


# TOWN OF WESTON

## Plan of Conservation and Development

Data Analysis

January 7, 2019

 MILONE & MACBROOM

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Demographics
- Housing
- Transportation

# ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS

## Acronyms:

**ACS** – American Community Survey

**ADT** – Average Daily Traffic

**CTDEEP** – Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

**CTDOT** – Connecticut Department of Transportation

**CTDPH** – Connecticut Department of Public Health

**CTECO** – Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online

**CTOPM** – Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

**CTSDC** – Connecticut State Data Center

**FEMA** – Federal Emergency Management Agency

**HMP** – Hazard Mitigation Plan

**NDDB** – Natural Diversity Database

**POCD** – Plan of Conservation and Development

**WestCOG** – Western Connecticut Council of Governments

**WPCF** – Water Pollution Control Facility (Sewage Treatment Plant)

## Definitions

**American Community Survey (ACS)** – The ACS is a data collection program overseen by the U.S. Census Bureau that collects demographic and housing data for individuals and households. The ACS surveys approximately 3 million households across the nation per year (roughly 2.5% of households) and aggregates the data on multi-year intervals. Because it is based on a multi-year sample, it is not directly comparable to the Decennial Census, which is based on a 100% population count every ten years.

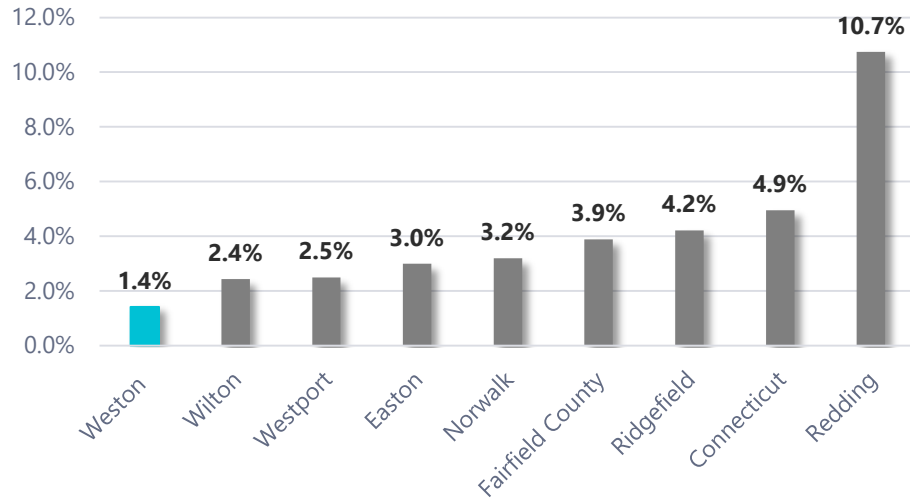
**Census Block Group** – A geographic unit developed by the U.S. Census Bureau to analyze Census and ACS data at the neighborhood level. Bethel contains 13 Census Block Groups, and the average Census Block Group in Bethel has just under 1,500 residents.



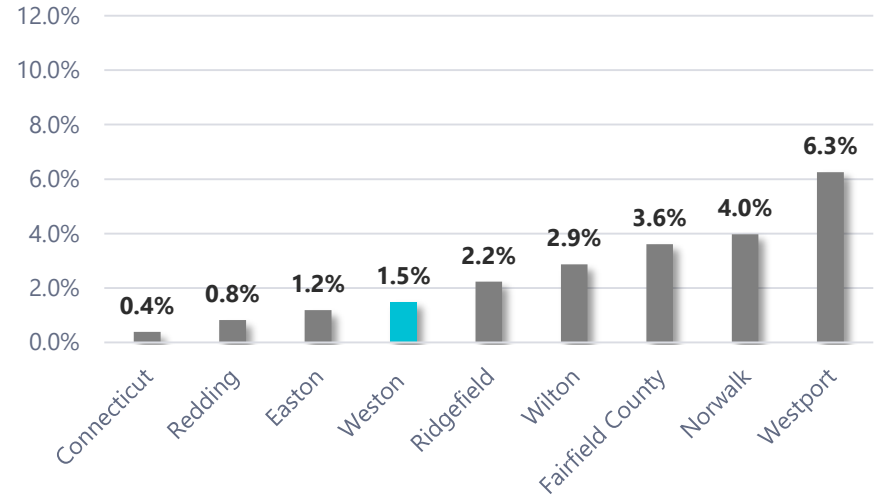
# DEMOCRAPHICS

# POPULATION

Percent Change in Population 2000 - 2010



Percent Change in Population 2010 - 2017

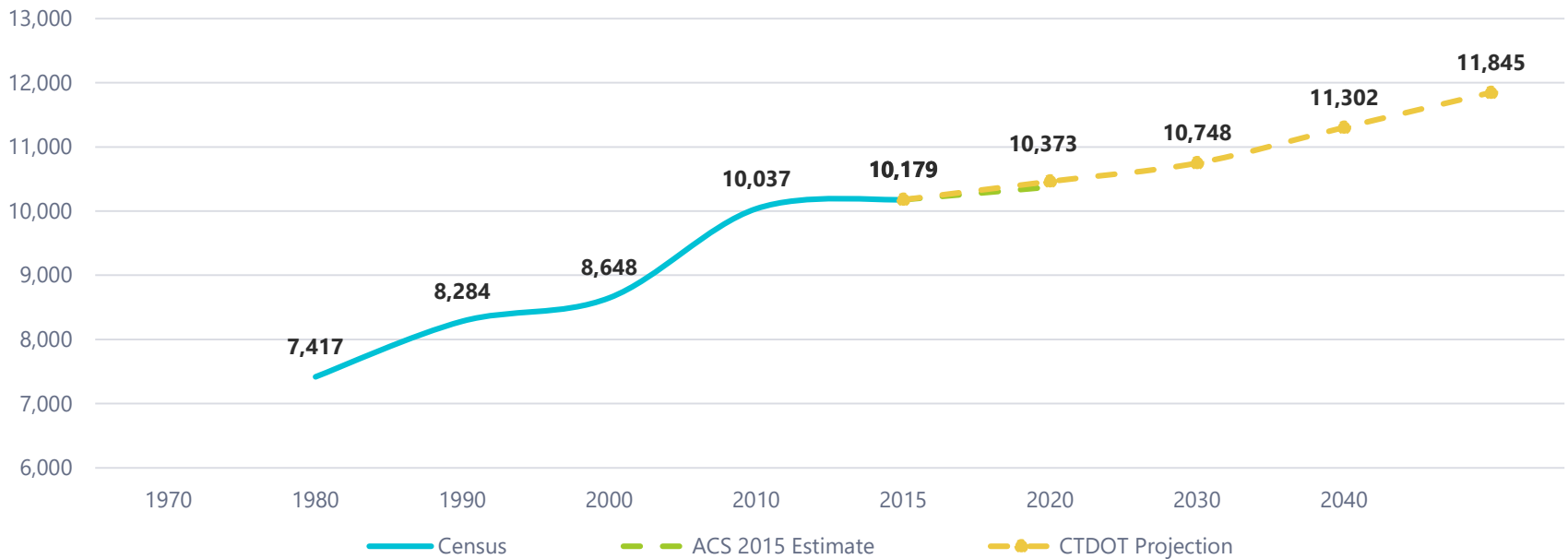


Source: U.S. Census 2000 & 2010, CT DPH 2017 Population Estimates

- Weston had the smallest percent population change compared to neighboring towns between the 2000 and 2010 census.
- Between 2010 and 2017, Weston's growth was similar to the previous decade. It grew faster than the state.

# POPULATION

Historic & Projected Population in Weston 1970 - 2040



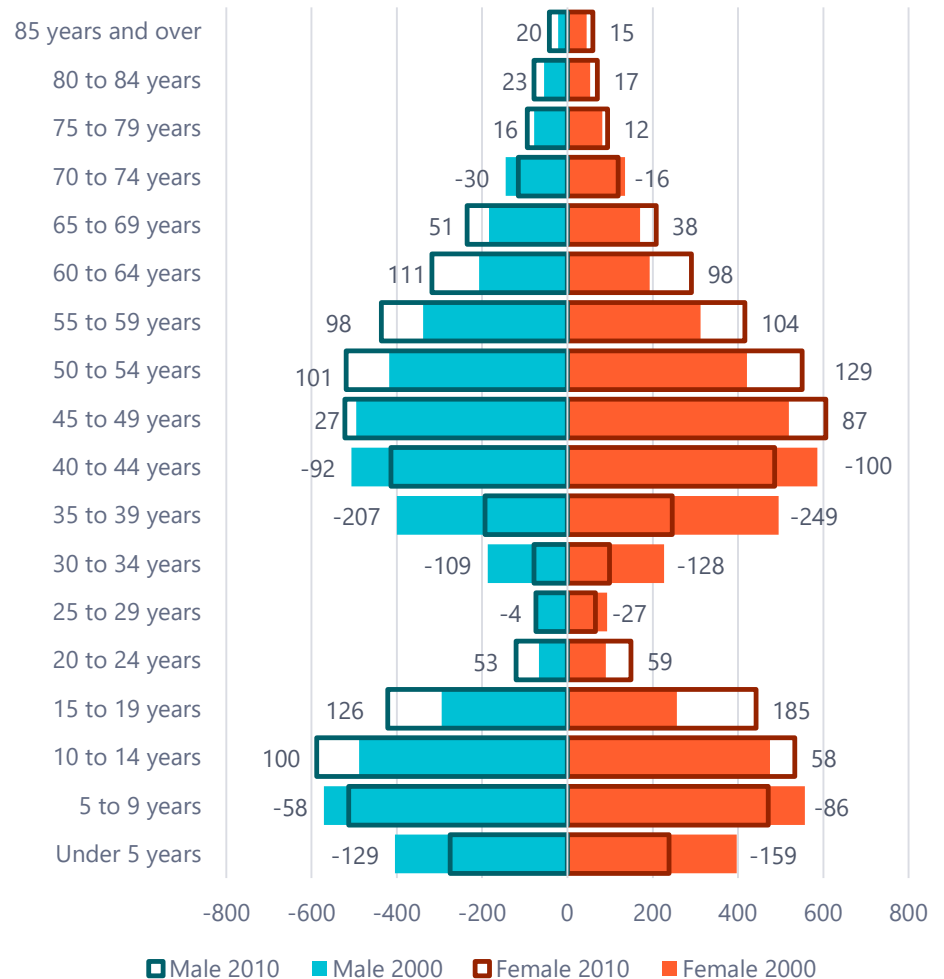
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, 1970-2010. 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates. Projected Population by CTDOT.

- CTDOT projects a small increase in Weston's population between 2015 to 2030, reaching 11,302 by 2030.
- 2015 ACS population estimates shows that **Weston is on pace with CTDOT Projections**

# AGE

- Weston continues to age.**  
 The median age of Weston residents increased from 39.1 in 2000 to 43.4 in 2010. 2016 estimates show that Weston's median age has continued to grow and is now 44.6 years old.
- Decline in 30 to 44 age cohort, and corresponding drop in children under the age of 10.
- Largest population growth in the 45 to 64 age cohort – corresponds with the aging of the “baby boomers.”

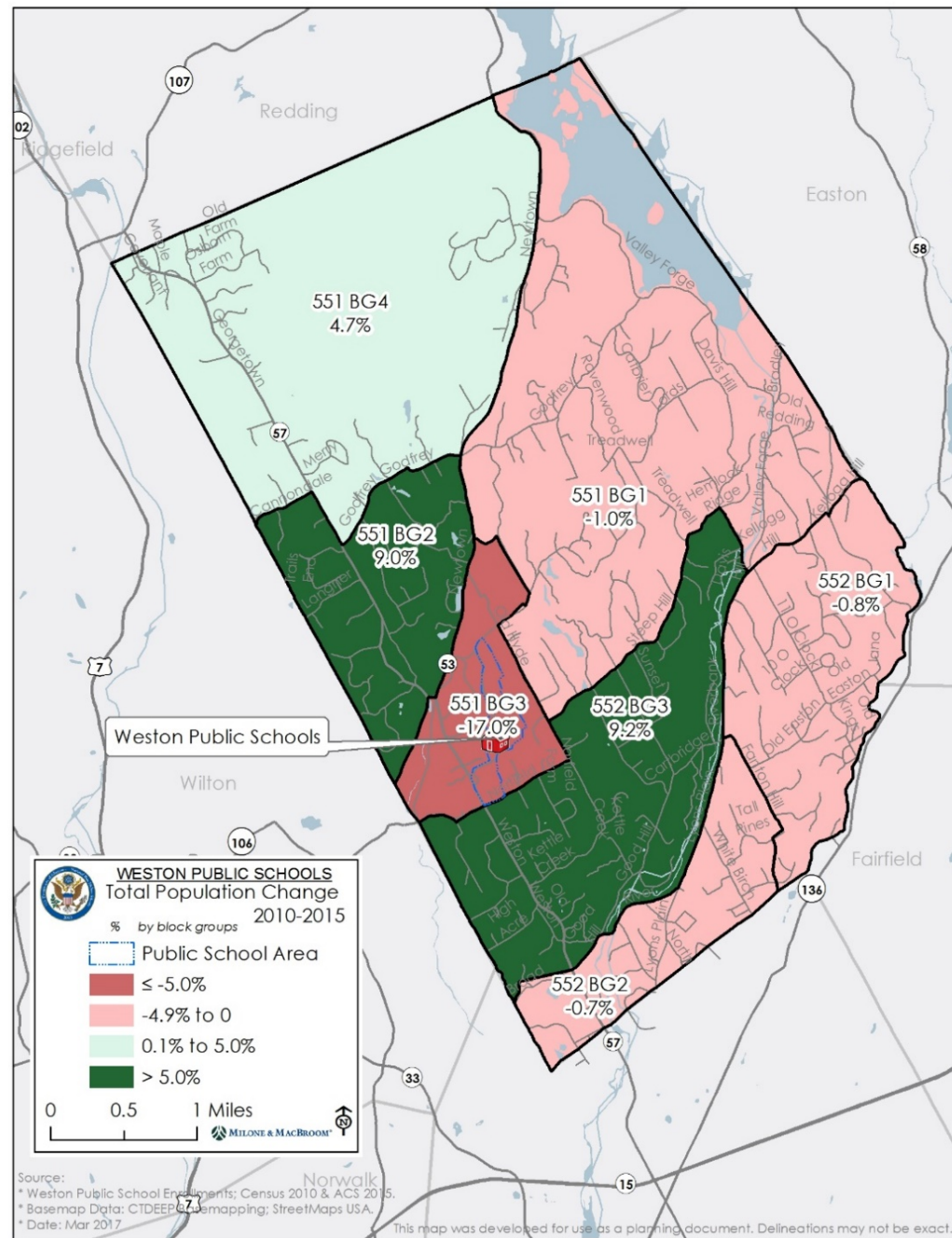
## Age Composition in Weston: 2000 to 2010



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 2000, 2010.

# POPULATION CHANGE

- Growth in the first half of 2010s unevenly distributed throughout the town.
- Greatest percentage gains in western neighborhoods closer to the Town Center and amenities in Wilton.





# HOUSEHOLDS

- Total number of housing units increased 5% from 2010 to 2016.
  - **Average household size is holding steady.** Average household size remained at 3 persons per household.
  - Owner-occupied housing units with homeowners age 65 or older increased 14.6%, indicating stock with greater potential for future turnover

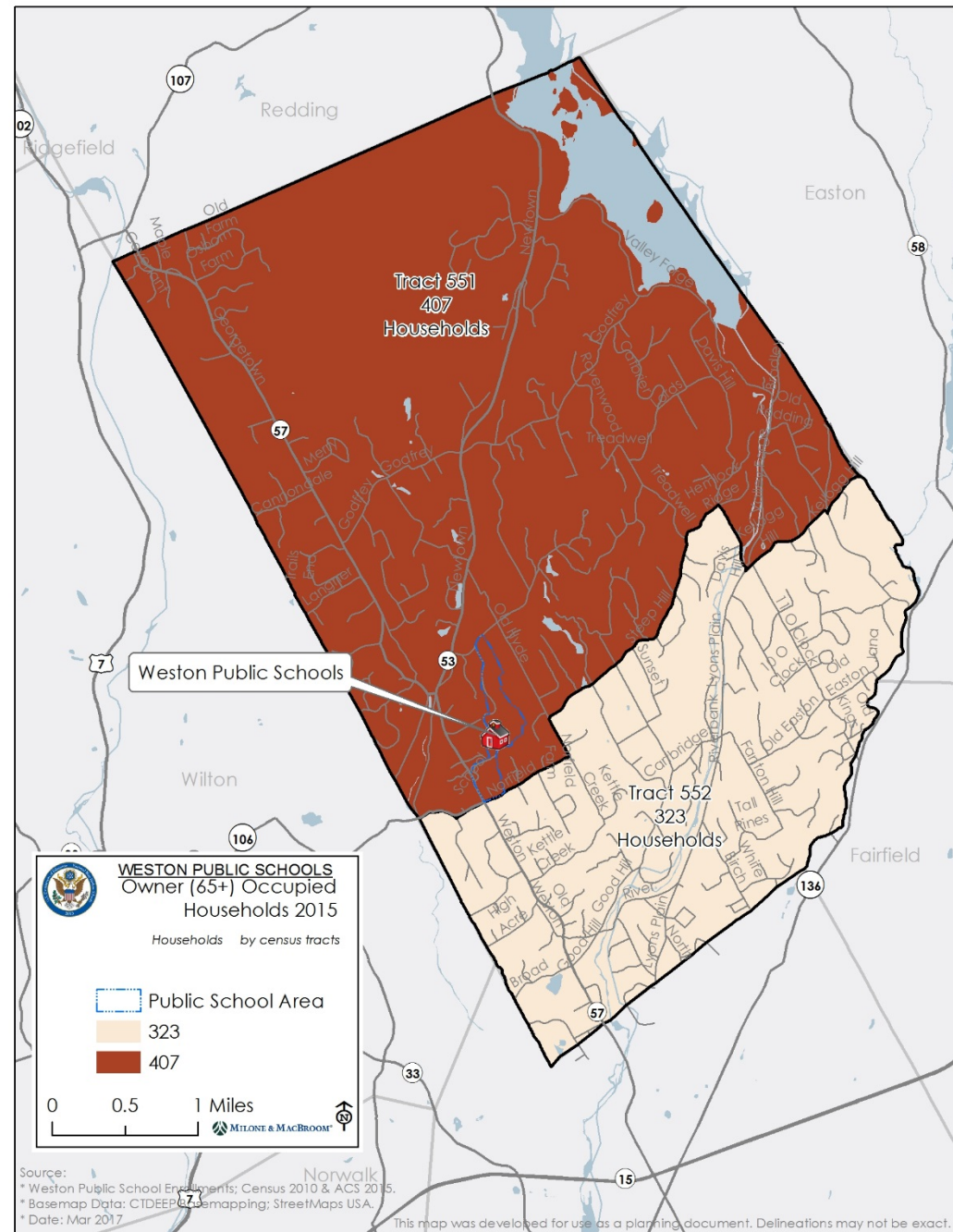
**Owner Occupied Housing Units and Households, 2000-2016**

	Weston				
	2000	2010	2016	Change 2010-2016	
				Number	%
<b>Total Population</b>	10,037	10,179	10,347	168	1.7%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	3,532	3,674	3,859	185	5.0%
Total Occupied Housing Units	3,312	3,379	3,440	61	1.8%
Owner Over 65 Occupied Housing Units	577	652	747	95	14.6%
<b>Total Households</b>	3,312	3,379	3,249	-130	-3.8%
<b>Family Households</b>	2,811	2,854	2,780	-74	-2.6%
With Own Children Under 18	1,649	1,647	1,632	-15	-0.9%
Married Couple Family	2,597	2,557	2,564	7	0.3%
With Own Children Under 18	1,511	1,482	1,556	74	5.0%
Female Householder, No husband Present	166	222	170	-52	-23.4%
With Own Children Under 18	109	125	114	-11	-8.8%
<b>Non-Family Households</b>	501	525	469	-56	-10.7%
Householder Living Alone	372	421	406	-15	-3.6%
Householder 65 Years and Over	161	196	194	-2	-1.0%
Average Household Size	3	3.0	3.0	0.04	1.3%
Average Family Size	3.3	3.3	3.3	0.01	0.3%

Source: U.S Census 2000 and 2010, ACS 2016

# DEMOGRAPHIC SPOTLIGHT: SENIORS

- For the purposes of the POCD, seniors are defined as persons age 65 years old and over
- Households headed by someone age 65+ are a good indicator of future housing turnover and demand for senior services.
- **Senior population more concentrated in the northern section of town.**



# RACE & ETHNICITY

- **The population of Weston is diversifying**
  - The Asian population grew by 100 people (51.3%) between 2000 and 2010.
  - Growth in the “Some Other Race” (228%), Two or More Races (98%), Black or African American (48.9%).

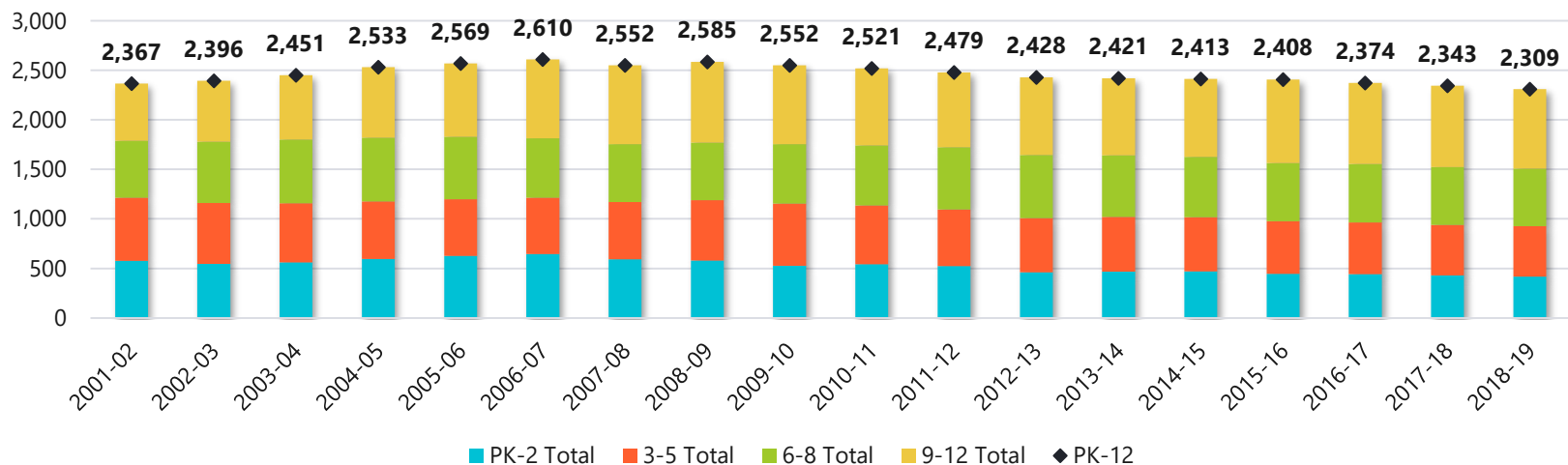
Mutually Exclusive Racial or Ethnic Group	2000		2010		Change 2000 to 2010	
	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total	Net	Percent
<b>Not Hispanic or Latino</b>	<b>9,831</b>	<b>97.9%</b>	<b>9,843</b>	<b>96.7%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
American Indian	11	0.1%	12	0.1%	1	9.1%
Asian	195	1.9%	295	2.9%	100	51.3%
Black or African American	88	0.9%	131	1.3%	43	48.9%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	13	0.1%	2	0.0%	-11	-84.6%
Some other Race	25	0.2%	82	0.8%	57	228.0%
Two or More races	98	1.0%	194	1.9%	96	98.0%
White	9,443	94.1%	9,463	93.0%	20	0.2%
<b>Hispanic or Latino (of all races)</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>10,037</b>		<b>10,179</b>		<b>142</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census

# SCHOOL ENROLLMENT TRENDS

- Most recent enrollment peak in 2006-07 with 2,610 students
- Enrollment dropped by about 12% between 2006-07 and 2018-19
- Enrollment has decreased by an average of 1.4% over the last three school years
- Elementary enrollment has been on a downward trend since 2006-07;
  - These grade levels are most responsive to changes in births, migration, and housing conditions
  - Rate of decline has slowed over the last five years

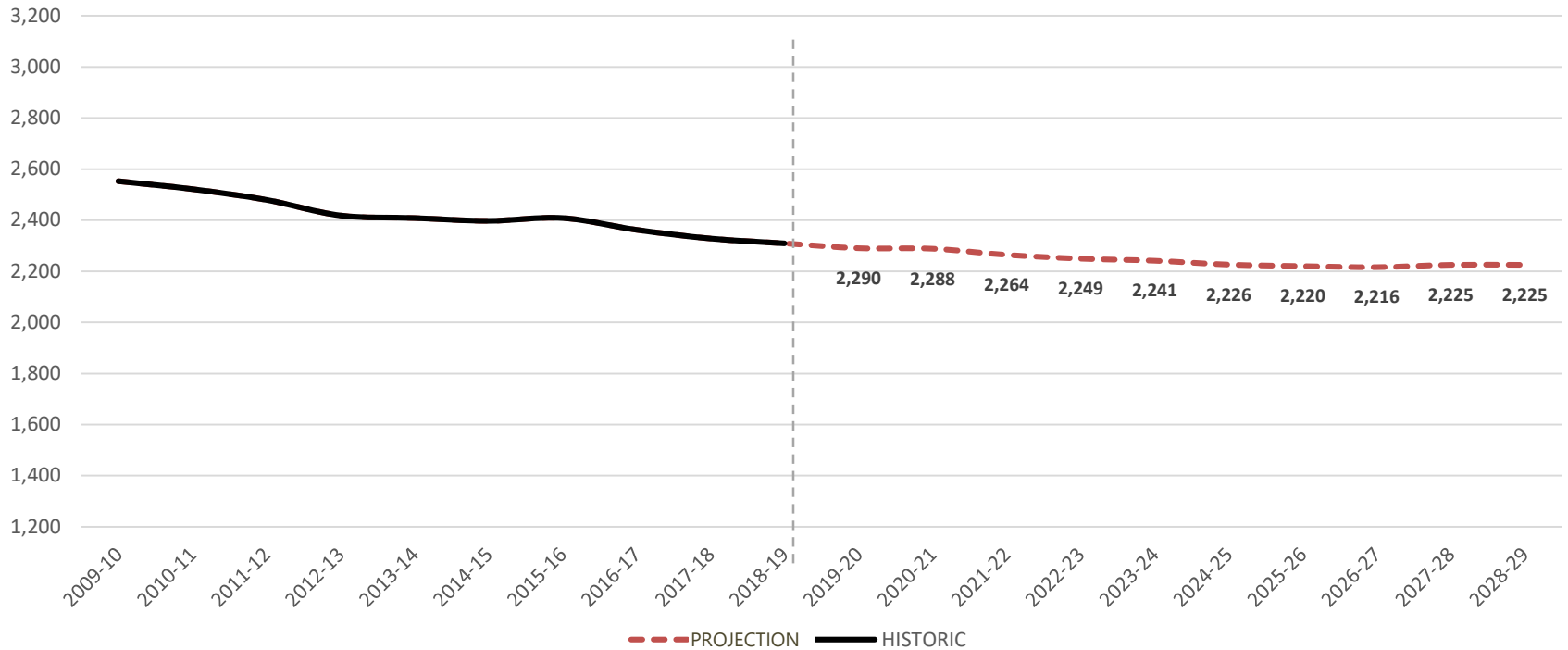
**Weston Historic Enrollments, 2001-02 to 2018-19**



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education; EdSight Enrollment database

# Enrollment Projections (PK-12)

Weston Public Schools



- Although not a steep decline, Weston Public Schools is likely to continue to experience declining enrollments over the next decade
- Declines at the K-2 grade levels are projected to be of a smaller magnitude than upper grade levels and are likely to stabilize or slightly increase after 2019-20
- Intermediate, middle, and high school grade levels are projected to experience some decline over the next decade
- Decline corresponds to decrease in children under 10 and women of childbearing age

A photograph of a white house with green shutters and a brick chimney, with the word 'HOUSING' overlaid in large white letters. The house has white horizontal siding and a white gable roof. A red brick chimney is visible on the left side. The word 'HOUSING' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image. The background shows some bare trees and a clear sky.

# HOUSING

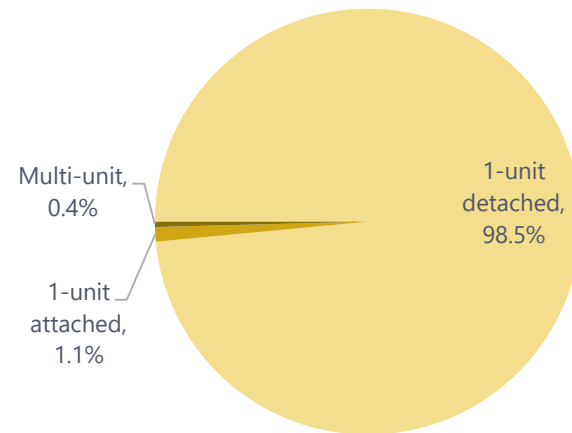
# HOUSING STOCK

- Since 2010, Weston has added 39 housing units.
- **The growth rate lags behind the county and the state but is on par with the neighboring communities of Easton and Westport**
- As of 2016, the vast majority of Weston's housing units (98.5%) were single-family detached units.
- Multi-family housing made up 0.4% of Weston's housing stock.
  - Multi-family is 8.9%, 11.9%, 13.4% of housing stock in Westport, Wilton, Redding respectively.

Municipality	Housing Units		
	2010	2017	Change
Weston	3,674	3,713	1.1%
Easton	2,715	2,748	1.2%
Norwalk	35,415	36,919	4.1%
Redding	3,811	3,813	0.1%
Ridgefield	9,420	9,584	1.7%
Westport	10,399	10,542	1.4%
Wilton	6,475	6,521	0.7%
<b>Fairfield County</b>	<b>361,221</b>	<b>371,239</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>1,487,891</b>	<b>1,514,065</b>	<b>1.7%</b>

Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

Weston Housing Units in Structure:  
2016

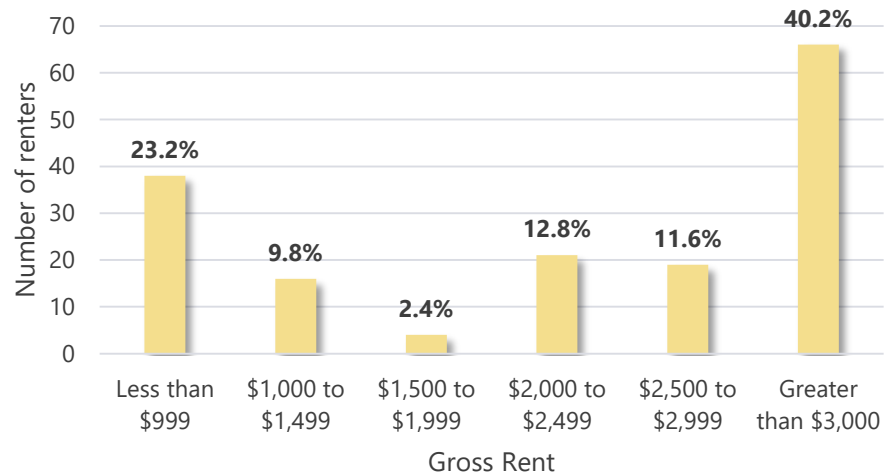


Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates: 2012-2016

# GROSS RENT & HOME VALUE

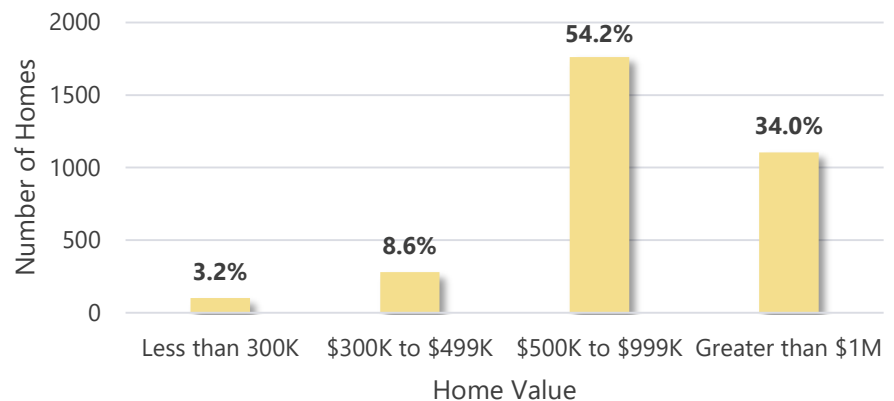
- The 2016 ACS reports 191 total rental units
- All renters live in single-family homes
- 51.8% of gross rent higher than \$2,500

## Distribution of Gross Rent



- 3,249 Homes in 2016
- 99.5% of home owners live in single-family homes
- 0.1% live in 2 – 4 unit homes
- 0.4% live in homes with five or more units

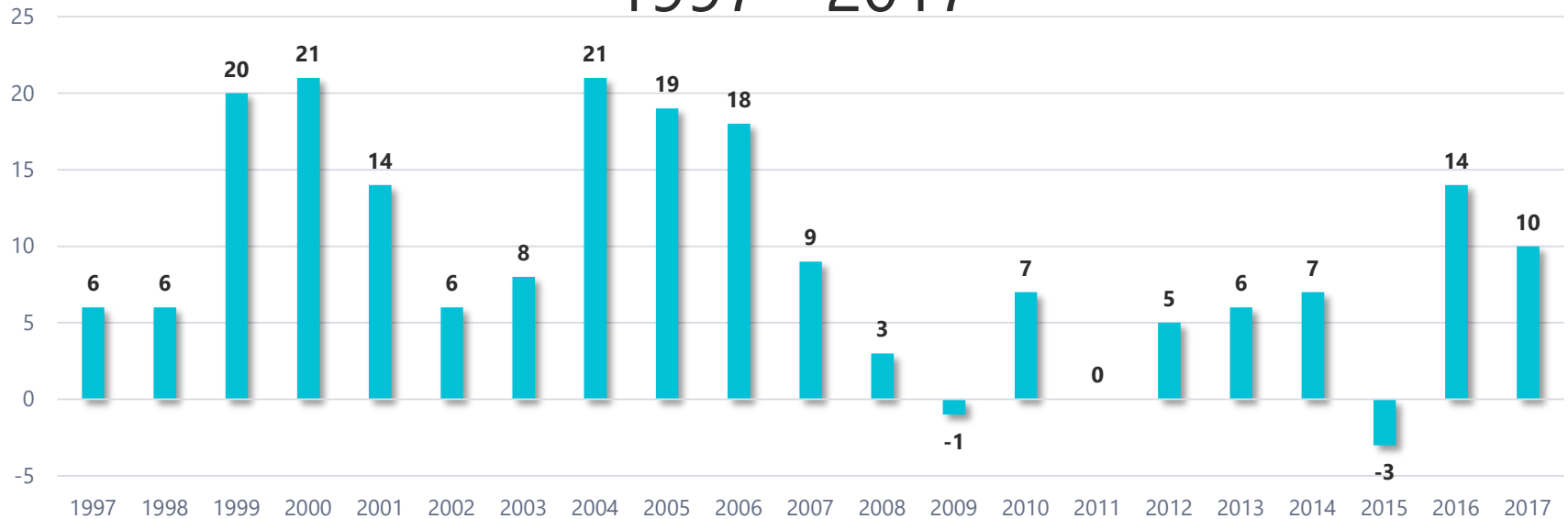
## Home Value Distribution



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates: 2012-2016



# Net Housing Permit Activity in Weston: 1997 - 2017



CT DECD Annual Housing Permit Data: 5/2/2018. \*This figure subtracts demolitions from building permit to estimate the number of new houses constructed each year

- **Housing starts have improved since the Recession**
- Over the last four years, building permit activity has averaged 10 units per year - similar level to the early 2000's
  - 32 building permits in 2000 was the highest number of annual permits issued over the last 20 years. (There were 12 demolitions.)
  - 12 demolition permits in 1998, and 2005 were the highest number of annual permits issued over the last 20 years (There were 18 and 31 constructions, respectively)

# Age 65+ Occupied Housing Units, 2016

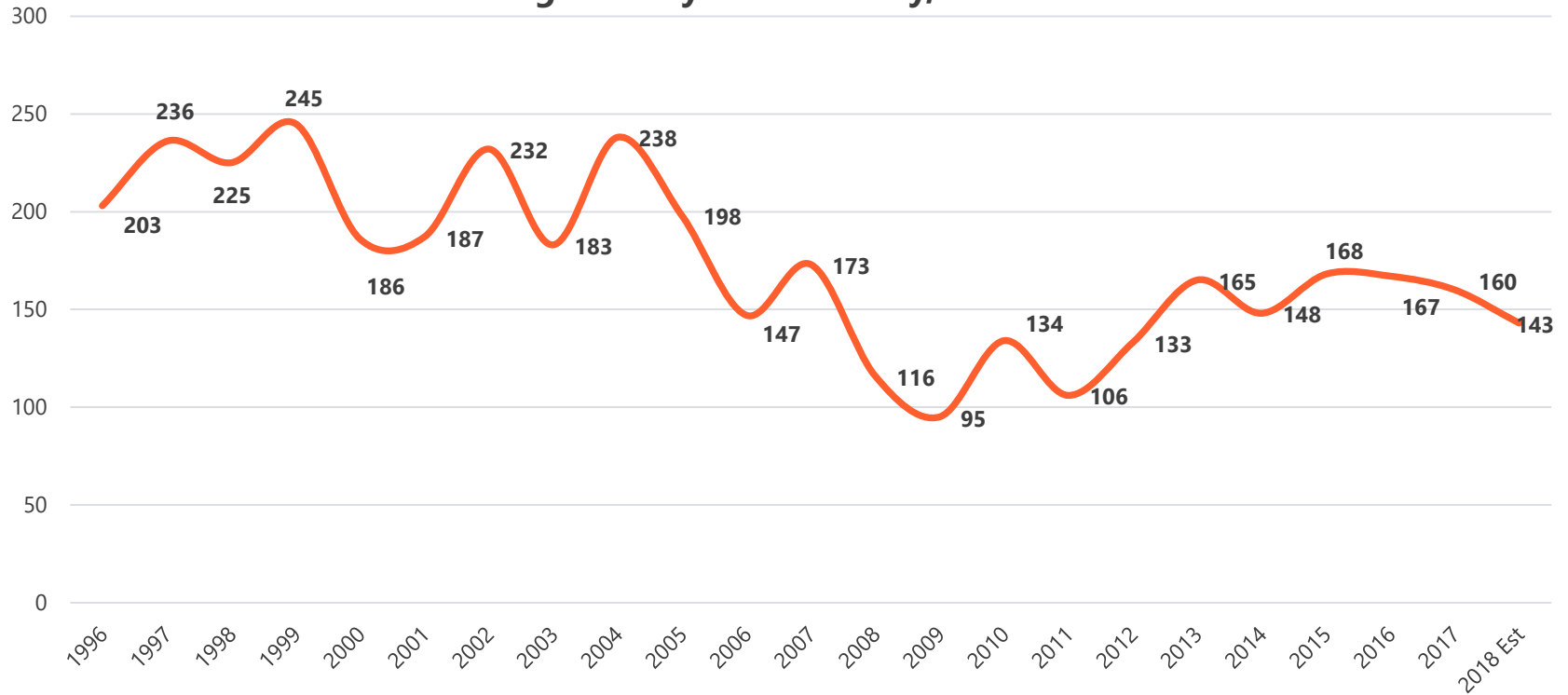
<b>Total Population</b>	10,347
<b>Total Occupied Housing Units</b>	3,440
<b>Total Owner Occupied Housing Units</b>	3,249
Owner Over 65 Occupied Housing Units	747
% of Owner Occupied Housing Units, Aged 65+	23%
Housing Units With a Mortgage, Aged 65+	382
Housing Units Without a Mortgage, Aged 65+	369
<b>Total Renter Occupied Housing Units</b>	191
Renter Over 65 Occupied Housing Units	18
% of Renter Occupied Housing Units, Aged 65+	9.4%

Source: ACS 2016

- 23% of owner-occupied units are headed by a householder age 65 years old and over
- About half of the Aged 65+ population own their home “free and clear”
- These units will likely have greater potential for turnover in the next ten years

# REAL ESTATE MARKET TRENDS

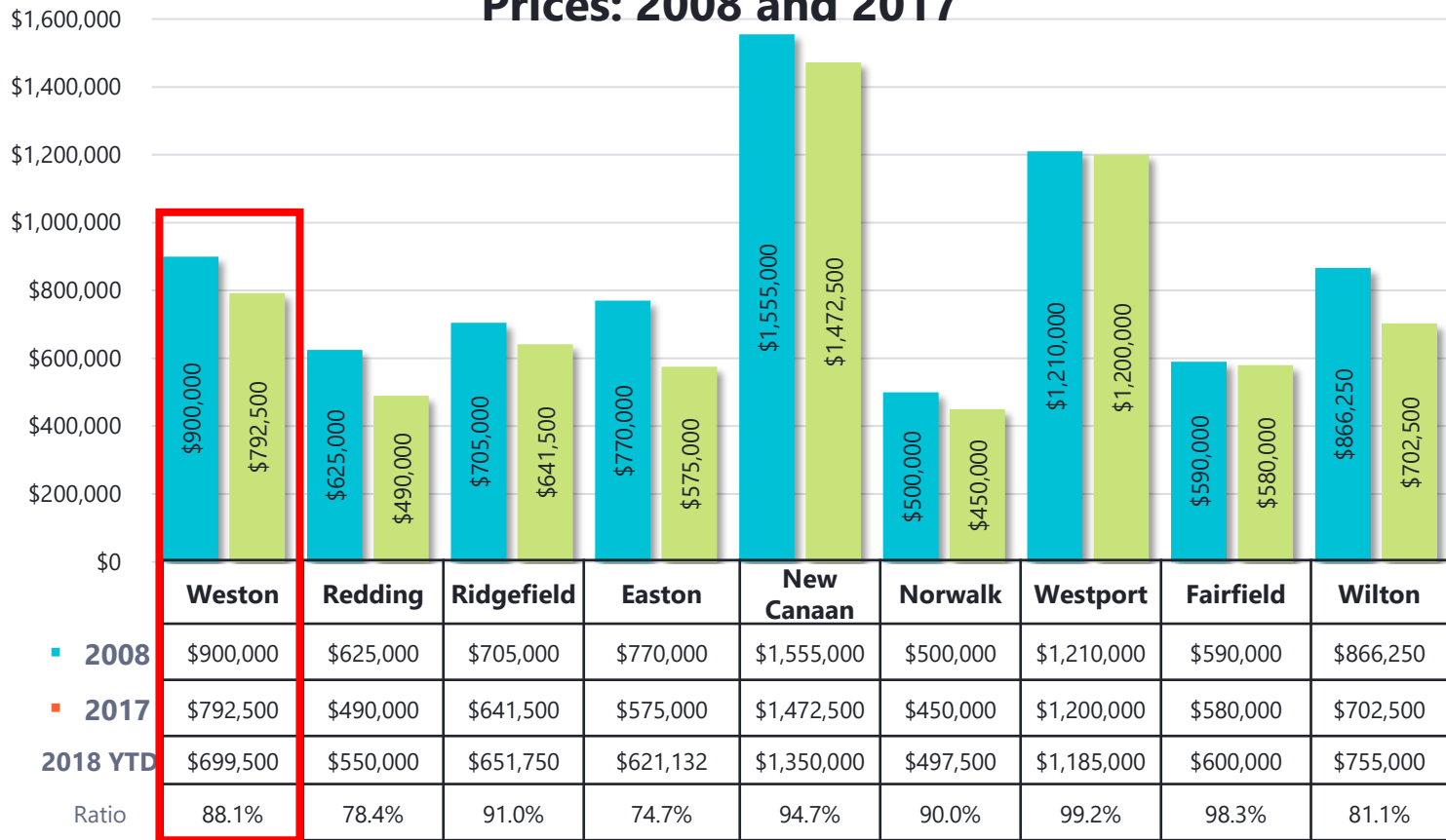
## Weston Single Family Sales Activity, 1996 – 2018 YTD



Source: CT DECD and The Warren Group, 2017

- Sales have improved since the Recession

## Comparison of Median Single-Family Home Sale Prices: 2008 and 2017



Source: The Warren Group

- **Median single-family home sale prices are still well below their 2006 peak.**
- 2017 median single family sale price: \$792,000
- Median prices in Weston have remained more affordable than Westport/ New Canaan, on par with Wilton, and well above other central Fairfield County towns

# AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

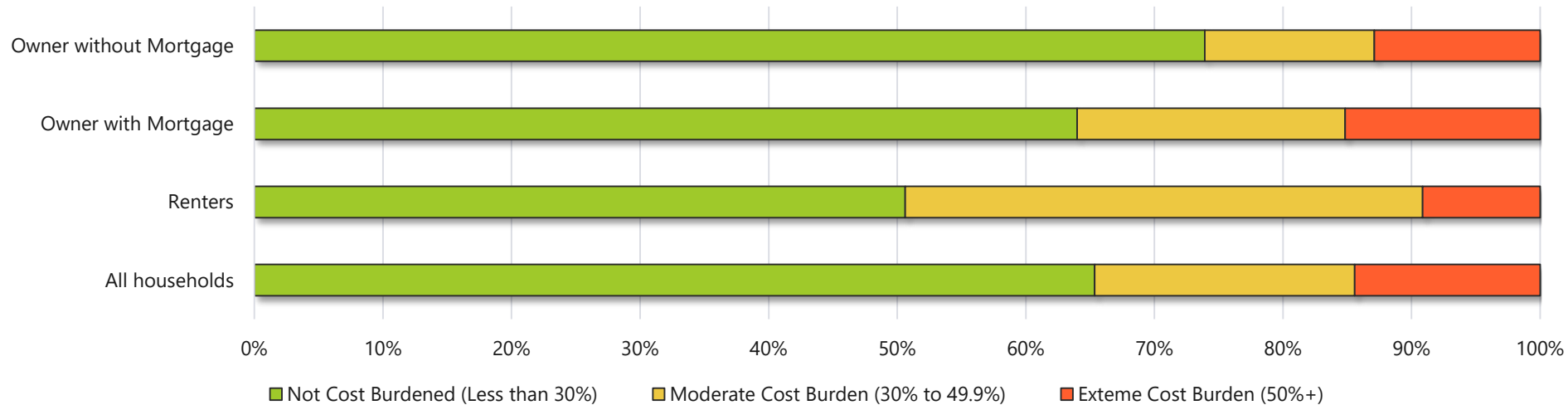
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends that no more than 30% of household income be spent on housing. This includes mortgage or rent, property taxes, HOA fees, insurance, and utilities.
- Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing may have difficulty affording other necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.
- HUD determines Fair Market Rents which identifies maximum rental limits for HUD tenant rental assistance programs. These limits are determined based on area incomes (cost of living taken into account) and assumes that recipient households pay no more than 30% of their income towards housing.

## HUD Fair Market Rents for the Town of Weston, by Number of Bedrooms: FY2019

Year	Efficiency/ Studio	One Bedroom	Two Bedroom	Three- Bedroom	Four Bedroom
Fair Market Rents FY19	\$1,211	\$1,517	\$1,885	\$2,404	\$2,752

# AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

## Affordability of Housing by Tenure, 2016



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates: 2012-2016, Table B25091; B25093

- **About 34% of Weston's households pay more than 30% of their income towards housing and are considered "cost burdened."** Weston has a similar share of cost burdened households as neighboring towns. However, the town has a slightly lower share of cost burdened households compared to the State or region as a whole.
  - **20% have a Moderate Cost Burden** (30% to 49% of income spent on housing)
  - **14% have an Extreme Cost Burden** (50%+ of income spent on housing)
- Renters are more likely to be cost burdened (49%) than homeowners (36%)
- Income does not include assets or equity

# AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

## All Households

## Senior Households

**Median Household Income: 2016**

\$218,152

\$105,991

**Maximum Monthly Housing Budget**  
(30% of Household Income)

\$7,029 per month

\$2,650 per month

**Maximum Monthly Homeowner Costs**

\$4,153 Mortgage P&I  
\$1,658 Property Taxes  
\$1,209 Utilities/Insurance

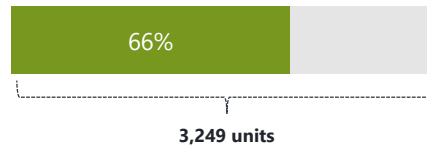
\$1,586 Mortgage P&I  
\$626 Property Taxes  
\$456 Utilities/Insurance

**Maximum Affordable Home Value**

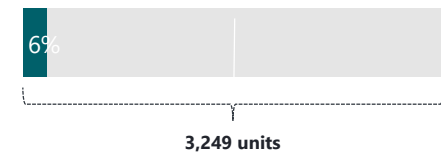
**\$766,000**

**\$365,000**

**The average household in Weston can afford to buy 66% of owner-occupied units in town**



**The average senior household in Weston can afford to buy 6% of owner-occupied units in town**



# AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

## Affordable Housing Units in Weston by Type 2017

Total Housing Units 2010	3,674
Governmentally Assisted	0
Tenant Rental Assistance	1
Family CHFA/USDA Mortgages	3
Deed Restricted Units	0
Totally Assisted Units	4

Percent Affordable 0.11%

Source: Connecticut Department of Housing – Affordable Housing Appeals List: 2017  
CHFA – Connecticut Housing Finance Authority  
USDA United States Department of Agriculture

- In 2017, there were 4 affordable housing units in Weston, or roughly 0.1% of all housing units.
- **Weston needs at least an additional 360 affordable units to meet state's 10% affordable housing goal.**
- In 2007, Weston had 2 affordable housing units

## How Many Housing Units Does Weston Need to Reach the State's 10% Affordable Housing Goal?

*Assuming Weston only added affordable units, it would need...*

8 existing affordable units + **360 new units** = **368 affordable units**  
3,674 existing housing units + **360 new units** = **4,035 total housing units**



# CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Cluster development subdivides a lot and concentrates housing on one portion of a building site while the remainder of the parcel remains protected farmland or open space.

- Introduces new type of housing stock.
- Decreases development cost.
- Many towns in Connecticut use this tool:
  - Essex
  - Madison
  - Milford
  - Simsbury

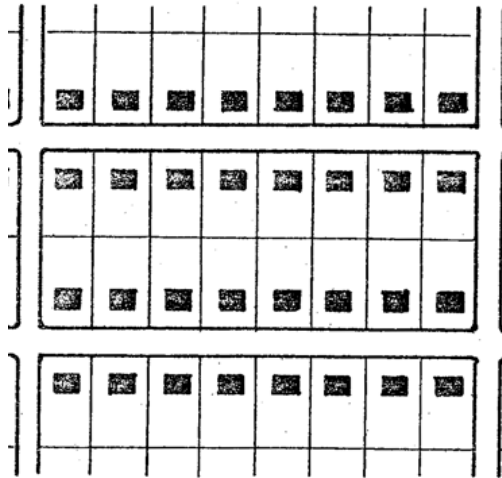


Figure 1a  
Conventional Planning

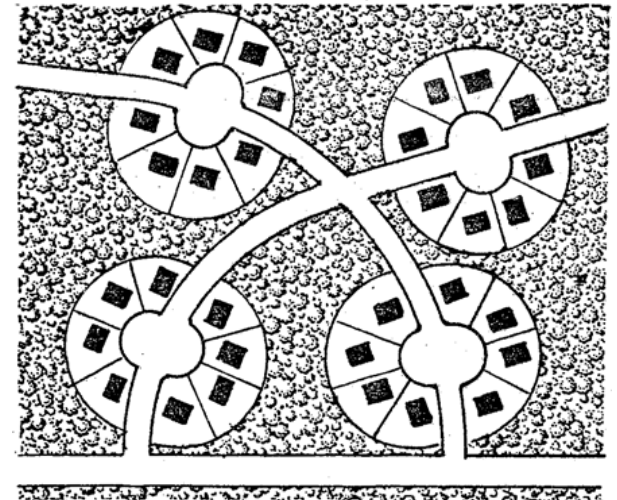


Figure 1b  
Cluster Zoning

Source: American Planning Association

# CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

## Opportunities

- Allows communities to protect development from hazard areas, and/or conserve sensitive habitat.
- The footprint of new development is reduced, therefore reducing needs for grading, paving roads, and laying infrastructure.
- Less infrastructure means that long-term maintenance costs are reduced.
- Common Ownership lots
- Homeowner does not need to maintain 2 acres
- Can be tailored to any community.
- Property values may rise.
- Varies housing stock.

## Challenges

- Less developable land.
  - Without proper implementation, developers may have to build smaller homes on smaller lots, making it difficult to maximize profit.
- Higher open space maintenance costs.
  - Depending on the particular subdivision, the burden of maintaining the protected or open areas could become the responsibility of the developer, municipality, or homeowners association.

# CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Examples in Simsbury

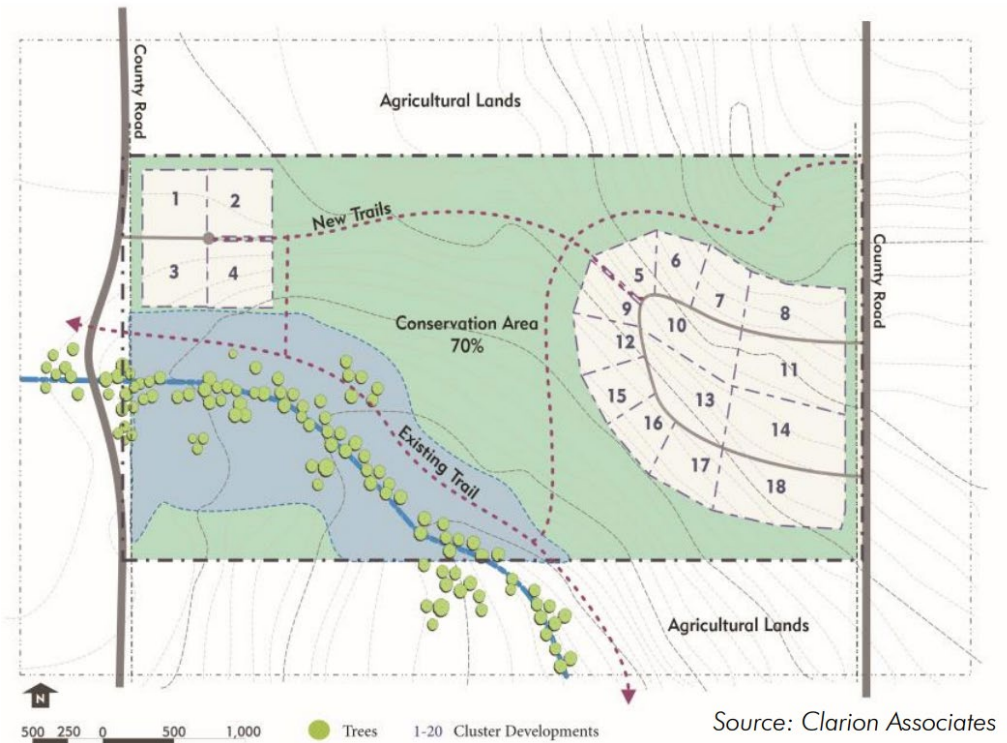


- Cluster Developments highlighted in yellow
- Notice difference in number of streets and lot size inside and outside of the cluster zone

# CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Additional Resources on Cluster Development:

- ***Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Communities*** by The EPA
- ***Cluster Subdivisions*** by the American Society of Planning Officials
- ***Cluster Development - Zoning Practice*** by Stuart Meck, FAICP
- ***Planning for Hazards*** by The Colorado Department of Local Affairs

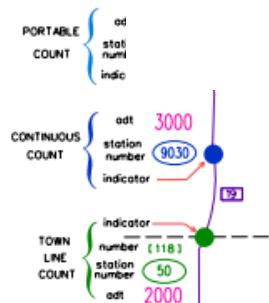
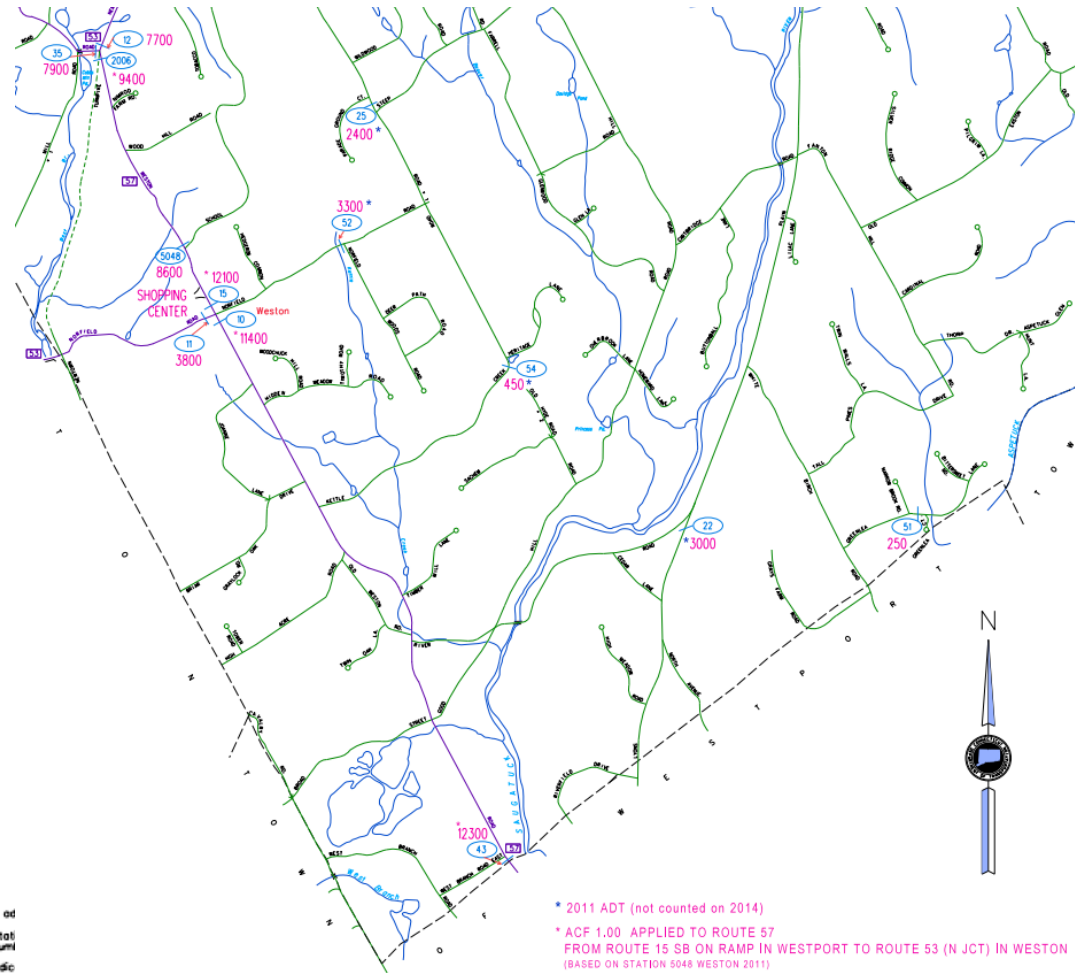


# TRANSPORTATION

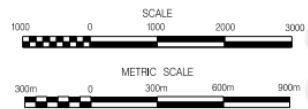
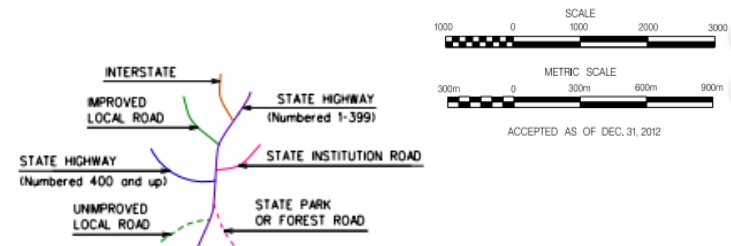


# TRAFFIC VOLUMES

- In 2014, CT-57 had the heaviest average daily traffic (ADT) volumes (vehicles per day) with between 5,800 (north) and 12,300 (south) cars
- The ADT for the shopping center declined from 15,000 vehicles per day in 2008 to 12,100 vehicles per day in 2014
- Through out Weston, traffic volumes have declined an estimated 18% since 2008



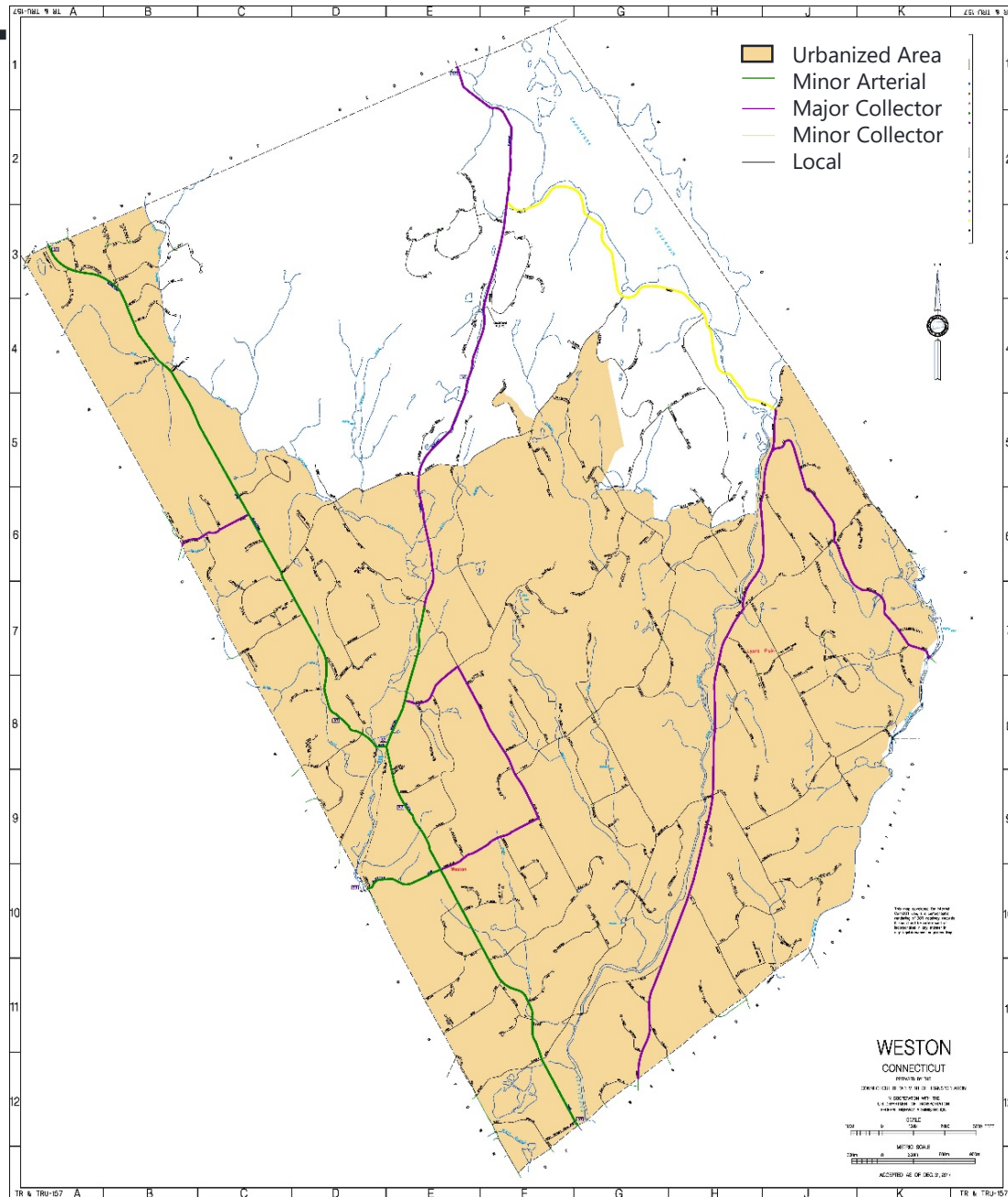
\* 2011 ADT (not counted on 2014)  
 \* ACF 1.00 APPLIED TO ROUTE 57 FROM ROUTE 15 SB ON RAMP IN WESTPORT TO ROUTE 53 (N JCT) IN WESTON (BASED ON STATION 5048 WESTON 2011)



ACCEPTED AS OF DEC. 31, 2012

# STATE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

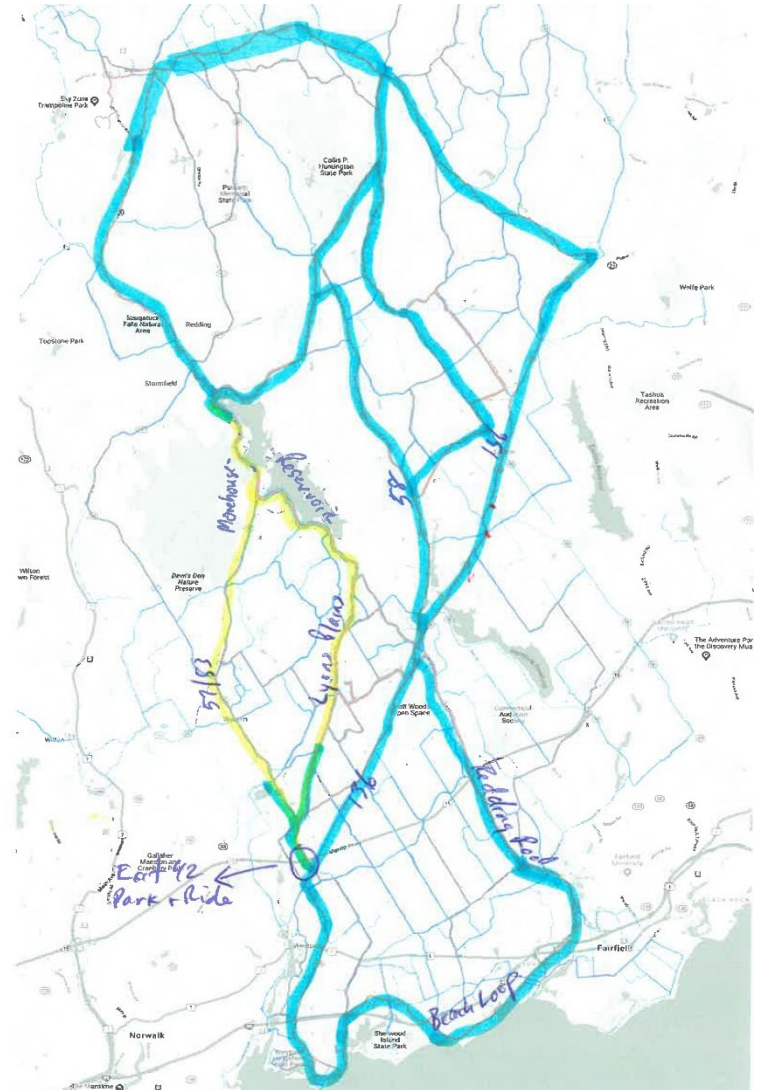
- Functional Classification is a roadway hierarchy that is used to determine eligibility for federal transportation funds.
- Roads classified as **collectors and arterials are eligible for state and federal funding programs**, including:
  - Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
  - Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)
- Collectors:
  - Newtown Turnpike (Route 53)
  - Lyons Plain Road
  - Old Hyde Road
  - Norfield Road
  - Old Redding Road
  - Valley Forge Road
- Arterials:
  - Georgetown Road (Route 57)
  - Weston Road (Route 57)



# WALKABILITY & BIKEABILITY

As part of the POCD, the Town desires to develop a framework to make Weston more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

- Transportation Planners met with stakeholders. Key findings include;
  - Pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to the Town Center is critical
  - A Complete Streets Policy for Town is needed
  - Bicycle parking needed
  - Active transportation education and programming is important and should be geared towards all ages (not just children)
  - Signage and sharrows signaling bicycle use is important
  - Events centered on bicycling build community
- A Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) Analysis was conducted through extensive field work, to classify roadways by accessibility.



Map from meeting with Jonathan Brostoff



# WALKABILITY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY



- Key safety concerns include:
  - Lack of sidewalks
  - Lack of crossing infrastructure
  - Poor visibility (curving roads and cresting hills)
  - High vehicular speeds on arterial roads
  - Lack of awareness from drivers of pedestrians' presence
  - Snow maintenance (narrows roadway)



- Presently, pedestrians in Weston typically walk:
  - To schools
  - On low traffic neighborhood streets
  - On park trails
- Walking groups:
  - Aspetuck Land Trust (Hiking)
  - Senior Center Group (Hiking - no longer in existence)

# BIKEABILITY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## BICYCLE ACCESSIBILITY



- Key safety concerns include:
  - High vehicular speeds / speeding
  - Lack of bicycle infrastructure
  - Poor visibility (curving roads and cresting hills)
  - Lack of awareness from drivers of bicyclists' presence
  - Snow maintenance (narrow roadway)
- Presently, bicyclists in Weston typically ride:
  - Key corridors include Lyons Plains Rd, Route 136, Route 57, Route 53, Godfrey Rd, Valley Forge Rd, Lord's Hwy, Treadwell Ln)
  - Mountain Bike Trails
- Bicycling groups:
  - Informal group rides (often departing from Merritt Parkway / Route 53 Park & Ride)
  - Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club (Regional Group)

# BIKEABILITY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

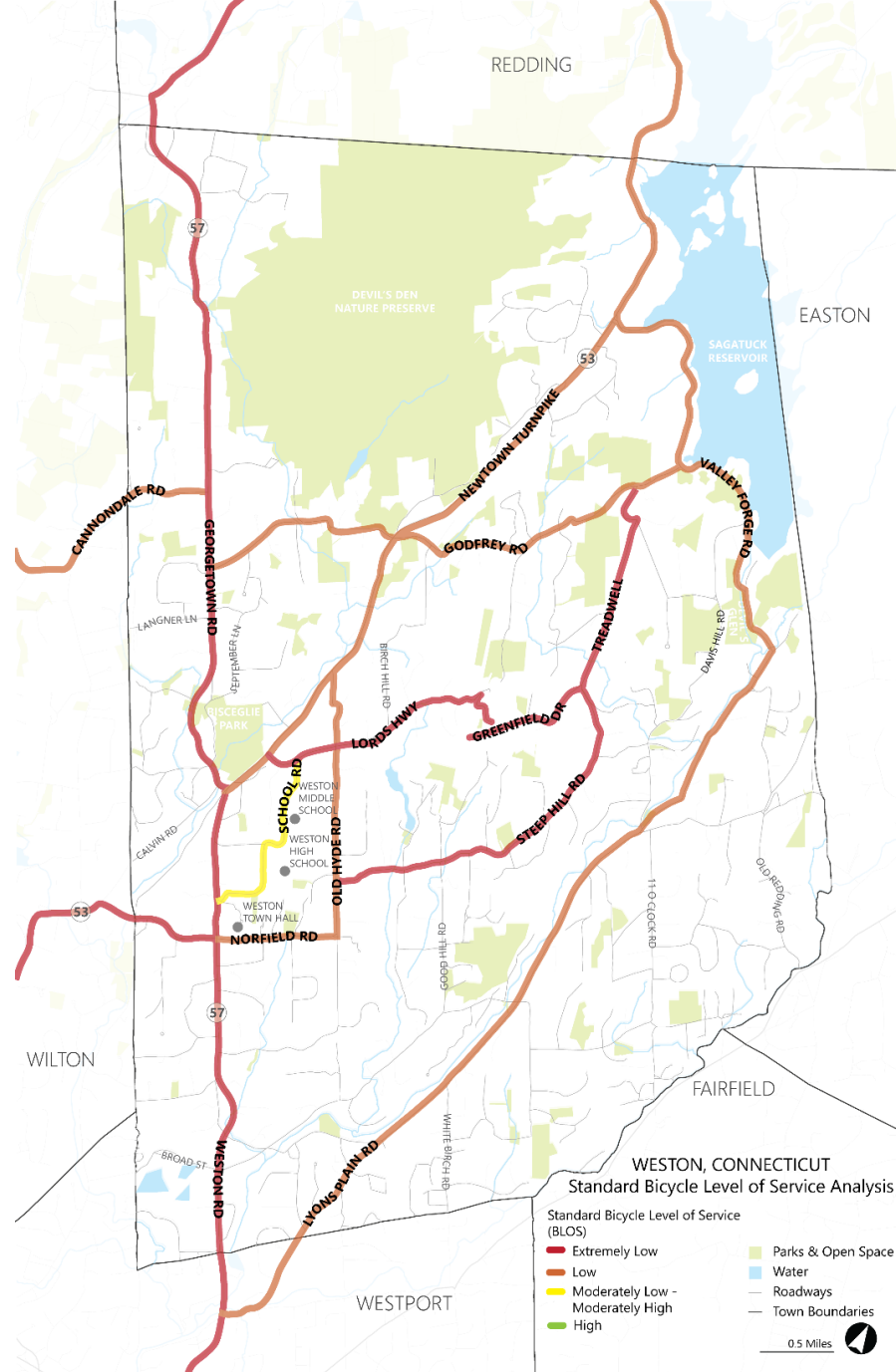
## BICYCLE LEVEL OF SERVICE (BLOS)

Lane Width	Score	Shoulder Width	Score	AADT	Score	Pavement Condition	Score	Road Complexity	Score
14+	3	5+	3	<2000	5	New	3	Simple	2
12-13	2	4	2	2000 – 3500	4	Good	2	Moderate	1
10-12	1	3	1	3501 – 4500	3	Fair	1	Complex	0
<10	0	0-2	0	4501 – 6500	2	Poor	0		
				6501 – 8500	1				
				8501+	0				

Classification	Standard BLOS	Local BLOS
High	>3.5	>1.7
Moderately Low - Moderately High	2 – 3.49	1.6
Low	1.5 – 1.9	1.4 – 1.5
Extremely Low	<1.5	<1.4

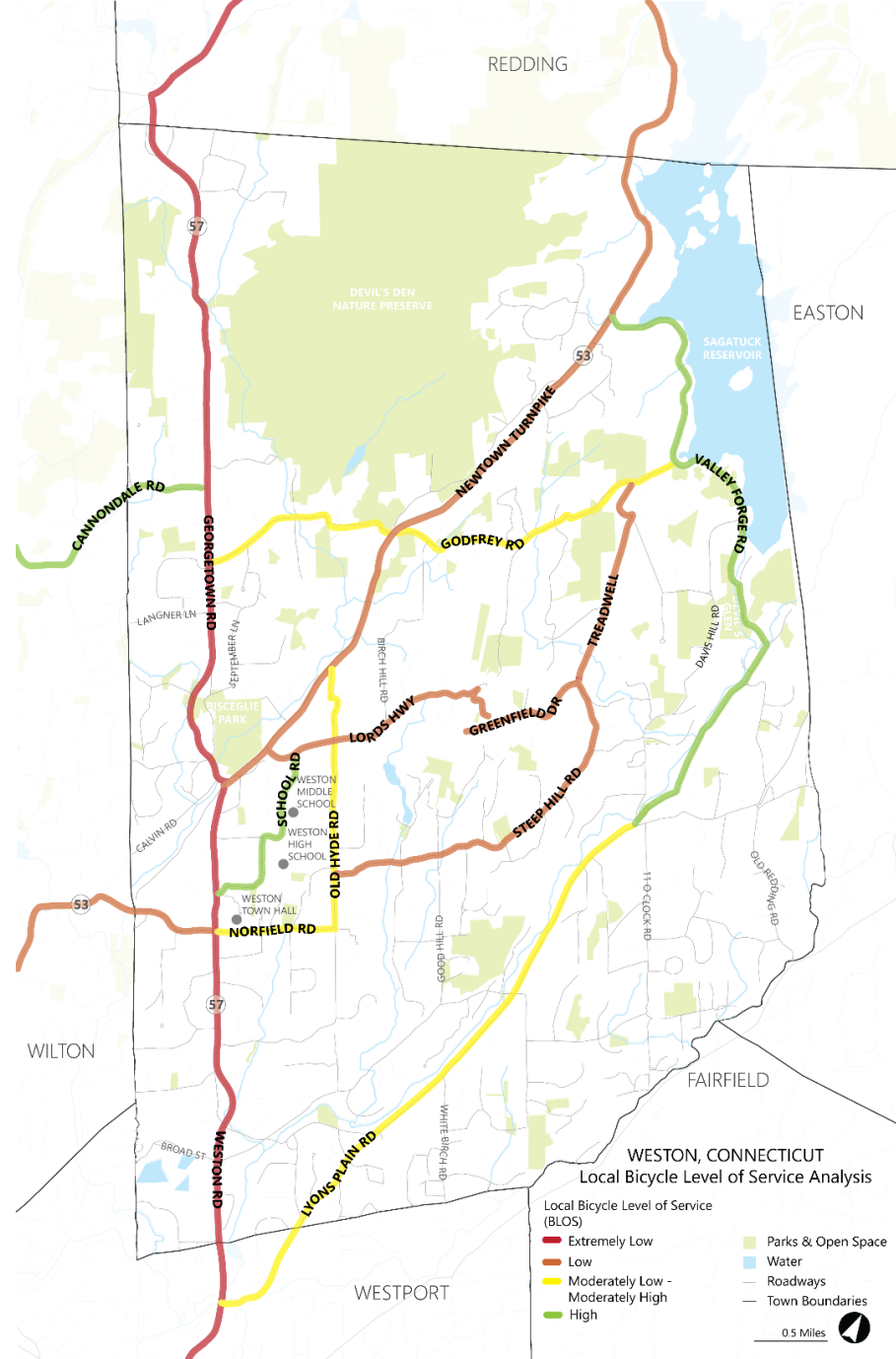
# BIKEABILITY: STANDARD LEVEL OF SERVICE

- Compared to national standards, none of the road ways in Weston that were studied provide a high bicycle level of service
- The highest level of service is on School Rd.
- The lowest level of service on Route 57



# BIKEABILITY: LOCAL LEVEL OF SERVICE

- Taking into account the local and Town character, which includes winding country-esque roads, we developed a local level of service analysis
- High levels of service can be found on School Rd. (1.1 mi), Valley Forge Rd. (3.7 mi), and Cannondale Rd. (0.4 mi)
  - Totalling 5.2 miles of fragmented biking
- Extremely low levels of service can be found on Route 57.
- This is an initial analysis. Strategies and recommendations will be forthcoming as part of the POCD update process.
- Based on our analysis and expertise, the LLOS is the more appropriate rating system for this road network.



# TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

## **Recently Completed Projects**

- 2016 Town Center Road Safety Audit (RSA)
- 2012 Weston Route 57-School Road Intersection Study

## **RSA Recommendations (Unfunded)**

- Clear overgrown vegetation on School Road and Weston Road
- Upgrade existing school zone signs and activate flashing lights
- Upgrade all pedestrian and advanced warning signage to dayglow green
- Evaluate traffic signal timing at the School Road and Norfield Road intersections
- Install a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon at the crosswalk located in front of the Center plaza.
- Evaluate access management and consider consolidating driveways at the Center plaza
- Install sidewalk on the western side of Weston Rd to connect the School Rd crosswalk with the plaza

## **Longer Range Projects (Unfunded)**

- School Road – CT 57 - Town Hall Sidewalk
- CT 57/ School Rd Intersection Improvements
- CT 57/ Norfield Rd Intersection Improvements
- CT 57 (Georgetown Rd)/ CT 53 (Newton Tpke) Intersection Study
- CT 57 (Weston Rd)/ Good Hill Rd Intersection Study

# GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Town submitted a LOTCIP grant application to make Weston Center safer and more pedestrian-friendly.

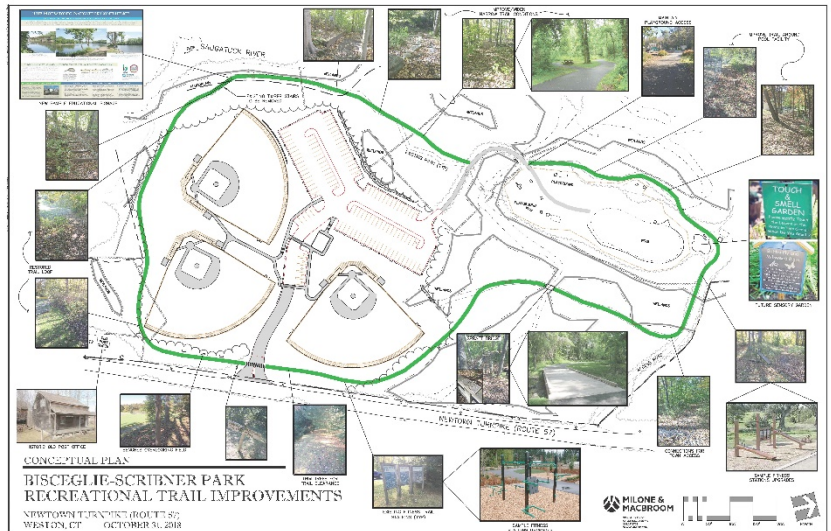
If funded the project would:

- Construct a sidewalk network
- Provide traffic relief on Rt 57 at the entrance to School Rd.
- Improve the intersection at School Rd.
- Create a 150-ft right turn lane on the N-bound Rt 57 approach to School Rd.
- Build a "bump out" on S-bound side to relieve congestion
- Replace traffic light

The town also submitted a Recreational Trails application to improve the trail network in Bisceglie-Scribner Park.

If funded the project would:

- Replace fitness stations with more modern equipment
- Physically improve the trail and reconnect the trail loop



# NEXT STEPS

## February Topics Analysis

- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Land Use & Zoning
- Parks, Open Space & Recreation
- Community Facilities & Infrastructure

