

Town of Newtown Plan of Conservation and Development



Public Workshop #1
November 30, 2023



BFJ Planning

Introductions



Planning & Zoning Commission

Barbara Manville

Roy Meadows

Greg Rich

Connie Widman

Dave Rosen

Peter Schwartz- Alternate

Jill Soderholm - Alternate

David Landau - Alternate

BFJ Planning

Town Staff and Consultant Team

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Rob Sibley, Director of Planning and Land Use

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Michelle Gilman – Project Planner

Eshti Sookram– Planner

Agenda

- 1 What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?**
- 2 Project Overview**
- 3 2014 POCD Goals**
- 4 Stakeholder and Community Engagement**
- 5 Initial Findings on Demographics**
- 6 Interactive Open House**

What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?



- **An expression of the community’s shared vision of the future.**



- **A Town-wide framework for plans, initiatives, and investments. It lays the groundwork for decisions on the zoning code, capital budget, and general policy.**



- **A “to-do list” for the Town to track implementation of short-, medium, and long-term goals.**

What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?

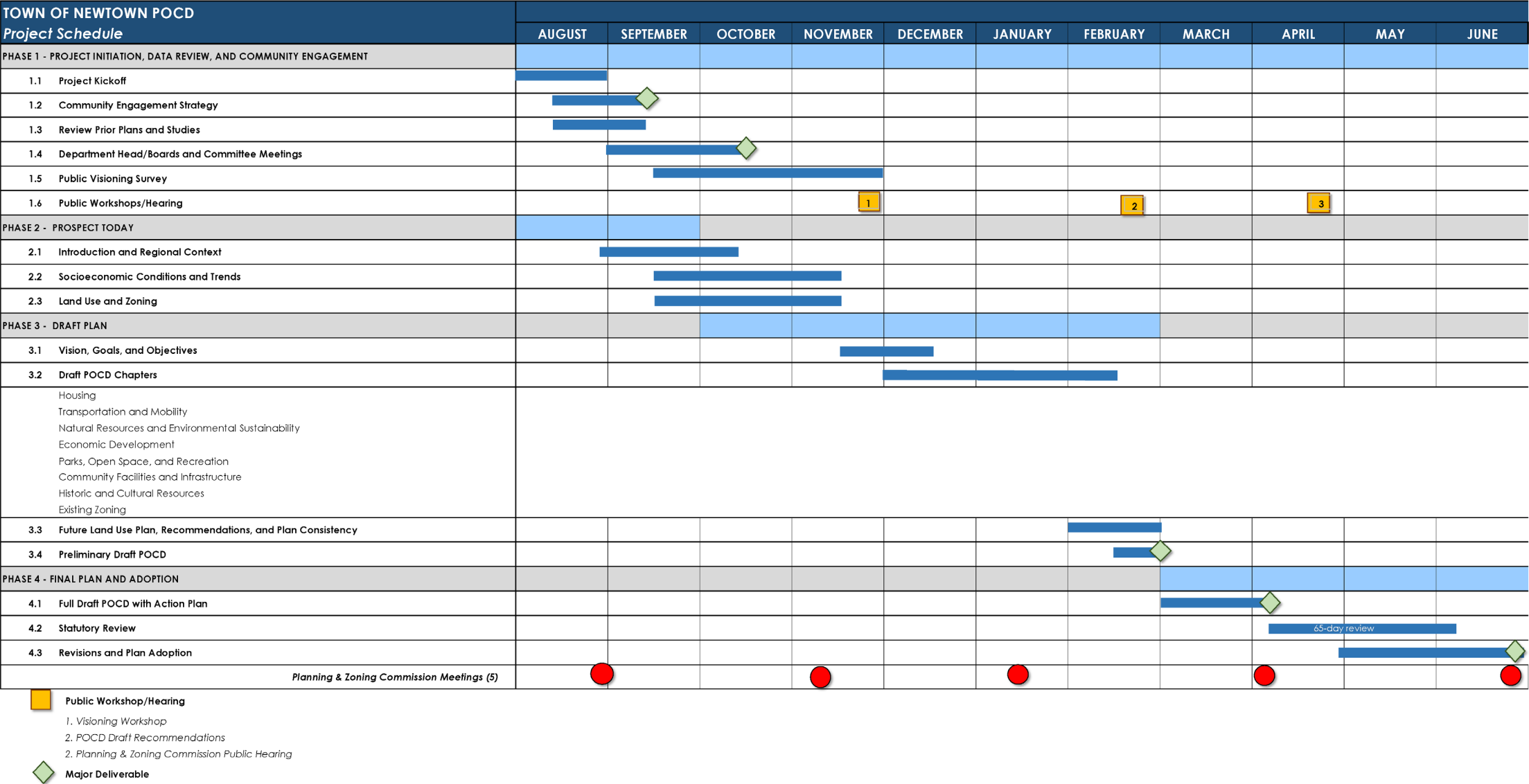
Newtown, Connecticut

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2014 Update

- State law requires that municipalities review and update POCDs at least every 10 years. Newtown's POCD was adopted in 2014.
- POCDs are not laws or regulations; they make recommendations on the Town's future. However, zoning must be consistent with the POCD.
- Certain POCD chapters are required by the State, but municipalities can look at additional topic areas.

Project Overview: POCD Timeline



Project Status: Next Steps



Visioning stage of project:

Social pinpoint online engagement
11/30 Public Meeting: Discussing
POCD Vision and Goals



**Outreach design for
Newtown High School
students**



**Begin work on draft POCD
chapters**



**Continue working on Land
Use & Zoning maps**

Project Overview: POCD Plan Chapters

2014 POCD Organization

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2. VISION STATEMENT
3. IN PERSPECTIVE – Growth, Change and Trends
4. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE
5. ACHIEVING THE VISION
 - a. Community
 - b. Conservation and Natural
 - c. Open Space
 - d. Housing
 - e. Economic Development
 - f. Community Facilities
 - g. Transportation
 - h. The Borough
 - i. Special and Overlay Districts and Corridors
 - j. Future Land Use Plan
6. ISSUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES
7. MANAGEMENT OF THE PLAN

2024 POCD Organization (Proposed)

1. Introduction, Regional Setting and Planning Context
2. Demographics
3. Land Use and Zoning
4. Economic Development
5. Housing
6. Infrastructure and Utilities
7. Transportation and Mobility
8. Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability
9. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation
10. Quality of Life and Neighborhood Livability
11. Future Land Use Plan
12. Action Agenda/Recommendations
13. Plan Consistency

Update on Stakeholder Meetings

Town Staff Meetings

- **Governance** (First Selectman, Purchasing Department, Finance Department) – October 19, 2023
- **Public Safety** (Police Department, Emergency Communications Center)– October 19, 2023
- **Economic Development** (Board of Education, Human Services) – October 20, 2023
- **Parks and Recreation & Public Works** – October 23, 2023
- **Zoning, Housing, and Development** (Town Clerk, Health District, Economic & Community Development, Land Use Agency) - October 26, 2023

Stakeholder Meetings: Key Takeaways

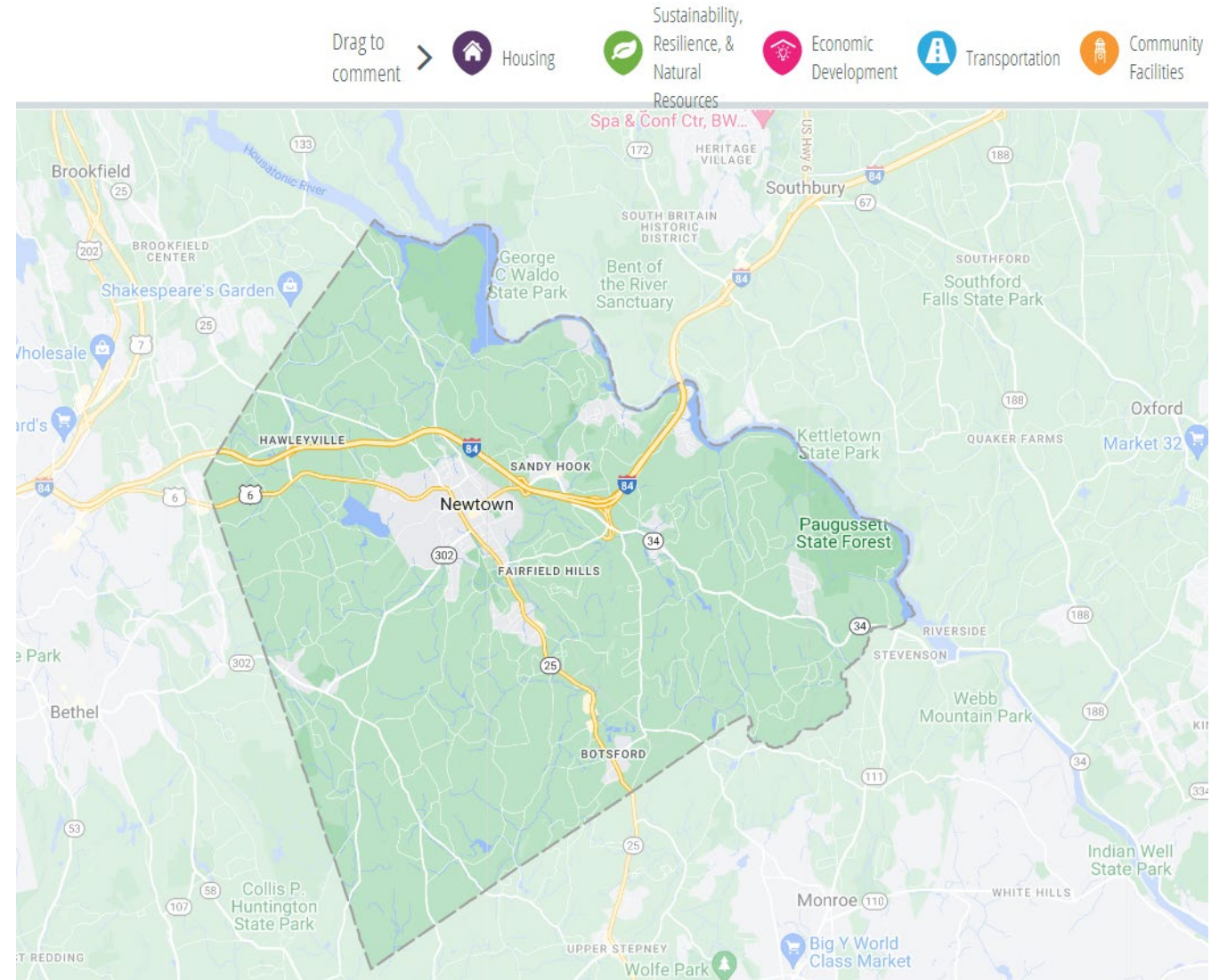
Theme	Details
Infrastructure and Resources	Road infrastructure and maintenance
	Sewer maintenance
	New fire apparatus
	EV charging infrastructure
	Renewable energy expansion (100% renewables target)
	Complete facilities study
Transportation Management and Mobility	Continue installation of fiber optic conduits
	Traffic enforcement and congestion mitigation
	Sidewalk installation
	Explore street geometry changes to enhance safety and visibility
	Speed camera installation
	Potential collaboration with software companies that operate mapping applications
Housing and Economic Development	Explore expansion of SweetHART bus or invest in alternative transportation option
	Support mixed-use development at Fairfield Hills campus
	Expand options for senior housing to support residents aging in place
	Increase emergency housing options
City Services & Community Engagement	Invest in strategies/programs to address staffing challenges
	Grow investments at Senior Center
	Establish a shared database for the Town to streamline data management
	Improve information sharing to mitigate spread of misinformation and encourage resident participation in critical Town activities, like budget votes

Discussion of 2014 POCD Goals: What's Changed? What's Missing?

Theme	Details
Maintain Small-Town Charm	Preserve commercial corridors mixed-use functions
	Preserve historic sites and archeological resources
Conservation and Natural Resources	Protect wetlands
	Regulate stormwater management in flood hazard areas
	Protect agricultural and natural resources
	Exceed State's goal of 21% open space
Housing	Achieve a more balanced housing supply
	Manage residential development to enhance Newtown's community character
Economic Development	Grow commercial property tax base
	Increase inventory of economic development sites
	Prioritize cleanup of brownfield sites
	Facilitate development of agricultural businesses aligned with Newtown's scale
Community Facilities	Improve organization and efficiency of municipal buildings and define long-range school facility requirements
	Support recreation facilities for all age groups and provide space for the Senior Center
	Continue to provide high level of police, fire, and emergency services
Transportation	Classify state roads
	Alleviate areas of congestion and address safety issues
	Improve opportunities for pedestrian circulation
	Initiate a trial "fixed route" bus service in Newtown and maximize rail mobility opportunities.

Online Community Engagement: Social Pinpoint

- Social Pinpoint is a software platform used for community engagement and public participation
- Allows users to interact with a map to identify specific locations and provide comments, suggestions, or concerns related to proposed developments, and infrastructure improvements



Online Community Engagement: Survey

- Online survey available in English and Spanish through Friday, December 15
- Provides quantitative and qualitative data on housing, sustainability and resiliency, economic development, transportation, and community facilities.
- Over 500 responses as of today



Newtown POCD - English

Public Survey

The Town of Newtown Plan of Conservation Development (POCD) Public Survey seeks to gather input from a diverse range of stakeholders. We hope to hear from Newtown residents, workers, property and business owners, representatives of community organizations, and anyone else who is interested in the future of the Town. The survey allows the public to weigh in on planning issues and opportunities and the results will advise the POCD update.

Please take a moment to provide your input (5-10 minutes), which will inform the POCD update. If you have questions or additional feedback, please bring your ideas to the public workshop, or email us at newtownpocd@gmail.com.

Your name and email address are required to submit the survey, but all responses will be kept confidential. Results of the survey will be tabulated and shared in summary form only. There are 18 multiple-choice, rating, or ranking questions (plus seven demographic questions).

Project Status: Next Steps



Analyze Survey &
Social Pinpoint
Results



Draft POCD
Chapters



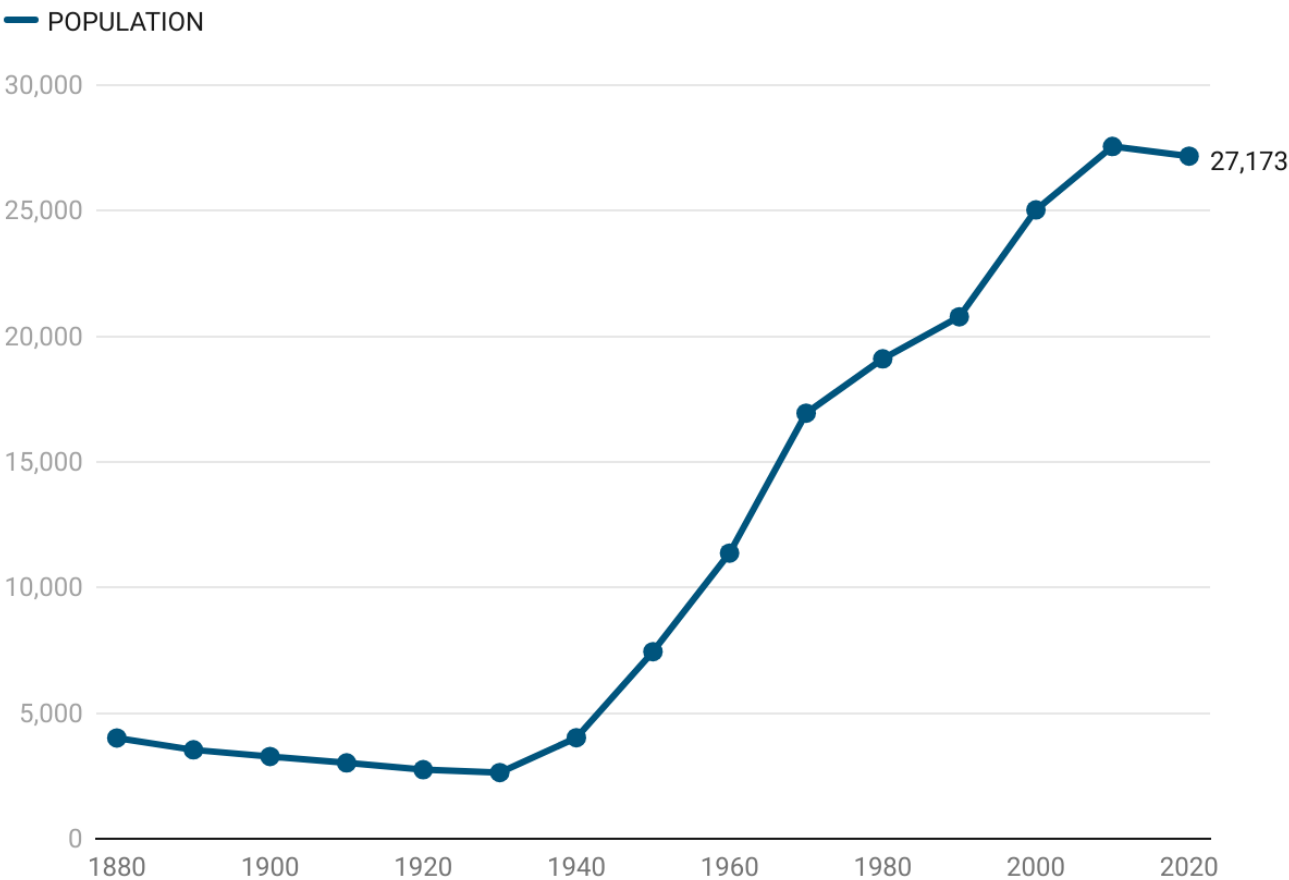
Public
Workshop #2

Demographics: Total Population

Key Trends

- Newtown has a population of 27,173 residents
- The population shrunk by 387 residents between 2010 and 2020, the first time the Town has experienced population loss in almost a century

Newtown Population, 1880 to 2020

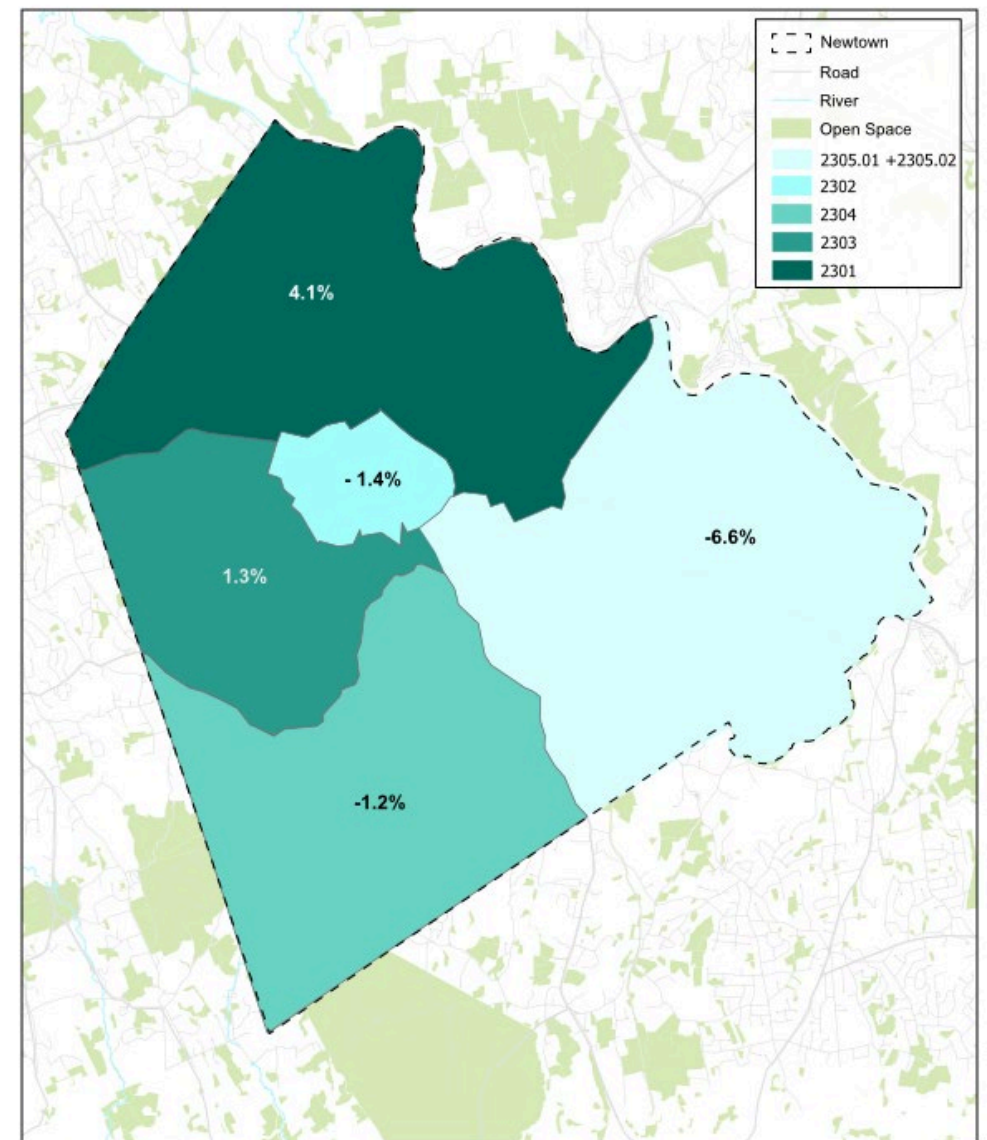


Source: US Census Bureau • Created with Datawrapper

Demographics: Total Population

Key Trends

- While the overall Town population decreased over the last decade, northern Newtown (census tract 2301) and western Newtown (census tract 2303) experienced population growth



Newtown Census Tract Population Change, 2010 to 2020

Sources: WestCOG, US Census Bureau, BFJ Planning

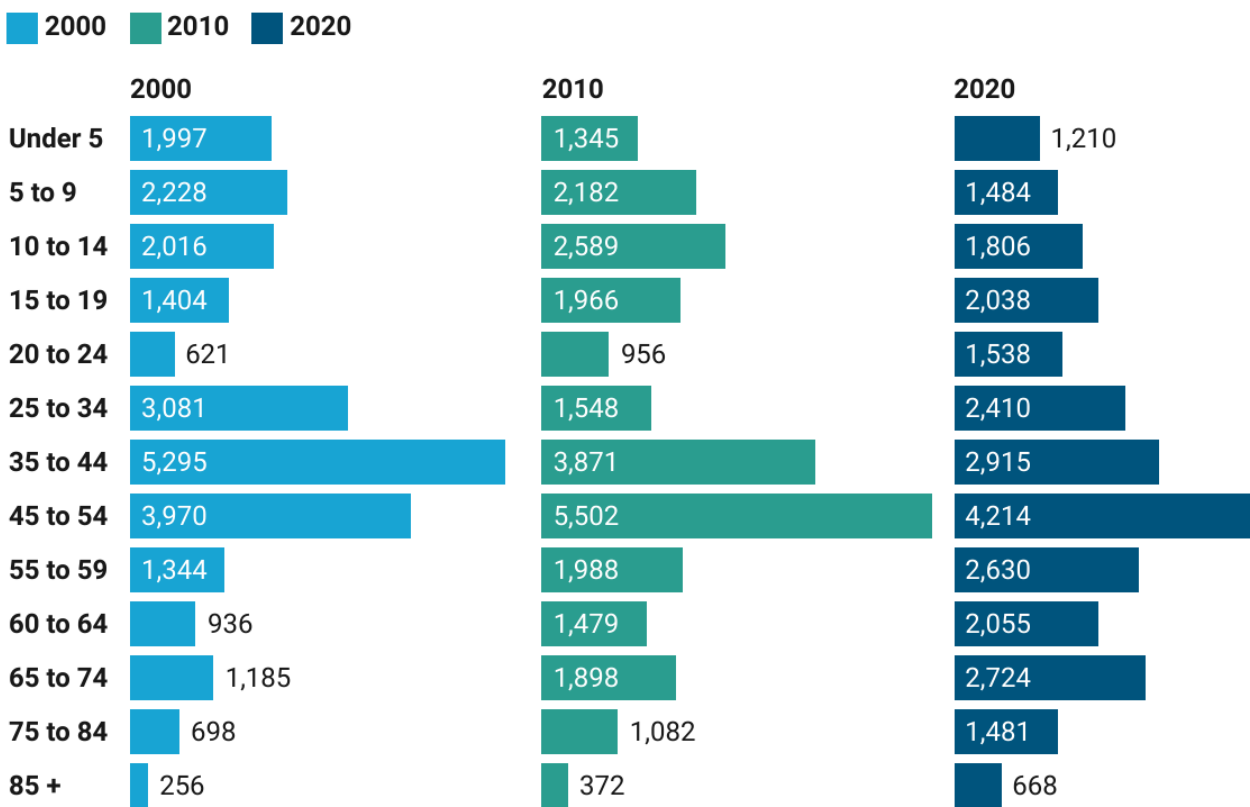


Demographics: Age Distribution

Key Trends

- The largest age cohort in Newtown is residents ages 45-54 (15.5%)
- The 55+ population has approximately doubled since 2000
 - 2000: 4,419
 - 2010: 9,558
- The youth population (14 and younger) has decreased in recent decades

Newtown Age Distribution, 2000, 2010, 2020



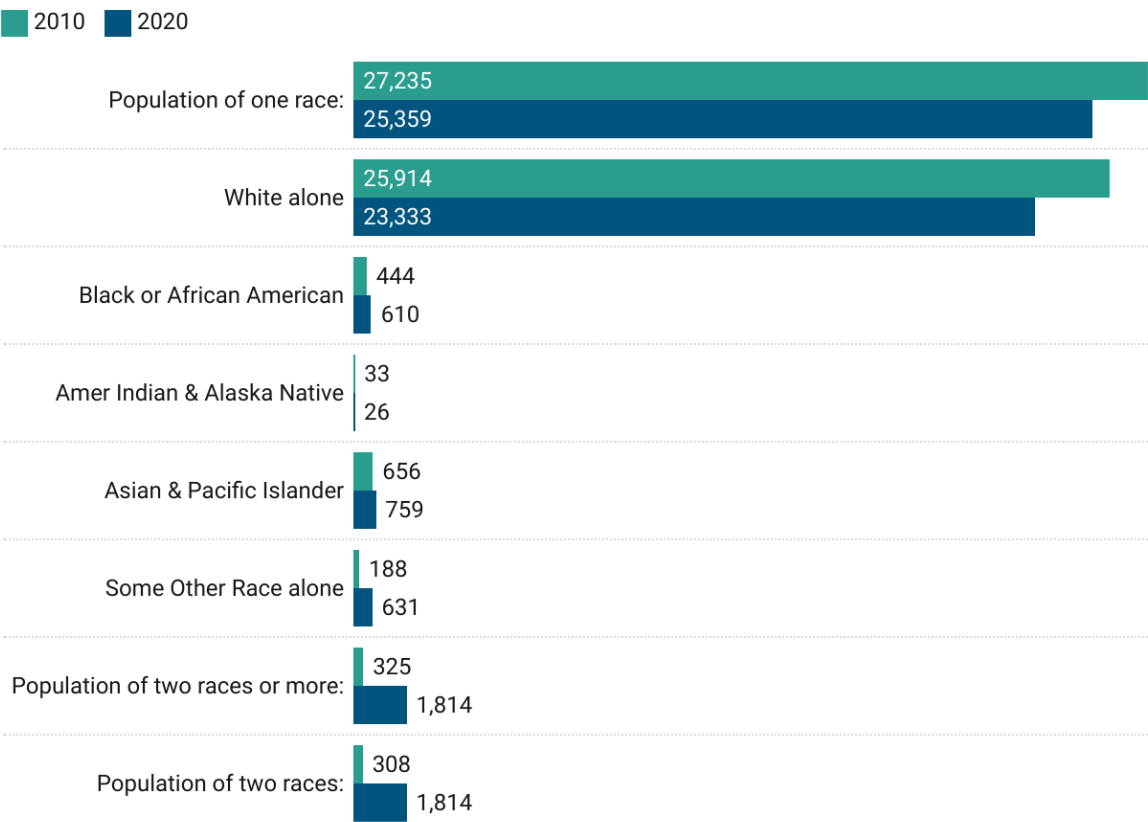
Source: US Census Bureau • Created with Datawrapper

Demographics: Race & Ethnicity

Key Trends

- Newtown’s racial/ethnic diversity has increased slightly over the last decade
- The Black or African American population increased by 37% between 2010 (444) and 2020 (610)
- The Newtown population of two races or more increased by 488% (308 in 2010 compared to 1,814 in 2020)

Newtown Race/Ethnicity, 2010, 2020



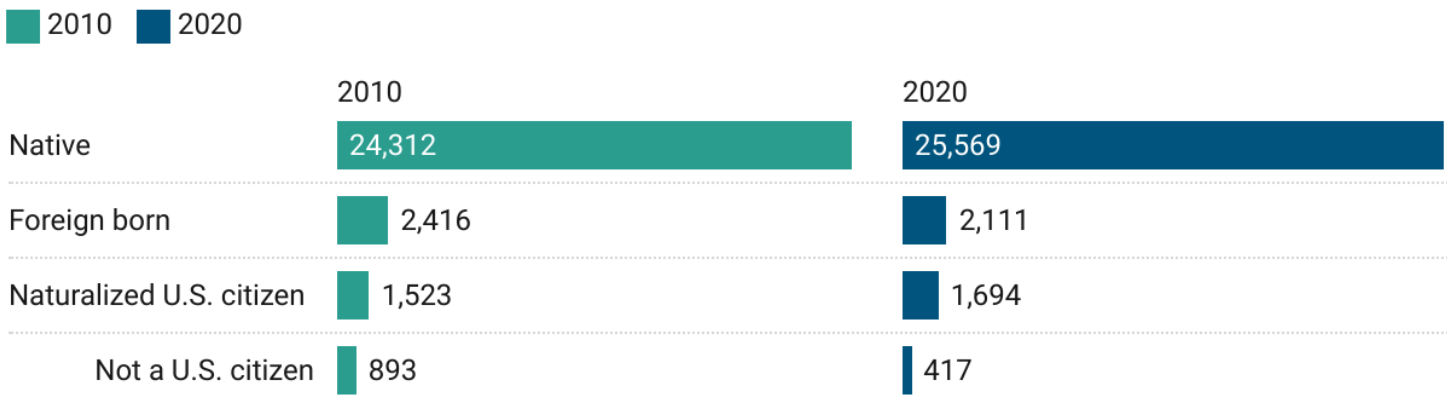
Source: U.S. Census Bureau • Created with Datawrapper

Demographics: Nativity & Citizenship Status

Key Trends

- Newtown is predominantly comprised of native-born U.S. citizens
- The foreign-born population in Newtown has decreased slightly since 2010

Nativity and Citizenship Status Newtown, 2010



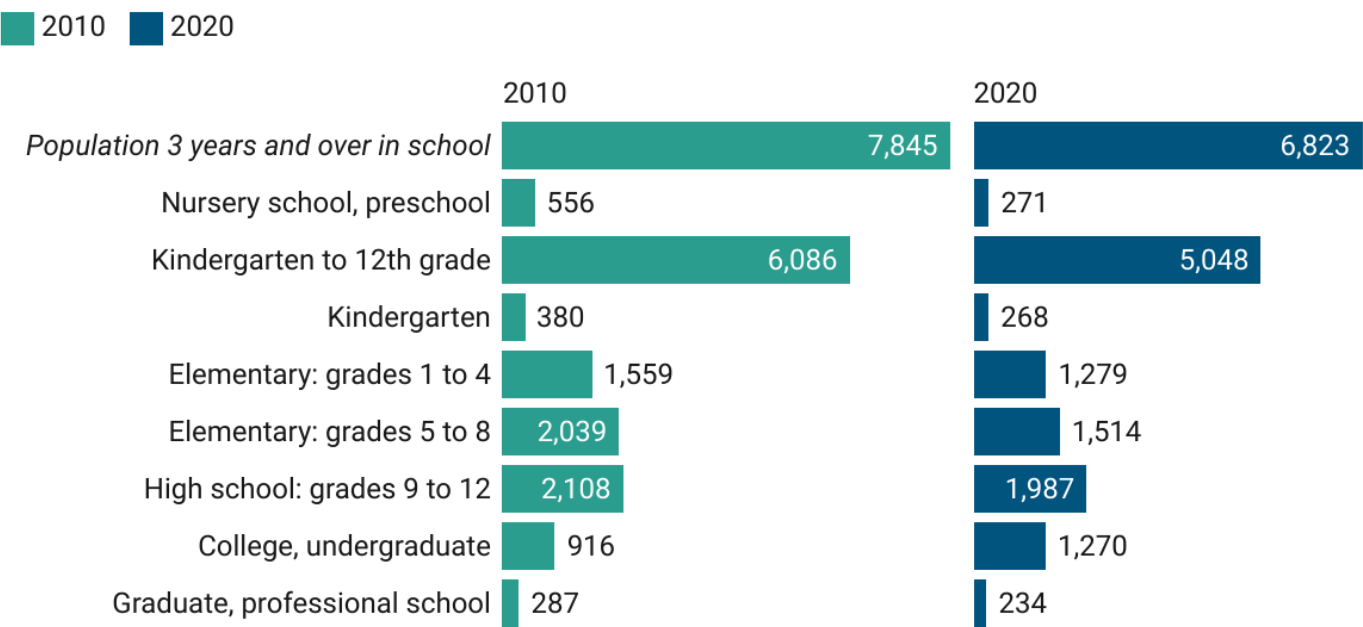
Source: American Community Survey (ACS), 2010, 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Demographics: School Enrollment

Key Trends

- K-12 enrollment decreased by 17% over the last decade
- The overall population enrolled in school decreased by 13%

Newtown School Enrollment, 2010, 2020



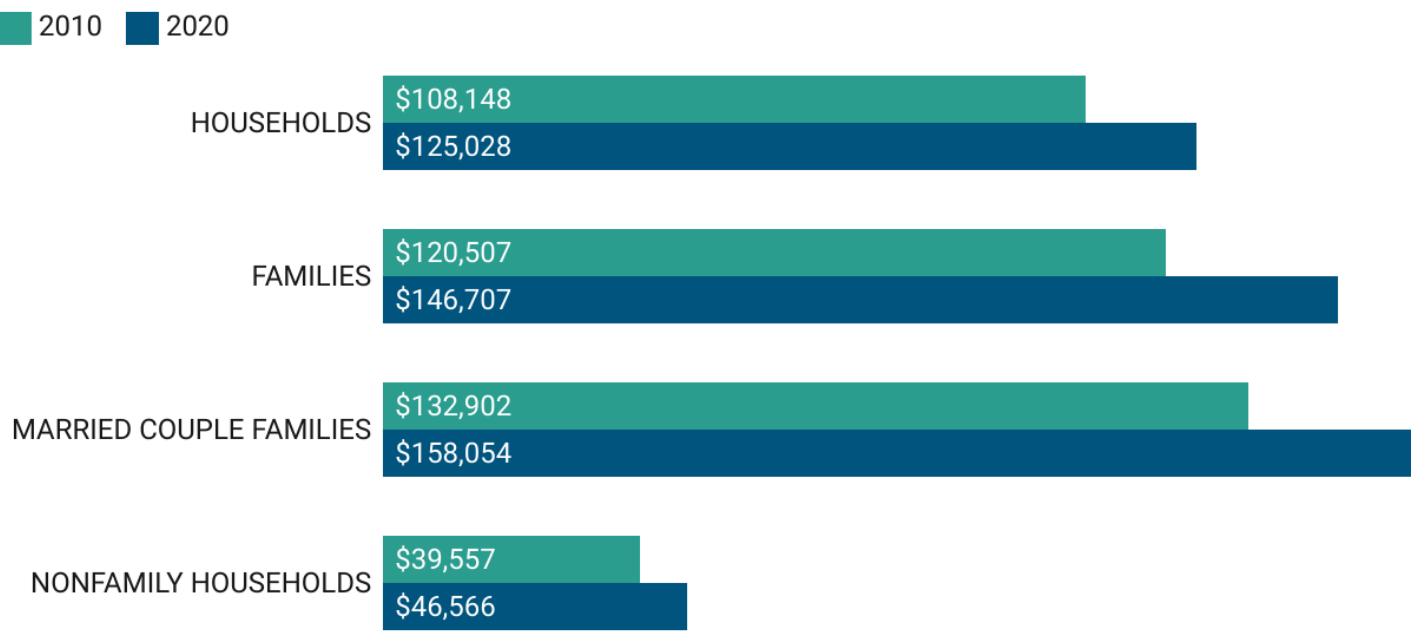
Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2010, 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Economics: Median Income

Key Trends:

- Median income grew across all household types between 2010 and 2020
- Families experienced the greatest percentage income growth at 21.7%

Newtown Median Income, 2010, 2020



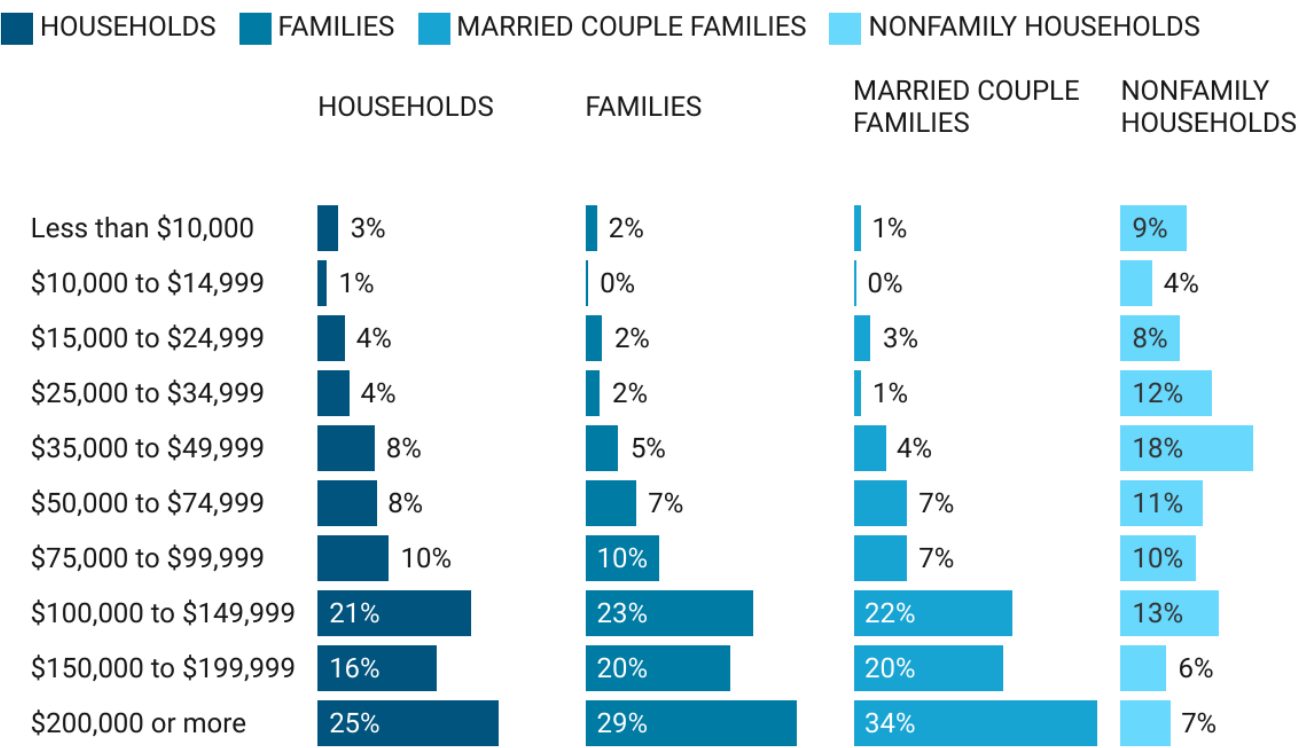
Source: American Community Survey (ACS), 2010, 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Economics: Income Distribution

Key Trends:

- Married couple households are the highest earning household type, on average, in Newtown
- 34% of married couple households earn more than \$200,000 per year

Newtown Income Distribution, 2020



Source: American Community Survey (ACS), 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Housing: Household Composition

Key Trends

- There are 9,766 occupied housing units in Newtown
- 63.7% of Newtown households are married couple households
- About one third of Newtown households have children (34%) and one third have individuals over the age of 65 (34.5%)

Housing Composition, Newtown & Fairfield County, 2020

	FAIRFIELD COUNTY		NEWTOWN	
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE	TOTAL	PERCENT OF FAIRFIELD TOTAL	TOTAL	PERCENT OF NEWTOWN TOTAL
Total households	354,084	100.0%	9,766	100.0%
<i>Married couple household:</i>	<i>179,031</i>	<i>50.6%</i>	<i>6,218</i>	<i>63.7%</i>
With own children under 18 [3]	78,111	22.1%	2,559	26.2%
Cohabiting couple household	20,595	5.8%	496	5.1%
With own children under 18 [3]	6,482	1.8%	122	1.2%
<i>Male householder, no spouse or partner present:</i>	<i>56,897</i>	<i>16.1%</i>	<i>1,173</i>	<i>12.0%</i>
Living alone	37,339	10.5%	757	7.8%
65 years and over	12,073	3.4%	292	3.0%
With own children under 18 [3]	4,944	1.4%	125	1.3%
<i>Female householder, no spouse or partner present:</i>	<i>97,561</i>	<i>27.6%</i>	<i>1,879</i>	<i>19.2%</i>
Living alone	51,774	14.6%	1,119	11.5%
65 years and over	27,279	7.7%	756	7.7%
With own children under 18 [3]	18,571	5.2%	297	3.0%
<i>Households with individuals under 18 years</i>	<i>118,322</i>	<i>33.4%</i>	<i>3,320</i>	<i>34.0%</i>
<i>Households with individuals 65 years and over</i>	<i>110,386</i>	<i>31.2%</i>	<i>3,371</i>	<i>34.5%</i>

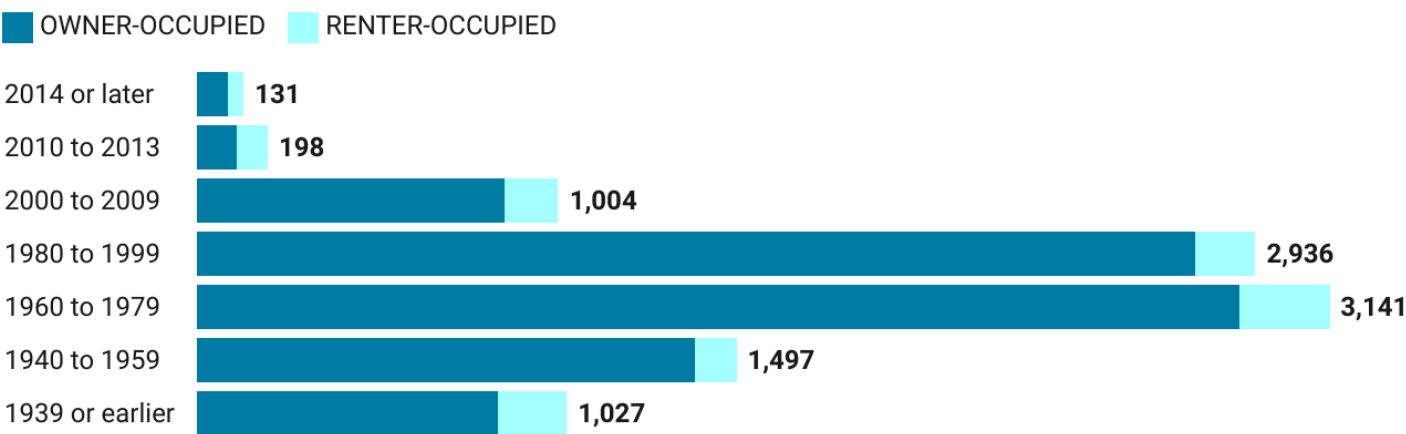
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010-2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Housing: Tenure and Structure Age

Key Trends

- Between 1940 and 1979, nearly half (46.7%) of occupied housing units were constructed in Newtown
- Housing construction has decreased since 2000, representing only 13% of occupied housing units

Newtown Housing Tenure by Structure Age



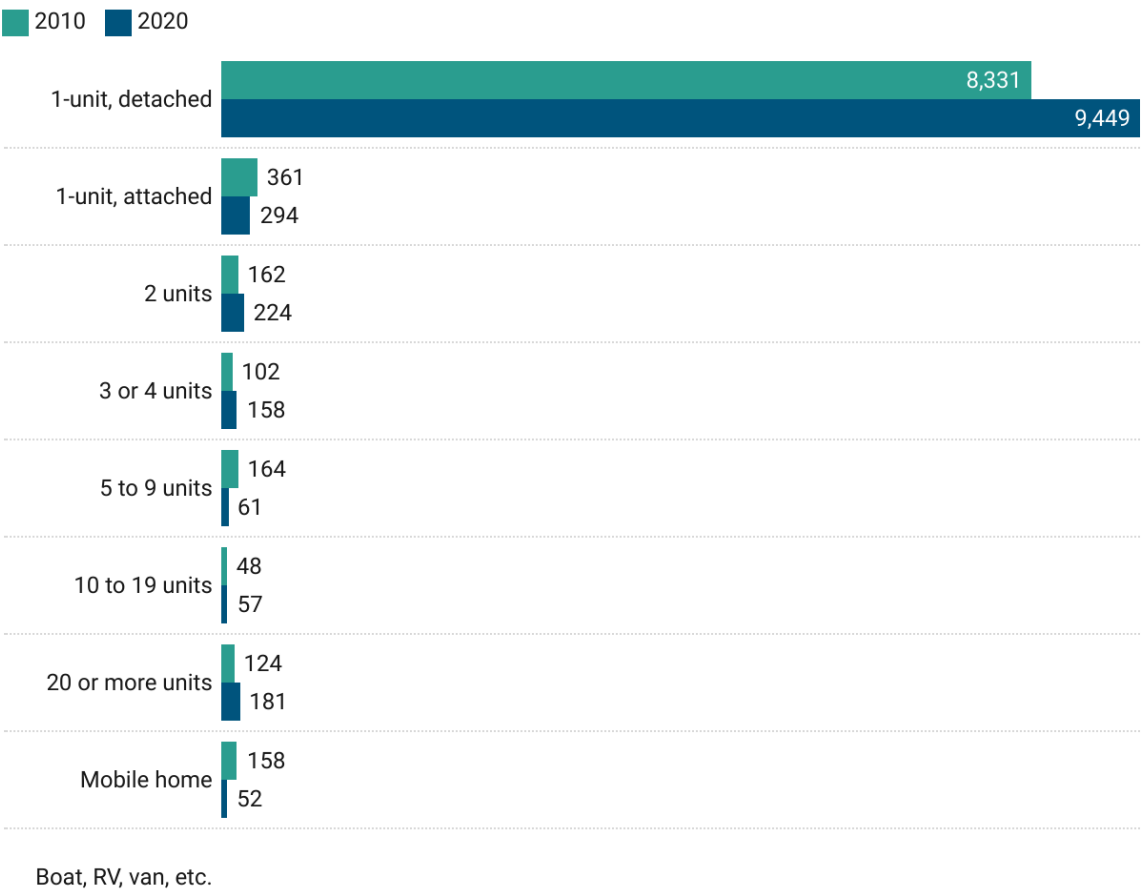
Source: American Community Survey, DP04, 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Housing: Household Units by Structure Type

Key Trends

- Newtown’s housing stock is mainly comprised of single-family detached homes
 - Over 1,000 single-family homes were constructed over the last decade
- 3- or 4-unit housing structures increased by 55% over the last decade

Newtown Housing Stock, 2010, 2020



Source: American Community Survey, DP04, 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

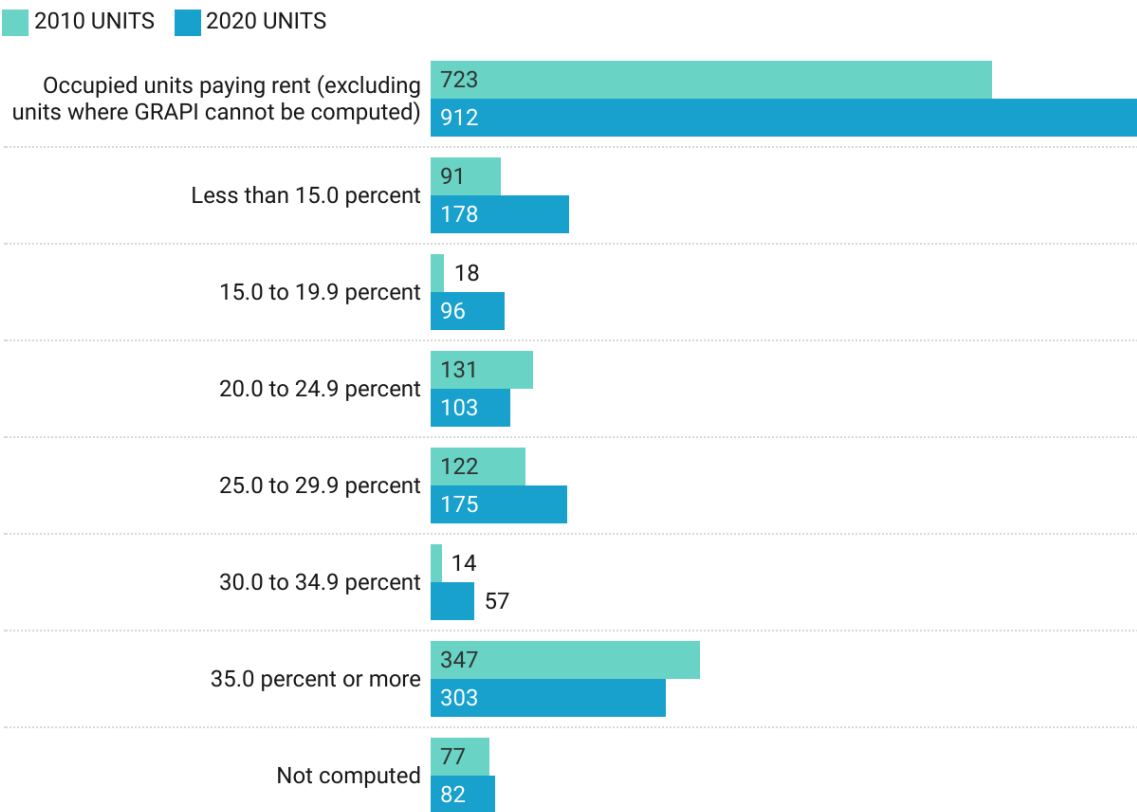
Housing: Rental Affordability

Key Trends:

- There are 912 occupied rental units in Newtown
- The proportion of rent-burdened* households decreased by about 10% between 2010 and 2020

** renters who paid 30% or more of their income on rent*

Newtown Household Income Percentage Spent on Gross Rent, 2010, 2020



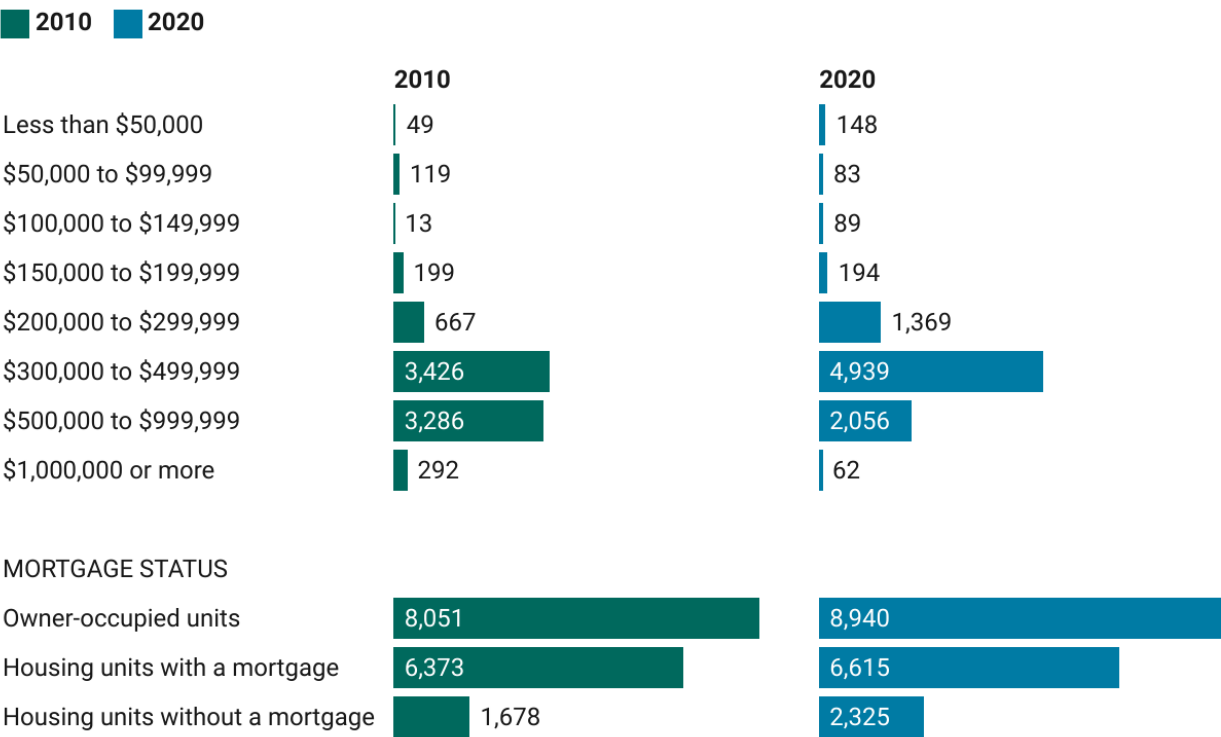
GRAPI: GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Source: American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Housing: Value

Key Trends:

- The median value of homes decreased slightly between 2010 and 2020
- The proportion of homes valued between \$100,000 to \$499,999 increased over the last decade while the proportion of homes valued at \$500,000 or higher decreased

Newtown Housing Value and Sale Price, 2010, 2020



Source: DP04, American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Interactive Open House

What Happens Now?

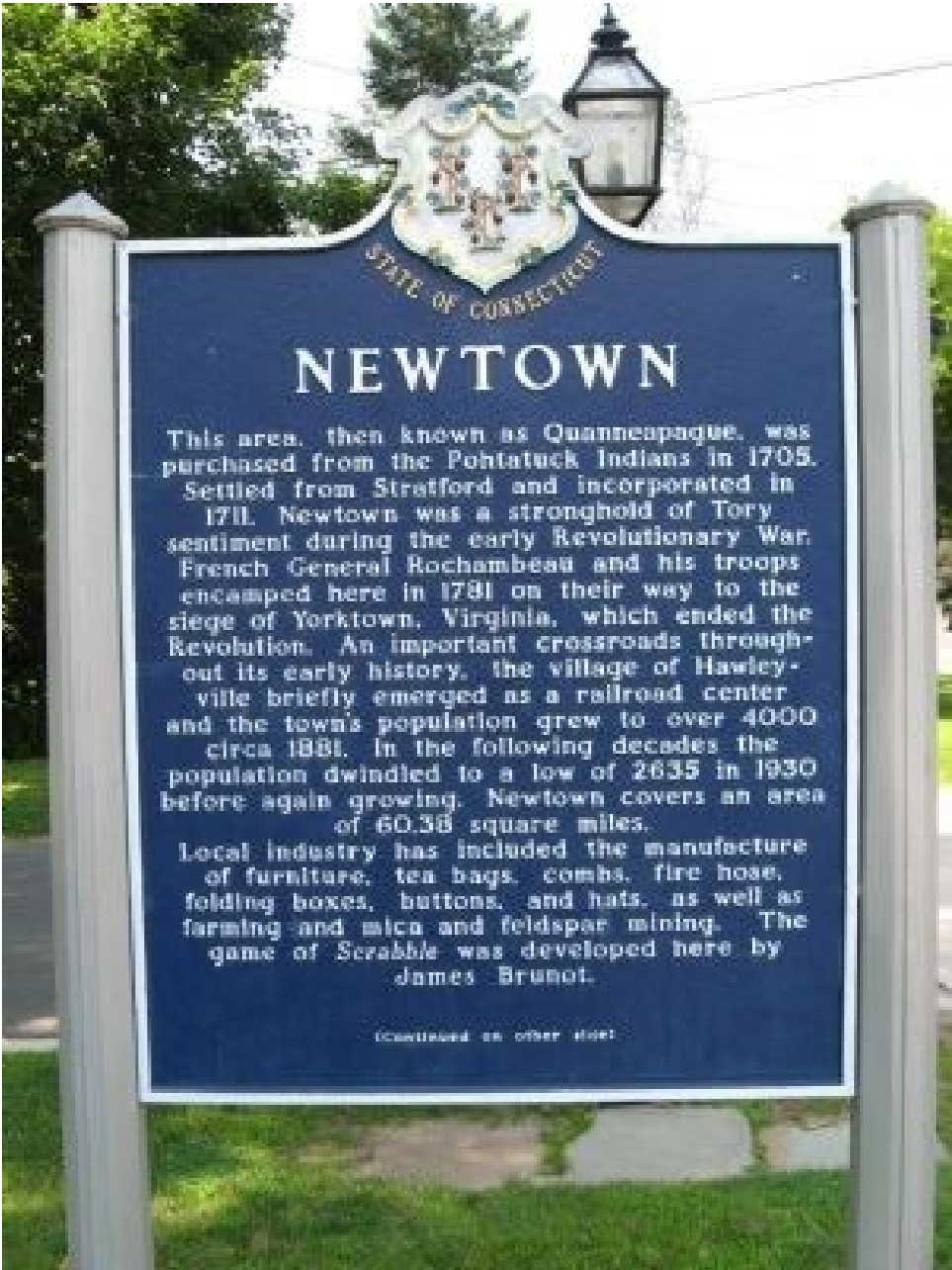
- Visit one of the five work stations:
 - Vision and Goals
 - Town Character and Development Patterns
 - Business Development and Residential Development
 - Community Facilities and Utilities and Transportation
 - Map for general ideas/priorities/concerns

Tell us what you think!

Use pens and Post-It notes to tell us what's missing or no longer relevant in the 2014 POCD goals.

Engage with project team members to tell us your key concerns, priorities, and questions.

Questions and Comments?



Thank You!

