

Sharon
— Connecticut —
Est. 1739



TOWN INFORMATION SESSION

WHY ARE WE DEVELOPING A TOWN HOUSING PLAN?

February 24, 2022

WELCOME! TOPICS COVERED TONIGHT:

- **Why** are we developing a town housing plan?
- **What types** of housing does Sharon need?
- What do Sharon **residents** say about housing needs?
- What is **affordable housing**? **What does it look like** in other small towns in the region?
- What are the **next steps** in the Housing Plan process and how can I provide feedback?



SHARON'S HOUSING PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Steering Committee Members

- **Dale Jones** (Board of Selectmen)
- **Larry Moskowitz** (Planning & Zoning Commission)
- **Pat Whelan** (Sharon Housing Authority)
- **Bob Whelan** (Habitat for Humanity NWCT)

Planning facilitator

- **Jocelyn Ayer**- consultant providing technical assistance

The screenshot shows the town of Sharon, Connecticut's website. The header includes the town logo "Sharon Connecticut Est. 1739", social media icons for Facebook and Instagram, a "Select Language" dropdown, a search bar, and a home icon. Below the header is a navigation menu with "Departments", "Boards & Committees", "Community", and "Find It Fast". The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail "Home » Boards & Committees" and the title "Housing Plan Steering Committee". To the right is a "Housing Plan Steering Committee Calendar" for February, with a navigation bar showing "S M T W T F S".

Steering Committee meets monthly

- 1st Mondays of the month at 5:30pm
- Meetings open to the public
- Agendas and minutes posted on the town website

MEETING PROTOCOL

- **Meeting is being recorded**
- Will take questions and comments after a short presentation
- Please **type your questions into “Chat”** they will go to the meeting host.
- Everyone is muted to cut down on background noise.

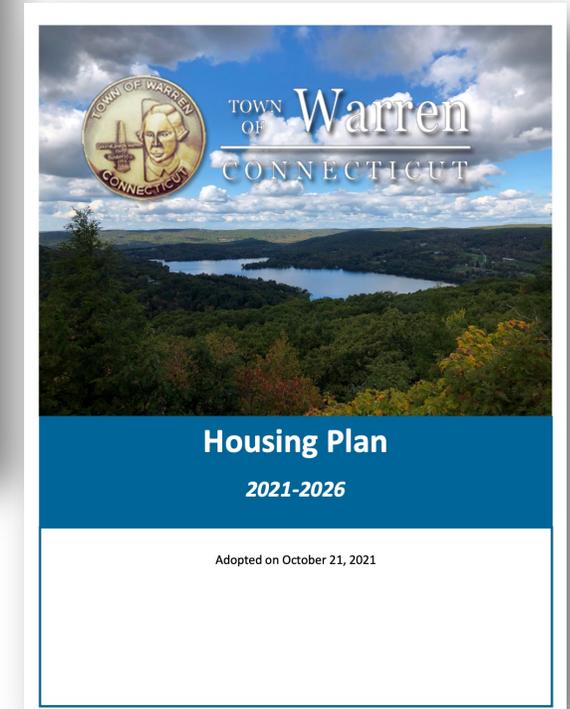
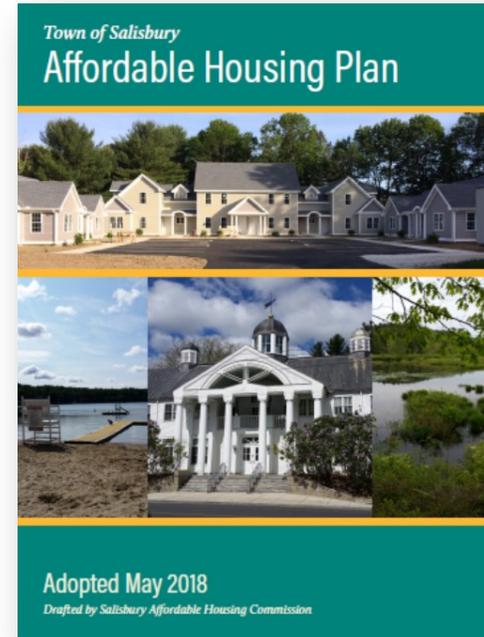


WHY ARE WE DEVELOPING A TOWN HOUSING PLAN?

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- **CT Law** passed in July 2017 requires every town in Connecticut to have a housing plan by June 2022:
 - **GOAL** “to undertake a proactive Planning process and lay out a strategy for meeting the housing needs of existing and future residents and workers” (CT Statute 8-30j)
 - The plan must **specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments** in the municipality
 - Plan does not have to be limited to only affordable housing.
 - Can include strategies for providing housing options for people of all ages, mobility/accessibility needs, range of incomes
 - **Housing Plan = Guidance document**, no regulatory authority

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN A TOWN HOUSING PLAN?

1. Assessment of **current Housing Needs**
 - Resident Housing Needs Survey Results
 - Worker Housing Needs Survey Results
 - Data analysis
2. Assessment of **existing Housing Stock**
3. **Goals**
 - # of housing units over 5-year period
4. **Strategies** for meeting identified housing needs
 - Zoning
 - Capacity Building
 - Funding resources



WHAT IS “AFFORDABLE HOUSING”?

Definition of affordable housing:

Costs less than 30% of the income of a household earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI) for Litchfield County.



TABLE: Income limits to qualify for “affordable housing”

	Household Size				
	1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people
80% of AMI (2021)	\$55,950	\$63,950	\$71,950	\$79,900	\$86,300

Sharon had 465 households earning below 80% area median income (AMI)

Example “affordable” rents:

- between \$500 and \$900 for a one-bedroom apartment or
- \$1,100 to \$1,800 for a 3-bedroom apartment.

CURRENT STOCK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

AS DEFINED BY THE CT AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPEALS ACT (8-30G)

TOWN	Total Housing Units 2010 Census	Government Assisted	Tenant Rental Assistance	Single Family CHFA/ USDA Mortgages	Deed Restricted Units	Total Assisted Units	Percent Affordable
Canaan/FV	779	1	4	5	1	11	1.41%
Cornwall	1,007	28	2	6	0	36	3.57%
Kent	1,665	58	4	5	0	67	4.02%
Sharon	1,775	32*	1	3	0	36	2.03%
Salisbury	2,593	24	2	2	14	42	1.62%

Most of Sharon's existing affordable housing is at Sharon Ridge

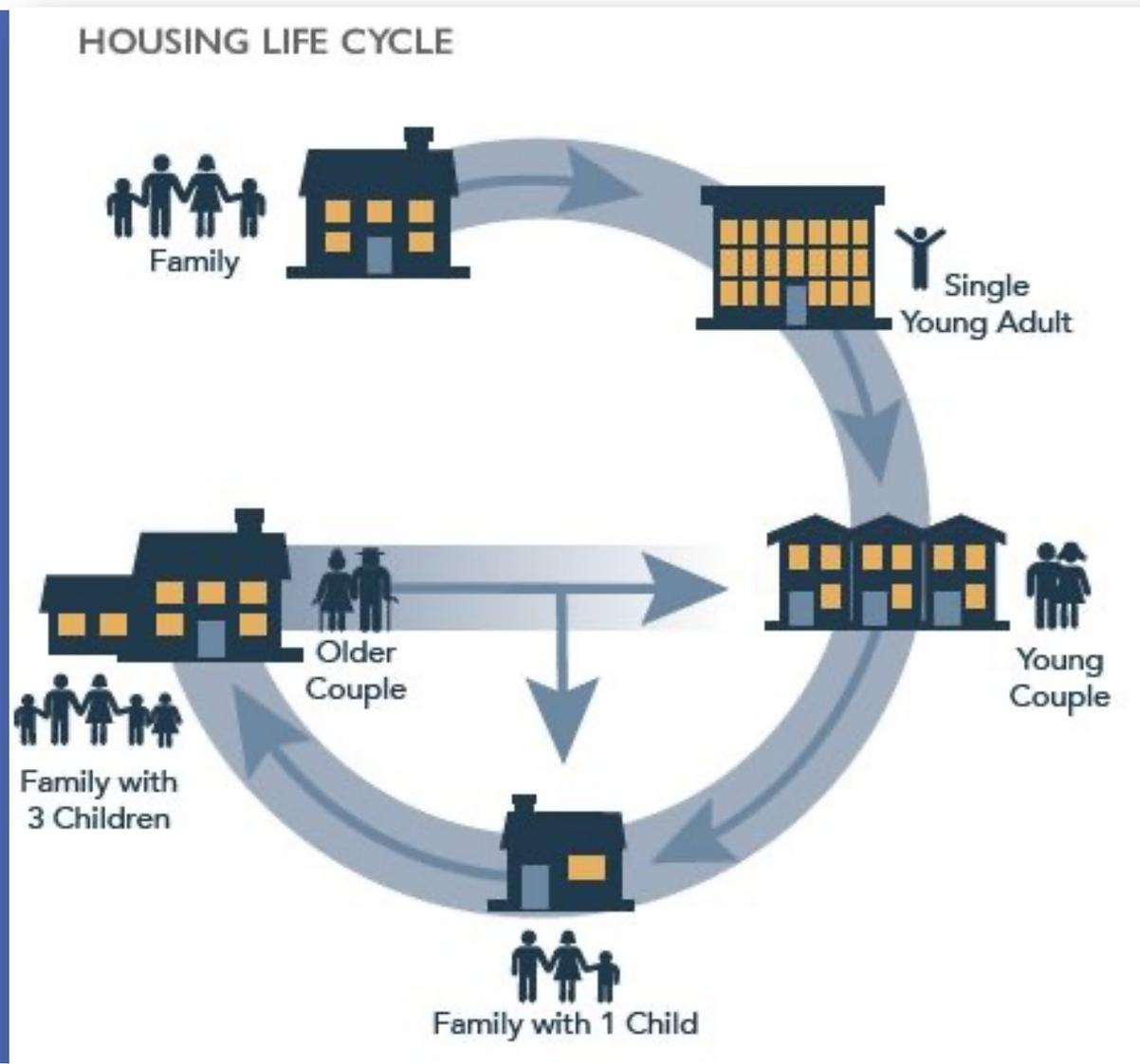


- The town had 465 households earning under 80% AMI and has 36 units dedicated to remain affordable for these households.
- The Sharon Housing Authority has **80 households** on their waiting lists.

What does
Sharon's housing
situation look like
now?

Range of housing options

Sharon's homes are predominately single family and mainly designed for families with children



- **90%** of Sharon's housing stock is **single family detached homes**
- Only **16%** of Sharon's households have children and yet **75%** of the housing stock has **3+ bedrooms**.
- A majority of town's housing stock may not fit the needs/desires of young adults, young families, or seniors that do not want to pay for or maintain a single family home with 3+ bedrooms.

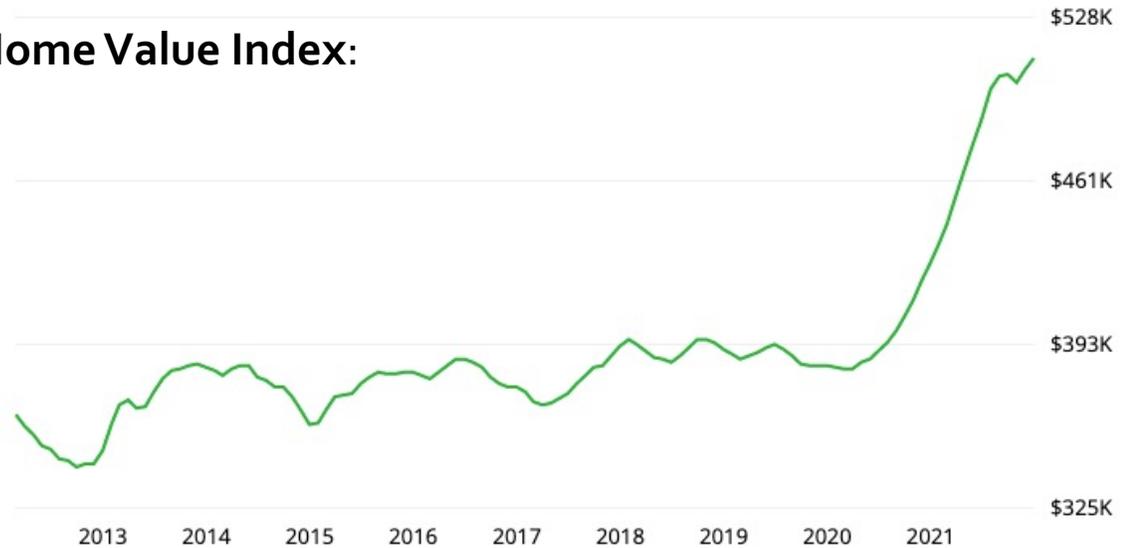
Home sales prices and values have risen

“The typical home value of homes in Sharon is \$519,292. This value is seasonally adjusted and only includes the middle price tier of homes. Sharon home values have gone up 18.2% over the past year.”

Median Sales Prices:



Zillow Home Value Index:



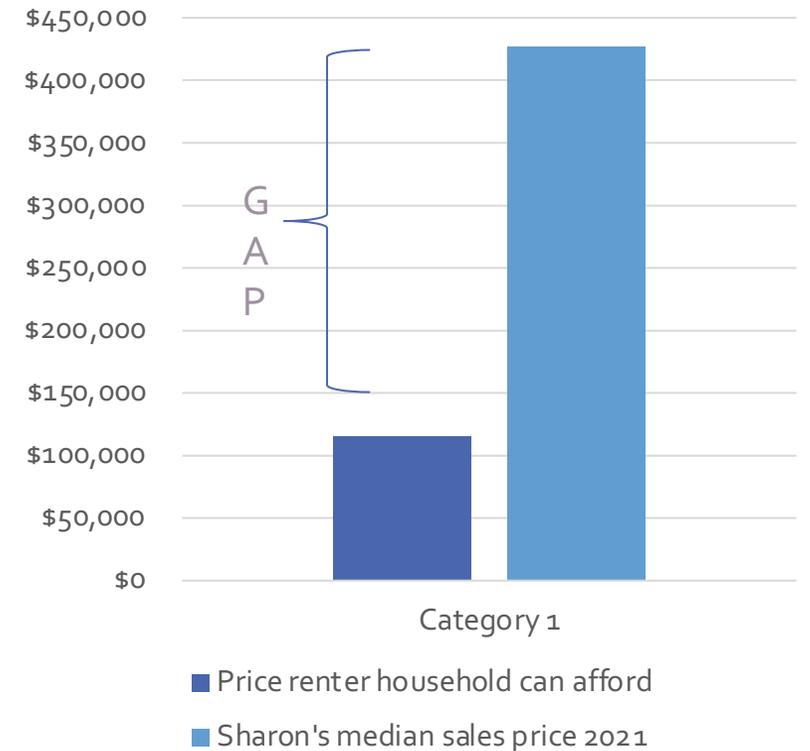
Access to ownership is challenging for renter households

New homeownership is often delayed by high housing costs, limited diversity in housing type (too many big houses), and student loan debt.

If your household earned the Litchfield County median household income for a renter of \$41,000, \$500 in monthly student loan or car debt, and a \$5,000 down payment, you'd be able to afford a home costing \$115,500.

There was a gap in 2021 of \$310,900, between what a renter household in Litchfield County could afford and the median priced home in Sharon.

Access to Ownership Gap



Rental Housing Availability

There is limited rental housing available in Sharon.

- **17% of Sharon's housing stock is renter occupied** (317 units) compared to 19% in Litchfield County and 30% statewide.
- Recent search on realtor.com found **5 homes** listed for rent:
 - \$2,400/mo (2-bedroom)
 - \$2,500/mo (1 bedroom)
 - \$4,000/mo (3-bedroom)
 - Rest between \$5,800/mo and \$8,000/mo (winter only)
- According to a Litchfield County rental report from SmartMLS, rents in Sharon have **increased 130%** in the last year while the number of rentals has declined by 60%

Housing Cost Burdened Households

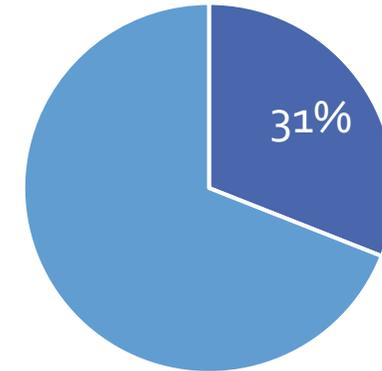
310 Sharon households are housing cost burdened

- Households are considered “housing cost burdened” if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

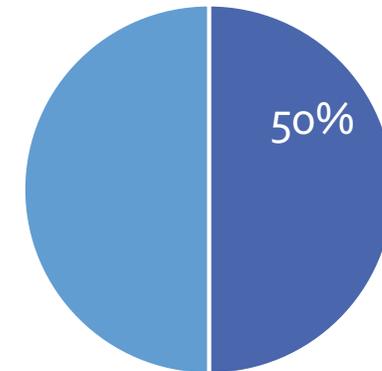


- **205 households** are paying more than 50% of their income on housing costs = severe cost burden

Cost Burdened Owners



Cost Burdened Renters



WHAT DO RESIDENTS SAY ABOUT HOUSING NEEDS?

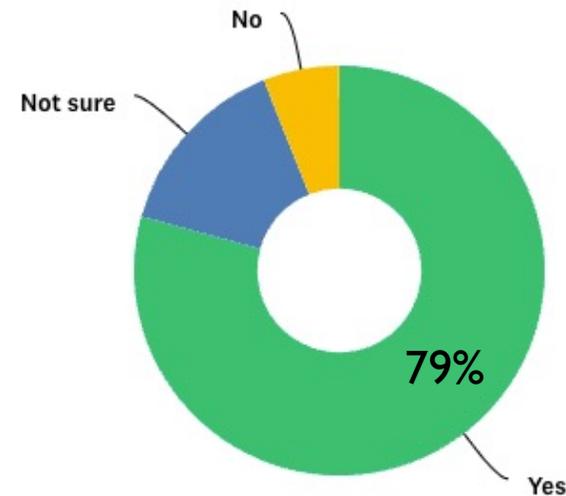
SURVEY RESULTS

222 responses to date

- **82%** think the cost of housing in Sharon affects the **ability of people who work in town to live in town.**
- **79%** think the cost of housing in town **affects the town's ability to attract/retain younger people or young families.**
- **76%** think the town needs **rental housing options that young families and young adults can afford.**
- **67%** think town needs **“downsize” options**
- **57%** think town needs **first time homebuyer options that allow renters to purchase their first home**

Do you think the cost of housing in Sharon affects the town's ability to attract/retain younger people or young families?

Answered: 217 Skipped: 2



SURVEY RESULTS CONTINUED...

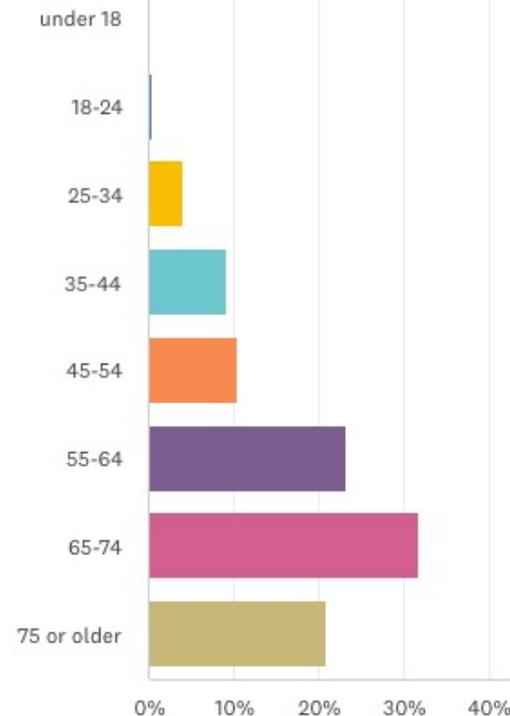
Who took the survey?

Respondents were:

- 87% home-owners; 13% home-renters
- 14% had school aged children
- Age and household type of the respondents were representative

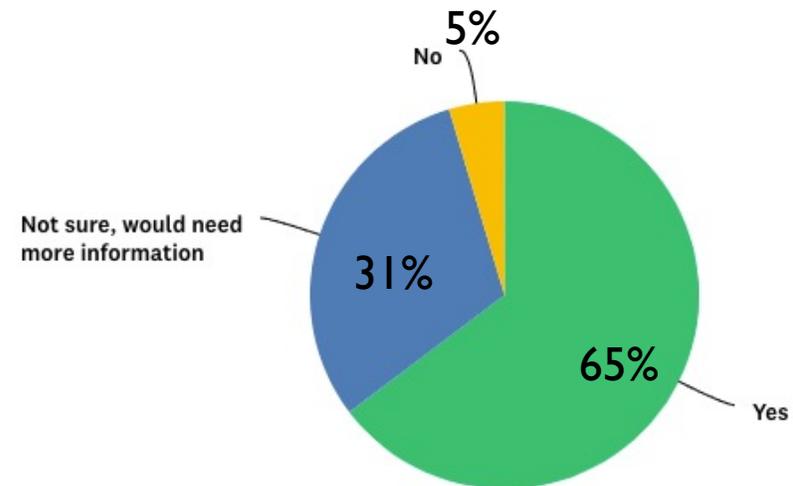
How old are you?

Answered: 220 Skipped: 2



Should the Town of Sharon provide funding in the municipal budget to assist with affordable housing efforts, as other Northwest Connecticut communities have done?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 4



WHAT DO RESIDENTS SAY ABOUT HOUSING NEEDS?

SURVEY COMMENTS

“Housing for older adults that does NOT require driving, i.e. is walkable to town green and town shopping. This will enable seniors to free up their (typically more affordable) housing for new families and allow seniors to stay in our town..”

“I used to live in Sharon with my husband and 2 girls. I served on the Sharon Ambulance squad and unfortunately I was forced to move out of Sharon! I was born and raised here and I miss it! I can only hope that one day we can return to our beautiful town!”

“If my family didn't build my house and leave it to me, I couldn't afford to live here. That's big, considering my spouse and I have high-paying jobs in the tech industry..”

“All residences need to be equipped with broadband.”

“Need multi family units in the town center”

“No subsidies. Let the market/buyers/sellers dictate the affordability.”



WHAT DO SHARON'S EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS SAY?

"I find it very hard to find and keep employees for my business because there is no affordable rental apartments or houses for young people starting out or early in their careers making between \$15 and \$25 an hour full time. Young people want to live here, and they want to work for us, most can't afford it even with a reasonable salary."

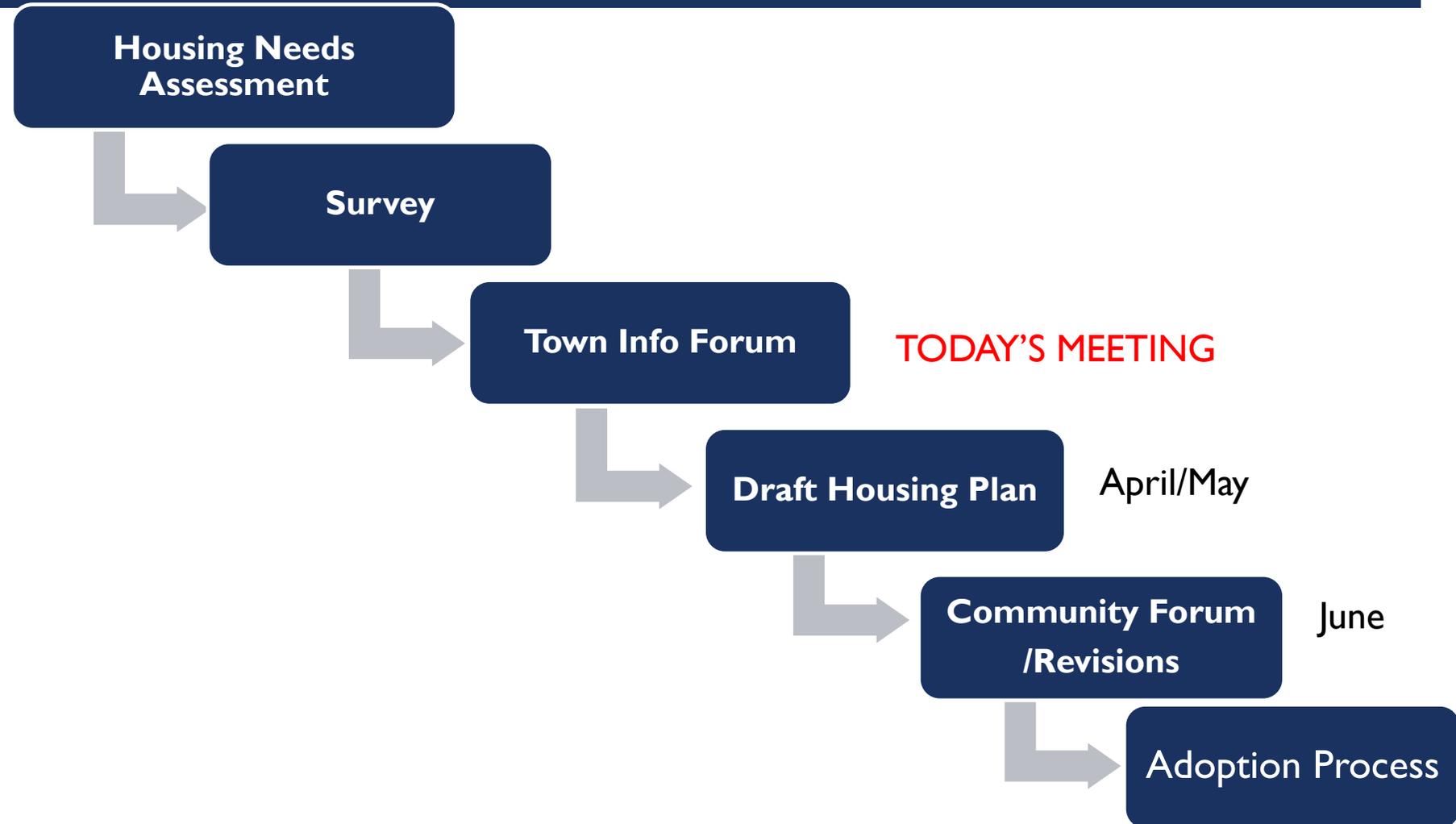
"Teachers cannot afford to live here. Many commute from Torrington or Goshen, some even further."

"I have worked in Sharon for 3 years. I would be delighted to be able to reside in Sharon, not only for being closer to my job but to make sure my younger children can stay at Sharon Center School."



NEXT STEPS IN SHARON'S HOUSING PLAN PROCESS

- Plan to hold **another community forum to get feedback on DRAFT Housing Plan** prior to presenting the Housing Plan for adoption.
- Monthly Housing Plan Steering Committee meetings are **open to the public**.



WHAT DO AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS LOOK LIKE?

Affordable Housing In
Northwest Connecticut's Small Towns

"An Investment in The Community"



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QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, FEEDBACK

- Please **type into the chat box!**
- Do you have any **questions** about the Housing Plan, the planning process, or affordable housing?
- **Ideas** for how Sharon can meet its housing needs?

