

Housing Production Plan

Town of West Stockbridge, Massachusetts

2025 - 2030



BRPC
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission



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Chapter 1: Introduction

Executive Summary

Key Findings:

- Households in West Stockbridge have undergone a significant shift since 2000. There are 36.5 percent less Households with Individuals Under 18 years olds in 2023 compared to the beginning of the century.
- West Stockbridge is home to a large managerial class of professionals and has a higher percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher (76.1 percent) than both Berkshire County (38.3 percent) and Massachusetts (46.6 percent).
- 33.4 percent of West Stockbridge's Total Housing Units are classified as "For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use."
- 40.2 percent of West Stockbridge's housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier.
- The Affordability Gap for Single-Family Home Ownership for the Median Household Income in West Stockbridge is \$180,000.
- In Berkshire County, the Short-Term Rental Average Daily Rate was \$329. This means a potential landlord could rent out their rental unit through a short-term rental agreement for only 3.3 days a month to make the same amount of money through a monthly rental.

Key Recommendations:

- **Five-Year Housing Production Goal:** Given the current building environment and the constraints outlined in this Housing Production Plan, a production goal of 3 affordable housing units annually that count toward the SHI is most reasonable and achievable for West Stockbridge. Please note that at this 0.5 percent growth rate, the Town of West Stockbridge will not achieve the MGL Chapter 40B 10 percent affordable housing within the life of this Housing Production Plan.
- **Local Capacity Building:** Empower the Affordable Housing Trust within its charter role to plan, promote, and create affordable housing opportunities throughout the Town of West Stockbridge. Without a strong and capable Affordable Housing Trust, West Stockbridge will miss out on key opportunities to achieve abundant housing.
- **Identification of Funding:** Identify realistic and stable funding sources to meet the needs of housing development at all levels within the community.
- **Zoning and Regulation:** Continue to be progressive in ensuring that West Stockbridge's isn't itself an impediment to reasonable and appropriate housing development within the community.
- **Preservation and Rehabilitation:** Focus on promoting programs and funding sources that would rehabilitate or modify housing units within the community to encourage aging in place and maintenance of the existing housing stock.

Our Vision for Abundant Housing

West Stockbridge understands that a thriving community requires abundant housing. The vision that West Stockbridge has of itself as a thriving, rural community in the Berkshires is reliant on ensuring that housing is abundant for all. While it is one thing to devote money, time, and volunteer resources around the idea of abundant housing, it is even more critical to understand what abundant housing looks like in West Stockbridge. To understand this, let's consider the average individual in West Stockbridge today and what abundant housing looks like in her life.

The average individual living in West Stockbridge is a white woman of about 53 years of age. She lives with her husband in the same home they moved to in the late 1980s. They are both still working and bring home about \$100,000 a year. They have 3 kids, all of whom are no longer living in Berkshire County, but did go from kindergarten through 12th grade in the local public schools. The homeowners are from Berkshire County but have strong connections to both Boston and New York City, where their children and other family members now live. What does abundant housing mean for this individual?

Abundant housing starts with her current home. She was able to buy this home at a relatively good price for the environment of the 1980s. She was able to raise her family here. Year in and year out, her and her partner worked hard and paid off their home sometime in the 2010s. Now at 53, they are looking for opportunities to make some extra money to help with the local property taxes while also making some required maintenance upgrades to the home.

She has the opportunity under local zoning regulations to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) above her detached garage. She can finance this through a combination of a favorable home equity line of credit from a local bank and a town administered grant program. She rents this ADU out to a local teacher for \$1,300 a month. Our local teacher is making about \$70,000 per year, which means she is paying less than a third of her income in rent and utilities. Under a local tax bylaw, our homeowner gets a reduced tax bill on the ADU's valuation due to the teacher making less than 100% of the Area Median Income and the unit being rented for less than a third of her income. This helps to motivate the homeowner to continue renting the unit out year-round, instead of renting out on AirBNB or another short-term rental site.

As the homeowner approaches 60, her youngest child, in his mid-20s and single, is considering moving back to Berkshire County. He can work remotely for a company in the New York City metro area and takes the nearby Metro-North train down to the city once a month. He lives with his parents while the ADUs annual lease runs out, then he moves into the ADU himself and pays a portion of his income to his parents. The teacher who loved living in the ADU, has recently moved to a larger duplex unit as her family situation evolves in the community.

As the homeowners approach 65, they are considering downsizing. However, they don't want to leave West Stockbridge. They are on local committees, are members of the library, and attend a local church. This is their home. Luckily, there are senior-friendly condos available in the village center, which are affordable and age-in-place friendly. In fact, a few of their friends already live there! Their son, living in the ADU, buys their home from them using the money he saved by living in the ADU along with favorable financing terms from a local bank. He can start a family in this single-family home, close by his parents, while then renting out the ADU to a young adult worker at a local restaurant. This helps them with the

cost of their property taxes while their kids are growing up in the local schools and allows local businesses access to a reliable worker throughout the year.

At 75, just 15 years from the beginning of this abundant housing story, our homeowner added one unit of housing to the local housing stock, allowed two young professionals to live comfortably in the community, and provided the opportunity for all families to flourish. At the same time, she has been able to remain in her community of choice from the day she purchased her home in the 1980s all the way through her aging-in-place residence toward the latter years of her life.

This is what abundant housing looks like in West Stockbridge. At each stage of life, from young professionals to seniors, every individual and family type can find housing in West Stockbridge. The housing that they find is affordable and meets their needs at that stage of life. It isn't a burden either financially or physically, but in fact it provides them with the opportunities to enjoy life. Abundant housing allows young professionals to thrive in West Stockbridge, the community they grew up in or the community where they have found a meaningful career. It allows families to grow and the local schools to continue their mission. It gives local businesses a consistent customer base and a reliable labor force from which they thrive and grow. Abundant housing touches all corners of the life of West Stockbridge.

There are a variety of pressures bearing down upon West Stockbridge's local government and residents, which will be discussed in this Housing Production Plan. However, West Stockbridge realizes that perhaps no pressure touches all aspects of life in West Stockbridge like the housing crisis it now faces. That is why West Stockbridge has invested money, time, and volunteer resources to ensure abundant housing for all. This Housing Production Plan is a piece of the puzzle in ensuring the vision of abundant housing for all is fulfilled.

Background

In the fall of 2024, the West Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust Fund issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a consultant to complete a Housing Needs Assessment and to "work with our organization [West Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust] to identify the key elements necessary to develop a comprehensive Housing Production Plan (HPP)." All proposals were to be submitted to the West Stockbridge Town Administrator by September 30, 2024.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), the regional planning agency for Berkshire County's 32 cities and towns, submitted a response to this RFP. BRPC's response was ultimately selected by the West Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust.

To accomplish the purposes as outlined by the West Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust, BRPC will gather data on the **Demographic Profile** and **Local Housing Conditions** within the Town. Projections on population and housing needs will be compiled to establish the baseline needs of today and future years. Turning from this baseline of people and housing, BRPC will analyze a variety of **Housing Development Considerations** within the town including environmental and infrastructure constraints. Finally, based on this key evidence, **Housing Goals and Strategies** will be identified along with an Action Plan for each item.

This HPP is meant to be used by the Town of West Stockbridge as a living document, guiding the Town through the many challenges of housing production. This document should be regularly updated, reviewed, and consulted by all stakeholders listed here within, especially when conditions change at the local, Commonwealth, or Federal level. This includes any economic, political, and sociodemographic

changes, as any of these factors could affect how the Town should respond to housing production in the coming five years. It is highly recommended that the Town of West Stockbridge and BRPC are in regular communication on the progress made and housing goals achieved.

Plan Methodology

The 2022 Draft Master Plan and its associated efforts provide a framework from which this HPP begins. However, using that momentum is only the beginning. BRPC utilized a three-tiered process to ensure the West Stockbridge HPP is as up to date as possible, being inclusive of existing planning efforts in the community and analyzing previously identified action items before creating additional work for community stakeholders. This three-tiered process included:

1) In-Depth Analysis of Past Planning Documents

This included reviewing three substantial documents:

- The draft **Master Plan**, particularly the Housing Chapter, provided a foundation for analyzing past planning efforts and goals. This has informed the process in how the Town has thought about the topic of housing in the past and what it hopes for the future.
- The **Open Space and Recreation Plan** is another key document in the development of the HPP as it mentions housing multiple times in relation to long-term open space preservation. This has informed the Affordable Housing Trust of the type of housing that may be desired in West Stockbridge and where it should be located. As with the Draft Master Plan, any past planning efforts have helped inform the HPP by placing it in context of previous work.
- The **Zoning Bylaws** are the backbone for land-use planning for the general welfare in the Town of West Stockbridge, which includes planning for housing. A critical part of this HPP is identifying any existing barriers to housing development. A thorough analysis of the existing bylaws has led to identifying barriers as well as recommendations directly to Town's Planning Board and Select Board.

2) Data Gathering

The best way to establish a baseline for understanding the housing situation in the Town is by going to the most exhaustive data sources for high quality, quantitative data. A variety of these sources were consulted to create the **Demographic Profile** and **Local Housing Conditions**. All data sources are listed with the corresponding data tables and narrative description. The main data sources used were:

- The **U.S. Census of Population and Housing** (decennial census): mainly Census 2020, although some data is taken from the Census 2000 and Census 2010 as well.
- The **American Community Survey (ACS)**: The ACS provides demographic and housing estimates for large and small geographic areas every year. This document primarily used the 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for current data. This means the numbers are a statistical representation using the data from 2019 through 2023. Although the estimates are based on a small population sample, a new survey is collected each month, and the results are aggregated to provide a similar, "rolling" dataset on a wide variety of topics. As this data source is based on a sample, there are Margins of Error associated with nearly every data point pulled from the ACS data. While BRPC feels

confident that the data is the best reflective information at hand for communities, those Margins of Error can be found on the associated ACS Tables listed with the data here: <https://data.census.gov/>.

- **UMass Amherst/Donahue Institute:** The Donahue Institute “addresses critical questions and develops innovative solutions to help organizations and agencies from both the public and private sector meet challenges, measure success, and set goals.”¹ This resource was used most frequently for population projection figures and data.
- **Redfin:** Redfin is a real estate company that collects a variety of information and makes it available to the public through various services and tools. This source is an excellent source of information for housing sale prices and other geographic information.
- **United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (CHAS):** The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides data to the public through Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data. This data is mainly used for the housing cost burdened section of this HPP and is invaluable when determining what income groups are most likely to suffer under high housing costs.
- **Zillow:** Zillow is an online real estate marketplace that provides a glimpse into the housing market in a specific geographic context at any given moment. This is critical when seeing what type of housing units are available for sale or rent in the current moment and market.
- **Massachusetts Department of Revenue:** The Commonwealth’s Department of Revenue was critical when gathering data regarding parcel numbers, local property tax trends, and property assessments over a longer period.

3) Public Engagement

A series of housing Issues Forums were held in April 2025 in collaboration between BRPC and the West Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust. These three meetings (April 5th, April 7th, and April 8th) were designed to discuss the current state of housing in West Stockbridge and help identify potential strategies for addressing housing challenges.

The discussions were laid out in the same structure as this Housing Production Plan with statistics used to focus the conversation on Demographic Considerations, Local Housing Conditions, and Housing Development Considerations. Ultimately, the public was provided the opportunity to comment on what they viewed as necessary Housing Goals and Strategies.

While this was the only formal public engagement process to inform this plan, the Housing Production Plan will ultimately go before the town’s Affordable Housing Trust, the Planning Board, and the Select Board for final approval.

¹ <https://donahue.umass.edu/about-us>

Town Overview and History

West Stockbridge is located in Berkshire County, the westernmost county in Massachusetts. It has Richmond on the northern border, Stockbridge to its east, Great Barrington and Alford to the south, and New York State as the western boundary.² The Town has a total area of 18.7 square miles with 41 miles of road, 12.5 miles of which are unpaved. The Town boasts a beautiful natural topography of four mountains over 1,500 feet, four major ponds/lakes, and three brooks which feed into the Williams River, a major feature of the Town's history and settlement.

Located at a western gateway of the Taconic Range, the area was a transient fishing and hunting area for Mohican tribes and Dutch traders from the west. As Berkshire County became settled from the south by English colonists in the early 1700s, the Stockbridge band of the Mohicans moved further into the area. During the 1750s farmers from the Connecticut Valley moved into the West Center area of West Stockbridge and the community grew. A meeting house and four taverns were built and by 1774, they petitioned the General Court to allow it to separate from the larger, more powerful Stockbridge Township. By **March of 1774**, the General Court granted West Stockbridge its charter and it became independent from the Stockbridge Township.

West Stockbridge has its populated village center along the Shaker Mill Pond and Williams River. There are also four outlying neighborhoods or areas that have featured in the Town's history at various times and are prominent at various times during the life of the Town. West Center was the original farming settlement. Williamsville was an early industrial mill area, State Line a mining and rail center, and Freedleyville/Rockdale an important quarrying center.

The evolution of West Stockbridge is typical of many **small, New England** communities. During the Colonial Period, farming was the main industry, and water provided the primary source of power. Settlements along watercourses provided power for sawmills, wool carding, and grain mills. The Williams River was the main source of power with some 13 dams spread across the Town. In the 1790s, iron was discovered on a farm near State Line Road, which then led to the development of two major open pit iron mines. During this time, iron mines employed the most people as ore extracted from these mines fed the Woodruff and Richmond Iron Furnace until the 1920s. In addition to iron, numerous limestone deposits were found throughout the Town. Some of the deposits were large – as in the Village Center and Miller Lane. Others were smaller, but more easily accessible (Swamp Road and Lenox Road). Those deposits were near the surface and easily extracted.

Marble was the third industrial product that helped define West Stockbridge. The first marble quarry was opened in Freedleyville in the 1790s and others quickly followed over the next few decades. West Stockbridge marble was used in civic buildings in New York City, Philadelphia, and Boston. The marble business lasted until the mid-1860s, when it was closed due to competition from Vermont marble, which was easier to work with and proved to be more plentiful. These two natural resources, iron, limestone, and marble, led the Town to become a center in the developing minerals industry of the young American nation.

To transport these valuable goods to the rest of the country, West Stockbridge developed as a transportation hub during the 1800s. The first railroad in Berkshire County was built in 1838 from West Stockbridge over to Hudson, New York to move the iron ore out to growing national markets. Within a few

² Taken from the 2022 Town of West Stockbridge – Master Plan (BRPC document)

years, the railroad had joined the Western Railroad; **tying West Stockbridge east to Boston, west to Albany, and south to Connecticut and New York City.** State Line (a neighborhood in the Town) became a major railroad junction with two rail yards, storage facilities, a switch town, a passenger station, and a hotel.

By the early 20th century, West Stockbridge had a mix of local families, newcomers, second homeowners, and visitors. West Stockbridge became a part of Berkshire County's summer cottage culture, although in a lesser way than its more affluent and well-known neighbors like Lenox and Stockbridge. For many years, it was a vacation and summer camp destination for **visitors from New York City and Boston**, often arriving by train. This mix of locals and second homeowners has continued into the present day. Tourism remains a strong part of the local economy as antique shops, restaurants, inns, and lodging houses became established in Village Center. Today, West Stockbridge is home to **1,201 people in approximately 551 households**. There are 880 total housing units throughout West Stockbridge, 91.5 percent are single-family homes. West Stockbridge **continues to be a popular second home location** in the Berkshires. Approximately 33.4 percent of total housing units (294 units) are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use within the town of West Stockbridge. Only 4 homes of the total housing units were for sale at the time of data calculation. This presents a huge housing challenge for the Town of West Stockbridge in the coming five years, and for decades to come.

Chapter 2: Demographic Profile

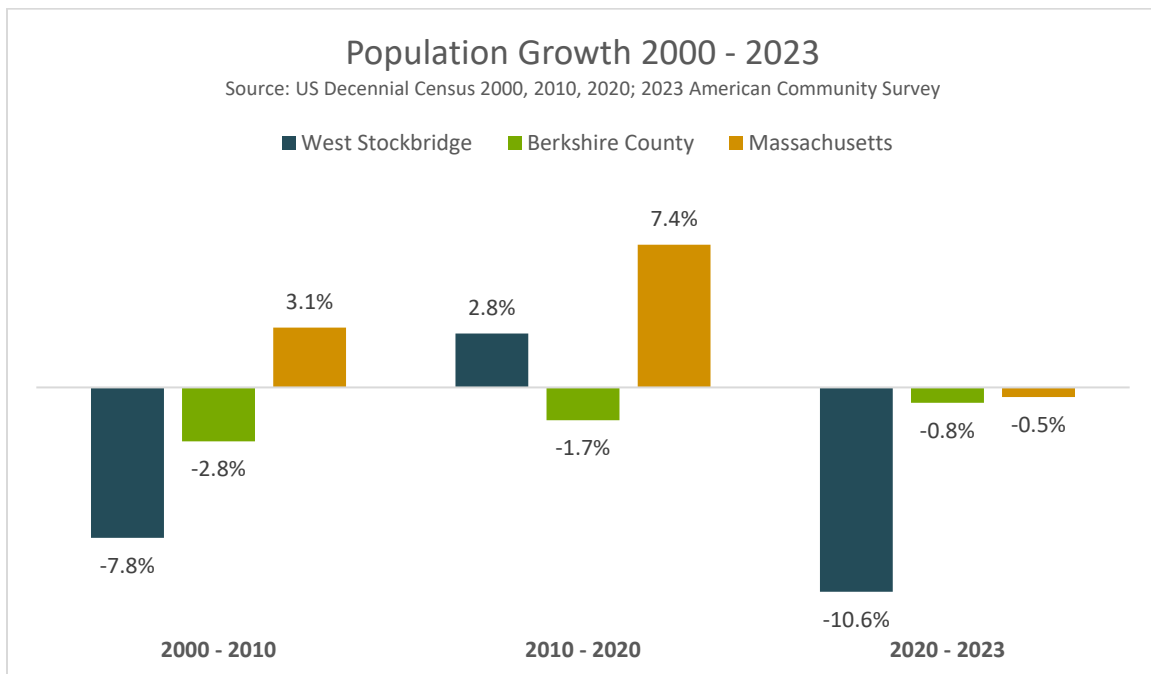
Key Findings

- The total population of West Stockbridge is expected to slightly increase over the next two decades, increasing further the pressure on the existing housing stock.
- Households in West Stockbridge have undergone a significant shift since 2000. There are 36.5 percent less Households with Individuals Under 18 years olds in 2023 compared to the beginning of the century.
- West Stockbridge's existing housing market is relatively stable. Only 15.4 percent of the population in owner-occupied housing units has moved since 2021. For renters, 107 or 54.6 percent of individuals living in rental units have been in the same unit since at least 2017. This stability could indicate a lack of opportunities to upsize, downsize, or find appropriate housing elsewhere in the community.
- West Stockbridge has seen an increase in household income, higher than Berkshire County but still below the Commonwealth's median. The Median Household Income has increased from \$51,000 in 2000 to \$99,961 in 2023.
- West Stockbridge is home to a large managerial class of professionals (56.7 percent) and has a higher percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher (76.1 percent) than both Berkshire County (38.3 percent) and Massachusetts (46.6 percent).

Population and Household Trends

Population and Household Change

The Town of West Stockbridge is home to 1,201 people according to the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimate.³ This current population level represents an increase since the 2020 Decennial Census population of 1,172. However, the largest decade of growth for the Town was between 2000 and 2010 when the population increased from 1,343 to 1,525. In comparison, Berkshire County has lost 0.2 percent of its population since the 2020 Decennial Census, while the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has lost 0.7 percent since the same survey.



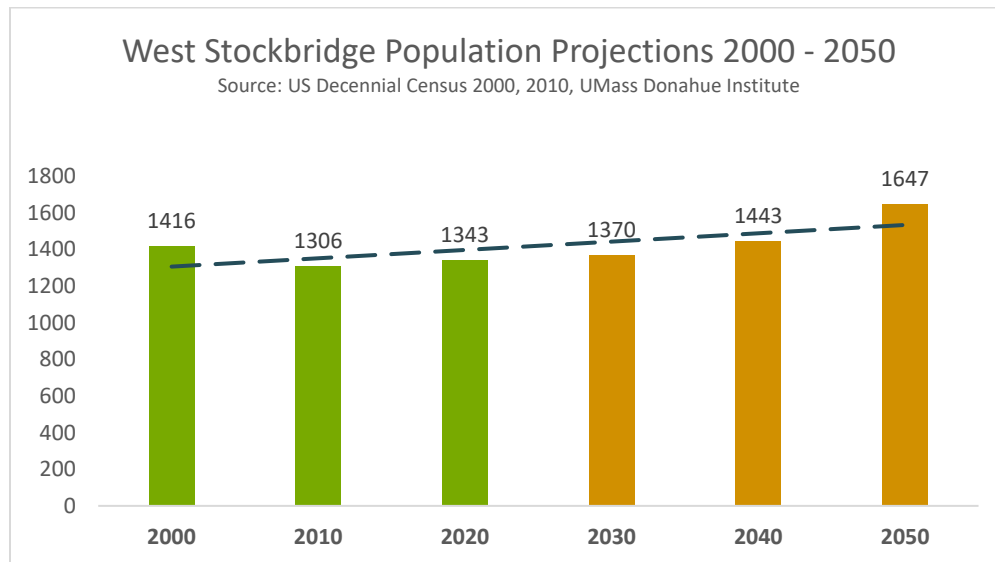
The Town of West Stockbridge has experienced similar demographic trends compared to the rest of Berkshire County, except that West Stockbridge grew between 2010 and 2020 while Berkshire County's population declined. The number of households has decreased since 2000 from 601 households to 551 households in 2023. At the same time, the number of Households with Individuals 65 Years and Older has increased by 34.1 percent.

³ The 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates is the data source used as the latest census data throughout this report, unless otherwise noted. Please note that the 2024 ACS isn't released until December 2025.

Change in Population	2000	2010	2020	2023	% Change from 2000 - 2023
Population	1,416	1,306	1,343	1,201	-15.2%
Households	601	638	618	551	-8.3%
Households with Individuals under 18 years	178	173	130	113	-36.5%
Households with Individuals 65 years and Older	179	170	295	240	34.1%
Single Person Households	162	222	180	131	-19.1%
Average Household Size	2.35	2.39	2.48	2.17	-7.7%
Average Family Size	2.86	3.03	2.83	2.76	-3.5%

Source: US Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020; American Community Survey 2023, Table SS0101

When analyzing West Stockbridge's population and household trends overall, they are consistent with Commonwealth and county trends. This trend shows mild growth in the decade between 2010 and 2020 with population decline outside of that decade. However, looking at this century in totality, West Stockbridge's 15.2 percent population decrease from 2000 to 2023 is directly opposite of Massachusetts' population increase of 10.1 percent in the same period.



Despite these recent demographic trends, a slight population increase within the community is projected through 2050. The Donahue Institute at UMass Amherst, using a variety of demographic projection techniques, projects an increase in every age group between 2000 and 2050 except in the 5- to 19-Year-Old category and a zero percent increase in the Under 5 category. At the same time, the 20- to 34-year-old age group is projected to experience the highest growth of 59.2% by the year 2050. This continued population increase, no matter how slight, will continue to lead to high demand for housing in West Stockbridge. It also means the issues surrounding workforce affordability, housing quality, and housing options would not be solved by population changes alone. Despite the chart below, it is critical to understand that population projections cannot consider all the factors in an unpredictable world. The COVID-19 pandemic is a good example of an unforeseen factor that drastically impacted both population projection and housing demands.

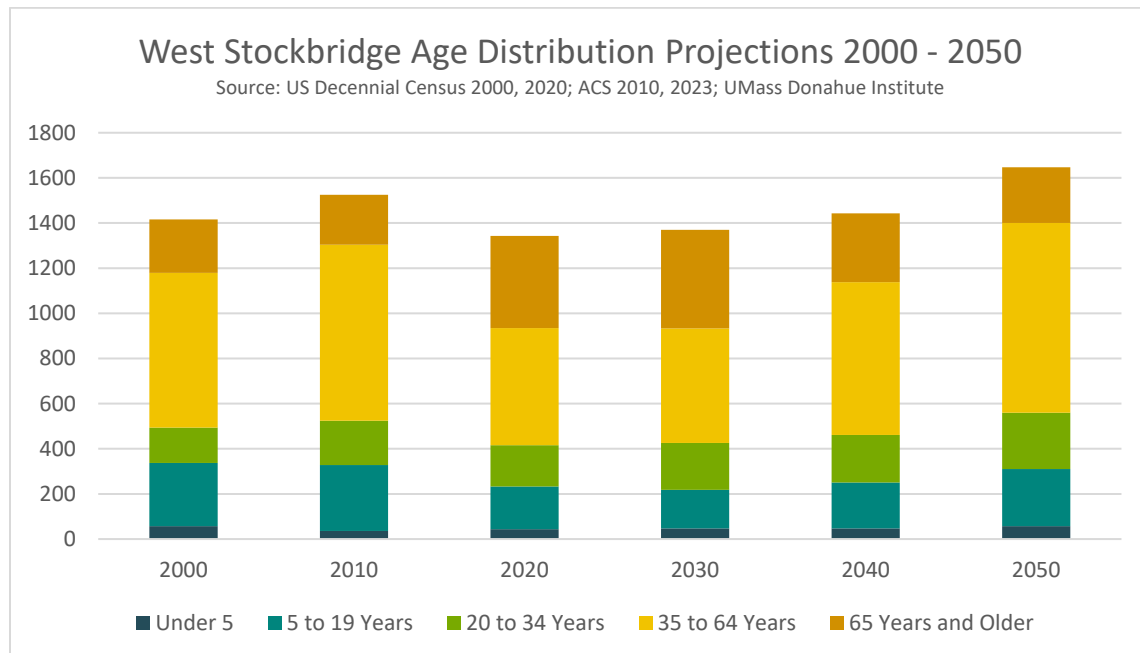
Age

The population's age is a recent point of concern in West Stockbridge. There have been decreases in populations under 5 (15.2 percent decrease) and 5 to 19 years (31.6 percent decrease). Conversely, there has been a 31.2 percent increase in individuals who are 65 years and over. This indicates that young people are actively leaving the community while the remaining population is aging in place. West Stockbridge's Median Age rose 9.5 years, or 21.4 percent between 2000 and 2023.

Change in Age	2000	2010	2020	2023	% Change from 2000 - 2023
Total Population	1,416	1,525	1,343	1,201	-15.2%
Under 5	57	36	44	39	-31.6%
5 to 19 Years	270	292	189	166	-40.7%
20 to 34 years	157	196	183	116	-26.1%
35 to 64 Years	685	780	519	569	-16.9%
65 Years and Over	237	221	408	311	31.2%
21 Years and Over	1,072	1,176	1,100	966	-9.9%
Median Age	44.4	48.3	54.0	53.9	21.4%

Source: US Decennial Census 2000, 2020; American Community Survey 2010, 2023; UMass Donahue Institute

In addition, UMass Amherst Donahue Institute provides age distribution projections in its population projections. Their age projections, shown below, confirm an overall population increase, as well as a swelling of individuals aged 35 to 64 years old.



Race and Ethnicity

	2000		2010		2020		2023	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Population	1,416	100%	1,306	100%	1,343	100%	1,201	100%
White alone	1,393	98%	1,254	96%	1,239	92%	1,099	92%
Black or African American alone		0%	15	1%	9	1%	-	0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone		0%	-	0%	3	0%	19	2%
Asian alone		0%	18	1%	13	1%	21	2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone		0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%
Some other race alone		0%	5	0%	19	1%	17	1%
Two or more races		0%	14	1%	60	4%	45	4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	19	1%	12	1%	46	3%	31	3%

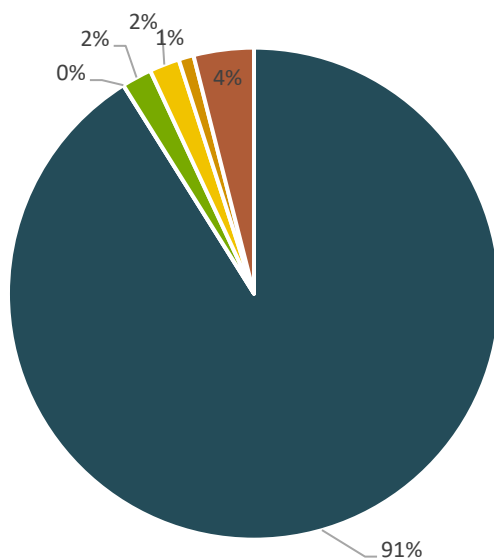
Source: US Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020; American Community Survey 2023

The 2020 Decennial Census is the most reliable data source for racial and ethnic makeup of smaller communities, although the 2023 ACS data is provided for further context. West Stockbridge's population identifies overwhelmingly as White alone (92 percent). This has remained relatively consistent from the 2000 Decennial Census through 2020. West Stockbridge has a higher percentage of individuals identifying as White alone than the rest of Berkshire County (86 percent).

West Stockbridge Racial Composition

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table P1

- White alone
- Black
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Some other race
- Two or more races



There is a decrease in this White Alone category from 98 percent in 2000 to 92 percent in 2020. However, "Some other race alone" and "Two or more races" picked up that difference increasing from zero percent and 1 percent, respectively. This increase is a potential change in how individuals self-identify over the course of the last decade.

The most significant growth in the racial/ethnic categories is the growth of individuals of any race identifying as Hispanic or Latino. West Stockbridge's percentage of Hispanic or Latino individuals has gone from 1 percent in 2000 to 3 percent in 2023.

Disability

The 2023 ACS collects data on individuals living with disabilities including hearing, vision, cognitive, and ambulatory difficulties along with self-care and independent-living challenges. According to the 2023 ACS, the disability rate of West Stockbridge is 9.2 percent or 110 individuals. This is below the rate for Berkshire County (15.7 percent) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (12.1 percent).

Geographic Mobility

A key measure when determining the elasticity of a housing market is geographic mobility. Geographic mobility is a measure of the movement of people from one community to another, or no movement at all. Whether or not a family or individual moves is dependent on a variety of factors including economic status, family situations, and age. For example, renters tend to move much more than those who own their own home. Whenever people are less likely to move, for whatever reason, the less likely homes will become available for new occupants, which increases the *inelasticity* of the housing market.

There are two ways to analyze the geographic mobility of West Stockbridge. First, by looking at when the current householder moved into their current unit. In West Stockbridge, 83.6 percent of the population lives in an owner-occupied housing unit with the remaining 16.4 percent living in a rented housing unit. Approximately 15.4 percent of the population (154 individuals) who own their housing unit moved into that unit during 2021 or after. For renters, 29 individuals (14.8 percent) who rented their housing unit moved into that unit during the same period. Conversely, 487 individuals (48.8 percent) who own their housing unit moved in between 2010 and 2020. For renters, 165 individuals (81.1 percent) have been in the same unit since at least 2010. For renters, this means the rental market is inelastic. Individuals are staying in the limited rental units longer without moving. For homeowners, the market shows some elasticity in the decade between 2010 and 2020, but a trend toward inelasticity in the last several years. These two trends taken together are a worrying sign for those looking for available housing units within West Stockbridge.

Total Population in Occupied Housing Units by Tenure by Year of Move In (2023)

Total population in occupied housing units:			1,193		
Owner occupied:	997	83.6%	Renter occupied:	196	16.4%
Moved in 2021 or later	154	15.4%	Moved in 2021 or later	29	14.8%
Moved in 2018 to 2020	116	11.6%	Moved in 2018 to 2020	60	30.6%
Moved in 2010 to 2017	371	37.2%	Moved in 2010 to 2017	99	50.5%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	124	12.4%	Moved in 2000 to 2009	-	0.0%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	111	11.1%	Moved in 1990 to 1999	-	0.0%
Moved in 1989 or earlier	121	12.1%	Moved in 1989 or earlier	8	4.1%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25026

The second way to analyze the geographic mobility of West Stockbridge is through an analysis of the actual movement of people within the town and region in the prior year. Matching county (88.4 percent) and Commonwealth (88 percent) trends, 82.1 percent of West Stockbridge's population remained in the same home in the prior year and did not move. West Stockbridge does stand out in that 6.6 percent of people of those that moved came from a different state. This could indicate West Stockbridge's popular real estate market status among second-home owners from surrounding states like New York and Connecticut.

Geographic Mobility of West Stockbridge (2023)

	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
Total	1,201	100%	126,384	100%	6,936,108	100%
Same Home	986	82.1%	112,552	88.4%	6,097,204	88%
Same County	121	10.1%	7,879	6.2%	410,093	5.9%
Same State	5	0.4%	1,703	1.3%	206,651	3%
Different State	79	6.6%	4,332	3.4%	153,441	2.2%
Abroad	10	0.8%	895	0.7%	61,171	0.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table S0701

Household Types

Having established the demographic profile of West Stockbridge, this report now moves from looking at statistics at the individual level and turns toward looking at households as the unit of analysis. This allows for a closer look into who is using housing in the community, how they interact with the housing stock, and the resources those households have when determining the housing units to call home.

According to the 2023 ACS, West Stockbridge is home to 551 total households, 326 of which are family households. Of the total households, only 18.7 percent are households with children under 18. This is below both Berkshire County's rate of 19.5 percent and Massachusetts' rate of 25.6 percent. Single-person households (Total Householders living alone) make up 33.2 percent of the total households, lower than the county (34.6 percent) but higher than the Commonwealth benchmark (28.6 percent). Most significantly, Householders 65 years and older living alone is 17.8 percent of Total Households, nearly identical to Berkshire County (17.3 percent) and higher than Massachusetts (12.7 percent).

	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
Total Households	551	100.0%	56,517	100.0%	2,762,070	100.0%
Family Households	326	59.2%	32,459	57.4%	1,728,134	62.6%
With Children under 18	103	18.7%	11,000	19.5%	707,619	25.6%
Male householder with children, no spouse	8	1.5%	2,216	3.9%	127,350	4.6%
Female householder with children, no spouse	44	8.0%	6,184	10.9%	324,834	11.8%
Nonfamily Households ⁴	225	40.8%	24,058	42.6%	1,033,936	37.4%
Total Householders living alone	183	33.2%	19,555	34.6%	789,952.02	28.6%
Householders 65+ living alone	98	17.8%	9,777	17.3%	342,496.7	12.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table S1101

⁴ "Under the U.S. Census Bureau definition, family households consist of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people. Nonfamily households consist of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals." ([Population Reference Bureau](#))

Tenure

The Town of West Stockbridge is home to both those that occupy the housing unit they own (owner-occupied) and those who rent their housing unit from a landlord (renter-occupied). In West Stockbridge, 84.8 percent of households are owner-occupied, which is a higher rate than both Berkshire County (68.8 percent) and Massachusetts (62.6 percent). Only 15.2 percent of the households are renter-occupied in West Stockbridge, which is much lower than both Berkshire County (31.2 percent) and Massachusetts (37.4 percent).

West Stockbridge Households by Tenure (2023)

	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
Total	551	100.0%	58,807	100.0%	2,762,070	100.0%
Owner-occupied	467	84.8%	40,464	68.8%	1,728,986	62.6%
Renter-occupied	84	15.2%	18,343	31.2%	1,033,084	37.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25003

Household Size

Household Size within the Town of West Stockbridge has changed quite a bit over the past two decades. The largest shifts between 2000 and 2023 are in the number of 4+ person households, which dropped from 19.5 percent in 2000 to 12.5% in 2023. Given the general decline in children under 18 present in West Stockbridge's households, this is another statistic to show the decline in school-aged children within the households of the community.

	2000		2010		2020		2023	
Total	601	100.0%	593	100.0%	618	100.0%	551	100.0%
1-person	162	27.0%	173	29.2%	180	29.1%	183	33.2%
2-person	234	38.9%	259	43.7%	256	41.4%	237	43.0%
3-person	88	14.6%	74	12.5%	92	14.9%	62	11.3%
4+ -person	117	19.5%	87	14.7%	90	14.6%	69	12.5%

Source: US Decennial Census 2000, Table H013; US Decennial Census 2010, Table HCT6; US Decennial Census 2020, Table H9; American Community Survey 2023, Table 2501

Household Income Distribution and Median Household Income

The households of West Stockbridge have seen a substantial increase in annual income over the past 23 years. The Median Household Income has increased from \$51,000 in 2000 to \$99,961 in 2023, a 96 percent increase. How this income is distributed among households is also changing. Households making \$200,000 or more have increased from just 6.4 percent in 2000 to 27.4 percent in 2023. At the same time, those making less than \$49,999 decreased from 49.3 percent in 2000 to only 26.5 percent in 2023. While it is positive that West Stockbridge's overall income levels are rising, it is also a cause of concern for housing prices. With this type of income distribution, affordable housing can become especially rare in the community.

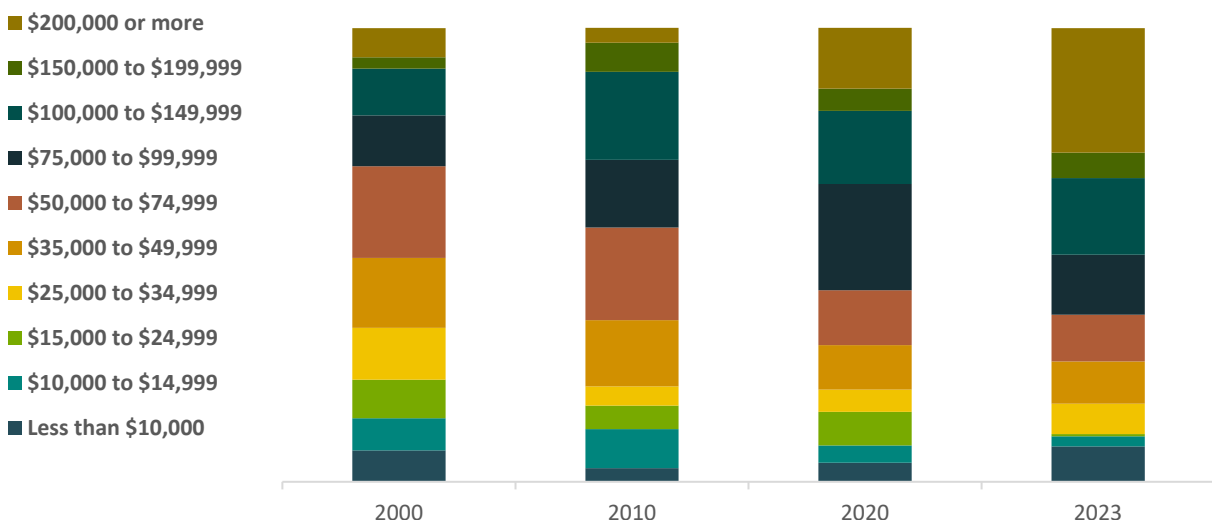
Income Distribution in West Stockbridge (2000 to 2023)

	2000	2010	2020	2023
Less than \$10,000	6.9%	3.0%	4.2%	7.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	7.1%	8.6%	3.8%	2.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	8.5%	5.2%	7.4%	0.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	11.4%	4.2%	4.9%	6.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15.4%	14.6%	9.8%	9.3%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.2%	20.4%	12.1%	10.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11.2%	14.9%	23.4%	13.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	10.3%	19.4%	16.1%	16.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2.5%	6.4%	4.9%	5.6%
\$200,000 or more	6.4%	3.3%	13.4%	27.4%
Median Income	\$51,000	\$68,750	\$81,696	\$99,961

Source: US Decennial Census 2000, Table DP3; American Community Survey 2010, 2020, 2023, Table S1901

West Stockbridge Income Distribution (2000 to 2023)

Source: Source: US Decennial Census 2000, Table DP3; American Community Survey 2010, 2020, 2022, Table S1901



Median Income by Tenure

Income in households based on tenure shows the large discrepancies in those who own housing units and those who rent. This indicates that renters are worse off by the measure of Median Household Income than those who own their own home. In addition, this shows the imperative of what was stated above: the higher the income levels in the community, the more risk that housing units become unaffordable.

Median Household Income by Tenure (2023)

	West Stockbridge	Berkshire County	Massachusetts
Total	\$99,961	\$72,565	\$101,341
Owner-occupied	\$119,375	\$90,557	\$132,085
Renter-occupied	\$37,857	\$38,673	\$58,815

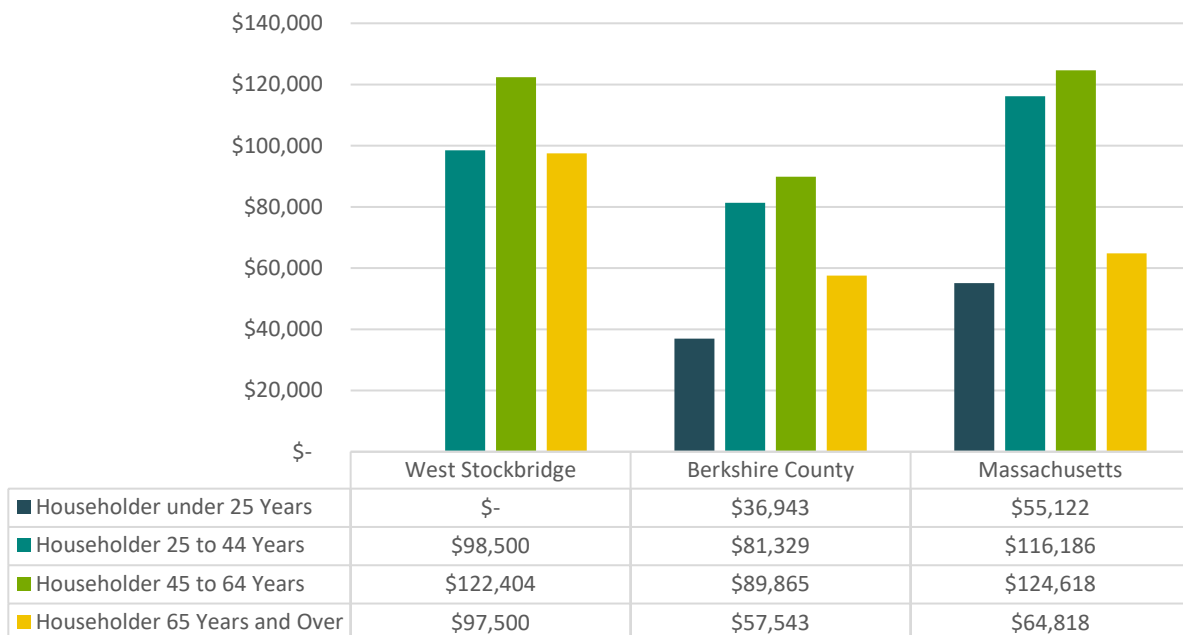
Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25119

Income Distribution by Age of Householder

Levels of income within households in West Stockbridge can be measured in another way. The chart below shows the Median Household Income by Age of Householder from the 2023 ACS. The cohort of householders aged 45 to 64 had the highest median income level at \$122,404, similar to Massachusetts' cohort of that age range, with a median income of \$124,618. There is a dramatic drop off with the cohort of householders 65 years and older with a Median Household Income of \$97,500 in West Stockbridge, \$57,543 in Berkshire County, and \$64,818 in Massachusetts. This most likely indicates that those households are taking pensions and other retirement type income instead of full-time employment salaries.

Median Household Income by Age of Householder (2023)

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B19049



Poverty

The US Census Bureau “uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty.”⁵ The chart below shows that poverty is present in West Stockbridge. However, its effects are limited primarily to the working age population. It should be noted that the small sample of West Stockbridge could indicate large margins of error in this calculation as well.

	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
Population for whom poverty status is determined	1,201	100.0%	122,620	100.0%	6,777,241	100.0%
Below Poverty Line	140	11.7%	13,481	11.0%	676,516	10.0%
Under 5 Years	24	2.0%	858	0.7%	42,407	0.6%
5 to 17 Years	29	2.4%	2,219	1.8%	117,085	1.7%
18 to 64 Years	66	5.5%	7,881	6.4%	395,502	5.8%
65 Years and Older	21	1.7%	2,523	2.1%	121,522	1.8%
Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table S1701						

Economic Characteristics

Economic Sectors

56.7 percent of West Stockbridge’s total labor force works in the professional class of management, business, science, and arts occupations. This is followed by 15.2 percent of the labor force employed by service occupations. The 28.2 percent remaining are in either sales, and office occupations, natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, or production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
Industry	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Civilian employed population 16 years and over	653	100%	63,618	100%	3,754,447	100%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	370	56.7%	29,933	47.1%	1,929,478	51.4%
Service occupations	99	15.2%	12,450	19.6%	601,524	16.0%
Sales and office occupations	64	9.8%	10,566	16.6%	631,650	16.8%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	51	7.8%	4,667	7.3%	260,039	6.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	69	10.6%	6,002	9.4%	331,756	8.8%
Source: American Community Survey 2023; Table DP03						

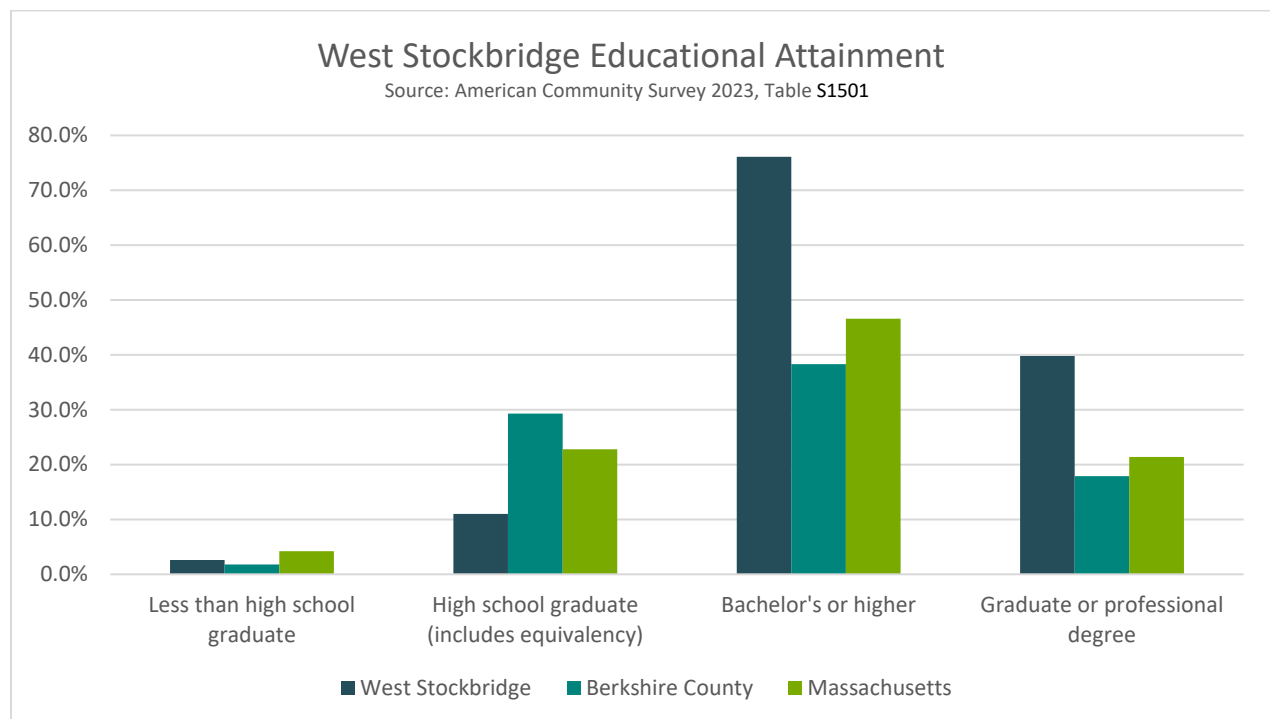
⁵ <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>

Educational Attainment

West Stockbridge has more individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher (76.1 percent) than both Berkshire County (38 percent) and Massachusetts (46.6 percent). Conversely, West Stockbridge has the lowest percentage of individuals with only a high school diploma or equivalent at 11 percent. This does determine the type of housing that needs to be available in the housing market due to levels of income predicted from these educational outcomes.

	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Population 25 Years and Older	933	100%	95,763	100.0%	4,945,630	100.0%
Less than 9th grade	24	2.6%	1,749	1.8%	209,811	4.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	20	2.1%	4,288	4.5%	215,398	4.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	103	11.0%	28,052	29.3%	1,129,802	22.8%
Some college, no degree	54	5.8%	17,045	17.8%	712,343	14.4%
Associate's degree	22	2.4%	7,990	8.3%	372,377	7.5%
Bachelor's degree	339	36.3%	19,480	20.3%	1,249,640	25.3%
Graduate or professional degree	371	39.8%	17,159	17.9%	1,056,259	21.4%
High school graduate or higher	889	95.3%	89,726	93.7%	4,520,421	91.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	710	76.1%	36,639	38.3%	2,305,899	46.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2023; Table S1501



Chapter 3: Local Housing Conditions

Key Findings

- 33.4 percent of West Stockbridge's Total Housing Units are classified as "For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use."
- From 2000 to 2023, Vacant Housing Units have grown by 96 percent, which includes homes classified as "For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use."
- 91.5 percent of the housing units in West Stockbridge are single-family, detached homes, outpacing both Berkshire County (65.7 percent) and Massachusetts (51.4 percent). West Stockbridge does stand out in that 4 percent of its housing units are mobile homes, which is much higher than the percentage in Berkshire County (1.5 percent) and the Commonwealth (0.8 percent).
- 40.2 percent of West Stockbridge's housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier.
- There have been no multi-family residential permits issued in the Town of West Stockbridge since 2000.
- Only 10 percent of West Stockbridge's owner households are below the age of 45
- The median sale price for a home in July 2025 in the 01266-zip code was \$500,000.
- 14.7 percent of owner-occupied households are Housing Cost Burdened, and 8.4 percent are considered Severely Housing Cost Burdened.
- The Affordability Gap for Single-Family Home Ownership for the Median Household Income in West Stockbridge is \$180,000.
- In Berkshire County, the Short-Term Rental Average Daily Rate was \$329. This means a potential landlord could rent out their rental unit through a short-term rental agreement for only 3.3 days a month to make the same amount of money through a monthly rental.
- West Stockbridge has 0 SHI Units and 0 Total Development units listed on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Housing Supply and Vacancy Trends

Occupancy and Tenure

Housing supply measures such as occupancy and tenure give a glimpse into the condition of the housing market in a community. According to the 2023 ACS, West Stockbridge had 880 housing units. 551 of those housing units (62.6 percent) are occupied while 329 housing units (37.4 percent) are vacant. This may be surprising. However, of the 329 vacant housing units, 294 of those are classified as “For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use” by the US Census Bureau. This means that 294 housing units or 33.4 percent of the total housing units in the town of West Stockbridge fall into that category.

	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
Total Housing Units	880	100.0%	69,861	100.0%	3,014,657	100.0%
Occupied Housing Units	551	62.6%	56,517	80.9%	2,762,070	91.6%
Owner-Occupied	467	53.1%	39,542	56.6%	1,728,986	62.6%
Renter-Occupied	84	9.5%	16,975	24.3%	1,033,084	37.4%
Vacant Housing Units	329	37.4%	13,344	19.1%	252,587	9.1%
For Rent	-	0.0%	657	0.9%	36,181	1.3%
Rented, Not Occupied	-	0.0%	117	0.2%	10,675	0.4%
For Sale Only	4	0.5%	300	0.4%	11,047	0.4%
Sold, Not Occupied	-	0.0%	375	0.5%	12,532	0.5%
For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	294	33.4%	8,481	12.1%	115,211	4.2%
For Migrant Workers	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	167	0.0%
Other Vacant	31	3.5%	3,414	4.9%	66,774	2.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2023; Table B25004, Table DP04

West Stockbridge has a much larger percentage of vacant housing units compared to Berkshire County (19.1 percent) and Massachusetts (9.1 percent). At the same time, it has a relatively consistent percentage of Owner-Occupied Housing Units with the County and Commonwealth. However, it has a significantly lower percentage of Renter-Occupied Units when compared with those large jurisdictions. West Stockbridge has just 9.5 percent of Renter-Occupied Housing Units with Berkshire County at 24.3 percent and Massachusetts at 37.4 percent. This could indicate that the additional Vacant Housing Units classified as “For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use” in West Stockbridge would be allocated to Rental Units if long-term rentals were incentivized.

Considering the large percentage of housing units classified as seasonal (33.4 percent), it is important to define that classification and how that grouping has changed in the past two decades. The category of “For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use” is defined by the US Census Bureau as follows: “seasonal housing units are those intended for occupancy only during certain seasons of the year and are found primarily in resort areas.”⁶ In addition, the US Census Bureau clarifies that housing “units occupied by

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/definitions.pdf>

persons with usual residence elsewhere (URE) are [further] classified as seasonal vacant or year-round vacant units.”⁷

Given the context of West Stockbridge’s location proximate to the other Berkshire summer cottage towns (Lenox and Stockbridge), the Taconic State Parkway, and the beauty of the Berkshires, we can assume that these are second homes for those who desire a rural retreat from the urban centers of New York City.

The chart below shows how this type of use for West Stockbridge’s Housing Units has changed since 2000. For example, 21.8 percent of West Stockbridge’s housing units were classified as vacant in 2000 (keep in mind that the “For Seasonal...” category wasn’t defined until 2020). This could indicate that there has always been some portion of the housing units used for this seasonal purpose. This assumption is proven out when considering that from 2020 to 2023 (when the seasonal data became available), that “For Seasonal...” category has grown 57 percent. From 2000 to 2023, Vacant Housing Units have grown by 96 percent, showing how the two categories are closely tied in this community.

In addition to the large amount of “For Seasonal...” housing units, the upward swing of that category has had an impact on those who live in West Stockbridge full-time. From 2000 to 2023, Owner-Occupied Housing Units actually declined by 5 percent and Renter-Occupied Housing Units declined by 22 percent. This is at the same time as the overall housing units in West Stockbridge increased 14 percent. This means even with more housing units in West Stockbridge, fewer full-time households were living in them. This shows that the pressure of the “For Seasonal...” housing market is impacting the entire housing market, not just those looking for affordable housing. From 2000 to 2023, Vacant Housing Units have grown by 96 percent, which includes homes classified as “For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use.”

West Stockbridge	2000		2010		2020		2023		% Change from First Available Data to 2023
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
Total Housing Units	769	100.0%	891	100.0%	852	100.0%	880	100.0%	14%
Occupied Housing Units	601	78.2%	638	71.6%	618	72.5%	551	62.6%	-8%
Owner-Occupied	493	64.1%	569	63.9%	525	61.6%	467	53.1%	-5%
Renter-Occupied	108	14.0%	69	7.7%	93	10.9%	84	9.5%	-22%
Vacant Housing Units	168	21.8%	253	28.4%	234	27.5%	329	37.4%	96%
For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	187	21.9%	294	33.4%	57%

Source: Decennial Census 2000, Table DP1, Table H001; American Community Survey 2010, Table DP4; Decennial Census 2020, Table H1, Table DP1; American Community Survey 2023, Table B25004, Table DP04

⁷ Ibid.

Residential Property Characteristics

Units in Structure	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	880	100.0%	69,861	100.0%	3,014,657	100.0%
1, detached	805	91.5%	45,896	65.7%	1,550,002	51.4%
1, attached	3	0.3%	1,837	2.6%	175,084	5.8%
2	25	2.8%	5,976	8.6%	283,336	9.4%
3 or 4	3	0.3%	6,130	8.8%	320,710	10.6%
5 to 9	9	1.0%	3,661	5.2%	172,273	5.7%
10 to 19	-	0.0%	2,302	3.3%	128,312	4.3%
20 or more	-	0.0%	2,965	4.2%	360,178	11.9%
Mobile home	35	4.0%	1,074	1.5%	23,618	0.8%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	-	0.0%	20	0.0%	1,144	0.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table DP04

91.5 percent of the housing units in West Stockbridge are single-family, detached homes, outpacing both Berkshire County (65.7 percent) and Massachusetts (51.4 percent). Only about 1.3 percent of West Stockbridge's housing stock is listed as multi-family (3 units or more) while those percentages are much higher for Berkshire County (21.5 percent) and Massachusetts (32.5 percent). While this could indicate a lack of diversity in housing choices, it also shows the characteristic housing style in the town. West Stockbridge does stand out in that 4 percent of its housing units are mobile homes, which is much higher than the percentage in Berkshire County (1.5 percent) and the Commonwealth (0.8 percent). This is a unique affordable housing situation for West Stockbridge and should be considered by the West Stockbridge Affordable Housing Trust for their planning purposes.

Data from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue confirms this 2023 ACS data. Of the 1,336 parcels in Town, 55 percent are residential parcels. 53.7 percent of the parcels are zoned as single-family homes, which means just 1.3 percent are non-single-family home residential parcels.

Use Type	Number of Parcels	% of Land
Total	1336	100.0%
Single-Family	717	53.7%
Two+ Family	16	1.2%
Condominiums	0	0.0%
Apartments	2	0.1%
Other non-residential Uses	601	45.0%
Miscellaneous Residential	39	2.9%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Municipal Databank

Age of Housing

The age of housing stock in West Stockbridge is remarkably like the age of housing stock across the rest of Berkshire County and Massachusetts. For example, zero percent of the Town's housing units were built in 2020 or later in West Stockbridge. This is in line with the 0.2 percent in Berkshire County and 0.6 percent in Massachusetts in the same category. On the other side of the chart, 40.2 percent of West Stockbridge's housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier. This is again in line with Berkshire County's rate of 36.3 percent and Massachusetts' rate of 30.7 percent in the same category. However, both ends of this age spectrum produce a dilemma: there is not enough new housing to meet current demand while simultaneously older housing stock is going to need more rehabilitation to remain viable options for those seeking housing.

An important note: the housing units built before 1978 may contain lead paint, which can pose a risk to the health and safety of occupants. In 1978 the EPA's Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule was passed and required the use of lead-safe materials and remediation of any existing lead.

Age of Housing Stock	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	880	100.0%	69,861	100.0%	3,014,657	100.0%
Built 2020 or later	-	0.0%	150	0.2%	18,138	0.6%
Built 2010 to 2019	45	5.1%	1,742	2.5%	176,602	5.9%
Built 2000 to 2009	77	8.8%	3,644	5.2%	212,520	7.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	124	14.1%	3,884	5.6%	225,520	7.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	121	13.8%	7,155	10.2%	325,595	10.8%
Built 1970 to 1979	92	10.5%	7,661	11.0%	339,238	11.3%
Built 1960 to 1969	17	1.9%	5,885	8.4%	298,975	9.9%
Built 1950 to 1959	44	5.0%	9,223	13.2%	334,223	11.1%
Built 1940 to 1949	6	0.7%	5,144	7.4%	157,134	5.2%
Built 1939 or earlier	354	40.2%	25,373	36.3%	926,712	30.7%
Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25034						

Trends in Residential Property Values

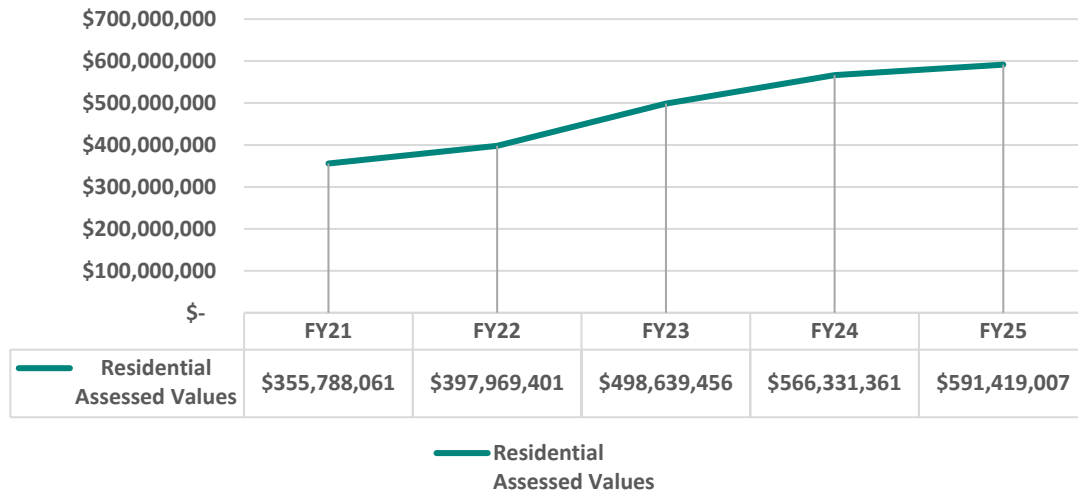
The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) provides a variety of municipal focused data points including residential assessed value, the number of single-family parcels, the average value of single-family parcels, the residential tax rate, and the average single-family tax bill. These tools, viewed over time, can help find trends in residential property values. In FY25, West Stockbridge had a total residential assessed value of \$591,419,007 and a residential tax rate of \$9.62 per \$1,000 of assessed value. With 717 single-family parcels, the average single-family parcel value was \$671,511. This left the Average Single-Family Tax Bill at \$6,640. West Stockbridge has the third highest Residential Property Tax Rate of its immediate neighbors while having the third highest Residential Assessed Value, coming in well behind Great Barrington and Stockbridge.

FY25	Residential Assessed Values	Single-Family Parcels	Single-Family Average Value	Residential Tax Rate	Average Single-Family Tax Bill
Great Barrington	\$1,807,814,081	2,192	\$601,443	\$13.79	\$8,294
Richmond	\$611,066,036	749	\$643,922	\$9.88	\$6,362
West Stockbridge	\$591,419,007	717	\$671,511	\$9.62	\$6,640
Stockbridge	\$1,227,965,920	1,110	\$835,582	\$7.09	\$5,924
Alford	\$368,078,407	313	\$1,004,295	\$4.95	\$4,971
Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue Municipal Databank					

There is a clear upward trend in West Stockbridge's Residential Assessed Values from FY21 to FY25. This upward trend represents a 66 percent increase over the period between FY20 and FY24. This results in potentially more revenue for the Town, but also a higher tax burden on homeowners.

West Stockbridge Residential Assessed Values (FY21 - FY25)

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue Municipal Databank

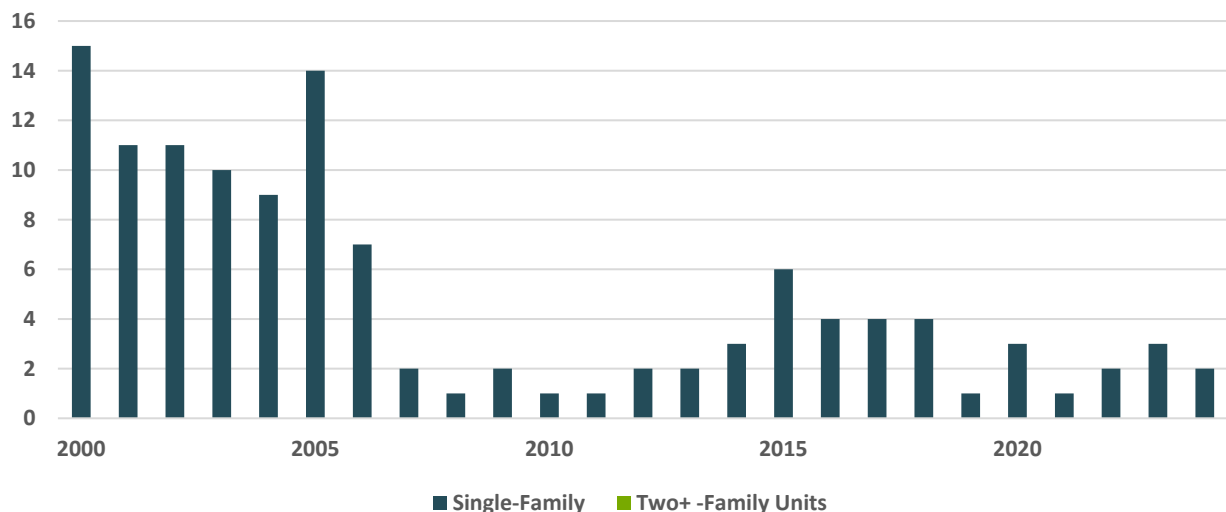


Permitting Activity

Between 2000 and 2024, West Stockbridge's residential permitting has fluctuated between a high in 2000 (15 permits) and a low in 2010 and 2011 (one permit each year). Most notably, however, is that there have been no multi-family residential permits issued in the Town of West Stockbridge since 2000.

Building Permits in West Stockbridge (2000 to 2024)

Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Council's DataCommon



Owner-Occupied Housing Characteristics

Owner Characteristics

The following charts and discussion focus on the characteristics of the owner of the housing unit. This critical information helps understand any trends in homeowners within the town. According to the 2023 ACS, there are 467 Owner-Occupied housing units in the town of West Stockbridge. 60.4 percent of owners moved into their homes since 2010. This is divergent from Berkshire County's rate of 37.2 percent and a bit higher than the Massachusetts rate of 43.9 percent. It is incredibly intriguing for West Stockbridge's housing market that 77 owner-occupied housing units (16.5 percent) have been moved into since 2021. This is much higher than 4.5 percent in Berkshire County and 4.8 percent in Massachusetts generally.

Owner by Year Moved into Unit	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner occupied:	467	100.0%	39,542	100.0%	1,728,986	100.0%
Moved in 2021 or later	77	16.5%	1,781	4.5%	82,687	4.8%
Moved in 2018 to 2020	43	9.2%	4,780	12.1%	230,564	13.3%
Moved in 2010 to 2017	162	34.7%	8,145	20.6%	446,032	25.8%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	74	15.8%	9,049	22.9%	365,718	21.2%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	54	11.6%	6,248	15.8%	276,039	16.0%
Moved in 1989 or earlier	57	12.2%	9,539	24.1%	327,946	19.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25038

When considering the age demographics of West Stockbridge, the next chart is also intriguing. Only 10 percent of West Stockbridge's owner households are below the age of 45. This is drastically different than 18.8 percent in Berkshire County and 24.9 percent in the entire Commonwealth. While this may be expected due to the larger cohort of older individuals in the community, it does perhaps signal a lack of availability for potential young homeowners to buy a home within the town.

Owner by Age of Householder	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner occupied:	467	100.0%	39,542	100.0%	1,728,986	100.0%
Householder 15 to 24 years	-	0.0%	167	0.4%	8,286	0.5%
Householder 25 to 34 years	10	2.1%	2,883	7.3%	144,536	8.4%
Householder 35 to 44 years	37	7.9%	4,398	11.1%	277,477	16.0%
Householder 45 to 54 years	87	18.6%	6,711	17.0%	339,302	19.6%
Householder 55 to 59 years	46	9.9%	4,269	10.8%	201,945	11.7%
Householder 60 to 64 years	75	16.1%	5,180	13.1%	206,071	11.9%
Householder 65 to 74 years	184	39.4%	9,172	23.2%	331,976	19.2%
Householder 75 to 84 years	11	2.4%	4,867	12.3%	157,279	9.1%
Householder 85 years and over	17	3.6%	1,895	4.8%	62,114	3.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25007

Owners of households in West Stockbridge also tend to be well off. 57.4 percent of owners have a household income of \$100,000 or more. This isn't unexpected given Berkshire County's rate of 45 percent and Massachusetts' rate of 63.3 percent in the same statistic.

Owner by Household Income	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner occupied:	467	100.0%	39,542	100.0%	1,728,986	100.0%
Less than \$5,000	5	1.1%	642	1.6%	23,346	1.4%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	13	2.8%	544	1.4%	12,844	0.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	12	2.6%	565	1.4%	18,327	1.1%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	-	0.0%	924	2.3%	22,810	1.3%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	3	0.6%	1,065	2.7%	27,716	1.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	22	4.7%	2,270	5.7%	60,673	3.5%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	37	7.9%	3,365	8.5%	99,391	5.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	34	7.3%	6,413	16.2%	181,363	10.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	73	15.6%	5,969	15.1%	187,752	10.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	90	19.3%	7,850	19.9%	344,004	19.9%
\$150,000 or more	178	38.1%	9,935	25.1%	750,760	43.4%
Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25118						

Owner-Occupied Housing Values

Considering the statistics about those who own homes in West Stockbridge, it is informative when analyzing the Housing Values within the current housing market. 54.9 percent of homes in West Stockbridge have a home value of \$500,000 or more. Homes that might be considered affordable for young, first-time homebuyers (under \$200,000) comprise only 13.1 percent of owner-occupied homes.

Owner-Occupied Housing Values	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner occupied:	467	100.0%	39,542	100.0%	1,728,986	100.0%
Less than \$50,000	5	1.1%	1,229	3.1%	31,344	1.8%
\$50,000 to \$99,000	8	1.7%	1,067	2.7%	16,645	1.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	23	4.9%	2,809	7.1%	23,019	1.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,000	25	5.4%	5,279	13.4%	43,079	2.5%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	41	8.8%	11,086	28.0%	189,494	11.0%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	159	34.0%	10,747	27.2%	511,597	29.6%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	224	48.0%	5,658	14.3%	703,160	40.7%
\$1,000,000 or more	32	6.9%	1,667	4.2%	210,648	12.2%
Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25075						

For-Sale Market

Analysis of the current for-sale market in West Stockbridge is limited due to the lack of homes for sale and the fact that major data sources are only available by zip code. West Stockbridge's zip code (01266) covers only a portion of the town. However, these statistics are instructive for this analysis due to the totality of the housing market and its impact.

According to the realty site Redfin, the median sale price for a home in July 2025 in the 01266-zip code was \$500,000, down 65.5 percent since the same month in 2024. Only 7 homes were sold within the zip code in July 2025 with a median of 17 days on the market. This is up 40 percent from July 2025. Redfin classifies this housing market at "Somewhat Competitive."⁸

"The median sale price for a home in July 2025 in the 01266-zip code was \$500,000."

Renter-Occupied Housing Characteristics

Renter Characteristics

Now, having considered the characteristics of owner-occupied housing within West Stockbridge, it is critical to understand the other portion of the housing market: the renter-occupied housing units. In the same way as the discussion above, the following charts and discussion focus on the characteristics of the renter of the housing unit. This critical information helps understand any trends for renting within the town. There are 84 renter-occupied units in the town of West Stockbridge. 96.5 percent of those renters have moved into their units since 2010. That is a bit higher than Berkshire County's rate of 80.7 percent and Massachusetts' rate of 74.8 percent.

Renter by Year Moved into Unit	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Renter occupied:	84	100.0%	16,975	100.0%	1,033,084	100.0%
Moved in 2021 or later	12	14.3%	2,452	14.4%	183,454	17.8%
Moved in 2018 to 2020	25	29.8%	5,249	30.9%	335,632	32.5%
Moved in 2010 to 2017	44	52.4%	6,015	35.4%	346,381	33.5%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	-	0.0%	1,909	11.2%	107,661	10.4%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	-	0.0%	674	4.0%	36,836	3.6%
Moved in 1989 or earlier	3	3.6%	676	4.0%	23,120	2.2%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25038

The age of renters in renter-occupied housing is predictably different than those in owner-occupied housing. 71.5 percent of renters are below the age of 55. However, it is interesting to note that there are zero renters between the ages of 15 and 24 years old. This may indicate a lack of affordable starter apartments or a lack of jobs available in the area for those getting started in their career, who typically rent. That same age group may be encouraged to remain living with parents or guardians if there are no housing options available and they wish to remain within West Stockbridge.

⁸ <https://www.redfin.com/zipcode/01266/housing-market>

Renter by Age of Householder	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Renter occupied:	84	100.0%	16,975	100.0%	1,033,084	100.0%
Householder 15 to 24 years	-	0.0%	894	5.3%	68,271	6.6%
Householder 25 to 34 years	-	0.0%	3,269	19.3%	268,933	26.0%
Householder 35 to 44 years	25	29.8%	3,286	19.4%	192,351	18.6%
Householder 45 to 54 years	35	41.7%	2,020	11.9%	149,339	14.5%
Householder 55 to 59 years	20	23.8%	1,438	8.5%	75,729	7.3%
Householder 60 to 64 years	-	0.0%	1,613	9.5%	72,927	7.1%
Householder 65 to 74 years	4	4.8%	2,398	14.1%	110,964	10.7%
Householder 75 to 84 years	-	0.0%	1,185	7.0%	58,304	5.6%
Householder 85 years and over	-	0.0%	872	5.1%	36,266	3.5%
Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25007						

Somewhat unsurprising is the trend in household income among renters. 8.4 percent of renters in West Stockbridge have a household income of \$100,000 or more. This is a bit lower than the rate in Berkshire County (13.2 percent) and much lower than the rate of Massachusetts (29.3 percent). Most importantly for this analysis, 64.4 percent of West Stockbridge's renters make less than \$50,000. This shows the disparity of income within the housing market in West Stockbridge.

Renter by Household Income	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Renter occupied:	84	100.0%	16,975	100.0%	1,033,084	100.0%
Less than \$5,000	25	29.8%	771	4.5%	51,776	5.0%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	-	0.0%	713	4.2%	31,135	3.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	-	0.0%	1,626	9.6%	79,116	7.7%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	-	0.0%	1,380	8.1%	55,163	5.3%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	-	0.0%	1,420	8.4%	49,828	4.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	15	17.9%	1,908	11.2%	80,748	7.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	14	16.7%	2,492	14.7%	112,908	10.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	23	27.4%	3,004	17.7%	154,620	15.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	0	0.0%	1,421	8.4%	115,472	11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3	3.6%	1,380	8.1%	144,471	14.0%
\$150,000 or more	4	4.8%	860	5.1%	157,847	15.3%
Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25118						

Rental Housing Costs

Keeping in mind the household income for renter-occupied housing units, 54.8 percent of renters in West Stockbridge paid less than \$2,000 per month. This is surprising given the limited rental housing market. The most interesting statistic though is about cash rent: 33.3 percent of renters paid no cash rent. This is substantially higher than the same statistics in Berkshire County (5.6 percent) and Massachusetts (3.5 percent). This is an indicator which could make for an interesting case study for the Town's Affordable Housing Trust. However, it is important to note that the ACS is a statistical sample and is bound to miss some nuance, which means these numbers may not be exact down to the unit count.

Renter Households by Gross Rent per Month	West Stockbridge		Berkshire County		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Renter occupied:	84	100.0%	16,975	100.0%	1,033,084	100.0%
Less than \$500	4	4.8%	2,166	12.8%	105,478	10.2%
\$500 to \$999	-	0.0%	5,310	31.3%	123,637	12.0%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	19	22.6%	5,443	32.1%	192,686	18.7%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	23	27.4%	1,499	8.8%	204,764	19.8%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	6	7.1%	813	4.8%	160,120	15.5%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	-	0.0%	427	2.5%	93,887	9.1%
\$3,000 or more	4	4.8%	372	2.2%	116,262	11.3%
No cash rent	28	33.3%	945	5.6%	36,250	3.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2023, Table B25063

For-Rent Market

The FY2026 Berkshire County, MA HUD Metro Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,302. Without paying more than 30% of income on rent and utilities, to afford this FMR one-bedroom apartment a household would need to earn approximately \$4,340 a month (before taxes) or \$52,080 a year. As mentioned above, 64.4 percent of West Stockbridge's renters make less than \$50,000. This indicates a large percentage of Housing Cost Burdened households in West Stockbridge among renters.

Keeping this in mind, there is only one rental unit available (as of July 2025) for rent in West Stockbridge on the real estate website Zillow. That one unit is a 2-bedroom, 1-bathroom house for rent at \$2,000 a month.⁹ This one unit's rent is far out of reach for a majority of renting households and shows how the 2023 ACS is limited in its scope when measuring rental prices in West Stockbridge.

Short-Term Rental Rates and Median Gross Rents

The University of Massachusetts' Western Massachusetts Housing Study (2024-2025) identified some other troubling trends among rental units in Berkshire County. In Berkshire County, the Short-Term Rental Average Daily Rate was \$329, while Median Gross Monthly Rent (including utilities) was found to be \$1,073. This means a potential landlord could rent out their rental unit through a short-term rental agreement for only 3.3 days a month to make the same amount of money through a monthly rental. This identifies the need to change the local policy to ensure landlords have financial incentives to provide rental units for year-round leasing instead of limited short term, tourist opportunities.¹⁰

⁹ https://www.zillow.com/homes/9525_rid/

¹⁰ [Building Homes, Building Futures: The State of Housing in Western Massachusetts](#)

Housing Affordability

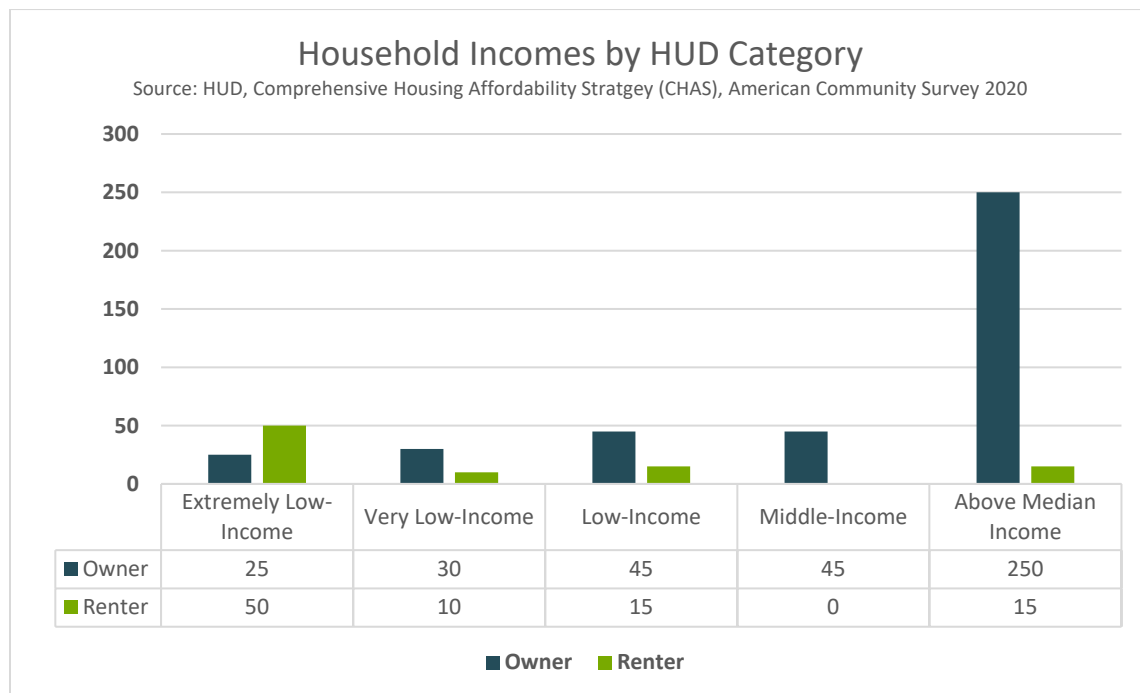
Housing Cost Burden

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development currently defines “Housing Cost Burden” as households who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing (including utilities). “Severe Housing Cost Burden” is further defined as a household paying more than 50 percent of income toward housing (including utilities).¹¹ The definition also clarifies that these are households that due to their housing costs may have trouble affording other essentials like food, medicine, clothing, and transportation.

It is important to note that these definitions are applicable to both homeowners and renters. However, there is a slight distinction. Housing costs for homeowners includes the monthly mortgage payment, any property taxes, and home insurance. For renters it only includes base monthly rent and the basic utilities of the housing unit. Due to HUD restraints, this data is reflective of the 2020 ACS and using Household Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) for Berkshire County as the income measure.

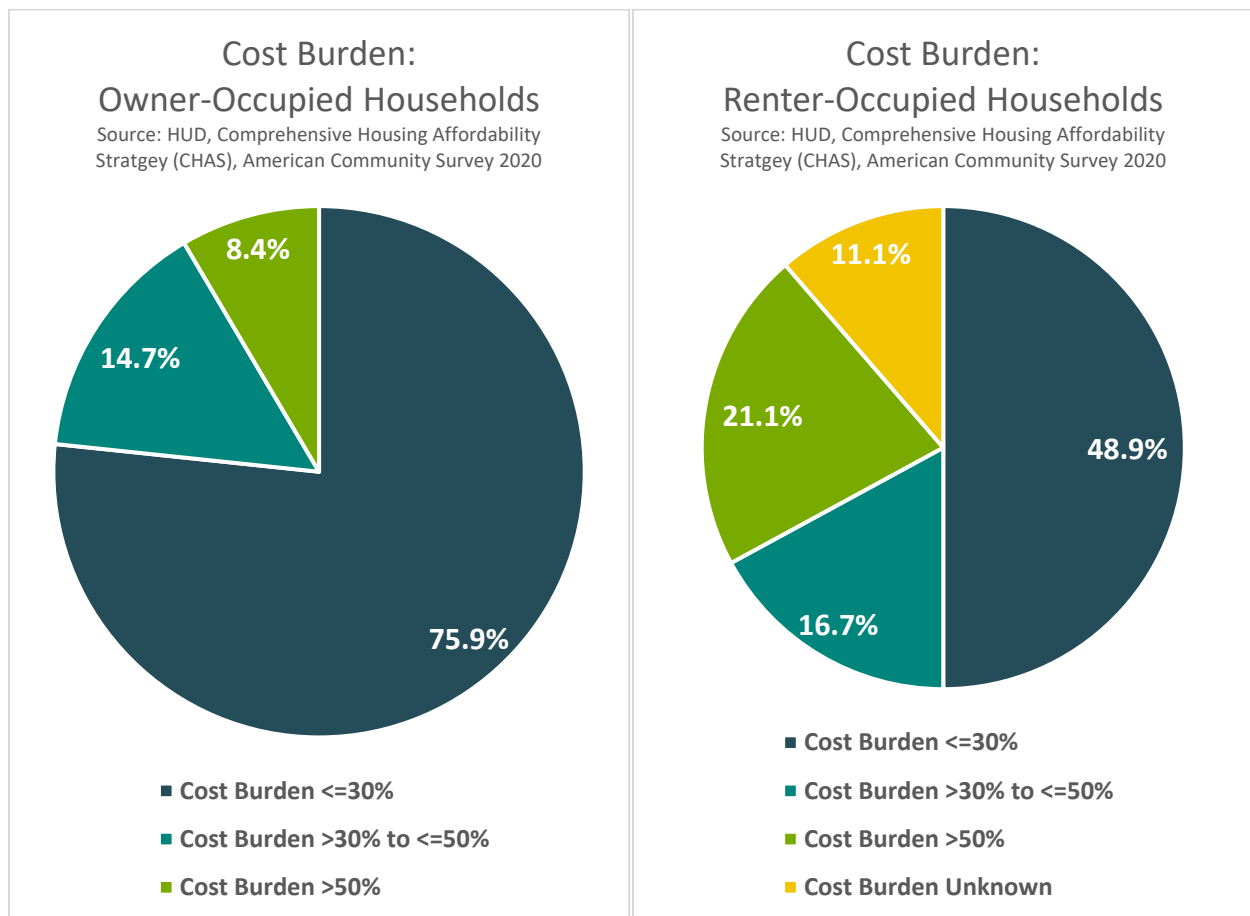
Household Income Level	Definition
Extremely Low-Income	Less than 30% of HAMFI
Very Low-Income	Between 30% and 50% of HAMFI
Low-Income	Between 50% and 80% of HAMFI
Middle-Income	Between 80% and 100% of HAMFI
Above Median Income	Greater than 100% of HAMFI

This first chart breaks down the household incomes by HUD category. This shows that 63.3 percent of Owner-Occupied Households make more than the HAMFI, while 16.7 percent of Renter-Occupied Households do as well. This indicates that most of West Stockbridge’s households have an income above the Household Area Median Family Income (HAMFI).



¹¹ https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp/CHAS/bg_chas.html

These next two graphs indicate the breakdown in Housing Cost Burden between owner-occupied households and renter-occupied households. This shows that 14.7 percent of owner-occupied households are Housing Cost Burdened and 8.4 percent are considered Severely Housing Cost Burdened. At the same time, 16.7 percent of renter-occupied households are classified as Housing Cost Burdened and 21.1 percent are classified as Severely Housing Cost Burdened. It is important to note that 11.1 percent of renter-occupied households could not be classified in this data set.



To narrow the analysis down further, it is also important to understand from which income category the cost burden households emerge. For Renter-Occupied Households, all households (100 percent) in the Housing Cost Burdened and Severely Housing Cost Burdened categories come from the Extremely Low-Income, Very Low-Income, or Low-Income households.

For Owner-Occupied Households, the cost burdened households come from a diverse mix of household income categories. It is important to note that 69.2 percent of the Housing Cost Burdened Households come from the Extremely Low-Income, Very Low-Income, and Low-Income categories. Nearly a third of the Housing Cost Burdened Households come from the Middle-Income or Above Median Income categories. This shows that high housing costs are impacting all income categories. Unsurprisingly, those in the Severely Housing Cost Burdened category almost completely come from the Low-Income categories.

Renter-Occupied Income by Cost Burden	Cost burden > 30%		Cost burden > 50%	
	#	%	#	%
Extremely Low-Income	15	44.1%	15	78.9%
Very Low-Income	4	11.8%	4	21.1%
Low-Income	15	44.1%	0	0.0%
Middle-Income	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Above Median Income	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	34	100.0%	19	100.0%
Source: Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), American Community Survey 2020				

Owner-Occupied Income by Cost Burden	Cost burden > 30%		Cost burden > 50%	
	#	%	#	%
Extremely Low-Income	25	27.5%	15	45.5%
Very Low-Income	14	15.4%	10	30.3%
Low-Income	24	26.3%	4	12.1%
Middle-Income	20	22.0%	0	0.0%
Above Median Income	8	8.8%	4	12.1%
Total	91	100.0%	33	100.0%
Source: Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), American Community Survey 2020				

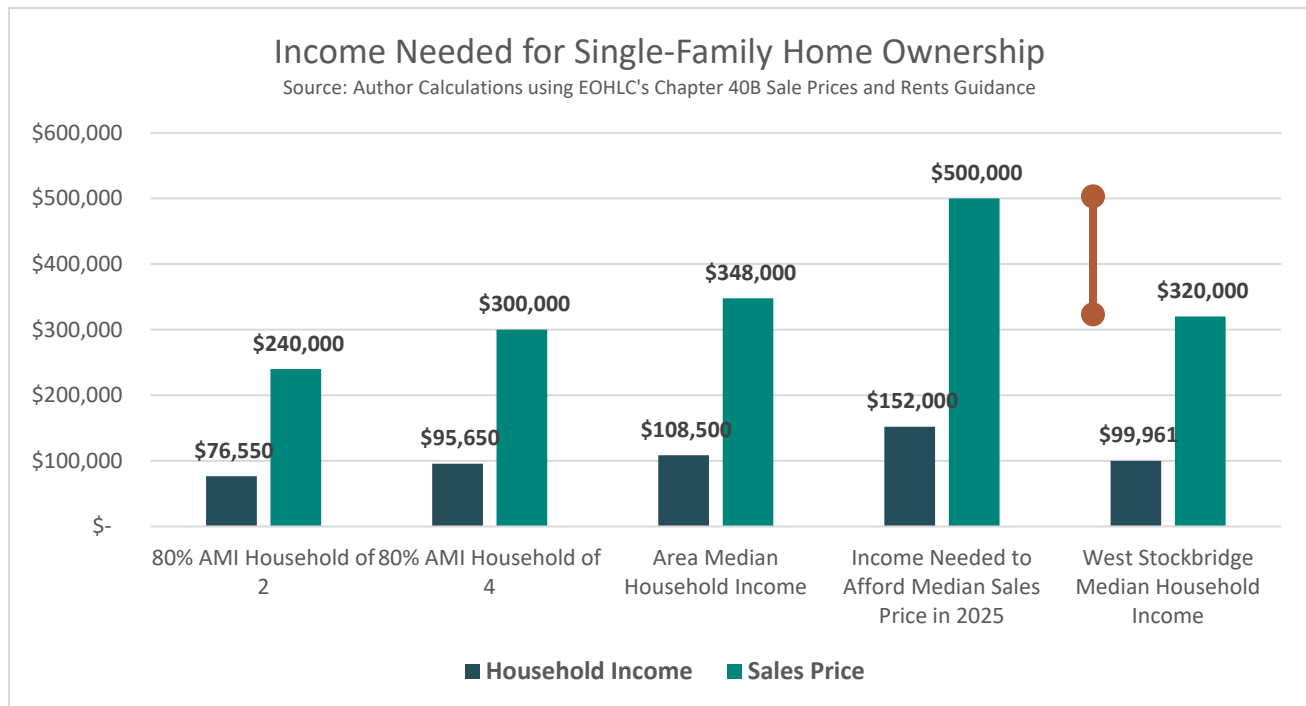
Ownership Affordability by Income

Affordability of home ownership is determined through an analysis of the Area Median Income (provided by HUD) and the median sales price for a single-family home in West Stockbridge. The chart below outlines the relationship between Household Income and Housing Costs. A household earning the Area Median Income of \$108,500 could afford to purchase a single-family home up to \$348,000. As mentioned above, the median sales price for a single-family home in West Stockbridge in July 2025 was \$500,000. This gap between the price of an affordable home for a household making the Area Median Income and the actual median sales price for a single-family home is called the Affordability Gap.

Turning to those households below the Area Median Income, the situation is even more dire. Consider the situation of an Average Household earning less than the Area Median Household Income. A household of 2 earning \$76,550 (80 percent of the Area Median Income for household size of 2) can afford to purchase a single-family home up to \$240,000. Similarly, a household of 4 earning \$95,650 (80 percent of the Area Median Income for household of 4) can afford to purchase a single-family home up to \$300,000. Even more surprising, the Median Household Income for West Stockbridge is below the Area Median Household Income at \$99,961. The Median Household Income in West Stockbridge can afford a single-family home up to \$320,000. That means the Affordability Gap for Single-Family Home Ownership for a household earning the Median

"The Affordability Gap for Single-Family Home Ownership for the Median Income in West Stockbridge is \$180,000."

Household Income in West Stockbridge is \$180,000. This Affordable Gap is represented by the red line on the chart below.



Rental Affordability by Income

Rental Affordability is defined as household income spending no more than 30 percent of household income on base rent and utilities. According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) Rate for a One-Bedroom apartment in Berkshire County is \$1,302 a month. This means an individual would need to earn at least \$52,080 a year to afford FMR. West Stockbridge's Median Household Income of \$99,961 means an individual would be able to afford up to \$2,499.03 in rent a month.

Income Category	Household Income	Affordable Monthly Rent
Very Low (50% One-Person Household)	\$41,850.00	\$1,046.25
Fair Market Rent (One-Bedroom)	\$52,080.00	\$1,302.00
Low (80% One-Person Household)	\$67,000.00	\$1,675.00
West Stockbridge Median Household Income	\$99,961.00	\$2,499.03
Area Median Income (Berkshire County)	\$108,500.00	\$2,712.50

Source: HUD FY25 Income Limits, American Community Survey 2023, Table B25119

Affordable Units

According to the June 29, 2023, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), West Stockbridge has 0 SHI Units and 0 Total Development units. West Stockbridge is 1 of 44 towns in Massachusetts with no SHI Units on the SHI.

Chapter 4: Housing Development Considerations

The Town of West Stockbridge's housing development considerations are tied directly to past planning work, including the 2022 Master Plan draft and the 2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan. This section identifies any barriers to housing development when considering environmental and infrastructure constraints. It also identifies the Town's infrastructure capacity, regulatory barriers, and any potential locations already identified for housing development.

Environmental Constraints

Geology, Soils, and Topography

West Stockbridge is a classic Berkshire hill town in its features of geology, soils, and topography. It is a landscape of high-forested hills with heights over 1,900 feet, open fields, lakes, and ponds. Tom Harvey Mountain is 2,057 feet and Tom Ball Mountain is 1,930 feet. The vast majority of the Town is located within the Western New England Marble Valley, one of 13 distinct ecological regions within Massachusetts. The marble and limestone substrate provides a calcium-rich soil that harbors calcareous wetland plant communities found nowhere else in the state. It is also the reason that limestone and marble mining operations were so successful here. Limestone bedrock is readily seen from Card Pond beach, where blasting of rock was done to construct the Massachusetts Turnpike.

The Harvey Mountain region of West Stockbridge Town belongs to the Taconic Mountains ecoregion, part of a larger geological region that extends along the Massachusetts/New York State border. Metamorphic bedrock here is more resistant to weathering than the marble/limestone found elsewhere in the Town. About 85% of the geographic area of West Stockbridge is in the general soil association of Amenia-Pittsfield-Farmington soil classification. The remainder of the land is associated with Harvey Mountain and is in Taconic-Macomber-Lanesboro type soils. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey describes the association as follows:

Amenia-Pittsfield-Farmington - This soil has characteristics that incorporate both very deep areas and shallow ones. It is moderately drained and somewhat excessively drained. The lay of the land usually is flat to very steep. These upland loamy soils are formed in glacial till derived from limestone.

Taconic-Macomber-Lanesboro - This soil is moderately deep to very deep, being somewhat excessively drained and well drained. It is found on uplands where land is gently sloping to very steep. The soils are loamy and are formed by glacial till derived from phyllite, slate, and shale.

The Soil Survey illustrates that the soils of much of West Stockbridge are excessively drained. These soils tend to be shallow and are located along steeply sloped areas along the hills that line the eastern border, along the Maple Hill complex in the middle to town, and along the hills that line the western border. The land use in most of these areas is forest cover, which currently minimizes the potential for serious erosion problems. Fortunately, many of the steeply sloped lands along Harvey, Maple Hill and Tom Ball Mountains are permanently protected from development, but the highlands along the Town's northern and eastern

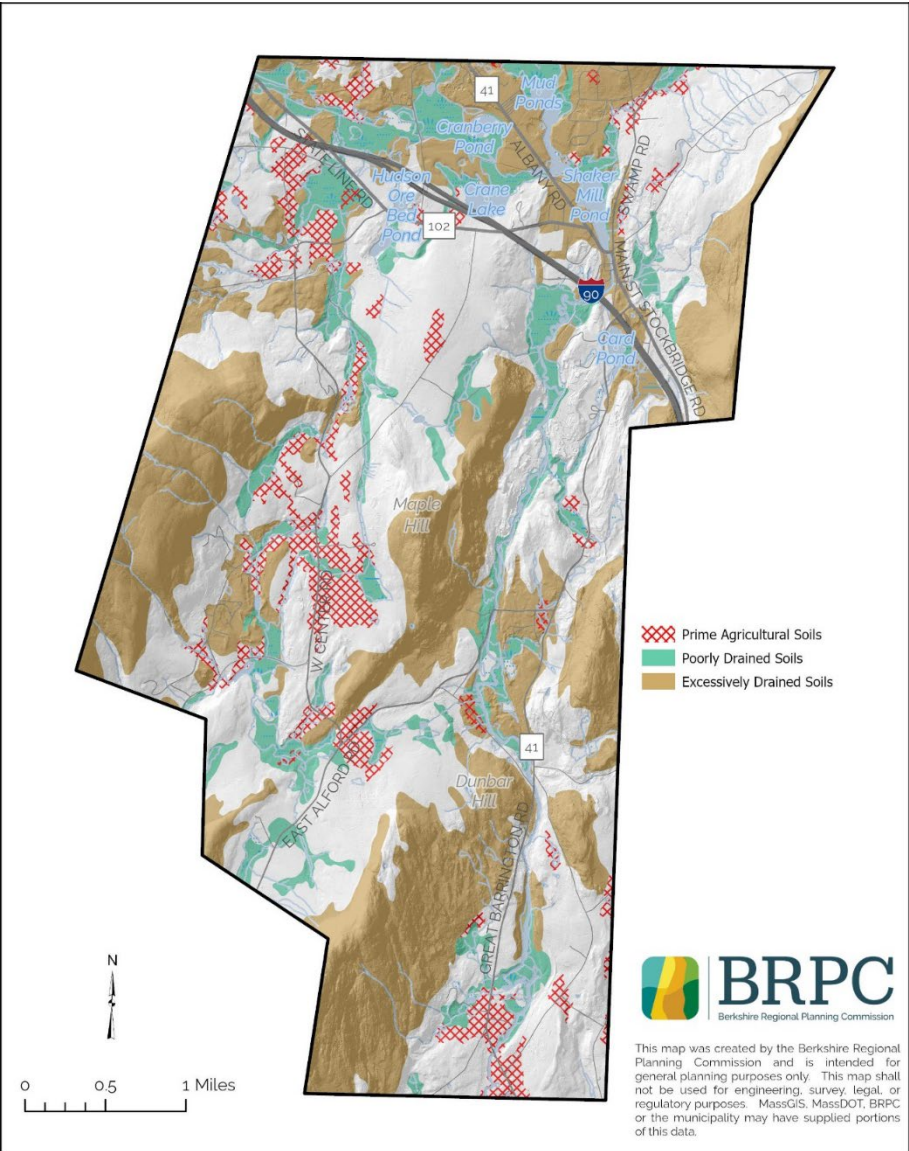


Figure 1: Soil Map

elevation will need to be reviewed and permitted under the Town's Berkshire Scenic Mountains Act regulations.

Vast expanses of poorly drained, hydric soils exist in the Baldwin Brook wetland complex that is in the northern section of the town, and along the Williams River. These mostly exist where there is a large amount of wetland and flowing water.

The Town also hosts some prime agricultural soil and today the remaining farms in the town are located in these areas. Prime agricultural soils are those that have been determined to have combination of physical and chemical characteristics for economically producing sustained high yields of food, feed, forage, and crops, when managed according to acceptable farming methods. Development should be

are less protected. Any trail systems that are proposed for steep slopes will need to be carefully sighted and designed to avoid erosion and sedimentation into streams and other wetland resources. Slopes that are 25% or greater create some real limitations to most activities mostly because of the heavy economic and environmental costs. Slopes with grades between 15-25% also pose limitations, for the soils can be highly susceptible to erosion, prone to excess surface runoff, or have bedrock that lies near the surface. Much harm can be done to springs and streams that neighbors could be relying on for water when new construction of a new home or a logging operation is done in West Stockbridge. Laying hiking or biking trails on steep slopes requires careful planning, design and maintenance to avoid erosion and sedimentation of downgradient wetland resources and other sensitive habitats. For development or other disturbances that will be proposed on lands that are higher than 1,500 feet in

directed away from areas with these underlying soils so that agricultural production can be maintained or expanded for use by future generations.

French Cave, also known as Eldon's Cave, is the longest cave in New England and, according to a 1974 publication, the second longest cave in the United States. At 950 feet long, the cave is a national and regional geologic treasure. The cave is located on private land and visitation is not welcome.

West Stockbridge has a long history of mining. An inventory of mining operations in 1956 listed several mines and quarries in the town, including five iron ore mines and two marble quarries. Today, the only quarry still in operation is the John S. Lane quarry, a large open gravel operation which produces crushed stone and gravel products for commercial construction.

Landscape Character

West Stockbridge is a pastoral community with open rolling hills, forested valleys, cool waters, and rugged mountains. Several mountain summits reach over 1,800 feet. Harvey Mountain is 2,057 feet in elevation, Tom Ball Mountain is 1,930 feet and Stockbridge Mountain is 1,826 feet. The lowest points average 930 feet in the north and 760 feet in the south. Such a wide variety of landscape elevations and the difficulty in developing the landscape provides for widespread biological and ecological resources. The restricted access to West Stockbridge has kept the town exceptionally rural and sparsely populated.

- Lowest point – 748' at the Town line with Great Barrington on Williams River
- Highest Point – 2,057' at the NY state line on Harvey Mountain.
- Old Forest data – 5,153 acres of forested land in 1840's around Harvey Mountain, Tom Ball Mountain, Maple Hill, West Stockbridge Mountain, and a scattering of smaller sites.

Surface Water

Numerous first and second order streams drain the West Stockbridge landscape. Baldwin Brook, Furnace Brook, and Cone Brook are tributaries of the Williams River. Scribner Brook and Tom Ball Brook are tributaries of Alford Brook, which drain into the Green River. As shown on the Water Features map, many of these are Cold Water Fisheries. Cone Brook and the Williams River are stocked each spring with trout. There are several ponds located throughout West Stockbridge. Many of these are open waters associated with wetland complexes, and some are old farm ponds. These ponds are found in the Williams River and Alford Brook watersheds. A series of larger ponds are in the northern portion of the town and are within the Williams River watershed. These ponds are listed below. Three of the ponds are ore bed ponds.

Ground Water Resources

There are two medium yield aquifers (100-300 gallons per minute) in West Stockbridge. One exists under Cranberry Pond and Mud Pond and is 300.9 acres and other is under the downtown area and is 35.5 acres. The Town drinking water supply does not directly withdraw water from this aquifer, as the wells are 40-foot-deep gravel-pack wells. There are no water resources in West Stockbridge that have been designated by the state as Outstanding Waters.

The downtown area receives its drinking water supply from the West Stockbridge Public Water System (PWS ID # 1326000), which is served by a system that includes a primary well and back-up well. This system serves the residents and businesses in the densely developed core downtown area, as well as Crane Lake Camp.

Drinking water for most of the town is supplied through individual groundwater wells. A portion of the most densely developed surrounding the downtown area is served by a municipal well system (refer to the Existing Infrastructure map).

Flood Hazards

The Town of West Stockbridge has 1,050 acres of floodplain covering approximately 8.8% of the Town's total land mass. The floodplains of greatest concern are those in the Downtown District. With six to eight flood events that approached or exceeded a 50-100-year interval in the region in the last 100 years, it can be estimated that a flood event will impact the region every 12-15 years, if not more frequently due to climate change, and result in minor flooding at least once a year. In addition to this, the increasing trend for increased precipitation, combined with existing development in or near floodplain areas, indicates that flooding will persist in some areas. Efforts to flood-proof or relocate high-risk properties within the

floodplain, along with efforts to prohibit or limit new development, will decrease the potential for expanded damage and losses. The Town's effort to control new sources of stormwater runoff and upgrade stormwater drainage systems should also help to alleviate flooding in certain areas, particularly road-stream crossings.

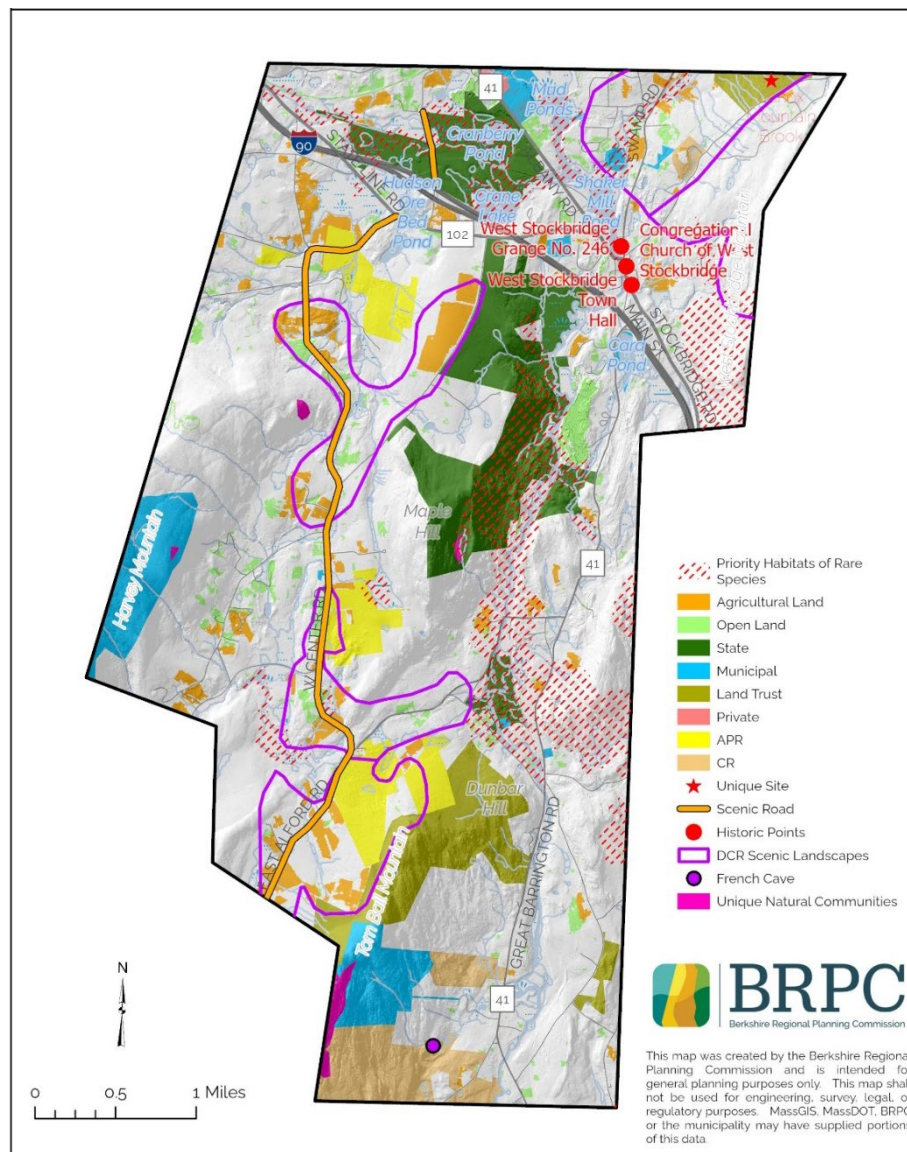


Figure 2: Unique Features Map

Wetlands

Wetlands exist in various pockets along the Williams River. Wetland complexes also exist in the Alford Brook sub-watershed, in the Baldwin Brook sub-watershed and along Mud and Shaker Mill ponds. Wetlands perform important functions for wildlife and people. Wetlands are the most productive ecosystems on earth when measured by the amount of biomass or living biological tissue they support and produce. Valuable ecosystem services provided by wetlands include plant and animal habitat, flood storage and control, water purification and shoreline stabilization.

The wetland complexes, nestled between forested hillsides and long open fields, help to provide a diverse range of habitats for wildlife. Because the GIS data only recognizes large wetland areas, the actual acreage of wetlands is undoubtedly higher, so the data should be used only as a rough guide. As always, wetlands can only truly be identified and quantified on the ground by a person knowledgeable in the field.

Conservation Species

The NHESP has identified several special concern and endangered species in West Stockbridge which include Harpoon Clubtail Dragonflies (endangered), Bridle Shiner fish (special concern), Four Toed Salamander (SWAP), Jefferson Salamander (special concern), Marbled Salamander (threatened), Spring Salamander (SWAP), Wood Turtle (special concern), American Bittern (endangered), and Sora (SWAP). The Town has five identified priority conservation areas (PCAs). PCA1 is 2,130 acres in central West Stockbridge, stretching west across Maple Hill to West Center Road. PCA2 is 1,500 acres in southern West Stockbridge, encompassing most of the forest core west of the Williams River. PCA3 is 1,000 acres in western West Stockbridge, stretching along the east edge of the Taconic Mountains. PCA 5/Regional PCA6 is 8,927 acres that extends from south central Pittsfield from the boundary between Lenox and Richmond, and the boundary between Stockbridge and west Stockbridge. Regional PCA6 extends to just north of the Mass Turnpike.

Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

There are many scenic areas in West Stockbridge, including Olivia's Overlook, which is the trailhead for several trails, including Yokun Ridge South Reserve. Stevens Glen is a popular waterfall that includes some trails. TurnPark Art Space is another scenic area built at the site of an old marble quarry, including sculptures and other rotating installations. In addition to these traditional scenic spaces, West Stockbridge has several winding roads with mountain views. All roadways serve recreational purposes as well as transportation use, to varying degrees. For the Town's roadways, especially non-numbered routes, it is important that all uses of roads, including recreational, be considered in maintenance and planning.

Historic and Cultural Resources

West Stockbridge has 188 entries on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MACRIS) database of historical properties. Many of the buildings listed were built during the mid-1800s when the Town was at its industrial peak. There are also three properties in West Stockbridge listed on the National Register of Historic Places: The Methodist Church/Grange Hall, West Stockbridge Congregational Church, and the Old Town Hall. National Register status is a recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community.

Infrastructure Capacity

Transportation

West Stockbridge has approximately 36 miles of Town-maintained roads. 24 miles of roads are paved, and the remaining 12 are unpaved gravel. The Town has 16 water crossings (bridges or culverts) and approximately 2.5 miles of roadway that fall within the 100-year floodplain.

Two state routes pass through West Stockbridge. Albany Road and Great Barrington Road are also identified as sections of Route 41, which runs from Pittsfield to Great Barrington and points to the south. Albany Road and Stockbridge Road are sections of a major east-west highway, Route 102. The Massachusetts Turnpike crosses the northern portion of the Town and connects with the Berkshire Extension of the New York Thruway at the State Line. The last Massachusetts exit for westbound traffic

and the first Massachusetts entrance for eastbound traffic is the turnpike's interchange with Great Barrington Road near Card Pond.

Albany Road and Stockbridge Road provide the only major east-west route through the northern portion of the Town. The valley between Maple Hill and Tom Ball Mountain allows only one east-west roadway in the southerly section of West Stockbridge. The Main Alford Road and Cobb Road run through this valley and connect West Center Road with Great Barrington Road.

There is considerable variation in both pavement and right-of-way widths throughout West Stockbridge. Paved roads maintained by the Town have a right-of-way which vary from 24 feet to 56 feet in width. The pavement width on these streets also varies from 18 to 20 feet on a street with a 32-foot right-of-way and from 18 to 28 feet on streets with a 40-foot right-of-way. The Town's unpaved roads have a right-of-way and travel way of 25 to 50 feet in width.

The main line of the Boston and Albany Railroad cuts across the northwest corner of West Stockbridge. On the Richmond-West Stockbridge line, there is a narrow underpass for Deane Hill Road near its intersection with Baker Street. There is also a grade crossing of these tracks directly on the State Line, where a short street connects State Line Road and Cross Road.

The opening of the Massachusetts Turnpike in May of 1957 had a marked effect on traffic flow through West Stockbridge. After the turnpike was opened, traffic volumes through Town generally declined. However, due to increased reliance on automobiles, current traffic volumes now exceed what they were before and shortly after the turnpike. This increase was predicted in the 1959 Master Plan. The turnpike's major effect has been to reduce the amount of east-west through traffic that formerly passed over Route 102. There has been a decline in the

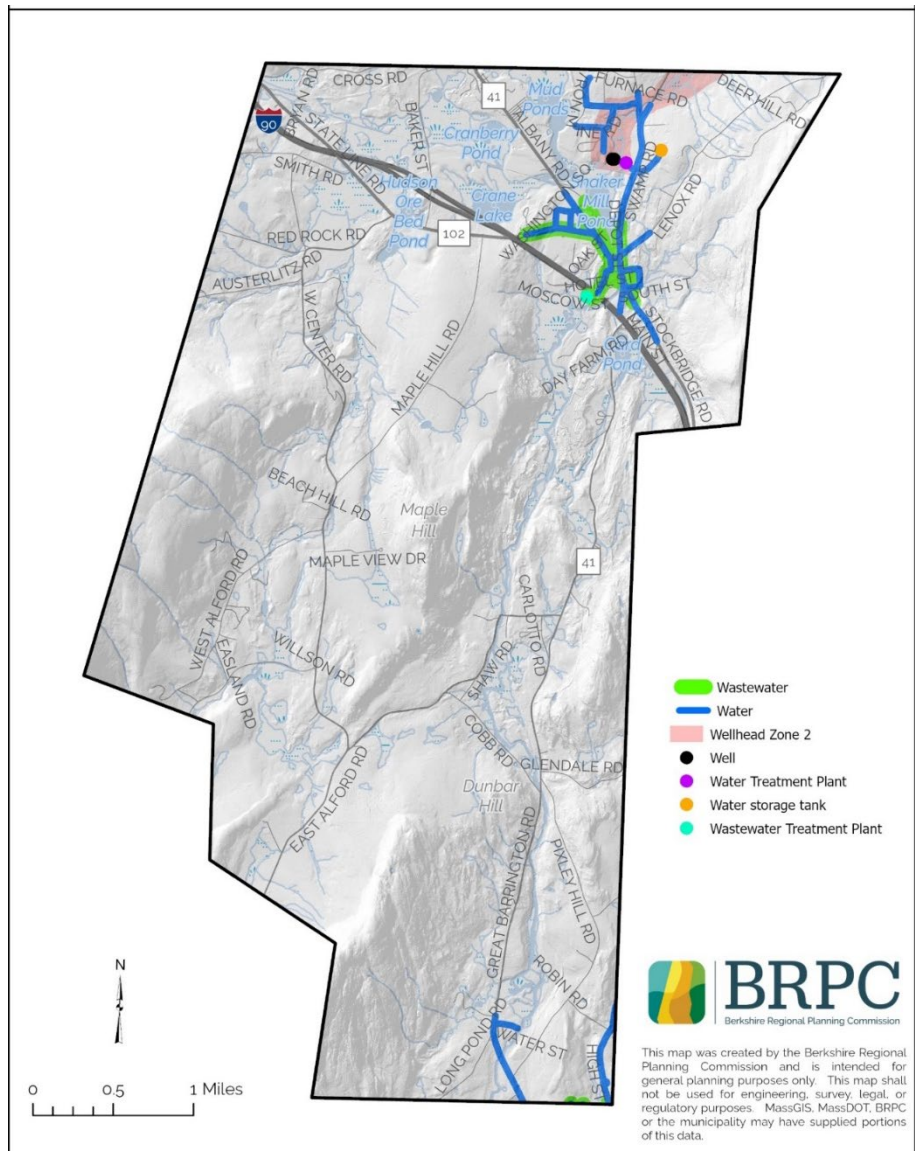


Figure 3: Existing Infrastructure Map

number of large vehicles (tractor-trailers) that have to pass through the Town's most densely developed business and residential areas. Town residents remain concerned about commercial traffic driving through the Town Center and not yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalk. Street calming measures would help to reduce speed through the Town and create a safer environment for pedestrians looking to cross Route 102.

Water Supply System

The Town operates and maintains both a primary and back-up well, located in a 12-acre town-owned Zone II protected zone behind the Gaston property, off of Swamp Road. Well #1 has a depth of 51' and pumps at a volume of 70 GPM. Well #2 is 48' deep and pumps at 50 GPM. Both wells pump chlorinated water directly up to the Lenox Mtn. Water Storage Tank, which has a capacity of 150,000 gallons. In addition to equalizing pressure throughout the system, the tank provides a three-day emergency supply of safe drinking water in the event of an emergency.

The two types of water treatment that the Town employs are "AquaMag". Inserted at the pump station, AquaMag sequesters (keeps in solution) calcium and magnesium, which cause hardness in water. By keeping these compounds in solution, clogging which results in the failure of tankless hot water heaters in household boilers when water is heated is reduced. The town also adds chlorine for disinfection.¹²

Sewer Service

The Town of West Stockbridge has a limited municipal sewer system. Currently, 82 homes and businesses are connected to this system. Most homes and businesses are served by septic systems.

Broadband

West Stockbridge has three broadband providers that have 100% coverage, including Spectrum, Viasat, and HughesNet. AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile provide limited coverage in West Stockbridge.

Regulatory Barriers

Zoning

West Stockbridge currently has ten zoning districts and three overlay districts, which include: One Acre Residence, Three-Acre Residence, Residence, Commercial, Manufacturing, Floodplain Districts, Wetland Area, Village Core Overlay District, Marijuana Retail Overlay District, and the Photovoltaic Overlay District.

The Town of West Stockbridge consists of three residential zoning districts, R1, R3, and RD, one commercial zoning district (C), and one manufacturing zoning district (M). The R-1 District has a one-acre minimum lot size for single-family and a two-acre minimum for two-family development. The R-3 district permits a three-acre minimum lot size for single-family and a six-acre minimum for two-family. The RD district, located in and around the main village center, allows more dense development with a ½ acre minimum lot size.

The Floodplain Overlay District has regulations that require a special permit for development in flood-hazard areas. The Wetlands Area Overlay District requires a special permit for development within 100 feet of a few select wetlands. West Stockbridge is also a Right-to-Farm Community. The Town's Farming Bylaw is a general bylaw that encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic

¹² [Annual Drinking Water Quality Report 2024](#)

opportunities, and protects farmlands within the Town by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function with minimal conflict with abutters and Town agencies. The Town has also adopted the Berkshire Scenic Mountains Act (SMA), which protects scenic views and watersheds. The SMA requires construction over 1,500 feet in elevation not to be visible above the ridge line, and it controls run-off and erosion created by development.

Chapter 5: Housing Goals and Strategies

The Town of West Stockbridge's Affordable Housing Trust has established and endorsed the Five-Year Production Goal as outlined below. To support this Production Goal and increase abundant housing more broadly, there are a variety of additional strategies listed to guide the town in the coming years.

Five-Year Housing Production Goal

The overarching goal for this Housing Production Plan is affordable housing development by striving to achieve milestones toward the MGL Chapter 40B requirement of 10 percent of the Town's housing stock qualifying as affordable housing. The Town of West Stockbridge currently has zero subsidized housing units listed on the most recent version of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities' (EOHLC) Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).¹³ This represents zero percent of the 665 total year-round housing units as reported by the 2020 Decennial Census. The Town is 66 housing units short of the 10 percent affordable housing goal as defined by EOHLC.

The Affordable Housing Trust's goal over the next five years is for the West Stockbridge Housing Production Plan (HPP) to become certified. Becoming certified means reaching the annual numeric goals of 0.5 percent or 1.0 percent housing growth based on the total year-round housing units. The HPP would be certified for one year if the town reached the 0.5 percent goal within a year's time and certified for two years if it reached the 1.0 percent goal within a year's time. These annual numeric goals are outlined in the chart below.

Chapter 40B Housing Production Schedule – 0.5% and 1% Growth¹⁴

Year	0.5% Increase in Units				1% Increase in Units			
	Additional Units (0.5%)	Number of Total Affordable Units	Total Housing Units	Percent Affordable	Additional Units (1%)	Number of Total Affordable Units	Total Housing Units	Percent Affordable
Current		0	665	0%		0	665	0%
2026	3	3	668	0.5%	7	7	672	1.0%
2027	3	6	671	0.9%	7	14	679	2.0%
2028	3	9	674	1.3%	7	21	686	3.0%
2029	3	12	677	1.7%	7	28	693	4.0%
2030	3	15	680	2.2%	7	35	700	5.0%

* Please note: this schedule assumes all newly created affordable housing units are new construction and increase the total number of year-round units of housing. It is assumed that some new affordable housing units will be conversion of existing units, which isn't reflected in this chart.

Given the current building environment and the constraints outlined in this Housing Production Plan, a production goal of 3 affordable housing units annually that count toward the SHI is most reasonable and achievable for West Stockbridge. Please note that at this 0.5 percent growth rate, the Town of West Stockbridge will not achieve the MGL Chapter 40B 10 percent affordable housing within the life of this Housing Production Plan.

¹³ June 29, 2023 is the most recent version of the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) available on EOHLC's website.

Strategies for Abundant Housing

This plan has outlined the demographic profile, the local housing conditions, and the housing development consideration within West Stockbridge and has established an ambitious Five-Year Housing Production Goal. However, overcoming housing development barriers and producing units of housing isn't as easy as simply building new units. There is a complex ecosystem of actions that must be addressed. These strategies for abundant housing are grouped to make clear what that ecosystem looks like and how this complex picture ties into housing production.

Local Capacity Building: Empower the Affordable Housing Trust within its charter role to plan, promote, and create affordable housing opportunities throughout the Town of West Stockbridge. Without a strong and capable Affordable Housing Trust, West Stockbridge will miss out on key opportunities to achieve abundant housing.

1. Conduct ongoing community outreach to understand the community's understanding of the local housing situation.
2. Participate in regional collaborations addressing affordable housing through Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and other regional organizations.
3. Strengthening local community support for affordable and abundant housing with ongoing community education. This includes providing a presence at local events and ensuring an updated, resource-rich website for the public's benefit.
4. Create a guide for homeowners on creating and financing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to encourage small, long-term rental units through private investment.
5. Create a local first-time homebuyer program to assist low- to moderate-income households and working families most in need through direct support to purchase a home.
6. Investigate opportunities and models for shared living situations with the community.
7. Monitor and evaluate the current housing stock to identify at-risk properties and how best to keep all housing units in stable condition to remain on the housing market.
8. Extend the working knowledge of Affordable Housing Trust members and Town officials through participation in relevant webinars and conferences.

Identification of Funding: Identify realistic and stable funding sources to meet the needs of housing development at all levels within the community.

1. Secure an annual, stable funding source through the Community Preservation Committee's allocation process to be used for affordable housing purposes. At the very least, this should be the required 10 percent of CPA funding required to be allocated for Affordable Housing needs and operations.

2. Work with Town officials and the Community Preservation Committee to establish a Community Preservation Plan to ensure consistent and strategic investment of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.
3. Continue to work with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) to identify grant opportunities to support low- to moderate-income housing development within the community.

Zoning and Regulation: Continue to be progressive in ensuring that West Stockbridge's isn't itself an impediment to reasonable and appropriate housing development within the community.

1. Investigate and then advocate for a reasonable adjustment to local property tax policy to incentivize the development of new, year-round housing units and the conversion of short-term rentals into affordable, year-round rentals. This includes implementation of the Residential Tax Exemption (RTE), the Expanded Residential Tax Exemption, and the Affordable Housing Tax Exemption.
2. Work with the West Stockbridge Planning Board to analyze the effects of the current Zoning Bylaws on housing production and ways in which this could be adjusted to allow intentional and integrative housing production within the community.
3. Identify all Town-owned land and create internal prospectus on the opportunities and barriers for housing on these parcels, including an analysis of:
 - a. Main Town Hall ("old school") property,
 - b. Vacant lot on Main Street next to old Town hall
 - c. Moscow Road Lot (former National Grid Land)
 - d. Land south of Turnpike (now State Fish and Game)
4. Explore small-scale infill development on nonconforming lots within the Village Center as part of a diverse set of housing solutions.

Preservation and Rehabilitation: Focus on promoting programs and funding sources that would rehabilitate or modify housing units within the community to encourage aging in place and maintenance of the existing housing stock.

1. Pursue grant opportunities such as the Community Development Block Grant to establish and Housing Rehabilitation Program in the Town of West Stockbridge, while potentially joining with other surrounding communities.
2. Promote the Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) to connect seniors and those living with disabilities to resources to modify their homes to ensure they remain in the homes and communities of their choice.
3. Investigate an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program to pair public funds with private investment to promote the creation of housing units for long-term rentals.
4. Investigate with the Board of Health the utilization of the Attorney General's Receivership Program to bring potentially abandoned or derelict properties back in the active housing market.

Action Plan

Strategy	Time Frame (month/year)	Strategy Champion (board, individual, etc.)	Funding Needed? (Y/N, source)
Local Capacity Building			
1. Conduct ongoing community outreach to understand the community's understanding of the local housing situation.	Ongoing, with initial survey released in Fall of 2025	Affordable Housing Trust with BRPC support	No additional funding needed.
2. Participate in regional collaborations addressing affordable housing through Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and other regional organizations.	Ongoing, with initial contacts made in Fall 2025	Affordable Housing Trust	No additional funding needed.
3. Strengthening local community support for affordable and abundant housing with ongoing community education. This includes providing a presence at local events and ensuring an updated, resource-rich website for the public's benefit.	Ongoing, with initial website recommendations made in Fall of 2025.	Affordable Housing Trust, Town Administrator	No additional funding needed.
4. Create a guide for homeowners on creating and financing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to encourage small, long-term rental units through private investment.	Completed by January 2026	Affordable Housing Trust with BRPC support	No additional funding needed.
5. Create a local first-time homebuyer program to assist low- to moderate-income households and working families most in need through direct support to purchase a home.	Outline and proposal completed by Spring 2026	Affordable Housing Trust	Funds needed from the Community Preservation Committee.
6. Investigate opportunities and models for shared living situations with the community.	Ongoing	Affordable Housing Trust	No additional funds needed.
7. Monitor and evaluate the current housing stock to identify at-risk properties and how best to keep all housing units in stable condition to remain on the housing market.	Initial evaluation to be completed by December 2025.	BRPC deliverable to Affordable Housing Trust	No additional funds needed.
8. Extend the working knowledge of Affordable Housing Trust members and Town officials through participation in relevant webinars and conferences.	Ongoing	Affordable Housing Trust with BRPC support	Possible funds needed, allocated through AHT budget or additional funds.
Identification of Funding			
1. Secure an annual, stable funding source through the Community Preservation Committee's allocation process to be used for affordable housing purposes. At the very least, this should be the required 10 percent of CPA funding required to be allocated for Affordable Housing needs and operations.	Spring 2026	Affordable Housing Trust, Community Preservation Committee, Town Meeting	No additional funds needed.
2. Work with Town officials and the Community Preservation Committee to establish a Community Preservation Plan to	Spring 2026	Community Preservation	No additional funds needed.

ensure consistent and strategic investment of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.		Committee, Town Meeting	
3. Continue to work with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) to identify grant opportunities to support low- to moderate-income housing development within the community.	Ongoing	Affordable Housing Trust, BRPC, Select Board	No additional funds needed.
Zoning and Regulation			
1. Investigate and then advocate for a reasonable adjustment to local property tax policy to incentivize the development of new, year-round housing units and the conversion of short-term rentals into affordable, year-round rentals. This includes implementation of the Residential Tax Exemption (RTE), the Expanded Residential Tax Exemption, and the Affordable Housing Tax Exemption.	Initial investigation complete by December 2025, ongoing advocacy after that	Affordable Housing Trust, Select Board	No additional funds needed.
2. Work with the West Stockbridge Planning Board to analyze the effects of the current Zoning Bylaws on housing production and ways in which this could be adjusted to allow intentional and integrative housing production within the community.	Spring 2026	Affordable Housing Trust, Planning Board	No additional funds are needed, unless an outside consultant needs to be obtained.
3. Identify all Town-owned land and create internal prospectus on the opportunities and barriers for housing on these parcels.	Spring 2026	Affordable Housing Trust, Town Administrator	No additional funds needed.
4. Explore small-scale infill development on nonconforming lots within the Village Center as part of a diverse set of housing solutions.	Fall 2026	Affordable Housing Trust, Planning Board	No additional funds needed for exploration; funds may be needed for actual infill construction.
Preservation and Rehabilitation			
1. Pursue grant opportunities such as the Community Development Block Grant to establish and Housing Rehabilitation Program in the Town of West Stockbridge, while potentially joining with other surrounding communities.	Spring 2026	Affordable Housing Trust, Select Board, BRPC	No additional funds need.
2. Promote the Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) to connect seniors and those living with disabilities to resources to modify their homes to ensure they remain in the homes and communities of their choice.	Ongoing	Affordable Housing Trust, Council on Aging	No additional funds needed.
3. Investigate an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program to pair public funds with private investment to promote the creation of housing units for long-term rentals.	Initial investigation completed by December 2025	Affordable Housing Trust, BRPC	No additional funds needed for investigation, funds for construction from Community

			Preservation Committee
4. Investigate with the Board of Health the utilization of the Attorney General's Receivership Program to bring potentially abandoned or derelict properties back in the active housing market.	Initial investigation completed by December 2025	Affordable Housing Trust, BRPC	No additional funds needed.