

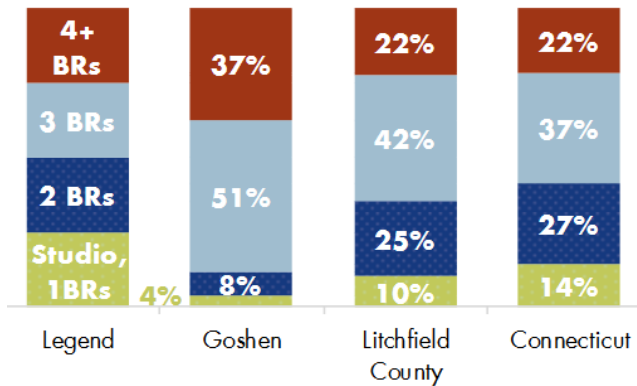
Housing: A Look in the Mirror

As Published in Goshen Town Topics, Feb 2018

The key elements of a great place to live include Jobs, Good Schools, Infrastructure & Services, Quality of Life factors, and its available Housing. Every community is shaped by the housing that exists for those who choose to live in the town. The mix of housing size, type, and cost will shape a community as much as anything else. The available housing is often accepted as a “given”, but it should be considered in community planning, just like good roads, good schools, and good services.

Housing Units by Number of Bedrooms

Source: 2011-15 American Community Survey



In 2016, Goshen revised its Plan of Conservation and Development and one of its top priorities was, “To provide a variety of housing types and opportunities ...”. Data just released underscores the lack of diversity in our housing stock.

Goshen has 1,633 housing units. Most of these homes (80%) were built since 1970, many during the building boom between 1998 and 2008. These homes catered to larger Baby Boomer families and second/vacation homes for larger families. Today 88% of our housing is 3 or 4 bedrooms in size. Only 8% are 2-bedroom units. As the figure above shows, Goshen’s housing is significantly less diverse in this regard than the rest of Litchfield County.

The data also confirms that Goshen is becoming a town of older citizens. Between today and 2030, the number of citizens aged 65 or older will grow by 19% while the number aged 5 to 19 will decline by 4%. This continues a ten-year trend.

(Data Source: 2018 Housing Data Profile: Goshen, Partnership for Strong Communities, copies available at www.GoshenHousingTrust.org)

Why does any of this matter?

Our available housing will shape the age diversity of our town in the years to come. The large, expensive, 3 and 4-bedroom, single-family homes that dominate our housing are not what young Millennials need or want. The reality is that younger individuals and families today don’t view the prospects of home ownership the same; many seek better-sized rental options, especially when just starting out. Many of our older citizens who would like to downsize and stay in the Town that they have come to love, instead “age in place” because our Town offers them almost no options. And, without younger families looking to trade up in home size, some find they can’t sell their current home.

The impact of these trends is clear. We struggle to support our excellent school system whose economics become more tenuous every year. Many employers find it hard to hire and retain staff they need in entry level positions. We are a community built on volunteers, but many groups face declining community involvement, especially among the young.

The young are leaving Goshen, in many cases to find a suitable home they can afford. Our seniors must leave to find a more suitable home or struggle to make their too large, now empty family home work.

Goshen Housing Trust

The mission of the Goshen Housing Trust is to create greater diversity in our available housing. We think doing so will keep Goshen a great place to live and create a stronger community.



If you want to help, keep us in mind during Connecticut Community Foundation’s GiveLocal event on April 24th and 25th. If you are interested in learning more, visit <http://www.GoshenHousingTrust.org>

-- Chris Sanders, President