residential development, including the former Knights of Columbus and Fairfield Lumber sites, for 90 and 58 units respectively.
4. **What additional data would be helpful in analyzing your community’s housing needs and their impacts on equity and how can you obtain it?**

The transit-oriented development planning study presently underway incorporates several additional analyses which will be helpful in assessing housing needs and market demands as well as identifying sites that might be susceptible to future development, the economic impact of such development and any impediments to realizing community goals, at least insofar as the Commerce Drive and downtown areas within a ¾ mile radius of the two full-service train stations. The scope of work specifically includes the following elements:

* Real estate market and feasibility studies identifying potential for commercial and residential development in the station areas;
* Fiscal impact analysis determining how different types of land use could affect Town revenues and expenses;
* Development capacity and design analysis into what types of development could take place under current zoning and potential modifications to zoning;
* Infrastructure capacity analysis identifying any major constraints in street or utility infrastructure that should inform the type, amount, and location of development, and possible infrastructure improvements

Additionally, the Town Plan & Zoning Commission has begun the process of updating the Town’s Plan of Conservation & Development, which will provide an opportunity to re-evaluate and recalibrate the Town’s land use policies and goals.

Fairfield Senior Advocates (FSA) has repeatedly expressed it’s concern that it feels that seniors lack housing options at all income/asset levels in its meetings and other discussions with seniors outside their group. FSA notes that a decline in our senior population represents a threat to the Town at multiple levels: reduced diversity and family solidarity plus a major threat to Town and individuals’ finances in that seniors shoulder a disproportionate share of the property tax burden.

FSA has noted the following recent trends:

* At all senior income levels an expressed desire for more options to downsize, thereby reducing housing/maintenance costs and improving convenient access to amenities
* A demand (waiting list) for “affordable housing” that is rent and income restricted.
* A demand for rental housing at varying rent/cost levels

FSA is concerned about seniors with limited economic means who may qualify for “affordable housing” as well as other seniors (regardless of income or asset levels) who struggle to find reasonable housing (we call this “attainable housing”) that is suitable to senior need and tastes.

The Town’s senior housing problem is exacerbated by the limited availability of land tracts for development that would be suitable for seniors desiring to downsize. Property costs of in Fairfield are high; Beach Area parcels have soared in value since Superstorm Sandy. The cost of land plus required improvements to support senior living preferences result in prices that are not competitive and/or affordable for many middle-income seniors.

FSA’s initiatives have included exploration of the concept of “pocket neighborhoods” (strategically placing 10 to 12 houses on 1+acre parcels) and other configurations that feature smaller houses on small land parcels.

FSA sees remediation of the senior housing shortage as a high priority for the Town. To this end the Organization has formed a Housing Committee with the following objectives:

Improve Town environment for senior housing:

* Identify zoning changes that may facilitate senior housing
* Engage with P&Z; propose updates to POCD
* Recommend improvements in Town planning process; streamline permitting/development
* Tools to encourage developers (e.g., abatements)
* Techniques to encourage affordable/attainable housing (accessible units, accessory apartments)

Strategies for senior housing stock

* Identify potential quick hit properties through systematic review of potential Town properties
* Action plans for priority properties
* Process to encourage/facilitate land donations
* Property land bank (funds; specific properties)

Communicate with senior population and evaluate “customer” feedback

* Encourage participation in senior housing/living survey
* Evaluate survey results (as these become more representative)
* Support communications/outreach (through overall FSA communication team)

FSA has held workshops addressing senior housing issues in October 2017, January 2018 and May 2018. Two of these events were held at the Town Senior Center. More events are planned for later 2018 and 2019. Attendees have been recruited and encouraged to continue to be active as participants in the Organization’s ongoing work.

The May 2018 event was designed to reach out to the business community and Town leaders. It featured informative presentations by Town senior Economic Development and Planning/Zoning staff as well as invited developers/planners. Speakers also responded to questions from the audience of about 100 residents.

Participating with FSA leaders were Town Department staff, planners, developers and an architect - with varied experience across the State and with various housing types. The following key observations were offered by presenters:

* To date no real validation of the degree/type of needed senior housing has been done in the State. A related study in progress should be completed by the next State legislative session. No CT town has done a good job in addressing its senior housing needs.
* Developers tend to prefer large scale projects. Small development can be just as difficult as a large development. Markets desiring small scale projects needs should seek willing developers with whom to partner.
* The concept of pocket neighborhoods can be effective and is a reasonable goal. Many residents prefer accessibility to amenities and their neighbors. Increased density can promote a sense of community and can be effective if well-conceived.
* Older buildings such as schools, offices, warehouses might be repurposed into attractive energy efficient housing should be considered. (This said, Fairfield does need to increase the portion of its grand list that is sourced from commercial development.)
* Mixed use (commercial/retail on the ground floor) can be an effective strategy.
* One challenge is that no incentive structure exists to build what FSA calls “attainable housing”. Developers might be incented to build smaller projects though subsidies, property tax incentives or private/public partnerships.
* “Affordable housing” should be evaluated in conjunction with needed services.
* A challenge to “affordable housing” in CT is currently low Medicaid reimbursement levels.
* Property tax incentives are needed for “affordable housing”
* Land in Fairfield is limited, and Town land use regulations may need to be updated.
* Community groups like FSA can serve as matchmakers: look for properties and connect developers with preferred types of housing opportunities.

FSA action plans are being fine-tuned as an outgrowth of the May 2018 meeting.

FSA has also initiated a senior housing/living survey. It plans to supplement survey results with focus group discussions.

**5. Overall, how do you *view* the age, income, racial, ethnic and other demographic indicators of your municipality? Please compare your assessment of your municipality with surrounding municipalities, your region and the state overall.**

1. We are an aging state and Fairfield’s citizens are older than the average for the state so we have to work to bring younger people to our Town.
2. We are becoming more diverse, but still less so than the County and State as a whole, and significantly less diverse than neighboring Bridgeport. While we celebrate our increasing diversity through events like the McKinley World’s Fair, Indian Festival, Irish Festival, we could do more to promote our welcoming community and encourage the importance of diverse cultures that are integral to our Town’s history and strength.
3. Fairfield’s racial makeup according to the 2017 American Community Survey is: 89.2% white, 1.8% African American, and 4.4% Asian. Compared to Connecticut, which has roughly a 77.7% white population, 10.4% African American population and 4.3% Asian population, Fairfield is less diverse. Trumbull and Westport, surrounding communities both have similar makeups to Fairfield. Bridgeport, one of Fairfield’s direct neighboring cities, is a far more diverse city with only 40.4% white and a 35.5% African American population. Similarly, Fairfield Hispanic population is 6.3% while Bridgeport’s is 39.2% of the total population and the average population percentage in Connecticut is 15%.   
   Fairfield’s median age, at 41 is on par with the Connecticut average and is only slightly lower form neighboring towns (Trumbull is 42.9, Weston is 44.6) meaning Fairfield is the 6th in overall median age of all people out of 10 total in the area. In Fairfield the age by generation is primarily congregated in the less than 20 age (30.8%), 40s (40.5%) and 50s (15.5%) reflecting Fairfield is a primarily family oriented residency town. This is similar for Trumbull, Westport, Weston and Easton. However compared to the state average it is not as equally spread out across the age spreads.   
   Fairfield has a comparable marriage status and average family size as compared to towns in the surroundings area as well as the state averages.

**6. Assess whether your municipality is projected to get older, younger or stay about the same, and whether your current housing stock will be affordable and appropriate for your anticipated age groups, or whether you foresee the need to provide new housing choices.**

The state of Connecticut is getting older and Fairfield is above average in this demographic profile. Fairfield has a local advocacy group, Fairfield Senior Advocates, focused on the needs of its elderly residents as well as an extremely active Bigelow Senior Center. The Town is updating its POCD and is engaged in a strategic planning initiative and transit-oriented development planning study to consider the needs of its residents both near and long-term. The Town has worked to increase the diversity of its housing stock to appeal to seniors and empty nesters as well as young people. Both populations are seeking housing options within walking distance of shops, restaurants and other amenities.

**7. Assess your residential grand list, whether it has grown in value, fallen in value or stayed about the same and what factors in the housing market (supply, demand, mix, those factors in surrounding municipalities) have had an impact on that grand list.**

The Town saw a 11% decrease in its grand list from 2008-16 due in part to the sale of the former GE Headquarters site to Sacred Heart University, which is tax exempt, and the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on the housing market. Residential values have rebounded to some extent, though larger lots in the Greenfield Hill area continue to lag. The Town will need to contend with an aging population and higher taxes than other states.

**8. Assess your municipality’s residential zoning and determine whether it allows for a variety of housing choice creation, should the municipality want to add to the spectrum of choices, or whether lot size, floor area ratio and other factors limit your municipality’s housing creation ability.**

Fairfield’s Zoning Regulations allow for a broad range of housing choices reflected by its percentage of single unit dwellings at 80.2% which means that approximately 20% of its housing stock is provided through multiple dwelling unit alternatives. (CERC Town Profile 2018)

The northern portion of Fairfield that has limited infrastructure (no sewer service) and significant wetlands and watercourses is least dense (Residential AAA) at a 2 acre minimum for single family development, followed by Residence AA at 1 acre (adjacent to this area).  Sewer service areas allow for moderate density single-family parcels in the R-3 (minimum 20,000 SF) and R-2 (minimum 14,000 SF) single family residential zones, with limited density multi-family developments permitted in the Residence B (1 unit per 6,000 SF lot and 2 units per each 9,000 SF lot) and Residence C zone (1 unit per 5,000 SF lot; 2 units per 7,500 SF lot; 3 units per 10,000 SF lot; and 4 units per 12,500 SF lot).

In order to diversify its housing stock further, Fairfield also allows or requires:

 Accessory apartments subordinate within an existing Single-Family residence within each of the Residential AAA, AA, A, R-3, and R-2 zones;

 A Designed Residence District overlay that allows for multiple-unit developments for minimum size acre parcels in underlying residential (i.e. in the AAA zone a site of a minimum of 30 acres can have .5 units per acre ranging to in the B or C zone a minimum acre lot can have 10 units per acre) or commercial zones with additional higher density for projects by Fairfield’s Housing Authority, projects with higher affordability set-asides, and age-restricted developments.  Design standards, height, coverage, bulk, and setback standards apply;

 A Transit-Oriented Downtown District (TODD) within the DRD district that allows higher density multi-family (max 50 beds per acre) for minimum 3 acre sites limited to a certain distance from Fairfield’s Downtown Train station with design standards;

 Mixed use buildings with upper story residential units in the Center Designed Business Districts, Designed Commercial District, and the Neighborhood Designed Business District not to exceed 50% of the total floor area with up to 66 2/3% total floor area if additional density is deed-restricted affordable; and

 Residential units in upper stories per underlying zoning for the Commerce Drive Area Designed District with an additional special overlay district for the Transit-Oriented Development Park that allows up to 50 bedrooms per acre and up to 70% floor area of upper levels allowed for multi-family residential development.

 All projects subject to a special permit which propose more than 10 units must provide 10% of the units as deed-restricted affordable to meet the 80% of median requirements for affordability.

**9. Assess your current housing choices: how wide a spectrum of unit types (single-family detached, duplex, multifamily, mixed-use, etc.) your municipality currently has, where they are generally located, and whether a diversity of housing types could be expanded in areas of municipality.**

Roughly 84% of the Town’s housing stock is comprised of single family detached residences. Approximately three-quarters of the Town’s housing inventory consist of units with at least three bedrooms. Nevertheless, the Town has a well-developed rental housing market. Renter-occupied housing comprises 20% of all housing units. Fairfield‘s rental inventory consists mainly of multi-family homes (2-4 units) and condominium rentals. A recent market analysis conducted on behalf of the Fairfield Housing Authority noted that the one “glaring gap in the market” was “the lack of rental product associated with professionally managed apartment complexes –particularly luxury rental – an oddity in view of the high rent structure in town.” The market is responding to this demand with several new projects either completed or in development including Fairchild Apartments (54 units) Trademark Fairfield I (101 apartments), Trademark II (160 apartments), Harbour Townhomes (28 apartments) and the Knights of Columbus site (90 apartments) to mention a few. All told, there are more than 400 additional units of housing approved or in development. To evaluate market-feasibility for additional housing opportunities, Fairfield has retained a planning consultant, Goody Clancy, to identify and examine [Transit-Oriented Development](https://www.fairfieldct.org/tod) opportunities around the Fairfield Downtown and Fairfield Metro Train stations.

**10. From your housing data profile, determine the number and percentage of income-restricted housing units (affordable housing), their type (single-family, multifamily), their location (confined to an area of municipality, with/without access to transit, jobs, healthcare, shopping, recreation) and whether there are locations where such housing could be created. How do your municipality’s numbers/percentage compare to surrounding municipalities, the region/county, and the state as a whole?**

Approximately 2.5% of the Town’s housing stock is deed-restricted as affordable housing. Much of this inventory is renter-occupied, and includes some 218 governmentally-assisted units. The Town has 47 units of deed-restricted ownership housing, which includes twenty-two 3-family homes as part of the Parkview Commons development. The Town enacted an inclusionary zoning requirement that mandates a 10% set aside for any new developments with ten or more housing units. The TPZ is presently considering a proposal that would assess a $5/$1000 inclusionary zoning permit fee on new construction or additions. The Affordable Housing Committee is examining whether higher affordable set-asides are viable for higher density developments, particularly around transit nodes.

**11. From your housing data profile, determine the median household income overall, for homeowners, and for renters, the median sales price and median gross rent, and how many households (renters and owners) are burdened by their housing costs (spending more than 30% of their income on housing).**

The homeowner median household income is $155,629 with mortgage, and $83,561 w/o mortgage. The renter median household income is $54,638.Median sales price is currently $578,900. Finally, the median gross rent is $1,698.   
Homeowners with 30+% income spent on housing: 5,301 units or 26% of households  
Renters with 30+% income spent on housing: 1,655 units or 8% of households

*Determining the Benefits and Burdens (for the work session)*

**12. How are your residents served by the existing housing in your community now? What are the root causes or factors of current inequities or barriers related to your community’s housing needs?**

The most significant barrier relates to housing affordability. Fairfield created an Affordable Housing Task Force in 1985 and issued its first Report in 1988 that recognized that Fairfield’s housing costs were outpacing local income.  “The need for affordable housing crosses a variety of age, household, ethnic, and other community factors, but all share a common characteristic – housing in Fairfield costs more than many people can afford.  Even people who live here already.” (pg 5 of [Affordable Housing Committee 2014 report](https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20316/AHC_Final_Report_103114.pdf)). The most recent Affordable Housing Report notes that the median price of a single family home eclipsed $600K in 2017, and of 779 residential sales, only 51 or 6.5% were for homes with a sales price of $300K or less.

The [Affordable Housing Committee 2014 report](https://www.fairfieldct.org/filestorage/10726/11008/13302/18266/20316/AHC_Final_Report_103114.pdf) has data (pp 10-11) which shows that Fairfield has less than ½ the multi-family and rental housing stock of comparable communities such as West Hartford or Greenwich.  Fairfield needs to continue to diversify its housing stock by adding more rental housing stock to its housing mix, units in closer proximity to transportation and commercial zones to allow for mobility options outside of the automobile, and smaller unit housing stock that accommodates smaller-sized households.  New housing development in Fairfield must meet the housing needs of older residents, younger people, moderate income workers, single people, and single parents.

**13. How will you engage those most impacted? Who is collecting and contributing feedback? Have you created accessible opportunities for these groups to engage? Public engagement should prioritize opportunities to collaborate and co-create.**

The Affordable Housing Committee reports annually to the Representative Town Meeting on the progress that the Town is making to meet its housing related goals. The Committee has worked with groups such as the League of Women Voters and the [Fairfield Senior Advocates](http://www.fairfieldsenioradvocates.com/) to sponsor workshops on housing needs. These events are frequently televised through public access television. Information is also posted to the Town’s website and disseminated through the local media. To the extent possible, meetings are held in different parts of Town to provide opportunities for engagement with specific neighborhoods. The Town has also utilized survey instruments as another tool to engage residents and obtain feedback on such issues.

As a recipient of federal Community Development Block Grant Funds, the Town has a citizen communication plan and public outreach strategy, which involves the following:

* direct mailings to community partners, key stakeholders and other interested partners, government agencies and area non-profits to invite their participation and solicit input.
* press releases to local media which are also posted to the Town’s website;
* public hearings and workshops;
* interviews with key partners.

*Determining the Benefits and Burdens (to be continued in your community)*

**14. What did those engaged tell you about the potential benefits, burdens, and/or community priorities related to community housing needs? What results and outcomes would they like to see? Did they identify ways to lessen any potential unintended consequences and/or to broaden any potential positive impacts?**

The feedback received to date indicate that there is continued community interest in providing additional housing options, particularly aimed at seniors and young people. There are continued concerns regarding the high cost of housing and the lack of affordable housing. For those with disabilities, there is also a need for more accessible housing units. The discussion has centered on the need to provide a diverse range of housing options, in terms of type, style, amenities and price range. There has been discussion on the need for “attainable” housing, i.e. housing options that might not meet the definition of affordable (<80% AMI), but is less than market rate.

FSA notes that seniors view suitable housing as a major factor in their decisions to stay in Fairfield.

*Engage, Advance Opportunity, & Minimize Harm (to be continued in your community)*

**15. Given what you have learned, what steps will you take to address any remaining barriers, impacts, or unintended consequences of understanding your community’s housing needs and planning for the future on equity (include immediate and long-term impacts)?**

There are several initiatives underway that will provide an opportunity to further identify impacts and to develop an action plan to address the Town’s housing needs. These include the strategic planning initiative and transit-oriented development planning study presently underway, as well as the TPZ Commission’s efforts to update the Plan of Conservation & Development. These undertakings, coupled with the Affordable Housing Committee’s requirement to report annually on progress with respect to the Town’s affordable housing goals, provide an opportunity for the community to address barriers, impacts and unintended consequences as well as to adjust course, as needed.

**16. How will you include and benefit from diverse representation in presenting your community’s housing data at a regular meeting of your community’s legislative body or other public meeting?**

The Town seeks to ensure that all groups are represented and given an opportunity to participate in this process. The Town employs a variety of techniques using traditional and digital media, survey instruments, neighborhood workshops, and direct mailings to maximize outreach. These efforts include consultation with regional partners, such as MetroCOG, where appropriate.

*Evaluate and Educate*

**17. How will you document, evaluate, and report progress to increase equity and access to services as you move toward designing and implementing a housing needs assessment?**

The Affordable Housing Committee is required by ordinance to report annually to the Representative Town Meeting on the Town’s progress in achieving its housing goals. The meeting is open to the public and televised through the public access channel. This report is also posted to the Town’s website.

**18. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with impacted segments of your community to make sure your strategies to meet housing needs works for all in the long-term?**

The Office of Community & Economic Development conducts outreach to neighborhood groups and other community partners as part of its consolidated planning process under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The Director of Community & Economic Development serves as staff to the AHC, which has a history of collaborating with housing advocacy groups and other civic organizations on these issues.

**19. What challenges did you encounter while considering how to optimize for equity in understanding your community’s housing needs, and how might you learn from them for future applications?**

Communication is always the biggest stumbling block in any program where you are trying to get public input. Getting to the people that aren’t following the news but would be interested and want to be engaged is hard. We continue to promote our meetings and provide information and continue to build those personal connections that help be more transparent and inclusive.

Signature of Municipal Elected Official

Printed Name

Title

Date