

PLAN OF
CONSERVATION &
DEVELOPMENT
New Fairfield

DEMOGRAPHICS AND
HOUSING

DRAFT

MARCH 2013

PREPARED FOR:
TOWN OF NEW FAIRFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION

PREPARED BY:



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DEMOGRAPHICS

This memorandum provides background on New Fairfield's population - its characteristics, trends and regional context. This information will help facilitate planning decisions insofar as it explains current population conditions and recent and expected trends that will influence future development. Additional demographic data which may be released later in the planning process will be incorporated into the final Plan of Conservation and Development.

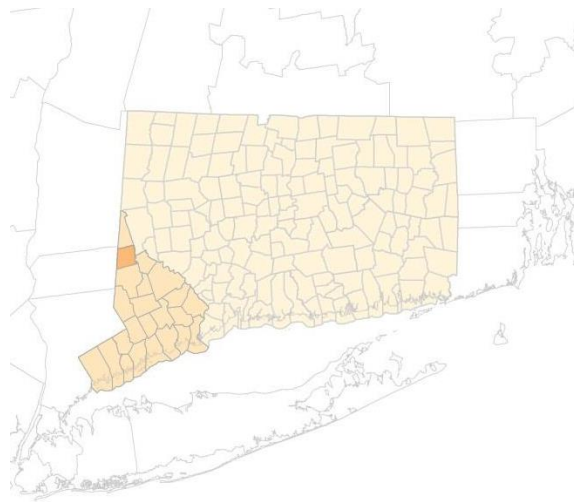
New Fairfield is located in the western portion of Connecticut, on the border with the State of New York, as seen in the map below. It is in Fairfield County situated north of Danbury in an area of the County that is somewhat distinct from the higher density coastal parts. It is bordered by the City of Danbury, and the towns of Brookfield and Sherman in Fairfield County; New Milford in Litchfield County; and Patterson and Southeast in New York State.

CURRENT POPULATION

The 2010 population of New Fairfield reported by the U.S. Census is 13,881, a slight decrease of -0.5% from 2000. Census numbers indicate that New Fairfield gained approximately 2,700 people between 1980 and 2000, as shown in Figure 1.

New Fairfield's most recent population decline is in sharp contrast to the growth it experienced since the middle of the last century, as well as the steady growth of the County. The table on the following page shows that New Fairfield was only one of two towns in the area to experience declining population from 2000 to 2010, along with neighboring Sherman. New Fairfield and Sherman, along with Brookfield, shared similar rates of growth through 2000, all more than tripling their populations from 1960 to 2000. However, Brookfield maintained its high level of growth over the last ten years, thereby remaining consistent with the rest of Fairfield County and the State.

MAP 1



Change in population within the Town of New Fairfield has not been evenly dispersed throughout the community. The map titled *Total Change in Population, 2000 to 2010 by Census Block Groups* shows that half of the block groups in the Town actually gained population, and a third of the block groups changed by single digit amounts that are considered statistically insignificant.

Denser population centers are located in the southeastern portion of the town, along the borders with Danbury and the State of New York town of Brewster. This is illustrated in the map titled *Population Density, 2010 by Census Block Group*.

TABLE 1

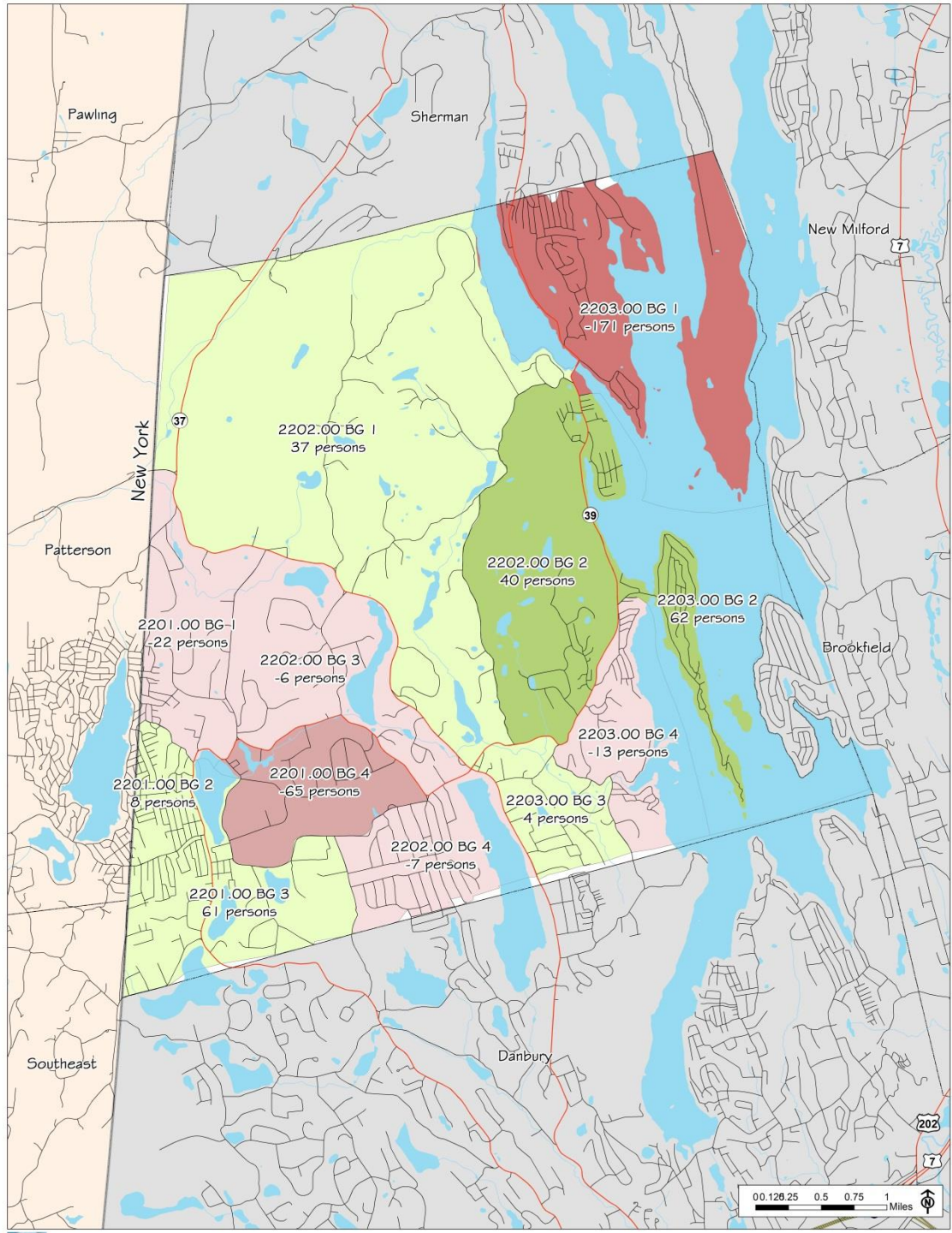
New Fairfield, Region and State Historic Populations, 1960 - 2010

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1960-2010 Change*	2000-2010 Change
New Fairfield	3,355	6,991	11,260	12,911	13,953	13,881	313.74%	-0.52%
New Milford	8,318	14,601	19,420	23,629	27,121	28,142	238.33%	3.76%
Brookfield	3,405	9,688	12,872	14,113	15,664	16,452	383.17%	5.03%
Danbury	39,382	50,781	60,470	65,585	74,848	80,893	105.41%	8.08%
Patterson, NY	2,853	4,124	7,247	8,679	11,306	12,023	321.42%	6.34%
Sherman	825	1,459	2,281	2,809	3,827	3,581	334.06%	-6.43%
Southeast, NY	-	9,901	11,416	14,929	17,316	18,404	85.88%	6.28%
Fairfield County	653,589	792,814	807,143	827,645	882,567	916,829	40.28%	3.88%
Litchfield County	119,856	144,091	156,769	174,092	182,193	189,927	58.46%	4.24%
Putnam County, NY	31,722	56,696	77,193	83,941	95,745	99,710	214.32%	4.14%
Connecticut	2,535,234	3,031,709	3,107,576	3,287,116	3,405,565	3,574,097	17.90%	4.90%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

*Southeast, 1970-2010 Change

MAP 2



Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut
Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Change in Total Population
2000 to 2010
by Census Block Group

Percentage Change



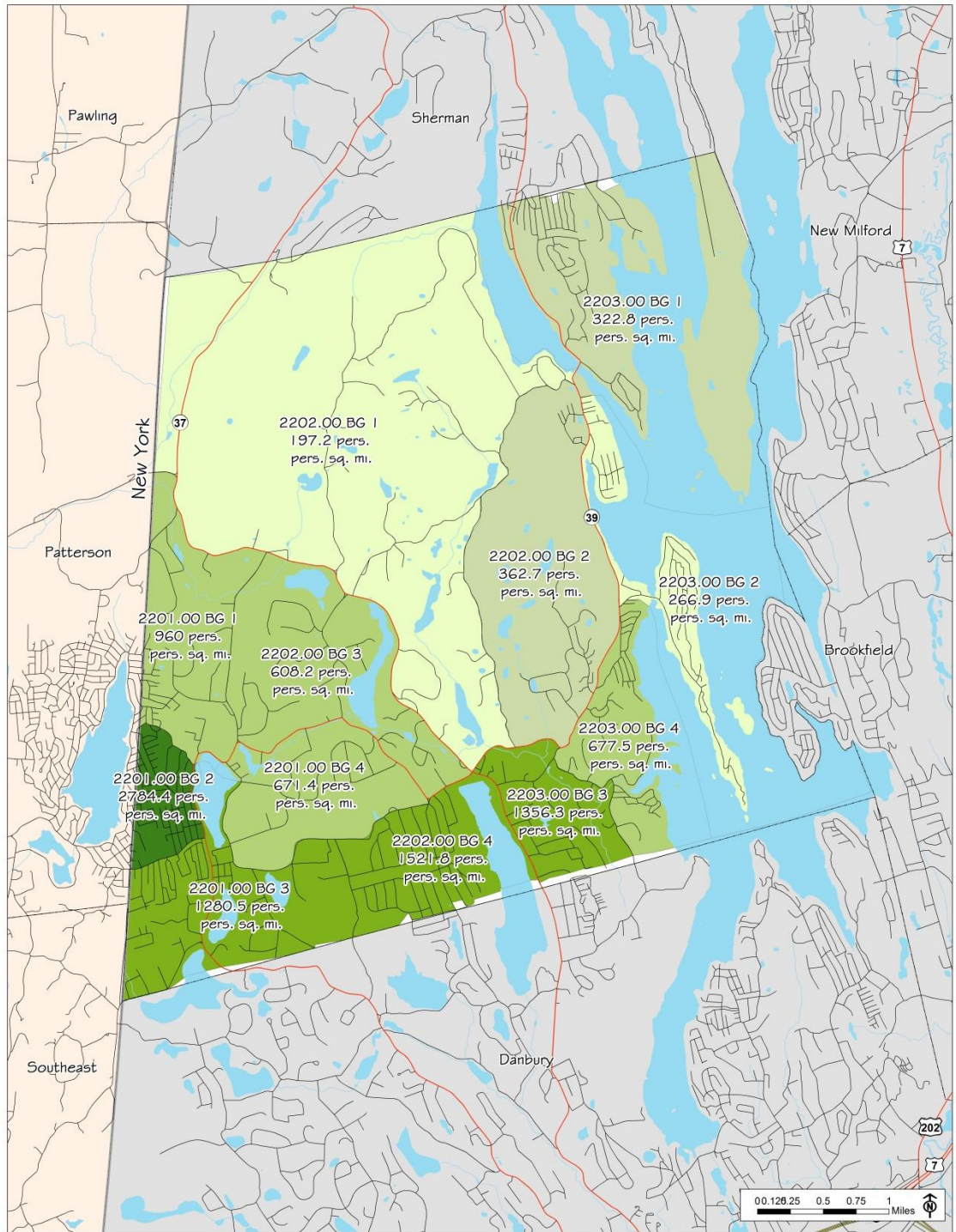
Sources:
Base Map: CT DEP - CT Town Boundaries,
CT Hydrography (2012)
NY GIS Cleanghouse NY- Town Boundaries,
NY Hydrography (2012)
StreetMaps USA (2011)

This map is intended for planning purposes only.
Dimensions may not be exact.

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MAP 3



Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut
Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Population Density, 2010
by Census Block Group

Persons Per Square Mile

- 0 - 266
- 267 - 362
- 363 - 960
- 961 - 1521
- 1522 - 2784

Sources:
Base Map: CT DEP - CT Town Boundaries,
CT Hydrography (2012)
NY's GIS Clearinghouse NY - Town Boundaries,
NY Hydrography (2012)
StreetMaps USA (2011)

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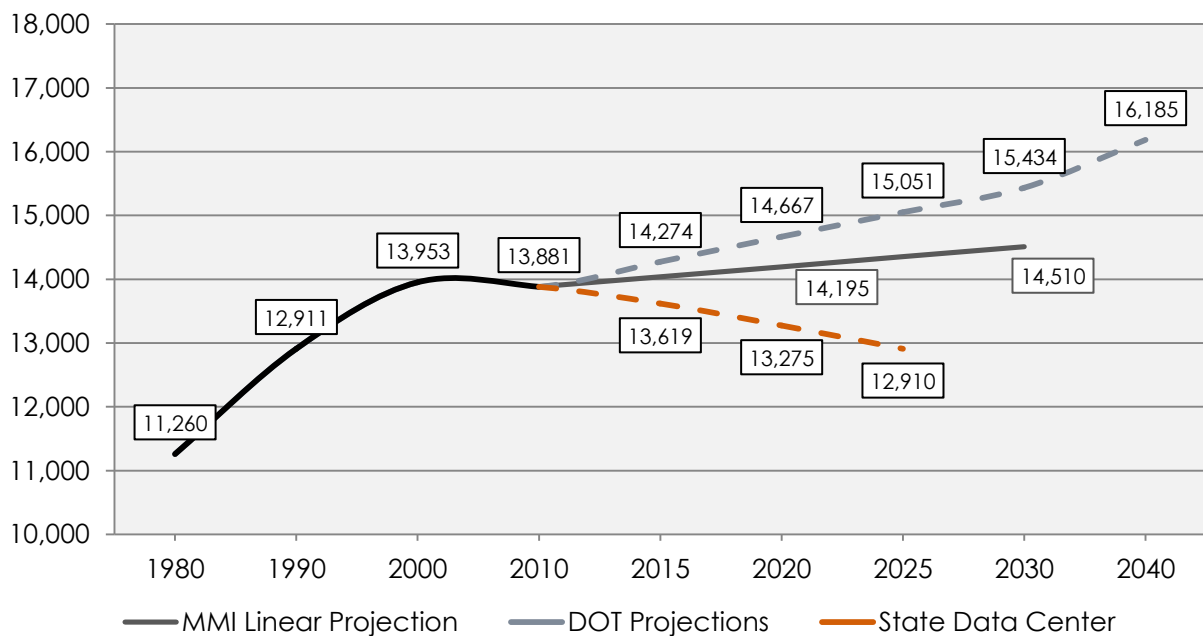
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Connecticut State Data Center at the University of Connecticut and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) prepare population projections for communities in Connecticut. The two sets of projections are shown below, and differ significantly. The State Data Center is projecting a continued decline in New Fairfield's population, while the DOT is projecting a steady increase. The Data Center's projections represent a worst-case scenario, with the overall population declining 4.4% by 2020, despite a projected 3.0% increase in Fairfield County population. In contrast, the DOT projections forecast an increase of 5.6% in New Fairfield by 2020 and Fairfield County is projected to increase by 4.1% over the same time period. Given lower annual births in New Fairfield since 2008, and relatively little residential development activity over the last few years, the DOT projections appear to exaggerate the potential for population growth in New Fairfield over the next decade. The projections below present two extremes, with the likely population growth pattern located somewhere in between.

Milone and MacBroom prepared exponential and linear projections to try to account for some of the discrepancies in available projections. The two models were both run at the block group level over different time intervals to generate four different projections. The linear projection using ten-year intervals over 30 years at the block group level appeared the most reasonable and is shown on the chart below.

FIGURE 1

New Fairfield Population Projections



Source: U.S. Census, Projections from CT State Data Center and UConn, and CT DOT

ELEMENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

Population changes result from natural increase (births-deaths) and net migration. Overall, annual births in New Fairfield have declined during the last decade, as shown in Table 2. Although other communities and the State have experienced a decline in annual births as well, the decline in New Fairfield has been more significant. Additionally, national fertility and birth rates have declined precipitously since 2007 according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

TABLE 2
New Fairfield
Vital Statistics 2000-2010

	Births	Deaths
2000	178	62
2001	186	70
2002	171	66
2003	143	75
2004	166	72
2005	126	63
2006	128	62
2007	125	63
2008	125	74
2009	85	87
2010	117	67
Total	1,550	761
<i>Source: CT DPH</i>		

Annual births are down 13% from 2000 to 2010 in Connecticut, compared to a 34% decline in New Fairfield. The number of deaths each year has remained relatively stable. The Town's natural increase from 2000 to 2010 was 789 people. Given that the 2010 Census indicated a decline in residents between 2000 and 2010, one can assume the community experienced an out-migration of approximately 850 people over the last decade.

AGE

New Fairfield's population is rapidly aging, more than any neighboring towns, the County, or the State. Between 2000 and 2010 the median age in New Fairfield rose 13.67% from 2000 figures, to 42.4 years. While the increase was substantial, New Fairfield does not have the highest median age in the region, and is still well below the average for neighboring Litchfield County. Statewide trends show aging rural populations, with less significant changes in age cohorts for more urban areas. These numbers are reflected by the relative low median age and rate of median age growth in Danbury, and in Fairfield County as a whole, which has several large urbanized areas.

TABLE 3

Change in Median Age, 2000 - 2010

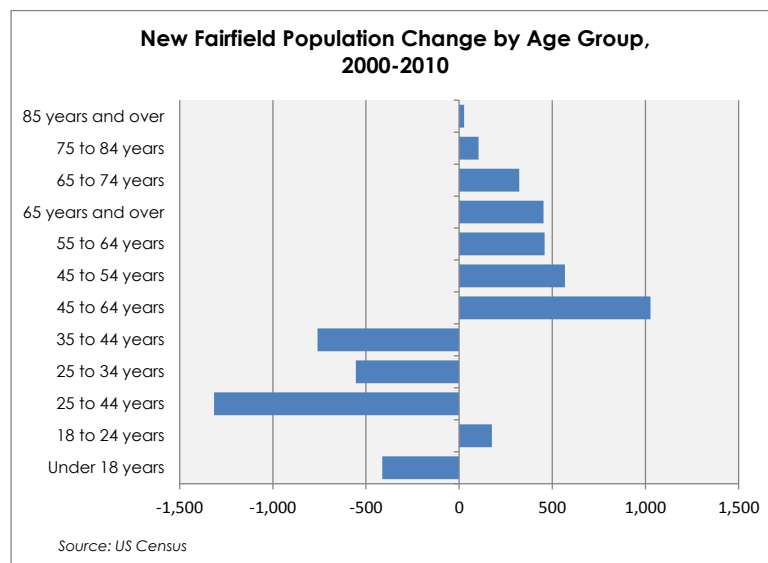
	2000	2010	2000-2010 Change
New Fairfield	37.3	42.4	13.67%
New Milford	36.8	41.4	12.50%
Brookfield	39.2	43.5	10.97%
Danbury	35.2	36.2	2.84%
Patterson, NY	35.6	40.0	12.36%
Sherman	42.1	47.4	12.59%
Southeast, NY	37.2	41.7	12.10%
Fairfield County	37.3	39.5	5.90%
Litchfield County	39.6	44.4	12.12%
Putnam County, NY	37.4	41.9	12.03%
Connecticut	37.4	40.0	6.95%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

As Table 3 shows, all surveyed communities experienced at least moderate aging between 2000 and 2010. The median age for the State in 2010 was 40 years, up 7% from 2000.

Looking more specifically at changes in population by age cohorts within New Fairfield, it is evident that New Fairfield has experienced a loss in children and young working age population, which correlates to its increasing median age. Figure 3 shows changes by age groups from 2000 to 2010. There was a slight increase in the 18- to 24-year old population, but all other groups under 44 lost population. The most significant loss was those 25-44, which represents both the young working-age population and the young families, suggesting that the population may continue to age, with the presence of fewer families. The loss of children and the corresponding increase in older age groups evident in Figure 2 has implications on facilities and service planning for the Town.

FIGURE 2



The following figure and accompanying table show the population of New Fairfield by age and sex for the year 2010. As is evident from the graph, a significant proportion (47%) of the total population was between the ages of 40 and 69. In contrast, 25% of the population was between the ages of 5 and 19. And the youngest population group, those under the age of 5 is smaller than previous cohorts, reflecting the low birth resident rates present since mid-decade. The population is split rather evenly between males and females.

FIGURE 3

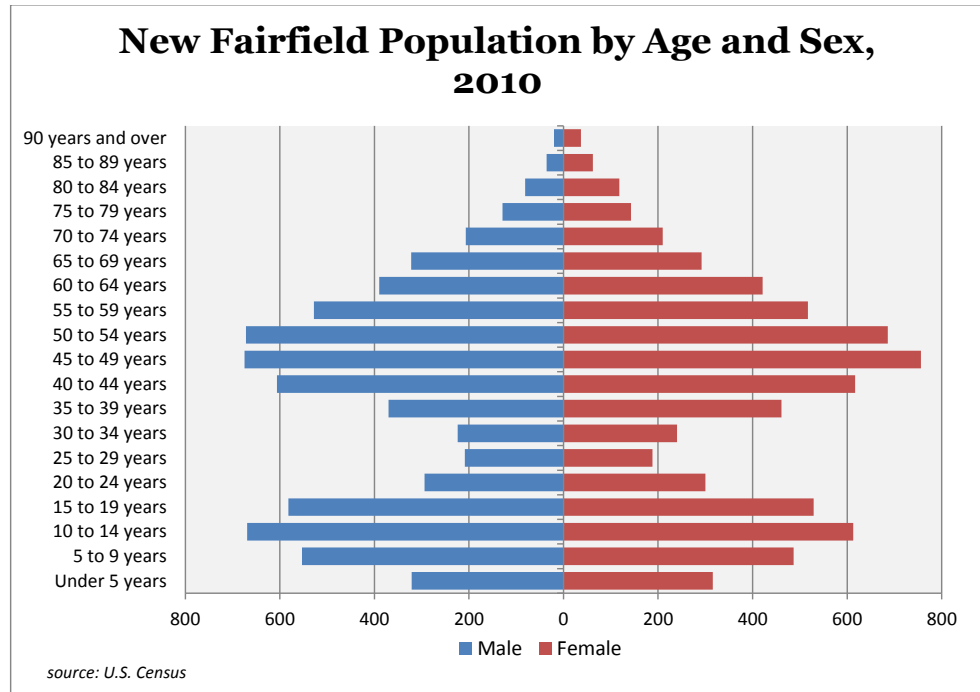


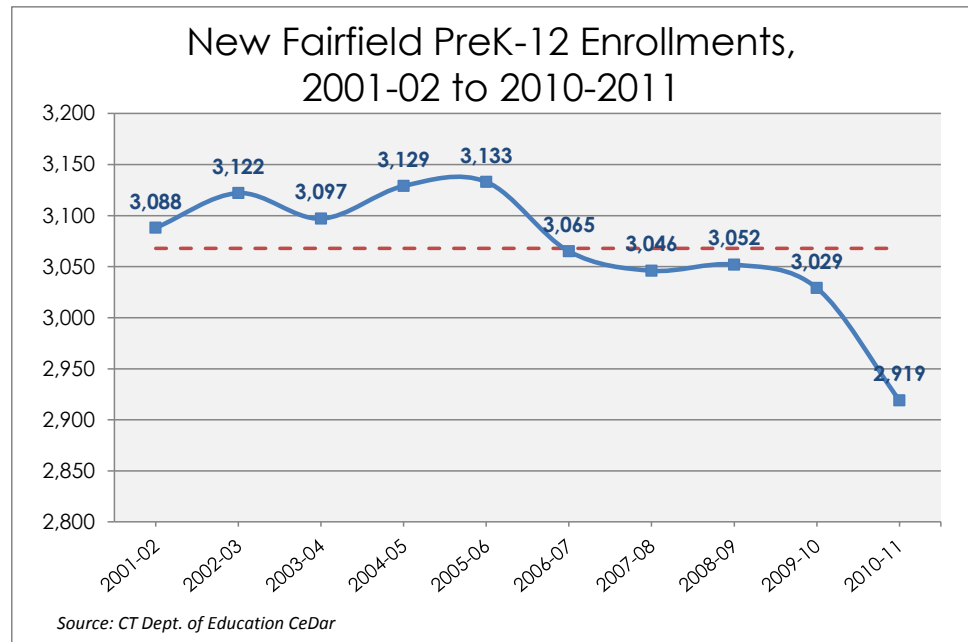
TABLE 4

2010 Population by Age and Sex			
	Male	Female	Total
Under 5 years	321	316	637
5 to 9 years	553	487	1040
10 to 14 years	669	613	1282
15 to 19 years	582	529	1111
20 to 24 years	294	300	594
25 to 29 years	209	188	397
30 to 34 years	224	240	464
35 to 39 years	370	461	831
40 to 44 years	606	617	1223
45 to 49 years	675	756	1431
50 to 54 years	672	686	1358
55 to 59 years	528	517	1045
60 to 64 years	390	421	811
65 to 69 years	322	292	614
70 to 74 years	207	210	417
75 to 79 years	129	143	272
80 to 84 years	81	118	199
85 to 89 years	36	62	98
90 years and over	20	37	57
TOTAL	6,888	6,993	13,881

SCHOOL AGE POPULATION

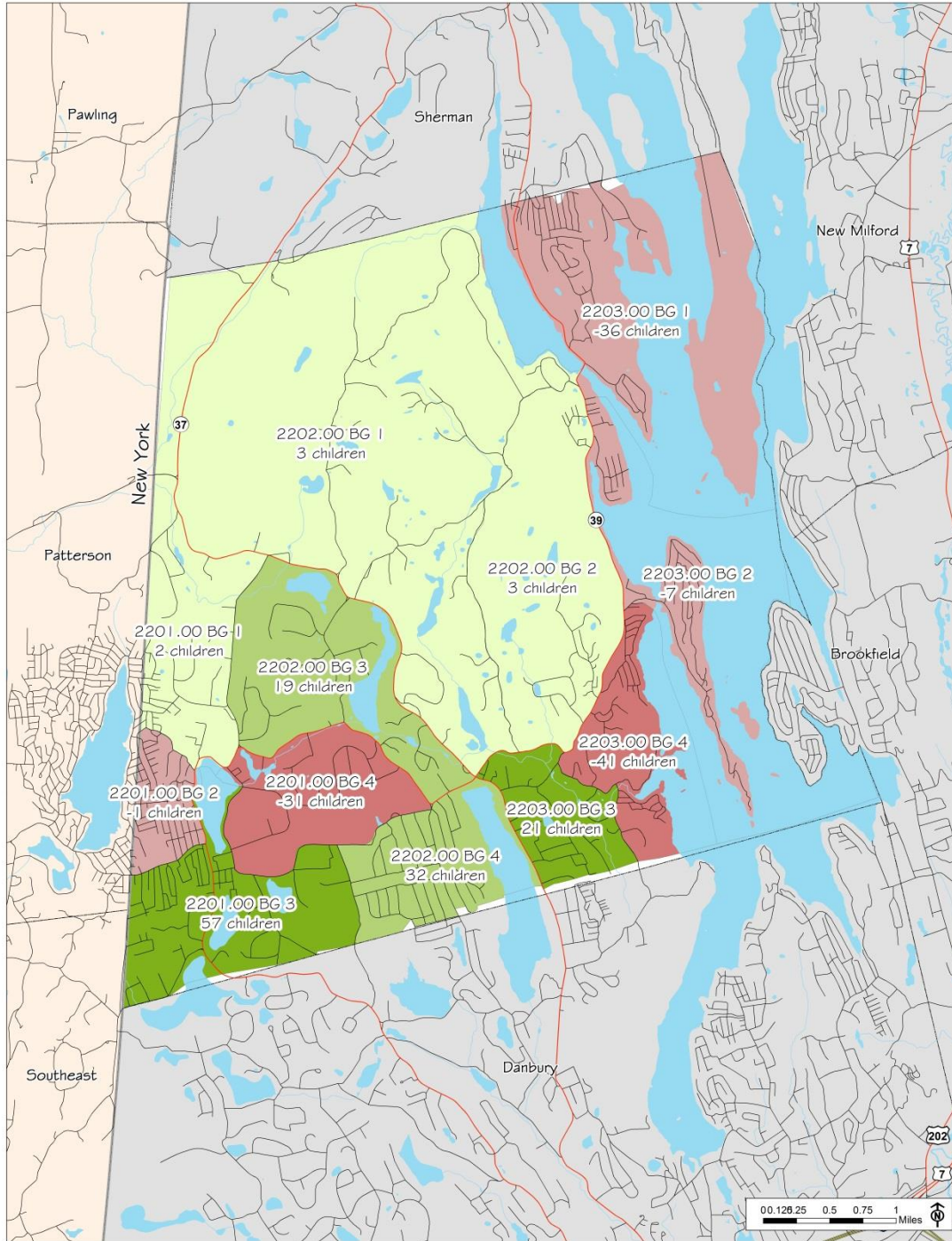
A significant decline in the population under 18 can have an impact on a community's school system, especially if certain neighborhoods are declining much faster than others. The map on the following page shows change in the school age population (ages 5-17) at the Census Block Group level from 2000 to 2010. While most of the comparable Block Groups experienced no change or a decline in school age population, the three block groups on the southern edge of the Town, along with the Block Group to the north of Bigelow Corners, experienced moderate increases in this age group.

FIGURE 4



Enrollment in the New Fairfield School District has declined moderately since reaching a high in 2005-2006. The District's enrollment decreased by 214 students, or almost 7% from 2005-06 to 2010-11. However, prior to 2010, New Fairfield saw relatively stable student enrollments, still with a slight decline, staying around 1-2% of the historic median of 3,068 students. Accounting for low birthrates, especially in the year 2009, and a decreasing overall population, especially in young families, it is expected New Fairfield's student enrollment will continue to decline in the future.

MAP 4



Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut
Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Change in School Age Population, 5-17
2000-2010
by Block Group

Percent Change (2000-2010)



Sources:
Base Map: CT DEP - CT Town Boundaries,
CT Hydrography (2012)
NYS GIS Clearinghouse NY- Town Boundaries,
NY Hydrography (2012)
StreetMaps USA (2011)

This map is intended for planning purposes only.
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RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION

New Fairfield's racial composition is extremely homogenous, especially in contrast to the racial composition of both the State of Connecticut and Fairfield County. The figure below shows the breakdown of New Fairfield's 2010 population by race. The majority, or 94.8%, is white. In contrast, Fairfield County's 2010 population was 74.8% white. As shown in the table to the left, New Fairfield has seen an increase in all non-white racial populations. Some of these increases may be the result of self-reporting differences.

The Hispanic population, of any race, in New Fairfield grew by 55% from about 400 people in 2000 to 611 in 2010. This growth is consistent with growth in the Hispanic population throughout Fairfield County, which was about 48% from 2000 to 2010.

FIGURE 5

New Fairfield 2010 Racial Composition

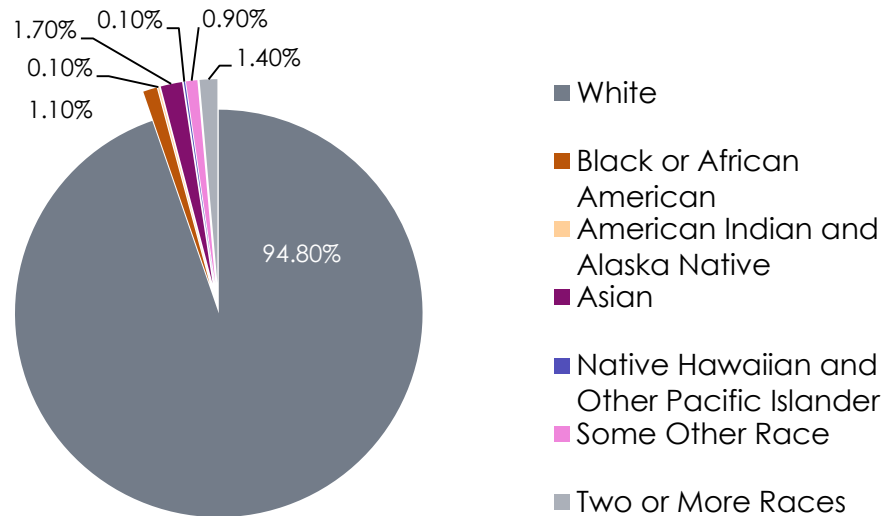


TABLE 5

Change in New Fairfield Racial Composition, 2000-2010

	2000	2010	Change
White	13,511	13,161	-2.6%
Black or African American	54	149	175.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	5	18	260.0%
Asian	177	232	31.1%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island	1	8	700.0%
Some Other Race	72	123	70.8%
Two or More Races	133	190	42.9%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

HOUSEHOLDS

In addition to changes in age and racial composition, the types of households in which New Fairfield residents live are changing. The Town experienced a small increase in total households between 2000 and 2010, of 164 or about 3.5%. More significantly, the number of single-person households increased by almost 29% and non-family households increased by 24%, while the number of family households did not change and the number of Families with children declined by 7% in New Fairfield (see Table 5 below). New Fairfield's change in household composition was far more drastic than in Fairfield County and the State; however it is far more in line with neighboring Litchfield County, which has seen a shift towards smaller households and a decline in families with children.

TABLE 6

Change in Household Types, 2000 to 2010

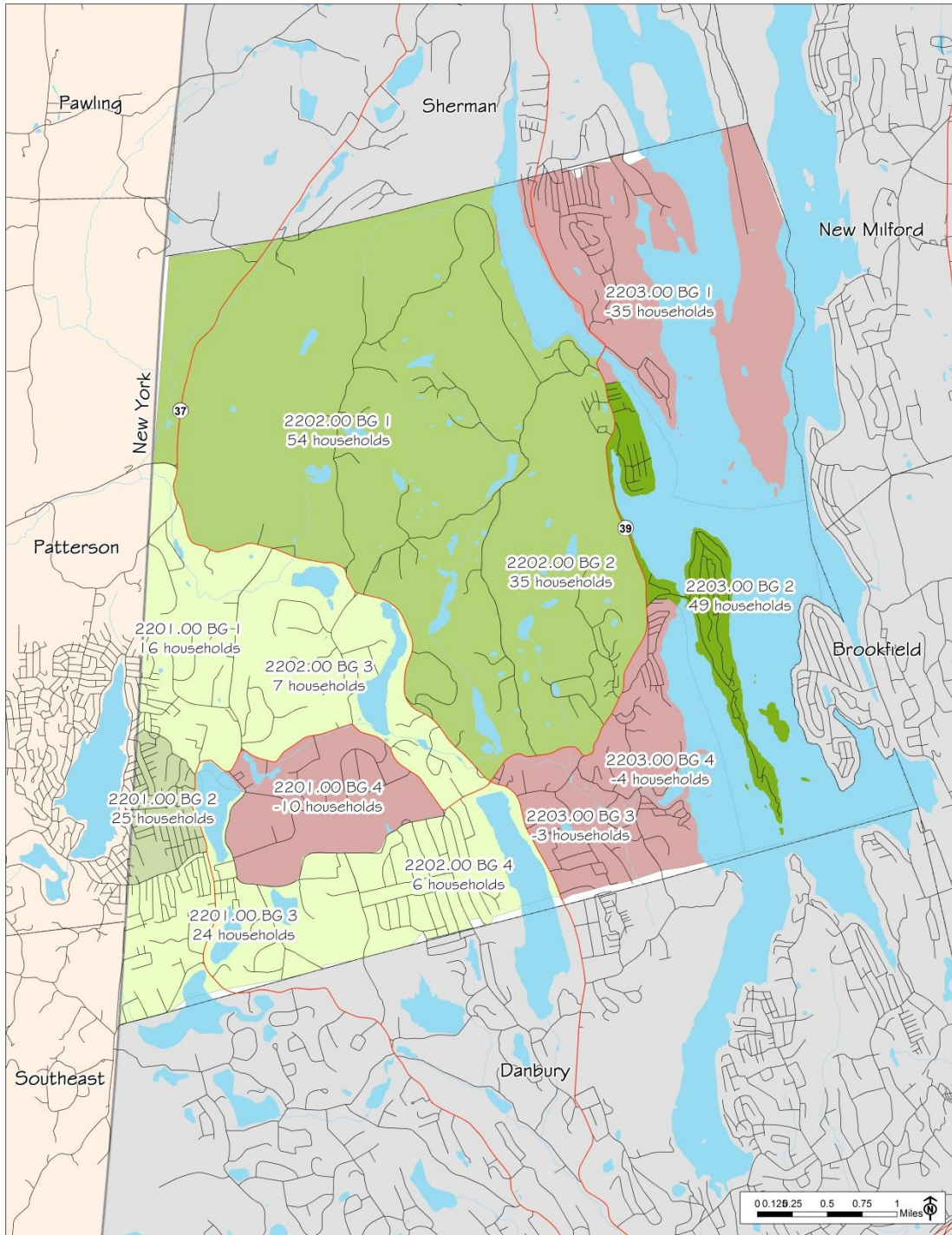
	1-Person HH	Families	Families with Children	Total HH
New Fairfield	29%	0%	-7%	6%
New Milford	14%	3%	-5%	6%
Brookfield	34%	4%	-3%	10%
Danbury	7%	7%	8%	6%
Patterson, NY	34%	5%	-3%	11%
Sherman	4%	-6%	-12%	-3%
Southeast, NY	24%	4%	-4%	8%
Fairfield County	7%	2%	2%	3%
Litchfield County	13%	4%	-6%	7%
Putnam County, NY	20%	4%	-3%	7%
Connecticut	9%	3%	-1%	5%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

As with other population trends, the only municipality in the area to see an increase in the number of families with children, and the municipality that saw the greatest increase in families overall, was the more urbanized Danbury. It had similar levels of overall household growth as the region, but has managed to retain its current household mix.

Within the Town of New Fairfield, the change in the number of households was very uneven as seen by the map titled *Change in Households by Census Block Group, 2000-2010*. Five of the 12 block groups in the Town saw modest increases in the number of households, in line with the average for the Town of between 0 and 10% growth in the ten year period. Four block groups actually saw a decline in their number of households, and the remaining 3 block groups grew their households more than 10%. The changes in the number of households correspond to changes in population, as seen in the map titled *Change in Total Population*, in the previous section, especially the growth in both population and households in the Candelwood Knolls area.

MAP 5



Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut
Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Change in Households
by Census Block Group
2000 to 2010

Percent Change (2000-2010)



Sources:
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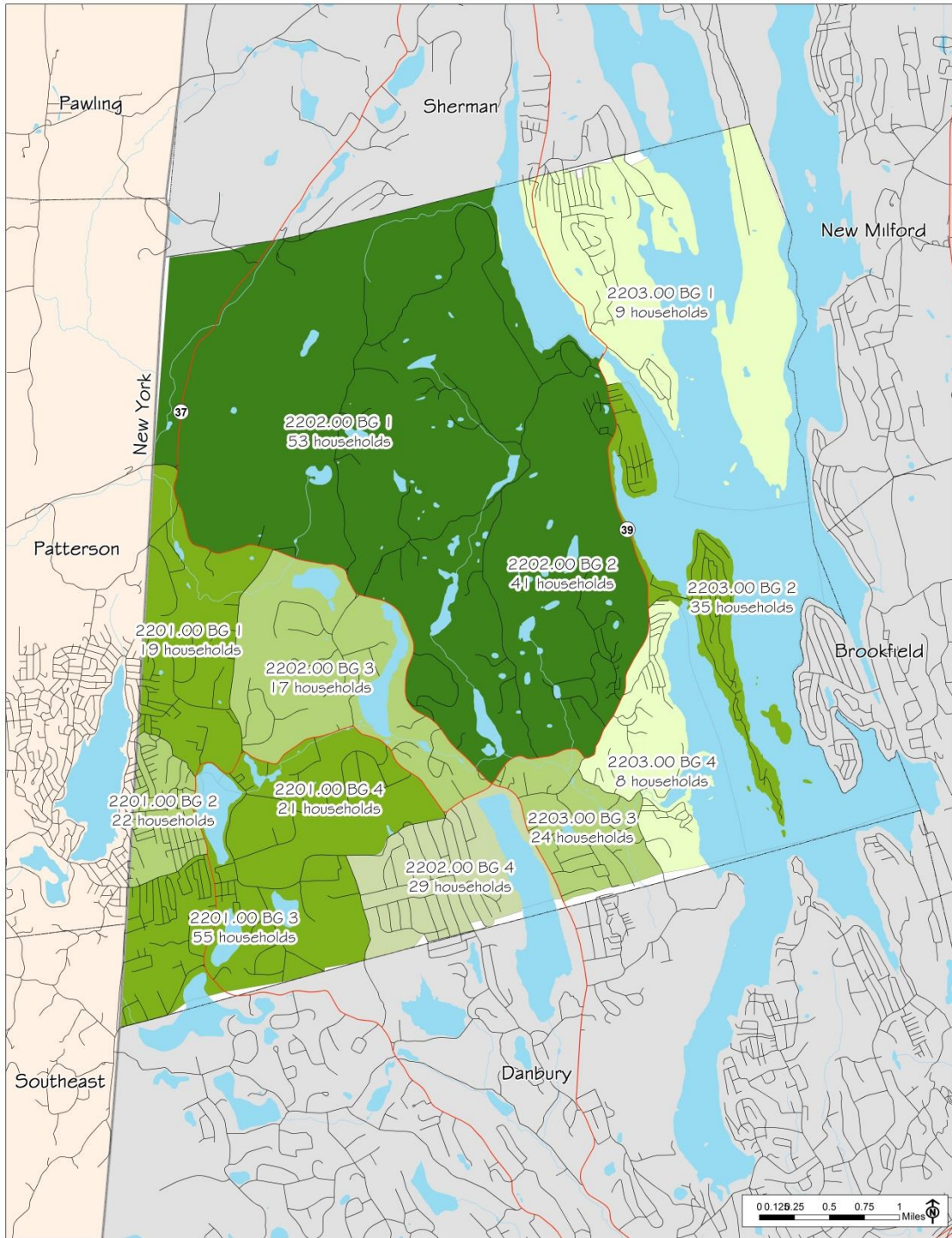
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Additionally, while New Fairfield experienced only 6% growth in the overall number of households, the number of households with members over the age of 65 grew by 37.8%, from 881 in 2000 to 1,214 in 2010. Change in households headed by a person age 65 or over by Census Block Group are shown in Map 6. Every area of the Town saw a significant increase in the number of households with members over 65 years of age, with some areas seeing increases over 50%. The reduction in size and aging of householders has implications for the future of housing units in the community, especially when the economy recovers and older householders decide to leave their family homes. If there are not new families to take the larger units, there can be an imbalance between the need for new smaller units, and a surplus of unneeded larger units.

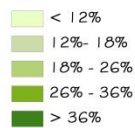
MAP 6



 **Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut**
Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Change in Households
with Persons +65 Years Old
by Census Block Group
2000 to 2010

Percent Change (2000-2010)



Sources:
Base Map: CT DEP - CT Town Boundaries,
CT Hydrography (2012)
NYS GIS Clearinghouse NY- Town Boundaries,
NY Hydrography (2012)
StreetMaps USA (2011)

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 **MILONE & MACBROOM**
Engineering, Architecture,
and Environmental Science

WHERE IS NEW FAIRFIELD'S POPULATION HEADING?

New Fairfield's population has remained quite stable for the last 20 years, following a quadrupling of population since 1960. Various projections show a slightly contracting or slightly expanding population in the next twenty years, but the change is not expected under any projection to be more than 5% per ten-year period. Nevertheless, the community is subject to outside influences, such as changes in the local and regional economy. Barring any dramatic change in New Fairfield, the following demographic trends can be expected over the next decade.

- Stable population – New Fairfield will likely maintain a steady population of around 13,000-15,000.
- Aging population - The population will continue to age, not just in New Fairfield, but across the Region and State.
- Increasing diversity – The population will continue to become more ethnically and racially diverse.
- Decreasing household sizes – New Fairfield's household sizes will continue to decrease as fewer families occupy housing units, and average household sizes decrease.

HOUSING

As the primary land use in New Fairfield, housing and housing-related issues significantly affect the Town and all residents. Housing conditions, the variety of housing types available in a community and housing costs impact the quality of life in a community. The following section examines housing trends, identifies housing needs vis-à-vis population trends, and provides the basis for planning strategies to address housing issues in New Fairfield.

EXISTING HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS

The 2010 Census recorded 5,593 housing units in New Fairfield, with 85.9% of all units occupied. Of the total occupied units, 93.4% were owner-occupied and 6.6% were renter-occupied. A total of 791 housing units were vacant, resulting in a vacancy rate of 14.1%. A significant proportion of those vacant units (77.5%) were seasonal homes.

The following table highlights the housing characteristics of New Fairfield compared to neighboring communities, regional counties and the State of Connecticut.

TABLE 7

Housing Unit Characteristics - 2010 New Fairfield and Surrounding Communities

	Total Housing Units - 2010	Change, 2000 to 2010	% Occupied 2010	% Vacant 2010	Total Occupied Units 2010	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied
New Fairfield	5,593	8.6%	85.9%	14.1%	4,802	93.4%	6.6%
Brookfield, CT	6,562	13.5%	93.4%	6.6%	6,129	87.3%	12.7%
Danbury, CT	31,154	9.2%	92.8%	7.2%	28,907	60.7%	39.3%
New Milford, CT	11,731	9.5%	90.5%	9.5%	10,618	80.5%	19.5%
Patterson, NY	4,272	14.0%	91.4%	8.6%	3,905	81.2%	18.8%
Sherman, CT	1,831	14.0%	75.8%	24.2%	1,388	92.1%	7.9%
Southeast, NY	7,095	10.7%	94.1%	5.9%	6,675	77.3%	22.7%
Fairfield County, CT	361,221	6.4%	92.9%	7.1%	335,545	68.6%	31.4%
Litchfield County, CT	87,550	10.4%	87.5%	12.5%	76,640	76.3%	23.7%
Putnam County, NY	38,224	9.1%	91.7%	8.3%	35,041	81.9%	18.1%
Connecticut	1,487,891	7.4%	92.1%	7.9%	1,371,087	67.5%	32.5%

A suburb of Danbury, New Fairfield's housing stock resembles that of other suburban communities in the region, including Brookfield, Patterson and Southeast. New Fairfield experienced the lowest rate of growth in housing units between 2000 and 2010 of all immediately adjacent communities; however, its growth rate was higher than that of Fairfield County and the State of Connecticut on the whole. The attractiveness of the Greater Danbury region for its relative affordability and proximity to employment centers in Danbury, lower Fairfield County and New York City has contributed to growth in New Fairfield and the region.

The high vacancy rate in New Fairfield in 2010 results from a significant number of seasonal or vacation homes. Of all vacant units, approximately 78% are seasonal homes. In 2000, 402 housing units were reported as vacant seasonal homes, whereas in 2010, 613 units were reported as seasonal. Given that not all of the new construction of the last decade was for seasonal residences, one can assume that active housing sales in the mid-2000s brought more second homeowners to New Fairfield.

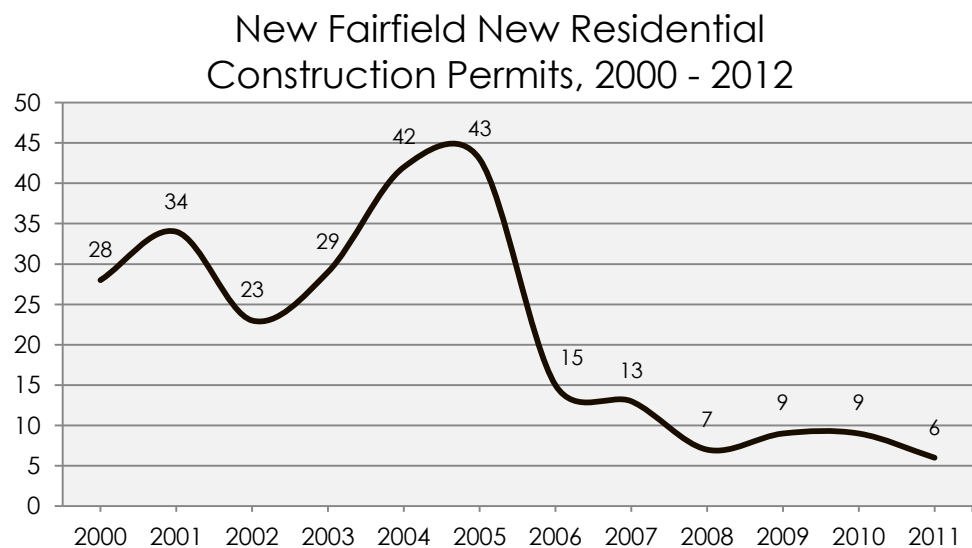
Not surprisingly, New Fairfield has a lower proportion of renter-occupied to owner-occupied housing than all other communities in the immediate region. Rental housing is clearly important to the region with 27% of occupied units in the region occupied by renters; however, with limited sewer and water service, New Fairfield has limited opportunity for multi-family development.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

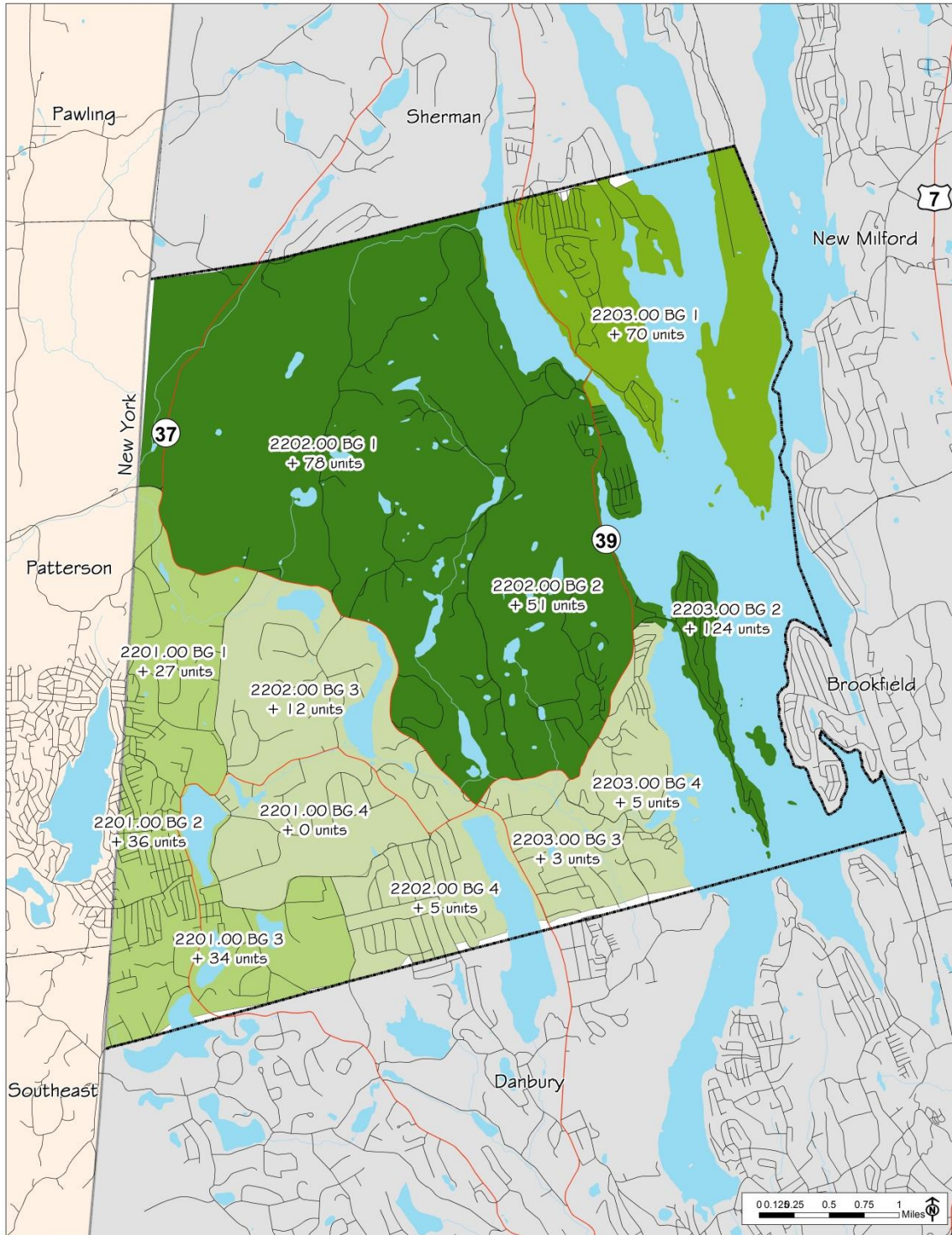
The number of housing units in New Fairfield increased from 5,148 to 5,593 between Census 2000 and Census 2010. These 445 additional housing units were concentrated in the central and western edges of town, as well as in lake shore areas such as Candlewood Isle and around Squantz Pond. The change in housing units by Census Block Group is shown in the following map.

Permits for new housing construction were strong in the first half of the 2000s, averaging about 33 units per year. However, permit activity decreased significantly in 2006 and has remained at a relatively low level of fewer than 10 new construction permits per year (see the figure below). Importantly, the height of the housing market boom coincides with the peak in New Fairfield's new residential construction permitting.

FIGURE 6



Source: CT Department of Economic and Community Development



 **Town of New Fairfield, Connecticut**
Plan of Conservation and Development Update

**Change in Housing Units
by Census Block Groups
2000 to 2010**

Percentage Change



Sources:
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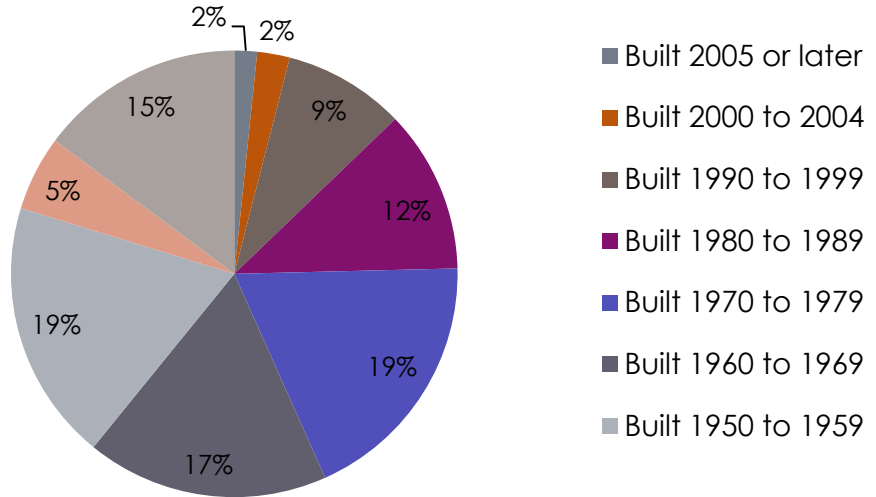
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New Fairfield's housing stock is primarily older, with 56% of units built before 1970. The chart below shows the breakdown of the Town's housing stock by year built. With 15% of units built before 1940, the Town has an ample supply of historic homes. Significant housing growth occurred in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Only 4% of all units have been built since 2000.

FIGURE 7

New Fairfield Housing Stock by Year Built



Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011

The New Fairfield Zoning Commission adopted new zoning regulations in 2009 that included two new residential zoning districts and new conservation subdivision regulations. Overall, 96% of the Town's land is zoned residential. The new zoning districts are: Waterfront Residential (WR) and Open Space (OS); however, regulations are as yet to be developed for the WR district. The Open Space district is designed to protect Vaughn's Neck, the remote northeastern peninsula into Candlewood Lake. The Open Space district requires a minimum lot area of 10 acres and allows only single-family residential development. These zoning changes will help to curb the amount of development that can occur in certain areas of New Fairfield. Given growth in lakefront areas during the past decade, it is important for New Fairfield to address Waterfront Residential development through the implementation of zoning regulations.

AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

Housing affordability is an issue of statewide concern. Overall housing costs in Connecticut, for both renters and owners, are ranked the sixth highest in the nation, according to Census data.¹ The cost of housing depends on a variety of factors from regional demand and economic conditions to the age and conditions of existing housing stock.

¹ Partnership for Strong Communities, *Housing In CT 2012*, 2012.

TABLE 8

New Fairfield Median Housing Sales Price, 1990 - 2012

Year	Single-Family	Condo	All
1990	\$213,500		\$200,000
1991	\$200,000		\$194,250
1992	\$192,025		\$187,500
1993	\$183,000	\$160,000	\$170,000
1994	\$188,500		\$180,000
1995	\$206,750	\$149,000	\$185,000
1996	\$211,000	\$136,083	\$192,000
1997	\$210,000	\$148,904	\$190,000
1998	\$210,000	\$162,102	\$207,500
1999	\$233,000	\$150,000	\$230,000
2000	\$243,250	\$391,250	\$237,000
2001	\$255,000	\$220,000	\$250,000
2002	\$299,500	\$287,500	\$299,000
2003	\$329,000	\$201,900	\$313,500
2004	\$357,000	\$341,000	\$344,950
2005	\$407,250	\$370,000	\$389,586
2006	\$422,000	\$328,000	\$391,500
2007	\$401,500	\$340,000	\$392,000
2008	\$380,000		\$368,375
2009	\$330,000		\$308,500
2010	\$345,500	\$325,000	\$327,000
2011	\$300,000	\$213,750	\$295,000
2012*	\$300,000	\$222,500	\$290,500

Source: The Warren Group
*2012 figures are Jan - Nov

New Fairfield is a suburban, commuting community, with employment statistics indicating that approximately 30% of all New Fairfield workers are employed outside of Connecticut.² The housing market in New Fairfield depends in part on the economies of Greater Danbury and metropolitan New York. With primarily single-family, detached housing units available, New Fairfield is an attractive, moderately-priced location for families relative to most of Fairfield County.

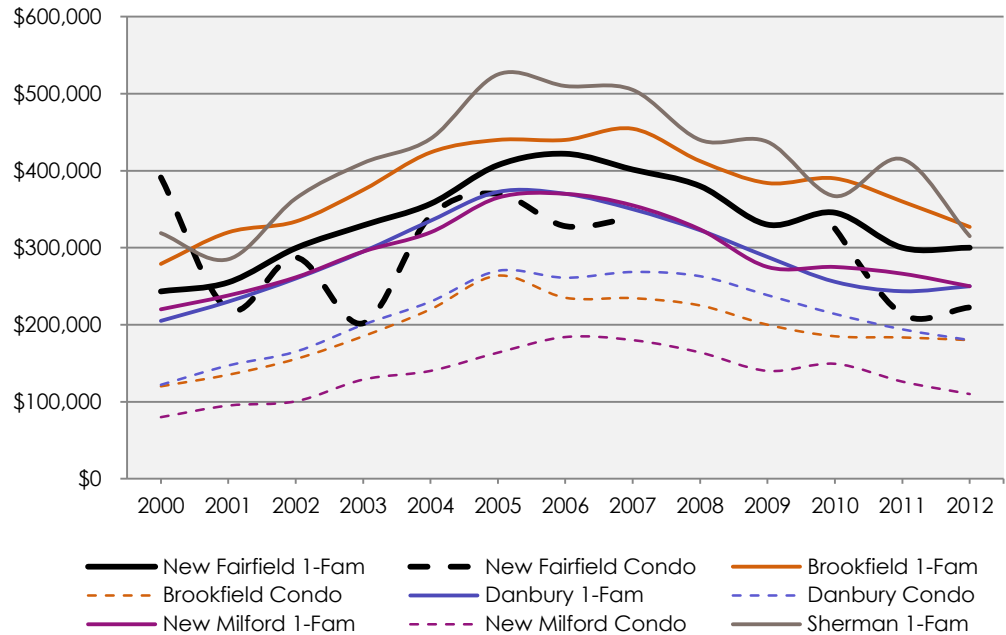
Single-family median sales prices in New Fairfield peaked in 2006 at \$422,000, as shown in the Median Housing Sales Price table. Median sales prices have steadily declined since then and the current median sales price is around \$300,000. A review of current real estate listings shows offerings ranging from \$99,000 to \$8.95 million for single-family homes in New Fairfield. While median sales prices are relatively affordable, there is a wide range of housing values within town.

Condo median sales prices have also declined over the last five years, though there are a limited number of condo sales in New Fairfield each year (less than 10 per year since 2007). Relative to neighboring communities in Connecticut, New Fairfield's single-family median sales prices are consistently more expensive than those in Danbury and New Milford, but less costly than in Brookfield and Sherman, as shown with the solid lines in the chart on the following page. New Fairfield's condo sales prices are consistently higher than those in neighboring Connecticut communities; however, it must be noted that there are very few condo sales in New Fairfield per year.

² American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates, 2007-2011, 2012.

FIGURE 8

Median Housing Sales Prices, New Fairfield and Surrounding Communities, 2000 - 2012



Source: The Warren Group

**2011 Affordable Units -
New Fairfield**

CHFA/USDA Mortgages	22
Deed Restricted Units	13
Total Assisted Units	35

source: CT DECD

According to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development's *2011 Affordable Housing Appeals List*, only 0.63% of New Fairfield housing units meet the statutory definition of affordable. Under *Connecticut General Statutes*, a municipality with fewer than 10% of its housing units qualified as affordable is subject to affordable housing appeals from developers who propose affordable housing developments. In affordable housing appeals cases, the municipality has to prove the public health, safety or welfare interests protected by a denial of a proposed development. While New Fairfield is not likely to reach the 10% threshold of the Affordable Housing Appeals Act, just because of the sheer numbers of new or converted units that would be required, steps can be taken to increase the availability of affordable units in the community.

Strategies for increasing the numbers of affordable housing units in a suburban/rural community can include: easing regulations on accessory apartments, implementing inclusionary zoning, conservation subdivisions, and elderly housing regulations; and encouraging limited-equity housing developments.

Accessory Apartments

Accessory or in-law apartments can contribute to a community's stock of affordable rental units without significant physical development. These units, if not used for family members, provide opportunities, especially for older and younger individuals or couples, to rent in communities consisting of primarily single-family ownership units. Such units could be deed-restricted as affordable housing units

and would therefore count toward the Town's number of affordable housing units under the State's Affordable Housing Appeals Act.

New Fairfield currently allows accessory apartments by special permit in residential zones. The regulations require a sworn affidavit from the property owner that the property complies with the accessory apartment regulations every two years. Some of the provisions of the regulations include a maximum of 1,000 square feet or 30% of the combined floor area of the single-family dwelling and accessory apartment for the accessory unit; for attached units, accessibility through a common wall from the dwelling unit is required; adequate off-street parking for both units is required and, the structure must still appear as a single-family dwelling. These regulations are not overly restrictive; however, as most of the provisions address structural and site design elements which are unlikely to change frequently, there seems to be little reason for a sworn affidavit every two years.

Limited Equity Housing

Limited equity housing is a model of homeownership that separates land ownership from long-term interests in a housing unit. In these programs, a non-profit organization owns the land of the development, and then provides long-term leases for the housing units built on the property to individuals/families. The leases limit the sales value of the units, such that a lease-holder earns fair compensation for their investment, but not a market-return on the property. Therefore, the affordability of limited-equity housing units persists beyond the first lessees.

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning is a land use regulation that requires a certain proportion of new units in a residential development to be restricted as affordable for a certain time period (usually 40-99 years). New Fairfield's Multi-Family District for the Elderly regulations have inclusionary zoning provisions. Such provisions could be incorporated into other types of development regulations, especially any other multi-family districts where efficiencies in construction costs increase the economic feasibility of incorporating affordable units into a mixed-income development.

Multi-Family District for the Elderly

The Town has floating zone regulations for multifamily housing developments for the elderly, of which a portion of the total number of units are affordable units. As a floating zone, Multi-Family District for the Elderly (MFDE) zones are only landed on the Town's official Zoning Map with an approved development.

[Information that needs to be verified and provided by Zoning Commission and/or Assessor:

The Town has landed two MFDEs thus far. One is The Birches development off of Sawmill Road. The other MFDE is The Woods at Dunham Pond. Between the two MFDE zones, ? number of units have been constructed.]

Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation subdivisions are developments that cluster housing units in order to maintain larger, contiguous areas of open space on the development site. These developments not only help to protect significant areas of open space, but also enable the development of housing on smaller lots with less infrastructure, such as

roads, which can sometimes lower the overall price of these units. New Fairfield adopted conservation subdivision regulations in 2009. The regulations allow flexibility in that the extent that individual lot area requirements may be reduced depends on the overall proportion of open space preserved.

[Information that needs to be provided by Zoning Commission and/or Assessor: Any conservation subdivision applications since regulations adopted? If so, disposition of proposals? Any units built? Prices?]

HOUSING SUMMARY

With a stable or declining population, New Fairfield can expect continued slow growth in housing over the next three to five years. With changing household composition (fewer families with children and more single-person households) comes an increasing demand for different housing types, including smaller units. In addition, the need for more housing for the elderly will persist over the next decade, as households continue to age.

The increasing number of seasonally vacant homes in New Fairfield and aging of households represent an opportunity for significant housing turnover when the housing market improves. As housing prices rise, older owners and second homeowners may decide to sell.

With limited sewer and water availability, New Fairfield has limited opportunities for new residential development of significant density. Nevertheless, the Town's existing MFDE zones and developments serve as models for increasing density within the carrying capacity of the land. Similar regulations could enable construction of multi-family units that are not age-restricted, but still geared towards single-person households through limited numbers of bedroom and overall square footage, in similarly appropriate locations.

Much of the housing growth of the last decade occurred around lake fronts, areas that traditionally developed as seasonal communities and have many non-conforming lots and structures. The adoption of regulations specifically addressing redevelopment and development in these areas could help to protect water and other natural resources, as well as neighborhood characteristics.