

TOWN OF WESTPORT

Housing Production Plan FY2018-2022

FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE WESTPORT COMMUNITY
PRESERVATION ACT FUNDS AND THE WESTPORT AFFORDABLE
HOUSING TRUST

Prepared for:

Town of Westport
816 Main Road
Westport, MA 02790

Contact: Elizabeth Collins, Chair
Westport Affordable Housing Trust

Prepared by

JM Goldson community preservation + planning

J M Goldson

community preservation
+ planning

**DRAFT 2/17/17
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
ACRONYMS	4
KEY DEFINITIONS	4
CHAPTER 1	5
INTRODUCTION	5
BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE	5
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW	7
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	7
CHAPTER 2	8
HOUSING GOALS AND STRATEGIES	8
CHAPTER 3	9
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	9
KEY FINDINGS:	9
POPULATION TRENDS	9
HOUSEHOLD TRENDS	14
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	16
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	16
CHAPTER 4	18
LOCAL HOUSING CONDITIONS	18
KEY FINDINGS	18
HOUSING SUPPLY AND VACANCY TRENDS	18
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN WESTPORT	28
AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS	30
CHAPTER 5	32
DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS	32
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS	32
HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES	36
INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY	37
REGULATORY BARRIERS	40

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Housing Production Plan was created under the direction of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees with funding assistance from the Westport Community Preservation Act. The Plan was approved by the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen on [insert date of approval].

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

R. Michael Sullivan, chair
Craig J. Dutra
Steven J. Ouellette
Shana M. Shufelt
Antone C. Vieira Jr.

PLANNING BOARD

James T. Whitin, chair
David Cole
William D. Raus
Marc De Rego
Andrew Sousa

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Collins, chair
Craig J. Dutra
Henry Lanier
Warren Messier
BettyAnn Mullins
James Sabra

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

William D. Raus, chair
Anne Brum
Elizabeth Collins
Jim Coyne
Timothy Gillespie
Janet Joens
Richard Lambert
Hugh Morton
Betty Slade

With the assistance of planning consultants:

Jennifer M. Goldson, AICP, JM Goldson community preservation + planning
Jamie Shalvey, Planning Assistant, JM Goldson community preservation + planning

The Town of Westport gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for their support and assistance with this planning effort.



Acronyms

ACS	US Census Bureau's American Community Survey
AMI	Area Median Income
DDS	MA Department of Developmental Services
DHCD	MA Department of Housing and Community Development
DMH	MA Department of Mental Health
SRPEDD	Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
MOE	Margins of Error
SHI	Subsidized Housing Inventory

Key Definitions

The following definitions are for key terms used throughout the document and are based on information from the U.S. Census Bureau, unless otherwise noted:

Chapter 40B (MGL c.40B) – Massachusetts General Laws c.40B, §§ 20 through 23. Chapter 40B permits developers of projects that include a sufficient level of subsidized low and moderate income housing units to apply for a Comprehensive Permit from the local zoning board of appeals (the "Board").

Cost Burdened – Households who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing.

Disability – The American Community Survey defines disability as including difficulties with hearing, vision, cognition, ambulation, self-care, and independent living.

Family - A family is a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family.

Household – A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or roomers, is also counted as a household. The count of households excludes group quarters.

Housing Unit - A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied, or, if vacant, is intended for occupancy as separate living quarters.

Median Age – The age which divides the population into two numerically equal groups; that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older.

Median Income – Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having incomes above the median, half having incomes below the median. The medians for households, families, and unrelated individuals are based on all households, families, and unrelated individuals, respectively. The medians for people are based on people fifteen years old and over with income.

Millennials – The demographic cohort following Generation X. There are no precise dates when the generation starts and ends. Researchers and commentators use birth years ranging from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/millennials.)

Poverty – Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated annually for inflation with the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and excludes capital gains and noncash benefits (such as public housing, medicaid, and food stamps). Thresholds by year and households size are found at this link:

<https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/>.

Subsidized Housing Inventory – The list compiled by DHCD containing the count of Low or Moderate Income Housing units by city or town.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose

This Housing Production Plan (HPP) is a state-recognized planning tool that, under certain circumstances, permits the town to influence the location, type, and pace of affordable housing development. This HPP establishes a strategic plan for production of affordable housing that is based upon a comprehensive housing needs assessment, and provides a detailed analysis of development constraints due to infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, protected open space, and regulatory barriers. The HPP describes how the Town plans to produce affordable housing units to obtain certification of compliance by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and builds on the Town's 2012 Housing Plan, which identified goals and strategies for the development and preservation of affordable housing in Westport.

The Westport Housing Production Plan (HPP) is a report of the Town of Westport, created under the guidance of the Westport Affordable Housing Fund Board of Trustees (Westport Trust) and approved by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board on xxxxxx [insert date(s) of approval]

In December 2016, the Westport Trust issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional services to prepare a Housing Production Plan for the Town of Westport. The Town selected the planning firm of JM Goldson community preservation + planning to prepare the Housing Production Plan under the oversight of the Westport Trust.

Under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B Section 20-23 (C.40B), the Commonwealth's goal is for all Massachusetts municipalities is to have 10 percent of housing units affordable to low/moderate income households or affordable housing on at least 1.5 percent of total land area. As of January 2017, the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) included 3.54 percent (227 units) of Westport's 2010 year-round housing base (6,417 year-round units). Westport would need an addition 415 SHI-eligible units to achieve the state's 10 percent goal.

WHEN AN HPP IS CERTIFIED BY DHCD, A ZBA'S DENIAL OF A COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT WILL BE UPHOLD IF SUCH APPLICATION IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL NEEDS. BASED ON 2010 U.S. CENSUS FIGURES, THE TOWN OF WESTPORT MUST PRODUCE THIRTY-TWO SHI UNITS FOR A ONE-YEAR CERTIFICATE, OR SIXTY-FOUR SHI UNITS FOR A TWO-YEAR CERTIFICATE.

COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT DENIAL & APPEAL PROCEDURES

(a) If a Board considers that, in connection with an Application, a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs on the grounds that the Statutory Minima defined at 760 CMR 56.03(3)(b or c) have been satisfied or that one or more of the grounds set forth in 760 CMR 56.03(1) have been met, it must do so according to the following procedures. Within 15 days of the opening of the local hearing for the Comprehensive Permit, the Board shall provide written notice to the Applicant, with a copy to the Department, that it considers that a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs, the grounds that it believes have been met, and the factual basis for that position, including any necessary supportive documentation. If the Applicant wishes to challenge the Board's assertion, it must do so by providing written notice to the Department, with a copy to the Board, within 15 days of its receipt of the Board's notice, including any documentation to support its position. The Department shall thereupon review the materials provided by both parties and issue a decision within 30 days of its receipt of all materials. The Board shall have the burden of proving satisfaction of the grounds for asserting that a denial or approval with conditions would be consistent with local needs, provided, however, that any failure of the Department to issue a timely decision shall be deemed a determination in favor of the municipality. This procedure shall toll the requirement to terminate the hearing within 180 days.

(b) For purposes of this subsection 760 CMR 56.03(8), the total number of SHI Eligible Housing units in a municipality as of the date of a Project's application shall be deemed to include those in any prior Project for which a Comprehensive Permit had been issued by the Board or by the Committee, and which was at the time of the application for the second Project subject to legal appeal by a party other than the Board, subject however to the time limit for counting such units set forth at 760 CMR 56.03(2)(c).

(c) If either the Board or the Applicant wishes to appeal a decision issued by the Department pursuant to 760 CMR 56.03(8)(a), including one resulting from failure of the Department to issue a timely decision, that party shall file an interlocutory appeal with the Committee on an expedited basis, pursuant to 760 CMR 56.05(9)(c) and 56.06(7)(e)(11), within 20 days of its receipt of the decision, with a copy to the other party and to the Department. The Board's hearing of the Project shall thereupon be stayed until the conclusion of the appeal, at which time the Board's hearing shall proceed in accordance with 760 CMR 56.05. Any appeal to the courts of the Committee's ruling shall not be taken until after the Board has completed its hearing and the Committee has rendered a decision on any subsequent appeal.

Source: DHCD Comprehensive Permit Regulations, 760 CMR 56.03(8).

PLAN METHODOLOGY

The U.S. Census Bureau's Decennial censuses of 2000 and 2010 and the 2009-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) were the primary sources of data for the needs assessment. The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States by asking ten questions, whereas the ACS provides estimates based on a sample of the population for more detailed information. It is important to be aware of the margins of error (MOE) attached to the ACS estimates, because the estimates are based samples and not on complete counts.

The Plan also uses data gathered from a variety of available sources including: The Warren Group; Massachusetts Department of Education; DHCD; Westport Affordable Housing Trust; and UMass Donahue Institute.

The housing needs assessment section includes comparison data for a variety of geographies. Many data sets offer comparison of the town to the county and the state, whereas others offer comparison to the four abutting communities: Dartmouth and Fall River in Massachusetts and Little Compton and Tiverton in Rhode Island.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW¹

Westport is a coastal, rural, and diverse community - a town that includes farms, beautiful landscapes and rivers, small businesses, and densely populated neighborhoods. Each of these aspects of the community is characterized and strengthened by the natural resources to be found within the town's borders. It is in Bristol County, in the southeastern region of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a total area of 64.4 square miles; located about eight miles south of Fall River; eight miles west of New Bedford; 54 miles south of Boston; and 26 miles southeast of Providence, Rhode Island.

Summary of Key Findings

xxx

¹ Community Overview is excerpted directly from the 2012 Westport Housing Production Plan.

CHAPTER 2

HOUSING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 3

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Key Findings:

- The population of Westport is expected to grow approximately six percent between 2015 and 2020. However, from 2020 to 2035, population growth is projected to slow and level out, with projected growth of approximately 1.4 percent in this period.
 - Residents in Westport are on average older than those in the county and in the state. The median age of 46 is almost seven years higher than that of Massachusetts.
 - Based on the 2035 projection of the Westport population, the population over 65 is expected to grow almost 65 percent from 2015-2035.
 - From 2010 to 2015, the estimated percentage of the population identifying as white rose slightly from 97 percent to 98 percent. However, the number of people identifying as African American and Asian decreased from 125 to 39 people and from 98 to 36 people respectively.
 - Westport's disability rates are higher than the county and the state, which could indicate a lack of accessible housing in the town.
 - Roughly 94 percent of Westport residents lived in the same house in the prior year, and less than one percent of Westport residents in 2015 moved from outside of Massachusetts in that year.
 - The median income for those who own their house in Westport is \$73,345, while the median income for those who rent their homes is significantly less at \$26,896.
-

Population Trends

Westport's total population in 2015 was estimated to be 15,814, a modest increase of 282 people since 2010 or 1.8 percent. This modest growth is in line with trends in Bristol County, which increased 1.2 percent from 2010 to 2015. The population of Massachusetts increased 3.5 percent and the United States increased 4.1 percent in the same period. Despite this population increase, the number of households declined about 1 percent in the same period. The number of households in the county, state, and country increased in the same period (2010-2015): 0.6 percent, 1.5 percent, and 2.4 percent respectively.

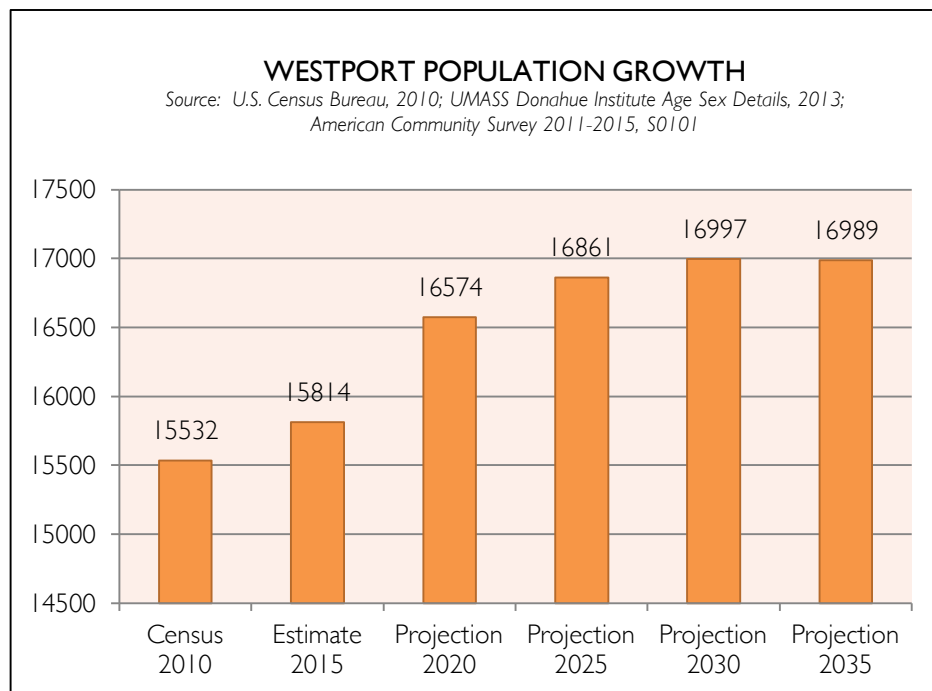
The number of households in Westport decreased while the population increased because while the population grew, so did the average household size, increasing two percent in the five-year period. The average family size in Westport also increased from 2.97 to 3.10 persons per household. In Massachusetts, average household size is also estimated to have increased about two percent as well, from 2.48 to 2.53 persons per household. In Bristol County, average household size remained virtually the same with 2.52 persons per household in 2010 to an estimated 2.53 persons per household in 2015. Average family size increased from 3.09 in the state and 3.07 in the County in 2010 to an estimated 3.15 and 3.12, respectively, in 2015. Westport household size trends are generally in line with the County and state.

Westport is estimated to have had a significant decrease (over 10 percent) in households with children (under 18 years) and an increase in people living alone (over nine percent) between 2010 and 2015.

TABLE 3.1: WESTPORT POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHANGE

	2000	2010	2015 Estimate	% Change from 2010-2015
Population	14,183	15,532	15,814	1.80%
Households	5,386	6,154	6,096	-0.90%
Households with individuals under 18 years	1,722	1,791	1,603	-10.50%
Single Person Households	1,063	1,404	1,536	9.40%
Average Household Size	2.62	2.52	2.57	2%
Average Family Size	3.01	2.97	3.1	4.40%
<i>Source: US Census Bureau 2010, American Community Survey 2011-2015, S0101</i>				

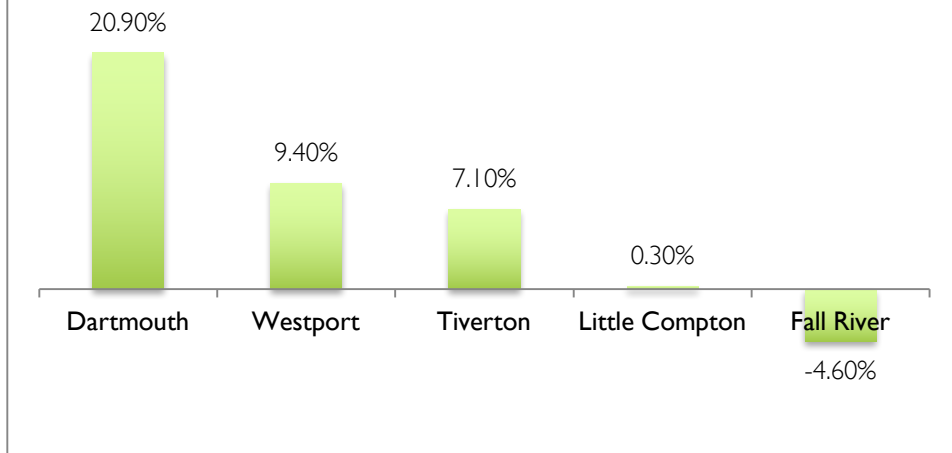
Projections by the UMass Donahue Institute anticipate a population growth in the Westport between 2010 to 2035 - the population is expected to increase by roughly 1,500 people (9.7 percent). However, from 2020 to 2035, population growth is projected to slow and level out, with projected growth of approximately 1.4 percent in this period.



Compared with other nearby Massachusetts and Rhode Island communities, Westport is among the three communities anticipated to experience the highest population growth in this timeframe with Dartmouth projected to grow the most at about 21 percent. Fall River is expected to experience population decline of about five percent.

Westport Population Change 2010-2035

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; UMASS Donahue Institute Age Sex Details, 2013; American Community Survey 2011-2015, S0101



AGE

Residents in Westport, on average, are significantly older than residents in Bristol County as a whole and older than the population in the state as a whole: the 2015 median age in the town was 46 years, 40.6 years in Bristol County, and 39.3 in the state.

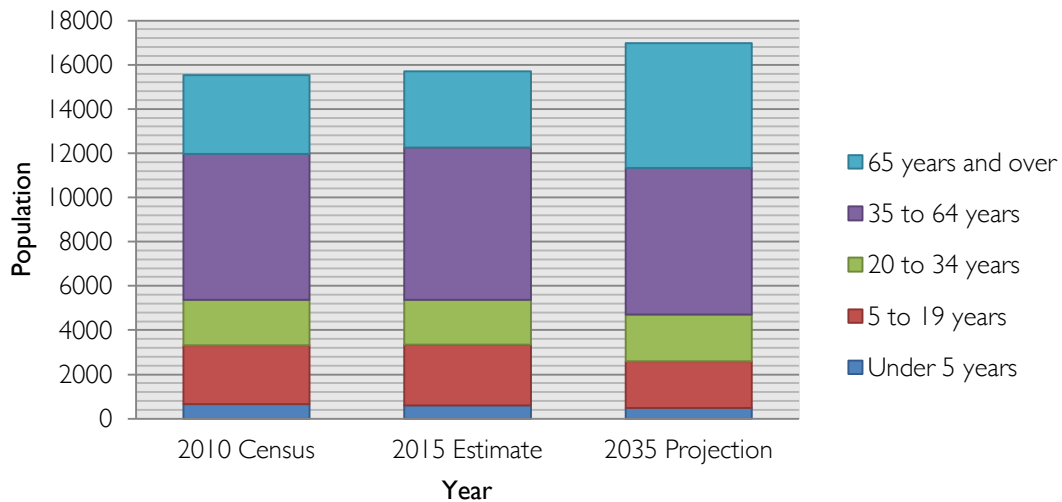
TABLE 3.2: WESTPORT POPULATION CHANGE BY AGE

	2010		2015 Estimate		2035 Projection	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total Population	15,532	100%	15,707	100.00%	16,989	100.00%
Under 5 years	661	4.20%	597	3.80%	479	2.80%
5 to 19 years	2,665	17.20%	2,764	17.60%	2,110	12.40%
20 to 34 years	2,046	13.20%	2,010	12.80%	2,123	12.50%
35 to 64 years	6,608	42.50%	6,895	43.90%	6,619	38.90%
65 years and over	3,552	22.90%	3,440	21.90%	5,658	33.30%
Median Age	45	(X)	46	(X)	(X)	(X)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; UMASS Donahue Institute Age Sex Details, 2013; American Community Survey 2011-2015, S0101						

UMASS Donahue Institute's population projections by age suggest that Westport will continue aging, predicting that the share of residents over 65 years will increase from about 23 percent of the population in 2010 to a third of total population by 2035. In 2010, youth 0-19 years old made up roughly 21.4 percent of total population, whereas projections indicate that youth 0-19 years will make up roughly 15.2 percent of total population in 2035. This is a projected decline from about 3,326 youth 0-19 in 2010 to about 2,589 in 2035 – a 22 percent projected decline in youth living in Westport by 2035.

Westport Age Distribution Projections

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; UMASS Donahue Institute Age Sex Details, 2013; American Community Survey 2011-2015, S0101



RACE

Westport's population predominantly identified race as white (97 percent of the total population per the 2010 U.S. Census), and the population identifying as white increased from that to 98 percent between 2010 and 2015. This is a higher percentage than the population of Bristol County, which also predominantly identified race as white (87 percent) in 2015. Statewide, 80 percent of the 2015 population identified race as white. Between 2010 and 2015, the number of people identifying as black or African American drastically decreased by 69 percent, starting at 125 people in 2010 and reducing to an estimated 39 in 2015. Those identifying as Asian decreased as well by 64 percent, with 98 people in 2010 and just 36 in 2015. However, people reporting more than one race rose slightly, from 196 people to 210.

TABLE 3.3: RACIAL COMPOSITION IN WESTPORT

	2010 Census	2015 Estimate
Total Population	15,298	15,707
White alone	14,856	15,418
Black or African American alone	125	39
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	4
Asian alone	98	36
Two or more races:	196	210
Two races including Some other race	0	54
Two races excluding Some other race, and three or more races	196	156
Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Table B02001. Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability		

Per analysis of 2015 ACS data by census tracts in Westport, there does not appear to be concentration of people identifying as non-white. There are three census tracts in Westport: Tract 25005646101 is the northernmost third of Westport, Tract 25005646103 is the middle third, and Tract 25005646104 is the southernmost part. In all three tracts, those identifying as white alone make up over 88 percent of the population. However, with so few residents estimated to identify as non-white and given the decline in non-white population, it is not surprising that racial concentration is not discernable.

DISABILITY

According to ACS 2015 5-year estimates, 11 percent of Westport's total civilian non-institutionalized population report having one or more disabilities. The estimates indicate that roughly four percent of children under the age of 18 are reported to have disabilities in Westport. Of the population age 18 to 64 years, "working age residents," seven percent reported having one or more disabilities. An estimated 29 percent of residents age 65 or over in Westport reported having one or more disabilities. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a disability as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition.

Residents with one or more disabilities can face housing challenges due to a lack of housing that is affordable and physically accessible or that provides supportive services. Westport's disability rates are lower than those of Bristol county and slightly lower than the state, which indicates a possible shortage of accessible housing and housing with supportive services. Bristol County has disability rates across all age categories that are higher than those of the state.

TABLE 3.4 DISABILITY CHARACTERISTICS OF WESTPORT

	Westport		Bristol County		Massachusetts	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Civilian, (Non-institutionalized Population)	15,707	100%	545,791	100%	6,627,768	100%
With disability	1,765	11%	76,028	13.90%	763,526	11.50%
Under 18 years	2,991	100%	117,963	100%	1,394,267	100%
With disability	118	4%	6,347	5.40%	63,543	4.50%
18-64 years	9,271	100%	347,511	100%	4,286,479	100%
With disability	642	7%	40,488	11.60%	383,623	8.90%
65 years and over	3,445	100%	80,317	100%	947,022	100%
With disability	1,005	29%	29,193	36.30%	316,360	33.40%
<i>Source: 2015 ACS 5-year estimate, S1810. Note: Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.</i>						

RESIDENCE ONE YEAR AGO

Roughly 94 percent of Westport's total population lived in the same house one-year prior per the 2015 ACS estimate. About 89 percent of the total county population lived in the same house one-year prior to the estimate. In Westport and the county, most of the population that moved to their current home in the past year moved from within Bristol County.

TABLE 3.5: HOUSING MOBILITY IN WESTPORT AND BRISTOL COUNTY, 2015 ACS ESTIMATES

	Westport		Bristol County	
	Units	%	Units	%
Total	15,560	100%	547,018	100%
Same Home	14,891	94%	486,847	89%
Same County	560	4%	38,838	7%
Same State	47	1%	11,487	2%
Different State	62	1%	7,658	1%
Abroad	0	0%	2,188	1%
Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability				

Household Trends

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

In 2015, 70 percent of all households in Westport were family households, meaning the household consisted of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Roughly 70 percent of family households included related children under 18 years in Westport, which is significantly higher than in the County or state: 39 percent and 44 percent family households with children respectively.

Approximately 25 percent of all households in Westport were single-person households. This was slightly less than the percentage of single-person households in Bristol County, roughly 28 percent in 2015, and less than the statewide percentage of single-person households of approximately 29 percent. A smaller percentage of households are single person in Westport; this is likely due to the size and affordability of housing stock.

TABLE 3.6: HOUSEHOLDS IN WESTPORT, 2015

Household Type	# Households	%
Total households	6,096	100%
Family households	4,253	69.7%
Family households with own children under 18 years	1,603	37.7%
Male householder, no wife present with own children	195	4.6%
Female householder, no husband present with own children	379	8.9%
Nonfamily households	1,843	30.20%
Householder living alone	1,536	83.3%
65 years and over	902	58.7%
Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015, S1101. Note: Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.		

Householders living alone make up over 80 percent of nonfamily households in Westport, and of this group, almost 60 percent are estimated to be older adults (age 65 years and over) in 2015. Between 2010 and 2015, single-person households in Westport increased, while family households with children stayed stagnant: single-person households increased from roughly 21 percent of households in 2010 to 25 percent of households in 2015, while family households with children made up about 30 percent of households in both 2010 and 2015. However, the population projections by age presented previously indicate that the percentage of youth age 19 years and under is anticipated to decrease.

About 14 percent of all families with children in the town consisted of single-parent households, the majority of which were single-mother households. Single-parent households often rely on one income to support the family and can experience hardships affording housing costs. Proportionally, Westport had fewer single-parent households in 2015 than Bristol county and the state.

HOUSEHOLD TENURE

According to the 2011-2015 ACS, approximately 90 percent of households in Westport own their home and about 10 percent rent their home. Those who own their home in Westport make up a significantly larger proportion than in Bristol County and in the state, where approximately 61 percent of households own their own home and about 39 percent rent their home.

TABLE 3.7: HOUSEHOLD TENURE IN WESTPORT AND BRISTOL COUNTY

Tenure Type	Westport	Bristol County
Own	14,150	131,610
Rent	1,544	83,513
Total	15,694	215,123
% Own	90%	61%
% Rent	10%	39%
Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Tables K202502 and B25026 Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability		

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

According to the 2011-2015 ACS, a majority of households in Westport have an income level over \$75,000 per year, with over 38 percent making more than \$100,000 per year.

TABLE 3.8: INCOME DISTRIBUTION IN WESTPORT

Income Level	Westport	
	# of Households	% of Households
Less than \$34,999	1,268	20.80%
\$35,000 to 74,999	1,536	25.20%
\$75,000 to 99,999	963	15.80%
\$100,000 +	2,328	38.20%
Total	6,096	100.00%
Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability		

The median income of renter households is often lower than for owner households and this holds true at both the local and state level. The estimated 2015 median homeowner household income in Westport is \$73,435 and in the state is \$83,847; the estimated median income for renter households in Westport is \$26,896 and in the state is \$34,832. Both owner and renter median incomes in Westport are lower than the state median incomes by a significant amount, although the total median income of Westport is \$62,761, which is more comparable to the state total median of \$64,496.

TABLE 3.9: MEDIAN INCOME IN MASSACHUSETTS AND WESTPORT, 2015

Median Income	Massachusetts	Westport
Owner	\$83,847	\$73,435
Renter	\$34,832	\$26,896
Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Table B25119. Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability		

Economic Characteristics

Roughly 40 percent of Westport's total labor force is employed in the industries of management, business, science, and art. About 22 percent are employed in sales or office occupations, and about 17 percent are employed in the service industry. The remaining employed population is employed in the fields of natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, or material moving.

TABLE 3.10: EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN WESTPORT, 2015

Industry:	Westport	
Service	1,310	16.70%
Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance	914	11.60%
Management, business, science, and arts	3,196	40.50%
Sales and office	1,769	22.40%
Production, transportation, and material moving	695	8.80%
Total civilian employed population 16 years and older	7,884	100.00%
Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Table S2406. Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability		

The unemployment rate for Westport according to the 2011-2015 ACS estimates was 7.6 percent, which is lower than the county rate of 9 percent. The state of Massachusetts was also estimated to have a 7.6 percent unemployment rate in 2015.

Educational Attainment

Per the 2015 ACS estimates, Westport residents have attained lower education levels than residents statewide, but higher education levels than residents countywide. About 31 percent of Westport's population twenty-five years and over has a Bachelor's degree or higher; whereas about 26 percent

countywide has a Bachelor's degree or higher. About 41 percent of the statewide population twenty-five years and over has a Bachelor's degree or higher.

CHAPTER 4

LOCAL HOUSING CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- Most vacant units in Westport are for seasonal or recreational use (77 percent), while an estimated zero vacant units were for rent in 2015. This indicates a significant need for more rental units in Westport.
- The majority of Westport's housing units (82 percent) are detached single-family units.
- Of the estimated 1,605 households in Westport with income at or below 80 percent AMI, there are 885 households (55 percent) that have housing cost burdens and 555 (35 percent) with severe housing cost burdens.
- About 1,135 (22 percent) of total owner households and 425 (44 percent) of renter households in Westport pay more than 30 percent of their income toward housing, which means that twice the percentage of renters as homeowners are defined as cost-burdened.
- Renters tend to be younger in the state and Bristol County, however this is not the case in Westport. About 43 percent of renters in Westport are over age 55 years whereas this age cohort makes up about a third of renters in the County and about 27 percent of renter in the state.
- In Westport, 23 percent of owner-occupied units are valued at over \$500,000, which is significantly higher than the countywide percentage of just under eight percent of total owner-occupied units over \$500,000.

Housing Supply and Vacancy Trends

OCCUPANCY & TENURE

The 2011-2015 ACS estimated 7,361 housing units in Westport, with 6,096 year-round occupied units (83 percent) and an estimated 1,265 vacant units (17 percent of total housing units), with 929 of these (77 percent) for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. In the same period, there were no vacant units for rent and 48 vacant units for sale. Figures for Bristol County were significantly higher in terms of vacant units for rent and for sale, with 21 percent for rent and 9 percent for sale, compared to Westport at no vacant units rent and four for sale. The state as a whole had an estimated 10 percent vacant, 15 percent of these units for rent, and seven percent for sale. Per the 2010 Census, Westport had a 0 percent vacancy rate in rental units as well, though per the 2000 Census the vacancy rate was 2.5 percent.² These vacancy rates indicate a significant need for more rental units in Westport.

An estimated 85 percent of Westport's total occupied

VACANCY RATES

Vacancies are an essential measure of the state of the housing market. Vacant units represent the supply of homes that exceeds demand, which is related to economic trends. Vacancy rates are measured as a percent of total housing units. A low vacancy rate can result in pressure on housing prices. A 1.5% vacancy rate for ownership and 7% for rental units are considered natural vacancy rates in a healthy market.

Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Basic Housing Needs Assessment*, Sept 2014 – in consultation with Barry Bluestone, Dukakis Center at Northeastern University.

² Source: US Census 2000, ACS Estimates 2011-2015, Table DP-1

housing units are owner occupied while 15 percent are renter occupied per the 2011-2015 ACS data. In comparison, both the county and the state had an estimated 38 percent of renter occupied units.

TABLE 4.1: HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TENURE, 2015

	Westport		Bristol County		Massachusetts	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Housing Units	7,361	100%	230,986	100%	2,827,820	100%
Occupied	6,096	83%	212,029	92%	2,549,721	90%
Owner occupied	5,155	85%	131,608	62%	1,583,667	62%
Renter occupied	941	15%	80,421	38%	966,054	38%
Vacant	1,265	17%	18,957	8%	278,099	10%
Vacant Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	929	73%	3,399	18%	123,040	44%
Vacant For Rent	0	0%	4,048	21%	42,605	15%
Vacant For sale	48	4%	1,837	9%	19,230	7%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Table DP04. Note: Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.						

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Westport's land is divided into 7,361 parcels. The majority of residential land in Westport consists of single-family properties (approximately 79 percent), followed by multi-family homes at 6 percent.

TABLE 4.2: RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Use Type	Number of Parcels	% of Land
Single-Family	5,781	79%
Multi-Family	411	6%
Condominium	166	2%
Apartments	29	1%
Other Non-Residential Uses	148	2%
Total	7,361	100%
Source: DOR Municipal Databank, Parcel Counts by Usage Code, 2015		

Eighty-two percent of Westport's housing units are single detached units; Five percent are single attached units, and about 11 percent of Westport's units are in structures between two and ten units attached. One percent are in structures with between 10 and 49 attached units, and 1 percent of units are either a mobile home, boat, RV, van or other.

TABLE 4.3: UNITS IN STRUCTURE

	Units
Total:	7,361
1, detached	6,057

1, attached	365
2	364
3 or 4	246
5 to 9	174
10 to 19	19
20 to 49	89
50 or more	0
Mobile home	32
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	15
<i>Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Table B25024</i>	

Age of Housing

Housing in Westport is generally somewhat newer than in the county and state. According to the 2011-2015 ACS estimates, roughly 67 percent of Westport homes were built prior to 1979. Roughly 72 percent of the total housing units in Bristol County were constructed in the same period, and 73 percent of housing units statewide were constructed in prior to 1979 as well.

The 2011-2015 ACS estimates 15 percent of homes were built after 2000 in Westport compared to roughly eight percent in the county and nine percent in the state. Roughly 18 percent of existing housing units were constructed in Westport before 1940, which is significantly less than the county (35 percent) and less than statewide (34 percent). Note that homes predating 1978 may contain lead paint, which can pose health hazards.

TABLE 4.4: WESTPORT HOUSING BY AGE, 2015

	Westport		Bristol County		Massachusetts	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
Total housing units	7,361	100%	230,986	100%	2,827,820	100%
2010 or later	123	2%	1,737	1%	26,488	1%
2000 to 2009	989	13%	16,205	7%	213,547	8%
1990 to 1999	1,031	14%	21,150	9%	211,209	7%
1980 to 1989	384	5%	25,009	11%	303,738	11%
1970 to 1979	1,280	17%	27,709	12%	328,414	12%
1960 to 1969	861	12%	21,688	9%	292,628	10%
1950 to 1959	937	13%	23,436	10%	324,491	11%
1940 to 1949	445	6%	13,239	6%	165,661	6%
1939 or earlier	1,311	18%	80,993	35%	961,644	34%
<i>Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Table B25034 Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.</i>						

Trends in Residential Property Values

A review of trends in residential property values provides some perspective on what is occurring with housing costs in the local real estate market. Data from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) and other sources can offer insights about residential assessed values, average single-family home values, tax rates, and tax bills for each municipality in the Commonwealth.

TABLE 4.5: TAX RATES AND AVERAGE TAX BILLS, REGIONAL COMMUNITIES FY17

Municipality	Residential Assessed Values	Single-Family Parcels	Single-Family Average Value	Residential Tax Rate	Average Single-Family Tax Bill
Westport	\$2,359,565,500	5,852	\$403,207	7.97	\$3,214
Dartmouth	\$3,772,240,800	9,887	\$381,535	9.70	\$3,701
Fall River	\$1,911,202,100	8,979	\$212,852	14.00	\$2,980

Source: DOR Municipal Databank, FY17

In FY17, the total assessed value of all residential parcels in Westport was \$2,359,565,500, and the average value of a single-family home was \$403,207, higher than the two Massachusetts communities bordering Westport. The two other communities surrounding Westport are Little Compton and Tiverton, which are in Rhode Island. Westport has the lowest residential tax rate and the average single-family tax bill falls in the middle of the three regional Massachusetts communities. Residential assessed values in Westport fluctuated between 2006-2016 with a decline of 12 percent (2010-2012) and increase of 3 percent (2015-2016). Total values are only slightly higher in 2016 than in 2006.

TABLE 4.6: WESTPORT RESIDENTIAL VALUES BY YEAR

Year	Residential Assessed Values	% Change
2006	\$2,838,302,688	-
2007	\$3,015,892,232	6%
2008	\$2,993,101,378	-1%
2009	\$3,067,817,148	3%
2010	\$2,823,173,785	-8%
2011	\$2,709,210,825	-4%
2012	\$2,767,343,443	2%
2013	\$2,723,333,667	1%
2014	\$2,709,814,290	0%
2015	\$2,721,766,503	-1%
2016	\$2,847,447,717	5%

Source: DOR Municipal Databank, Property Tax Trend Report

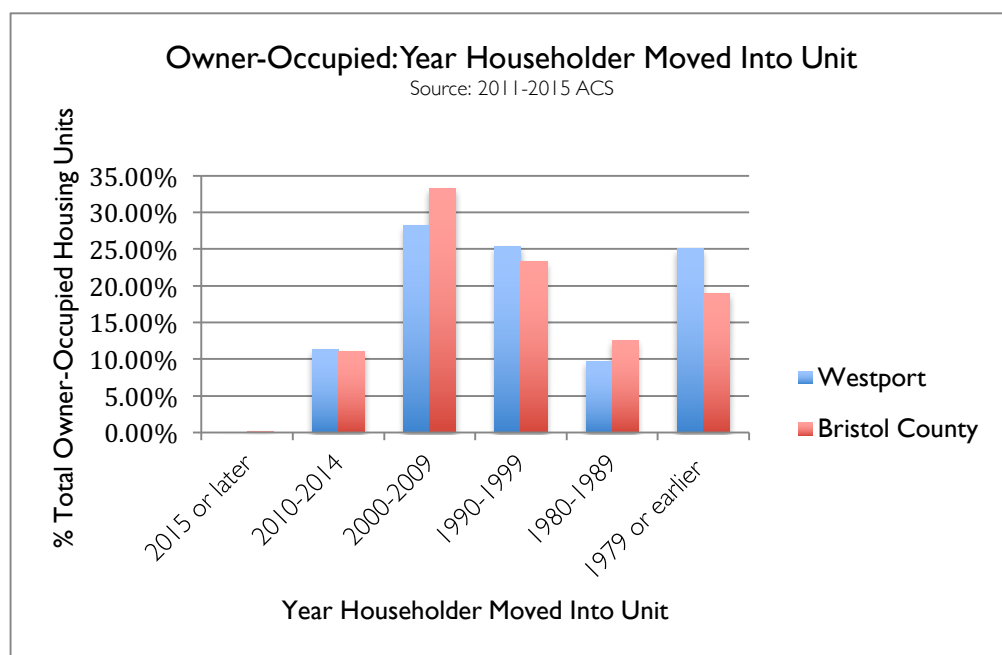
Owner-Occupied Housing Characteristics

Westport has a total of 5,155 owner-occupied housing units. The majority (about 54 percent) moved into their current homes between 1990 and 2009. However, more than 25 percent moved into their household before 1979. In Bristol County, about 19 percent moved in before 1979, and, like Westport, about 56 percent moved in between 1990 and 2009.

TABLE 4.7 OWNER-OCCUPIED: YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT

Year	Westport		Bristol County	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
2015 or later	0	0.00%	483	0.30%
2010-2014	589	11.40%	14,061	11.10%
2000-2009	1,458	28.30%	43,792	33.30%
1990-1999	1,312	25.40%	30,660	23.30%
1980-1989	503	9.70%	16,601	12.60%
1979 or earlier	1,293	25.10%	25,011	19.00%
Total	5,155	100.00%	131,608	100.00%

Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability



Homeowner Households by Age

The distribution of homeowners by age in Westport is similar to that of Bristol County, with a key difference being the larger percentage (35 percent) of householders over the age of 65 in Westport, whereas Bristol County has 27 percent.

TABLE 4.8: HOUSEHOLDERS BY AGE IN WESTPORT

	Westport		Bristol County
	Count	Percent	Percent
Owner occupied Units	5,155	85%	62%
Householder 25 to 34 years	291	6%	8%
Householder 35 to 44 years	803	16%	17%
Householder 45 to 54 years	1,176	23%	25%
Householder 55 to 64 years	1,084	21%	23%
Householder 65 to 74 years	1,142	22%	16%
Householder 75 to 84 years	414	8%	8%
Householder 85 years and over	245	5%	3%

Source: ACS 2010-14, Table B25007

Homeowner Households by Income

The median income for a year-round homeowner in Westport is \$87,555, which is more than the median income for Bristol County of \$80,444. The median household income for a homeowner in both Westport and the county is significantly higher than the median household income for renter occupied units in the town and the County, \$39,926 and \$30,634 respectively. Almost half of Westport's homeowner's (44 percent) earn more than \$100,000 a year, and only 12 percent earn less than \$25,000 a year.

TABLE 4.9: HOMEOWNER HOUSEHOLDS IN WESTPORT BY INCOME, 2015

	Westport		Bristol County
	Count	Percent	Percent
Less than \$5,000	62	1%	1%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	94	2%	1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	177	3%	3%

\$15,000 to \$19,999	181	4%	3%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	84	2%	3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	259	5%	7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	359	7%	10%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	838	16%	18%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	852	17%	16%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,283	25%	22%
\$150,000 or more	966	19%	16%
Source: ACS 2010-15, "B25118: Tenure by Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)".			

Owner-Occupied Housing Values

Home values in Westport are similar to those in the county, with approximately 87 percent of owner-occupied housing units valued at more than \$200,000 and about the same percentage countywide. However, in Westport, 23 percent of owner-occupied units are valued at over \$500,000, which is significantly higher than the countywide percentage of just under 8 percent over \$500,000.

TABLE 4.10: OWNER-OCCUPIED HOME VALUES 2015

Home Value	Westport		Middlesex County	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Less than \$50,000	169	3.30%	4,475	3.40%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	100	1.90%	2,885	2.20%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	54	1.00%	5,829	4.40%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	323	6.20%	16,765	12.70%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1,315	25.50%	49,035	37.20%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	2,029	39.30%	42,283	32.10%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	969	18.80%	9,229	7.00%
\$1,000,000 or more	216	4.20%	1,107	0.80%
Total	5,155	100.00%	131,608	100.00%
Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey, Table B25075; Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability				

For-Sale Market

Housing Sales

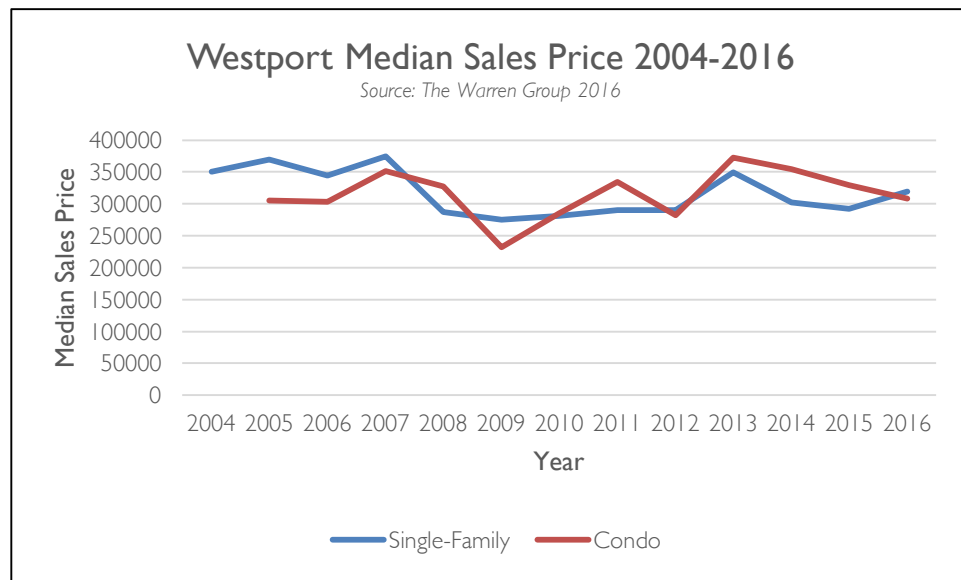
In 2016, the median sales price for a residential property in Westport was \$293,000, according to The Warren Group. The median sale price for a single-family home in 2016 was \$319,000, and the median sale price of a condo was \$308,000.

The table below further explores the median sale prices for residential units in Westport between 2010 and 2016. From 2012 to 2013, the median sale price for all residential units increased over 10 percent; though from 2014 to 2015, it increased about nine percent. From 2010 to 2016, the median sale price for all residential units in Westport increased over eight percent.

TABLE 4.11: WESTPORT MEDIAN SALES PRICE BY CALENDAR YEAR, 2004-2016

Year	Single-Family		Condo		All	
	Median Sales Price	% Change	Median Sales Price	% Change	Median Sales Price	% Change
2004	\$350,000	-			\$339,250	-
2005	\$370,000	5.7%	\$305,000	-	\$328,000	-3.3%
2006	\$344,000	-7.0%	\$303,750	-0.4%	\$330,000	0.6%
2007	\$375,000	9.0%	\$351,250	15.6%	\$307,000	-13.0%
2008	\$287,000	-23.5%	\$327,000	-6.9%	\$287,000	-6.5%
2009	\$275,000	-4.2%	\$232,450	-28.9%	\$225,000	-21.6%
2010	\$281,000	2.2%	\$285,000	22.6%	\$260,000	15.6%
2011	\$290,000	3.2%	\$334,716	17.4%	\$275,000	5.8%
2012	\$290,000	0.0%	\$282,000	-15.8%	\$285,000	3.6%
2013	\$349,500	20.5%	\$372,500	32.1%	\$315,000	10.5%
2014	\$302,000	-13.6%	\$354,000	-5.0%	\$310,000	-1.6%
2015	\$292,500	-3.2%	\$329,375	-7.0%	\$282,500	-8.9%
2016	\$319,000	9.1%	\$308,000	-6.5%	\$293,000	3.7%

Source: The Warren Group, 2016



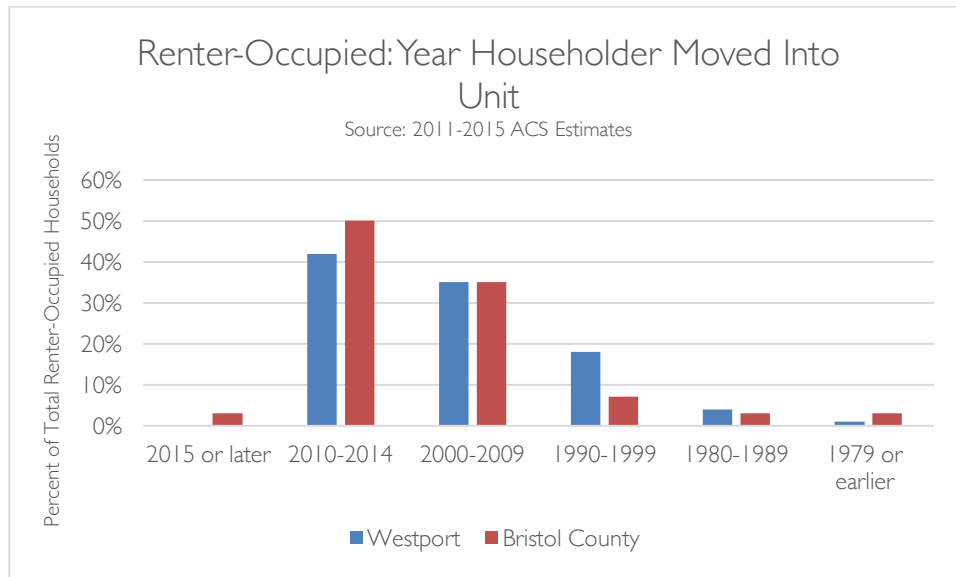
RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

According to the most recent ACS estimates, there are a total of 1,544 renter households in Westport. Approximately 77 percent moved in to their current unit sometime after 2000, slightly less than the 86 percent of renter households countywide that moved into their current unit during this period. Most percentages are comparable between Westport and Bristol County, although while 18 percent of renters in Westport moved into their home between 1990 and 1999, only 7 percent moved in during that period countywide.

TABLE 4.12: RENTER-OCCUPIED: YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT

Year	Westport		Bristol County	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
2015 or later	0	0%	4,555	3%
2010-2014	655	42%	88,122	50%
2000-2009	540	35%	62,739	35%
1990-1999	275	18%	12,033	7%
1980-1989	57	4%	4,613	3%
1979 or earlier	17	1%	4,712	3%
Total	1,544	100%	176,774	100%

Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Table B25026. Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability



Renter Households by Age

Renters tend to be younger in the state and Bristol County, however this is not the case in Westport. About 43 percent of renters in Westport are over age 55 years whereas this age cohort makes up about a third of renters in the County and about 27 percent of renter in the state. Likewise, only about 12 percent of all renters in Westport are age 25 to 34 years, whereas about 22 percent of the County's renters are 25 to 34 and 28 percent of the state's renters.

TABLE 4.13: RENTERS BY AGE, 2010

Householder Age	Westport		Bristol County
	Count	Percent	Percent
Renter occupied Units	1,158	100%	100%
25 to 34 years	141	12%	22%
35 to 44 years	250	21%	20%
45 to 54 years	219	19%	19%
55 to 64 years	162	14%	13%
65 to 74 years	145	13%	9%
75 to 84 years	119	10%	7%
85 years and over	66	6%	4%

Source: US Census Bureau 2010, Table QT-H2

Renter Households by Income

The median income for renter households in Westport is \$30,634, which is significantly less than the median income for a homeowner in Westport at \$80,444.³ Approximately 62 percent of renter households in Westport have incomes of less than \$50,000, compared to about 70 percent in the County. About eight percent of Westport's renter households have incomes greater than \$100,000, similar to the County's eight percent. About 29 percent of renter households in Westport have incomes between \$50,000 and \$99,999, compared to approximately 22 percent in the County.

TABLE 4.14: RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME, 2015

Household Income	Westport		Bristol County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Less than \$5,000	0	0.00%	3,856	4.80%
\$5,000-\$9,999	51	5.40%	6,090	7.60%
\$10,000-\$14,999	99	10.50%	11,080	13.80%
\$15,000-\$19,999	56	5.90%	7,389	9.20%
\$20,000-\$24,999	67	7.10%	6,062	7.50%
\$25,000-\$34,999	137	14.60%	9,844	12.20%
\$35,000-\$49,999	180	19.10%	12,424	15.40%
\$50,000-\$74,999	161	17.10%	12,095	15.00%
\$75,000-\$99,999	110	11.70%	5,928	7.40%
\$100,000-\$149,999	46	4.90%	4,048	5.00%
\$150,000 or more	32	3.40%	1,604	2.00%
Total	941	100.00%	80,421	100.00%

Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey, Table B25118. Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability

³ US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 2011-15, "B25119: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Tenure".

Rental Housing Costs

Approximately 78 percent of renter households in Westport pay between \$500 and \$1,499 in monthly gross rent (rent and basic utilities), which almost mirrors the county's percentage of about 76 percent for this monthly gross rent distribution. In Westport, about eight percent of renter households pay less than \$500 in monthly gross rent, which is about half of the 17 percent of the County that pays less than \$500.

Wages Needed to afford Fair Market Rent in Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,347. To afford this level of rent and utilities – without paying more than 30% of income on housing – a household must earn \$53,886 annually. Assuming a 40-hour-work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$25.91.

In Massachusetts, a minimum wage worker earns an hourly wage of \$10.00. To afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment, a minimum wage earner must work 104 hours per week, 52 weeks per year.

In Massachusetts, the estimated mean (average) wage for a renter is \$18.47. To afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment at this wage, a renter must work 56 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or, working 40 hours per week year-round, a household must include 1.4 workers earning the mean renter wage to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable.

Source: Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2016: Massachusetts."

The Providence-Fall River HMFA is made up of 40 percent renters, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition⁴. Fair Market Rent in the area is less than the Massachusetts fair market rent, at \$972 for a two-bedroom apartment. The estimated mean renter wage in the Providence-Fall River HMFA is \$11.47 - \$7 less than the state mean renter wage. In this area one making the mean renter wage would need to work 65 hours a week to afford the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment.

In Massachusetts and in the Providence-Fall River HMFA, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly payment is \$847, which means that the rent affordable to an SSI recipient, if the recipient's sole income, is just \$254 per month.

The table below provides a snapshot of the one, two, and three-bedroom apartments or houses available to rent on Craigslist as of mid-February, 2017.

TABLE 4.15: MARKET RENTAL RATES FOR WESTPORT (FEBRUARY 2017)

	1 bedroom		2 bedroom		3 bedroom		Total Listings
	#	\$	#	\$	#	\$	6
Total	3	\$850- \$1,300	2	\$800- \$1050	1	\$2,500	
FY 2016 Fair Market Rents	\$1,078		\$1,347		\$1,677		
Source: Craigslist South Coast, MA: Accessed February 14, 2017. Fair Market Rents via National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2016: Massachusetts."							

TABLE 4.16: RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY GROSS RENT PER MONTH 2015

Gross Rent	Westport		Bristol County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Less than \$500	79	8.50%	13,318	17.20%
\$500 to \$999	465	50.40%	41,153	53.10%

⁴ Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach 2016.

\$1,000 to \$1,499	255	27.60%	17,900	23.10%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	115	12.40%	4,009	5.20%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0	0.00%	841	1.10%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	9	1.00%	149	0.20%
\$3,000 or more	0	0.00%	167	0.20%
Total Occupied Units Paying Rent	923	100.00%	77,537	100.00%
<i>Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey; Table B25063. Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability</i>				

Housing Affordability in Westport

HOUSING COST BURDEN

As defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “housing cost burden” occurs when low/moderate-income (LMI) households spend more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing costs. When a household is cost burdened, it has less income to spend on other necessities and to circulate into the local economy – this is especially challenging for LMI households.

For homeowners, “housing costs” include the monthly cost of a mortgage payment, property taxes, and insurance. For renters, it includes monthly rent plus basic utilities (heat, electricity, hot water, and cooking fuel). When housing costs exceed 50 percent of a low- or moderate-income household’s monthly income, the household meets the definition of “severely cost burdened.”

The 2009-2013 ACS estimates indicate that about 27 percent (1,610) of Westport’s total households have income at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). About 56 percent (550) of Westport’s renter households have income below 80 percent AMI and 21 percent (1,060) of owners.

TABLE 4.16: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION OVERVIEW

Household Income	Homeowners	% Homeowners	Renters	% Renters	Total	% Total
Very Low Income (less than or equal to 30% AMI / ≤30%)	245	5%	255	26%	500	8%
Low Income (greater than 30%, but less than or equal to 50% AMI / >30% to ≤50%)	295	6%	90	9%	385	6%
Moderate Income (greater than 50%, but less than or equal to 80% AMI / >50% to ≤80%)	520	10%	205	21%	725	12%
Median Income (greater than 80%, but less than or equal to 100% AMI / >80% to ≤100%)	390	8%	155	16%	545	9%
Income greater than 100% AMI (>100%)	3,580	71%	275	28%	3,855	64%
Total	5,030	100%	975	100%	6,005	100%

Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2009-2013 ACS Estimates

About 1,135 (22 percent) of total owner households and 425 (44 percent) of renter households in Westport pay more than 30 percent of their income toward housing.

TABLE 4.17: COST BURDENED OWNERS AND RENTERS IN WESTPORT

Housing Cost Burden	Owner	Renter	Total
Cost Burden <=30%	3895	550	4445
Cost Burden >30% to <=50%	685	160	845
Cost Burden >50%	420	265	685
Cost Burden not available	30	0	30
Total	5030	975	6005
<i>Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2009-2013 ACS Estimates</i>			

Of the estimated 1,605 households in Westport with income at or below 80 percent AMI, there are 885 households (55 percent) that have housing cost burdens and 555 (35 percent) with severe housing cost burdens.

TABLE 4.18: TOTAL COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME

Income by Cost Burden (Owners and Renters)	Cost burden > 30%	Cost burden > 50%	Total
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	380	345	500
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	145	85	380
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	360	125	725
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	190	40	545
Household Income >100% HAMFI	455	90	3855
Total	1530	685	6005
<i>Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2009-2013 ACS Estimates</i>			

Of the 550 renters in Westport with income at or below 80 percent AMI, about 380 households (69 percent) are cost burdened. Of the 1,060 owners in Westport with income at or below 80 percent AMI, about 505 households (48 percent) are cost burdened.

TABLE 4.19: TOTAL COST BURDENED RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME

Income by Cost Burden (Renters only)	Cost burden > 30%	Cost burden > 50%	Total
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	180	180	255
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	80	50	90
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	120	35	205
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	45	0	155
Household Income >100% HAMFI	0	0	275
Total	425	265	975
<i>Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2009-2013 ACS Estimates</i>			

TABLE 4.20: TOTAL COST BURDENED OWNER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME

Income by Cost Burden (Owners only)	Cost burden > 30%	Cost burden > 50%	Total
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	200	165	245
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	65	35	295
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	240	90	520
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	145	40	390
Household Income >100% HAMFI	455	90	3580
Total	1105	420	5030
<i>Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2009-2013 ACS Estimates</i>			

Affordable Housing Characteristics

For the purposes of this analysis, affordable housing is housing that is restricted to individuals and families with qualifying incomes and asset levels, and receives some manner of assistance to bring down the cost of owning or renting the unit, usually in the form of a government subsidy, or results from zoning relief to a housing developer in exchange for the income-restricted unit(s). Affordable housing can be public or private. Public housing is managed by a public housing authority, established by state law to provide affordable housing for low-income households. Private income-restricted housing is owned and operated by for-profit and non-profit owners who receive subsidies in exchange for renting to low- and moderate-income households.

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) maintains a Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that lists all affordable housing units that are reserved for households with incomes at or below eighty percent of the area median income (AMI) under long-term legally binding agreements and are subject to affirmative marketing requirements. The SHI also includes group homes, which are residences licensed by or operated by the Department of Mental Health or the Department of Developmental Services for persons with disabilities or mental health issues.

The SHI is the state's official list for tracking a municipality's percentage of affordable housing under M.G.L. Chapter 40B (C.40B). This state law enables developers to request waivers to local regulations, including the zoning bylaw, from the local Zoning Board of Appeals for affordable housing developments if less than 10 percent of year-round housing units in the municipality is counted on the SHI. It was enacted in 1969 to address the shortage of affordable housing statewide by reducing barriers created by local building permit approval processes, local zoning, and other restrictions.

WESTPORT AFFORDABLE UNITS

As of December 2014, there were 227 units in Westport listed on the SHI.

TABLE 4.21: AFFORDABLE UNITS BY TYPE

	SHI
Rental	130
Mix	48
Ownership	49
Total	227

Edgewater Apartments on Borden Street and Sanford Road has 72 total SHI units for rental, and Westport Village on Village Way has 48 SHI units that are a mix of rental and ownership. Both projects have perpetual affordability restrictions.

PIPELINE

According to DHCD's tracker of application notices and project eligibility letter notices, there are four pending projects: Briggs Landing, Brookmeadow Estates, Strawberry Fields, and Westport Village Senior Estates.

- Briggs Landing applied in 2003 to construct 183 units (46 affordable) as all ownership units.
- Brookmeadow Estates applied in 2002 for a total of 52 units (13 affordable) all for ownership.
- Strawberry Fields applied in 2002 for a total of 54 condominium units (14 affordable) all for ownership as well.
- Westport Village applied in 2002 for 78 fifty-five and over condominiums (48 affordable) available for both rental and ownership.

CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

The focus of this chapter is to detail Westport's development constraints and limitations. This also includes analysis of environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity, and regulatory barriers. The information presented in this section is largely based on other planning documents, including the *2016 Westport Master Plan* and Westport's 2006 Open Space Plan.

Westport is loved by its residents for "the rural nature of the community and its natural environment, including the seaside, rivers, farm fields and woodlands." The *2016 Westport Master Plan* was "designed to guide decision-making policies regarding long term development in a manner that preserves the unique rural quality and character of Westport but also meets the pressing needs of the community, particularly in the areas of education, public safety and water quality."

Environmental Constraints

Specific environmental elements that impact housing development include landscape character, geology, soils, topography, groundwater, freshwater ponds and lakes, coastal and estuarine resources, plan communities & wetlands, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation, rare and endangered species, critical habitat, scenic views, and hazardous waste sites, as further described below. The following sections are excerpted from the 2016 Master Plan or from Westport's 2006 Open Space Plan, unless otherwise noted.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Westport lies within the Bristol Lowland/Narragansett Lowland Ecoregion, an area of flat, gently rolling plains. Forests are mostly central hardwoods and some elm-ash-red maple and red and white pine. There are numerous wetlands, some cropland/pasture, and many cranberry bogs. Many rivers drain this area.

Westport's earliest settlers, some 10,000 years ago, were attracted by this area's abundant resources: the river and its estuaries, the ocean front, shellfish beds, wildlife habitats, the intertidal zone of beaches, salt marsh and primary and secondary dunes. These assets, together with the farmland, woods, wetlands, ponds and upland wildlife, provide a wonderful mix of resources for residents and tourists.

Development is putting stress on these resources, and it will only increase. Groundwater, surface water and wetlands have been contaminated in some areas, wildlife habitats are shrinking, and open land is vanishing. On the other hand, climate change is expected to lead to rising sea levels, more frequent and severe storm events and rising temperatures of both air and water that will impact plant and animal life on reduced surface areas and in the waterways.

The most significant natural features in the town are the Westport River and Horseneck Beach. The two branches of the Westport River cover almost 3,300 acres, provide 35 miles of shoreline and drain 85 percent of the town's land area. The river serves as a breeding area and habitat for numerous species of fish, animals and plants. Horseneck Beach is a state recreation area and a barrier beach with over 4 miles of shoreline on the Atlantic Ocean. It is the Commonwealth's third most popular recreation area.

Over one half of Westport's land area is forested and many of these areas cover hundreds of acres of unbroken forestland. The variation of forest to open fields creates one of the basic landscape patterns that defines Westport.

Along with providing jobs and food, farming creates a unique open landscape wherever it is active. Westport's farms provide views of pastures, corn, vineyards, cows, horses, other livestock and a variety of small fruits and vegetables. The act of farming prevents fields from growing back to trees thus blocking views of the coastline and rivers.

GEOLOGY

The land surface of Westport is hilly, but the elevations are fairly gradual. The southern sector of the town has two large bay areas formed by the East and West branches of the Westport River. Westport is almost completely surfaced with good texture, well-watered loams with marshlands bordering most of the town's many streams. The coast is bordered by a strip of sandy soil to a depth varying from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. The town has a tidal shore line of 47.4 miles. Total land mass is 53.01 square miles. The town's character is mixed, ranging from extensive suburban development in the north to rural residential and agricultural in the south.

SOILS

Westport is characterized by a variety of soil types which have differing implications for open space and recreation opportunities in the town. Because Westport does not have a municipal sewer system, a large portion of Westport contains soil types which are classified as being difficult to develop. This limitation is primarily related to a high-water table or to an impermeable soil layer (hardpan) that impedes water percolation. Forty-five percent of the soils fall into the category of having severe limitations due to wetness (Whitman, Scituate, Ridgebury, muck, peat, and marsh). Another thirty-one percent have severe limitations due to hardpan (Millis and Paxton). In general, the Millis and Paxton soils have good potential as habitat for open land and woodland wildlife and have value from an open space point of view.

Wet soils with a seasonal high water table, at or near the surface, are clearly a problem in Westport. The areas having these types of soils are generally in the valleys between the ridges and hills in town. Most of the development in Westport has historically occurred along the ridges where wetness is not a problem.

Because these high lands are also important for agricultural use, the town is likely to face more pressure for development in the less desirable wet soils. The consequence of this situation is that efforts to preserve agricultural land will put the town in direct competition with development interests. Most of Westport has been categorized as having prime farmland soils or soils of statewide agricultural significance. "Prime" farmland is defined on a set of Soil Conservation Service (SCS) criteria that identify soils best suited for growing crops.

Despite the presence of important agricultural soils, due to a variety of somewhat contradictory regulations, Westport must recognize that it is planning within a regulatory system that tends to push development toward farmlands. Although other areas of the world allow waste disposal systems that allow the development of marginal lands, Massachusetts is governed by Title 5, which sets limits for residential properties that use septic systems. These systems need well drained soil conditions and thus are not suitable for high clay, high water table or highly permeable soils. Farmlands tend to have the characteristics most suitable for septic systems.

FRESHWATER PONDS

Several major ponds are also located in or partially in Westport. The City of Fall River's Watuppa Reservoir Company owns the flowage rights to South Watuppa Pond, Sawdy Pond, and Davol Pond. Richmond and Cockeast Ponds, located near the ocean, are tidal ponds associated with the barrier beach system. In 2005 the herring run to Cockeast Pond was restored.

South Watuppa Pond

The worst fresh water quality problem in Westport is South Watuppa Pond, bordered by three communities. This 1,446 acre warm water pond has an average depth of 15 feet and a maximum depth of 22 feet. Transparency is low at three feet and aquatic vegetation scant. The bottom is composed of rubble, rock, and muck and there are numerous rubble-strewn shoals. Parts of the ten-mile shoreline remain wooded but only a small portion is accessible to the public. High nutrient levels causing algae blooms have been attributed to runoff and septic system seepage from Westport, Fall River and Tiverton. Water quality information was not collected for the other ponds, but they do not appear to have any serious water quality problems at the present time. In the summer, fecal coliform testing is done by the Board of Health at South Watuppa, Sawdy and Devol Ponds.

GROUNDWATER

Despite plentiful wetlands, Westport does not have plentiful groundwater. This apparent contradiction may be explained by the fact that the predominant soils in town are not sand and gravel types, but rather soils with a very firm substratum (hardpan layer) that restricts the vertical movement of water recharging the aquifer. This results in rainfall running off ridges and hills into valleys where swamps develop because of the poor permeability of the soils.

The town's main aquifer generally follows the east side of the East branch of the Westport River and Bread and Cheese Brook. These aquifer areas were carved out during the glacial period and contain sandy and gravelly soils conducive to groundwater recharge and aquifer formation and are estimated to be capable of producing a flow of 1,400 gallons per minute. The large majority of Westport's land area, however, falls into the category of having a low potential (less than 25 gallons per minute) groundwater yield. This fact severely limits any type of development that would utilize more than a minimal amount of water.

Even in some of these areas that are favorable for finding groundwater, the potential for development of wells is limited because excessive pumping could induce salt water into the aquifer along the river where salt or brackish conditions exist.

COASTAL & ESTUARINE RESOURCES

The Westport River estuary is one of the Commonwealth's greatest coastal treasures in both habitat quality and scenic beauty. During the summer months boaters and vacationers flock to the river and beaches. The East Branch of the Westport River has significant shellfish resources and more salt marsh acreage than any other embayment. Similarly, the West Branch of the Westport River also has significant shellfish resources. This estuary has the fourth greatest salt marsh acreage (after the East Branch).

PLANT COMMUNITIES & WETLANDS

The Westport coastline and river system is fringed with more than 1,000 acres of saltmarsh providing a wide variety of natural and human benefits. The coastal regulations to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, MGL Ch. 131, Sec. 40 defines salt marshes as coastal wetlands that extend landward up to the highest high tide line, that is the highest spring tide of the year, and are characterized by plants that are well adapted to, or prefer living in, saline soils. Dominant plants within salt marshes are salt meadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*) and/or salt marsh hay (*Spartina alterniflora*).

Saltmarshes produce vast quantities of organic matter that wash into adjacent waters when the marsh is flooded. This material, when decomposed becomes a primary food source in the marine food web. Saltmarshes also serve as spawning and nursery grounds for many species of fish. They are habitat for crustaceans, mollusks, and worms and are feeding grounds for migratory and resident waterfowl and a variety of mammals. The marshes also serve as a protective barrier against storm damage and flooding, absorbing flood waters before they reach uplands. Finally, saltmarshes serve as pollutant filters absorbing nitrogen, phosphorus, heavy metals, and hydrocarbons.

RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program cites the following wildlife species as being threatened: the marbled salamander (*Imbystoma opacum*), the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and the persius duskywing (*Erynnis persius persius*). The following species were sighted in Westport and are classified as being of special concern: the spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), the four-toed salamander (*Hemidactylium scutatum*), the spartina borer moth (*Spartiniphaga inops*), the New England bluet (*Enallagma laterale*), the least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), the common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and the Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*). There are no endangered mammal or insect species listed for Westport.

The *Westport 2016 Master Plan* says that “Efforts to protect or improve breeding areas for avian and aquatic species that are either endangered or of special concern have had mixed results.”

CRITICAL HABITATS

Critical habitats in Barnstable have been identified by the NHESP and Core BioMap2.

NHESP BioMap2⁵

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) developed a BioMap2 to identify the areas most in need of protection to protect the native biodiversity of the Commonwealth. Core Habitats represent habitat for the most viable rare plant and animal populations and include exemplary natural communities and aquatic habitats. The BioMap2 produced for Westport indicates six major NHESP Core Habitat areas

Along with the six priority natural community cores, two forest cores, eight wetland cores, eleven aquatic cores, and twenty-six species of conservation concern cores were identified in Westport.

SCENIC VIEWS

The *Massachusetts Landscape Inventory* was created by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management and the Nature Conservancy to identify and locate the Commonwealth's important natural features. This Inventory designated the Westport/Dartmouth Area as the major scenic area along the southeastern coast of mainland Massachusetts, and as one of the most important areas for consideration by the Commonwealth and conservation groups. Westport has many major scenic areas; almost all of the East Branch of the Westport River valley and much of the West Branch were classified as either Distinctive or Noteworthy in the Inventory. The predominant landscape features that make Westport distinctive are as follows: active farms with pastures, crops and livestock; views of the river; views of the Buzzards Bay coastline; views of the harbor; and the varied historic villages of the town. The exceptional amount of open land combined with the views of the water gives Westport a very open and expansive character.

HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

According to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, there are three sites in Westport with activity and use limitations due to hazardous materials.

- Old Colony Station 6826 (currently Supreme Gas & Convenience on the corner of Sanford Road and State Road) is a class A2 Response Action Outcome (RAO) site. RAO is defined as “A site/release where a Permanent or Temporary Solution Statement was submitted. This statement asserts that response actions were sufficient to achieve a level of no significant risk or at least ensure that all substantial hazards were eliminated.” A permanent solution has been achieved for Old Colony Station 6826, though contamination has not been reduced to background.

⁵ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/land-protection-and-management/biomap2/>. accessed February 2017.

- At a second site, Roadway Express, Inc (located at 30 Borden St) is class PA RAO, a permanent solution has been achieved with conditions and no activity and use limitations.
- Lastly, at class A3 RAO Westport Sand and Gravel, located on Old County Road, a permanent solution has been achieved. Contamination has not been reduced to background and an Activity and use Limitation has been implemented.

Historic & Cultural Resources

HERITAGE RESOURCES

The Town has cultural and historical resources both physical and human that contribute to the vibrant character of the community.

The town's rich cultural resources include a plethora from landmarks, remnants of ancient villages to annual cultural events. There has been funding from both the private and public sector in support of restoration and rehabilitation of historic assets and for cultural events in the arts and humanities. The Westport Cultural Council (WCC) is a prominent town-appointed entity with public funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and private funding from the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust. In turn, the WCC awards grants to support community-oriented programs in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences. The events have been quality cultural programs and activities that bring the community together to create, share and inspire. In addition, since 2012, the WCC has hosted the popular annual free summer film series in partnership with a local gallery.

The town has recently experienced vibrant growth in its artistic and cultural identity that has added an important creative dimension in the local economy, popularly referred to as "a Creative Economy." Privately funded organizations include the Westport Art Group that provides a center for local artists to work and exhibit their products as well as instruction for young artists, a new privately-owned art gallery that offers frequent exhibits by leading artists, and prominent local artists who work independently and often join in "open studio" showings organized by the South Coast Artists group on several weekends each summer. Other private entities include the Concerts at the Point program that has provided six chamber music concerts annually for eighteen years and has built a strong group of supporters who assure financial continuity well into the future. The Tiverton Community Chorus has many members from Westport and presents two concerts in Westport each year.

Westport's identity can also be found in its abundant historic resources. Many of Westport's buildings are on the state register of historic places as well as the national register. Certain historic area resources also registered are the Westport River, the Head of Westport and Westport Point. The Westport Point Historic District, established in 1973 under MGL Chapter 40, is under the purview of the Westport Historical Commission.

Significant achievements in historical preservation, restoration and rehabilitation are listed below. Town projects have included significant work in the Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, American Legion Hall and the Council on Aging buildings, Town farm apartment, as well as preservation, microfilming and scanning of historic town records, maps, and placement of historic street markers and corner signs throughout Westport. Historic stone wall preservation and clean-up of contaminated soil at the Head of Westport has also been done. Updates of the Westport Historic Inventory have been made. The Demolition Delay Bylaw has been extended from six months to one year. The Westport Library History Room has been built to house historic documents.

Private projects have included work on the Friends Meeting House, the Bell School, the Wolf Pit School, the Cadman-White Handy House, the Oscar Palmer farm buildings, the Westport Point Methodist Church, the Grange, the Acoaxet Chapel, restoration of the historic Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station (LSS) and the Waite Potter House stone-ender chimney. In addition, historic maps, photo collections and Hicks/Handy records have been preserved.

Major accomplishments were the acquisition and opening to the public of the very significant and historic Cadman-White-Handy house by the Westport Historical Society, the restoration of the Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station by the Westport Fishermen's Association utilizing private and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) funding, and the identification and registration of all burial sites in Westport and the development of a website with complete information of those interred in Westport being made available to the public.

The Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Trustees of Reservation have leased the town-owned Town Poor Farm and restored the buildings and the land for public use. The Westport Historical Society was co-sponsor of a major symposium with the New Bedford Whaling Museum on Paul Cuffe, a prominent Native American/African American who lived in Westport in the late 18th-early 19th century. Many privately-owned homes in the Westport Point Historic District as well as throughout the Town have been restored. Historic stone walls have been rebuilt in some locations to include the Head of Westport river sea walls.

Infrastructure Capacity

This section reviews the town's infrastructure capacity including drinking water, wastewater and storm water, transportation, and schools. This section is based on information and direct excerpts from Westport's Master Plan or Open Space Plan unless otherwise noted.

DRINKING WATER

Westport does not have a public water supply, with the exception of the water line on Route 6 and the extension up Davis Road. Most residents are completely dependent on private wells for their drinking water, making the cleanliness of the groundwater vital to the health and welfare of the town. Yet, Westport has several gasoline contamination sites (see Table 24). Pesticides (Temik and carbofuran) have leaked into the wells of many homes in the North end of town; sodium exceeds the safe limit at an elderly housing complex as well as town hall, and nitrates and bacteria levels are on the rise. Most recently were findings of Perchlorate in the High School well and nearby neighboring wells. MtBE was discovered in several wells in Central Village. Westport residents need to protect their water supplies, as town-wide water is unlikely.

WASTEWATER AND STORM WATER

There have been several new developments since an agenda for undertaking the design and implementation of a water and wastewater system in the north end of the Town, primarily along Route 6, that would have been connected with water and sewer lines from Fall River was proposed in 2004 and was not approved by the required two-thirds majority. These developments have, on the one hand, clarified the severity and the location of the water and wastewater problems in this same area, and, on the other hand, provided some new instruments or mechanisms for addressing these problems.

Within the framework of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP), the School of Marine Sciences and Technology (SMAST) at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, completed a study of the Westport River in 2012. The report from SMAST identified the Upper East Branch of the Westport River as the part

of the river having the highest levels of nitrogen that, if not reduced, could eventually lead to eutrophication, or the death of the river as a source of fish and shellfish.

While the report indicated that one sub-watershed was the principle source of excess nitrogen and that it was apparently due mainly to agricultural operations and failed septic systems, subsequent research by SMAST has narrowed both the location and the dominant source of the problem, namely septic systems in the vicinity of the intersection of Bread and Cheese Brook and State highway 6. These may be either failed systems or systems that do comply with Title V requirements, but still have minimal effect in reducing nitrogen. This pinpointing of the problem area and source can help to focus efforts at finding solutions to the nitrogen problem.

Finally, after a very long wait, the State Department of Environmental Protection has issued a draft report entitled "Westport River Estuarine System Total Maximum Daily Loads for Total Nitrogen." This report confirms excess nitrogen levels in the Westport River that were earlier estimated in the SMAST report and specifies the target TMDLs for two sentinel stations in the East and West Branches of the River. The new DEP report does not take account of the more recent investigations undertaken by the Town that provided more precise information on sources and locus of the nitrogen entering Bread & Cheese Brook. But it does require that the Town undertake a comprehensive water management plan and take steps to implement such a plan, for which the State will provide guidance and possible financial support. It also suggests that the State may apply sanctions if the Town does not initiate remedial measures to move toward the specified nitrogen targets.

TRANSPORTATION

Westport is divided east to west by Route 88. This highway, built during the 1960s, serves as a direct link to Horseneck Beach State Reservation. In that respect it serves to separate most of the town from the high influx of park-goers during the summer months (650,000 cars per season). However, the road is also serving as an excellent means to protect the rural roadside character of Westport's streets. Route 88 allows anyone in town to quickly reach the interstates without using the town's local north-south streets. This is very attractive to commuters. The major transportation needs for the town will be providing strong east-west collectors to link drivers with Route 88.

The Master Plan states an objective regarding transportation: Westport needs to develop a framework for a functional and economical town-wide circulation system as part of its planning for future growth. This framework would form a structure for the land use plan; meet the requirements of public safety officials; and integrate the needs of drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians and recreational users. A study of trail development/improvement opportunities by a town-appointed committee working in cooperation with government officials, volunteer groups and non-profit organizations should be undertaken to support the public demand for multi-use trails expressed during public meetings on potential revisions to the Master Plan. Every effort should be made to coordinate development of a local trail system with regional and state trails and open space plans.

To encourage alternative modes of transportation such as walking and cycling, the town should adopt and apply the existing standardized guidelines for bike lanes, crosswalks and handicapped access to public facilities. This plan would include limiting curb cuts, promoting use of shared commercial driveways and frontage roads along business-zoned roads, and encouraging the retrofitting of individual driveways to the shared access circulation system. The extension of the pedestrian/bike path from Fall River into Westport, and connecting with the Dartmouth pedestrian/bike path should be encouraged as part of a town-wide circulation system. An effort should be made to identify, improve, and maintain public access to waterways over public ways and at town landings.

The Open Space Plan states that sixty-six percent of respondents of the Open Space Scientific Survey support the creation of a bike path that would connect with neighboring communities.

SCHOOLS

The Town of Westport's public school system consists of Alice A. Macomber Elementary, Westport Elementary, and Westport Junior/Senior High.

Enrollment

Enrollment in the Westport school district has decreased by more than 200 students in just the last five years, according to the Massachusetts Department of Education.

TABLE 5.1: WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Year	Total District Students (PK-12)	Alice A Macomber	Westport Elem	Westport Junior/Senior High
2012	1,737	236	509	*
2013	1,668	191	521	*
2014	1,626	184	515	*
2015	1,568	292	521	*
2016	1,519	402	513	576
Source: Massachusetts Department of Education. *Data unavailable				

The student/teacher ratio in Westport is 13.7 to 1, which is comparable to the state ratio of 13.2 to 1.

Special Needs

The special needs enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year was 236 students in Westport Public Schools. 80 percent of these students are full inclusion (inside the general education classroom for more than 80 percent of the school day). The graduation rate for students with IEPs in 2015 was 72.2 percent, which is lower than the state target of 82 percent but higher than the state rate of 69.9 percent.

Two-and-a-half percent of students in the district have a first language that is not English, and one percent are English language learners. Just over 17 percent are students with disabilities, and about 36 percent are considered High Needs students. Lastly, 23 percent are considered economically disadvantaged.

Regulatory Barriers

This section describes land use and environmental regulations that affect residential development including zoning and local historic districts. The Town of Westport does not have a local wetlands bylaw. The town has a soils conservation bylaw but excavation incidental to construction of buildings is exempt.

ZONING BYLAWS

The Westport Zoning Bylaws promote low-density housing development with some provisions for encouraging diversity of housing options or affordable housing including the following:

- Inclusionary Housing provisions
- Accessory Apartment provisions
- allowance of multi-family with site plan approval in the Unrestricted district
- allowance of two family new construction by right and conversions by special permit
- the overlay zone for Noquochoke Village

The Westport zoning bylaws establish three primary districts: residential/agricultural, business, and unrestricted. The residential/agricultural district covers most of the town's land area. In addition, as pertains to housing development, the bylaws establish the Noquochoke Overlay District, as approved in 2009.

Allowed Residential Uses

BA = Board of Appeals

PB = Planning Board

District	Single-family	Accessory Apt.	Two-family	Multi-family
Residential/Agricultural	By right	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By Right within single-family dwelling• Special Permit for detached structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By right for new construction• Special Permit (BA) for conversion of single to two-family	No
Business	By right	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By Right within single-family dwelling• Special Permit for detached structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By right for new construction• Special Permit (BA) for conversion of single to two-family	No
Unrestricted	By right	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By Right within single-family dwelling• Special Permit for detached structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By right for new construction• Special Permit (BA) for conversion of single to two-family	By right with Site Plan Approval (PB)

Special Permit Granting Authority

The bylaws designate the Board of Appeals as the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) except for five articles that the Planning Board acts as the SPGA including the following three pertaining to housing: Assisted and Independent Living Facilities, Inclusionary Housing, and the Noquochoke Overlay District.

Accessory Apartment Provisions

The bylaws define an Accessory Apartment as follows:

An independent dwelling unit of five hundred (500) to nine hundred (900) square feet contained within a single-family residence. The unit shall have a separate exterior entrance, a kitchen/living room, a bathroom and a maximum of one bedroom. Either unit shall be occupied by the owner.

Note that the maximum floor area for accessory apartments in detached structures are 750 square feet.

The accessory apartment provisions per Section 4.0.1B(5)(j) limit the occupancy to no more than two persons. Such an occupancy limitation may present Fair Housing considerations. While this policy may not have been intended to have a discriminatory effect, it may have a disparate impact on families with children, a protected class as defined by the Fair Housing Act.⁶ Occupancy of dwelling units is already regulated through the Massachusetts State Sanitary Code (105 CMR 410.000) Section 410.400, which requires that every dwelling unit contain at least 150 square feet for the first occupant and at least 100 square feet for each additional occupant and that bedrooms must be at least 70 square feet for first occupant and 50 square feet for additional occupants.

However, the bylaws do allow for flexibility when designing detached accessory apartments to accommodate residents with disabilities per section 4.0.1(D)(13)(j), which is important to provide fair housing choice.

Affordable Housing Provisions

Definition of Affordable Unit

A housing unit that by deed restriction is and shall remain permanently affordable by being available, upon sale or resale, for purchase or rent to purchasers or renters so that the unit shall count towards the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory as maintained by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Definition of Visitability

Dwelling units are deemed Visitable if they meet the following three criteria: zero step entrance, all doorways that are 32 inches clear, and a toilet on the first floor.

Inclusionary Zoning

The Town adopted Inclusionary Zoning provisions, Article 13, in 2005 with replacement in 2010. The purpose of the provisions is to compensate for any decreases in the town's percentage of affordable housing that are caused by increased in the town's overall housing stock. The provisions apply to creation of ten or more lots or units and require that at least 10 percent of the units be affordable housing. The Planning Board may grant, by special permit, an off-site alternative, cash contribution to the Westport Trust, donations of land to the Westport Trust, or a combination of alternatives. In addition, the Planning Board may grant, by special permit, a density bonus equal to two additional market rate units for each affordable unit.

The bylaws definition of Family appears to comply with fair housing standards:

One or more persons occupying a dwelling unit and living, sleeping, cooking and eating on the same premises as a single housekeeping unit.

⁶ Disparate Impact - practices or services that appear neutral on the surface, but, in practice, disadvantage protected class members and/or perpetuate segregated housing patterns

Assisted Living and Independent Living Facilities

Section 11.5.1 requires that at least fifteen percent of total dwelling units in an independent living facility that proposes more than ten units be affordable in accordance with the bylaws definition of affordable and that the units be marketed and administered through the Westport Housing Authority.

Noquochoke Overlay District

The purpose of this overlay district is to provide a range of housing choices including multi-family dwelling that is suitable for households of varying ages, sizes, and income levels. At least 30 percent of the dwelling units must be affordable units eligible for inclusion on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory. The district requires a special permit from the Planning Board. The district permits multi-family dwellings of up to 12 units per building and established a maximum density of eight units per net usable land area with a maximum of fifty-four units. Dwelling units in this district are required to have two spaces per unit plus one visitor space for every three units, which is higher than the parking requirements for all other dwelling units in town (1.5 spaces per unit).

Phased Development

Section 10.0 of the bylaws establish phased development requirements with a purpose to promote the orderly growth in town. The requirements are applicable for land that is the subject of a plan submitted for approval under the subdivision control law or for endorsement for "approval not required." In the first year, permits may be issued for the greater of two lots or 20 percent of lots on the plan; four lots or 40 percent in second year; six lots or 60 percent in third year; and eight lots or 80 percent in fourth year. No limit fifth year and after. (Question for town – is this article no longer in effect? Per 10.5 says only applies up to eight years after effective date.)

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Sherborn has one Local Historic District – Westport Point Local Historic District – that is in the southern portion of town, just north of Horseneck Beach State Reservation. The Town established this district in 2006 and the Westport Point Historic District Commission administers the district.

Towns may establish local historic districts to protect historic resources. Property owners must submit any exterior changes that are visible from a public way, park, or body of water to a local district commission for approval. A variety of exterior features are often exempt such as air conditioning units, storm doors, storm windows, paint color, and temporary structures. The decision on which features are exempt from review depends on the specifics of the local bylaw. The Westport Point district includes color of paint and stains in its review, but exempts review of color on doors and shutters. The review also includes septic mounds, which are viewed as structures.

In addition, the town has two National Register Districts (The Sherborn Center Historic District and the Edwards Plain-Dowse's Corner Historic District). National Register Districts do not restrict private use or changes to properties but do provide rehabilitation tax incentives for owners of income-producing properties and provide limited protection from adverse effects of federal and state projects.

JM GOLDSON
community preservation + planning
Boston, MA
www.jmgoldson.com
617-872-0958