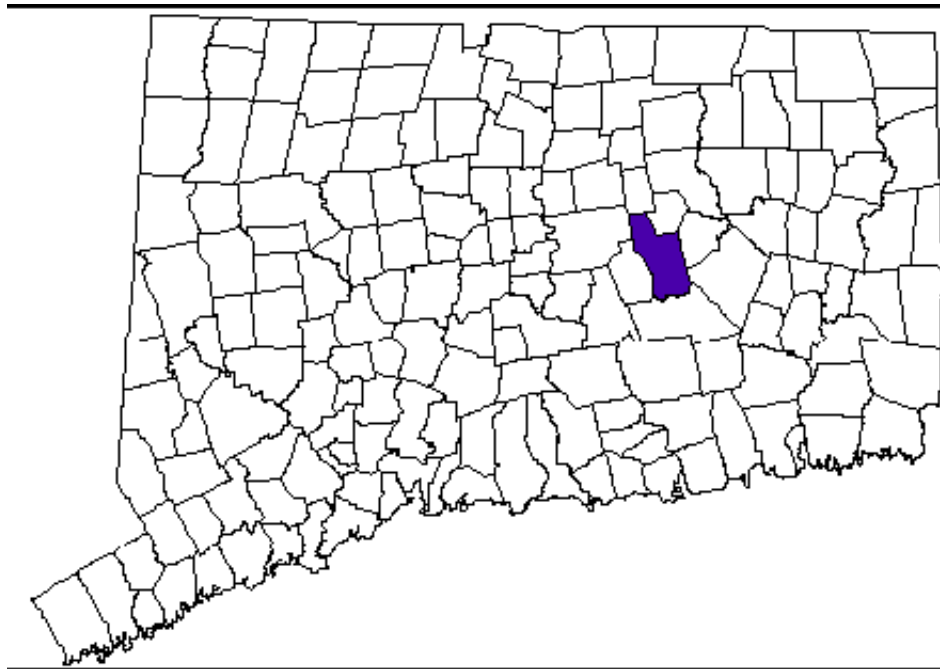


Section 1

Community Profile



Make no little plans; for they have no magic to stir men's souls...make big plans and aim high.... Daniel H. Burnham, architect & urban planner (1846-1912).

Introduction

The Community Profile section of the Plan of Conservation and Development is intended to provide a description of the Town and its past growth, and then utilize this information to project future trends. As the character of this Town is different from all other towns, so too are its history and growth patterns unique. It is an important function of the Plan of Conservation and Development to see how the Town has developed; why it has developed the way it did and understand the rate and type of past growth. Only with this understanding can we properly plan for and guide future growth. This 2024 Plan of Conservation and Development will also document the changes that have occurred in the Community since the adoption of the 2014 Plan and will identify the accomplishments that were made by the Town in achieving numerous Goals and Objectives identified in that last Plan.



The experience of past growth and development in the community raises unique issues, which should be addressed in future planning. This understanding of the past and a look to the future is the purpose of the Community Profile section of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Community Profile section of the Plan is divided into four parts. **Subsection A** provides a brief introduction and summary of the Town of Hebron's geography, size, and character. **Subsection B** documents and describes the existing land use make-up of the community. **Subsections C and D** contain a current description of the Town's housing stock and population. These two sections will also include analysis of recent growth during the last planning period and include a comparison to surrounding towns and the region.

The Town of Hebron

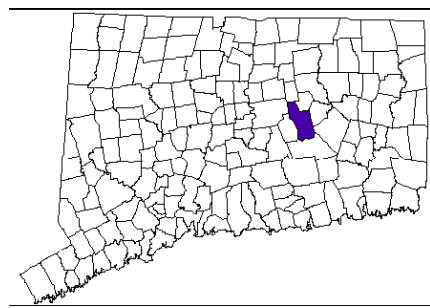
2024 Plan of Conservation and
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Section 1

Community Profile

A. Community Description

The Town of Hebron, incorporated in 1708, is located in central Connecticut, approximately 20 miles southeast of Hartford. The Town is bisected by Route 66, which runs east-west through the Town, and by Route 85, which runs north-south.

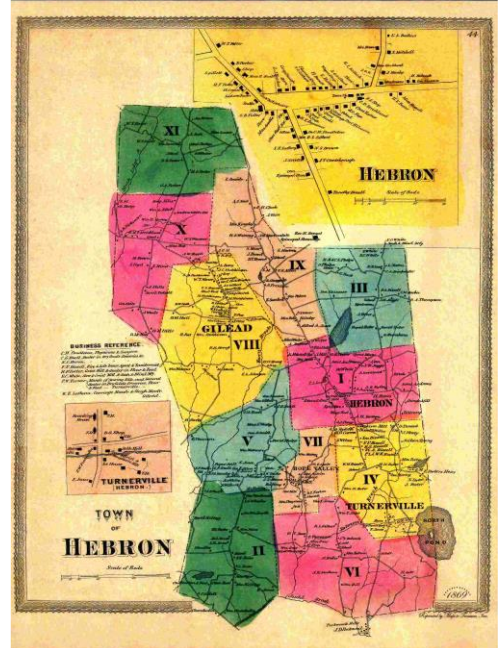


The Town contains 37.5 square miles (24,000 acres of land). With a 2020 US Census population of 9,098, it has a population density of approximately 243 persons per square mile. The topography within Town is primarily rolling hills, typical of the eastern uplands of Connecticut. The Town's landscape remains traversed with numerous stone walls as a tribute to its proud agricultural heritage, with several farms still in operation, and over 1,000 acres of land permanently preserved as agricultural land by farmland preservation programs. Many historically significant homes and buildings

line the roads throughout the Town of Hebron.

The landscape of Hebron is diverse, ranging from woodlands to open fields and marshlands, with many areas preserved in their natural state. Many indigenous species of vegetation and wildlife can be found throughout the Town. The terrain in Hebron ranges in elevation from 204 feet above sea level in the southwest corner of Town to 772 feet above sea level in the northeast corner. The landscape of the Town contains numerous streams within the Salmon River basin, all having high water quality.

The 2020 U.S. Census count for Hebron reported that the Town had a population of 9,098 people. This was a 6% decrease in total population since the 2010 U.S. Census. Despite this slip in town population from 2010-2020, Hebron has experienced significant residential growth in the previous five decades once it was discovered as a highly desirable and convenient housing location. It is expected that Hebron's future population will continue to grow but at a much slower pace than in the past.



The Town of Hebron

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Community Profile

B. Land Use

The land use of the community is the focus of a significant amount of local planning efforts and subsequent public policy discussions and zoning and subdivision regulations. The perceived character of a town, its quality of life, as well as its economic health is, in large part, a reflection of its land use make-up. It is therefore important to know and understand the Town's land use fabric as background for establishing policies intended to regulate future land use changes.

Methodology

For the 2024 Plan update, the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS) is the primary source for land use calculations. The land use data is derived mainly from the Hebron Assessor's land use codes. This should provide an accurate record of existing land use tabulations and changes over time.

The following assumptions were made in determining Land use area calculations:

- If a parcel of land is occupied by some land use, but the majority of land is vacant, a portion of land is calculated as developed, and the remainder of the parcel is calculated as vacant.
- Privately owned open space is calculated as vacant land, as that land is not permanently committed to open space.
- Farmland not permanently protected under a farmland preservation program is calculated as vacant, because it still can be developed.
- Preserved Agriculture parcels, where development rights were purchased by the State of CT, are considered as permanent open space.

Residential Land Use

Residential land use is the largest single land use category in Hebron. A total of 32.8 % of the overall land in Town is used for residential purposes. Single family development accounts for 32% of the Town's land whereas multi-family land use accounts for about 0.8% of Hebron's land area. Of all the developed land in Town, or land that is committed to some type of land use (such as permanent open space), approximately 50% of it is used for residential purposes.

Land Uses in Hebron May 2023		
Developed / Committed Land		
Land Use	Acres	% of Town
Single Family	7,630	32.03 %
Multi-Family	192	00.81%
Institutional	253	01.06%
Commercial	109	00.46%
Industrial	17	00.07%
Roads	780	03.27%
Sub-total: Developed Land	8,981	37.7%
Town Open Space	1,991	08.36%
State Open Space	3,284	13.79%
Sub-total: Open Space	5,275	22.15%
Preserved Agriculture	1,118	04.69%
Sub-Total: Open Space / Preserved Agricultural Land	6,393	26.84%
Total Developed / Open Space / Preserved Agricultural Land	15,374	64.5%
Vacant Land		
Land Use	Acres	% of Town
Private Open Space	1,463	06.15%
Vacant	6,982	29.31.%
Total Vacant Land	8,445	35.5%
Total		
Total Hebron Land Area	23,819	100%

Business & Industrial Land Use

As primarily a rural town, Hebron's business and industrial sectors are still emerging and this land use category is likely to remain a relatively small segment of the overall Town.

Business use occupies 109 acres in Hebron and is primarily located in Hebron Center, although there are other commercial areas along Church Street (CT Route 85). While there are other smaller business districts, the Route 66 corridor is seen as the most likely location for future growth. This is particularly true due to the existing concentration of businesses in this area, the existence of the Village Square District for future expansion of the business district on the south side of Rt. 66, and with the availability of public sewers and public water in this area.

Land devoted to industrial uses is limited to approximately 17 acres. These sites are generally located in the older industrial areas, particularly in the Amston Village District located on Church Street. The total amount of land in Hebron developed to date with business and industry amounts to one-half of a percent of the Town's land area.

Agriculture Land Use

Over 2,000 acres within the Town is presently being farmed, accounting for about 10% of the total land area of the community. This tremendously affects the positive impression many people have of the Town, retains a land use that is an important historic aspect of the community that dates back to its origins, and maintains a vibrant economic activity in the Community.

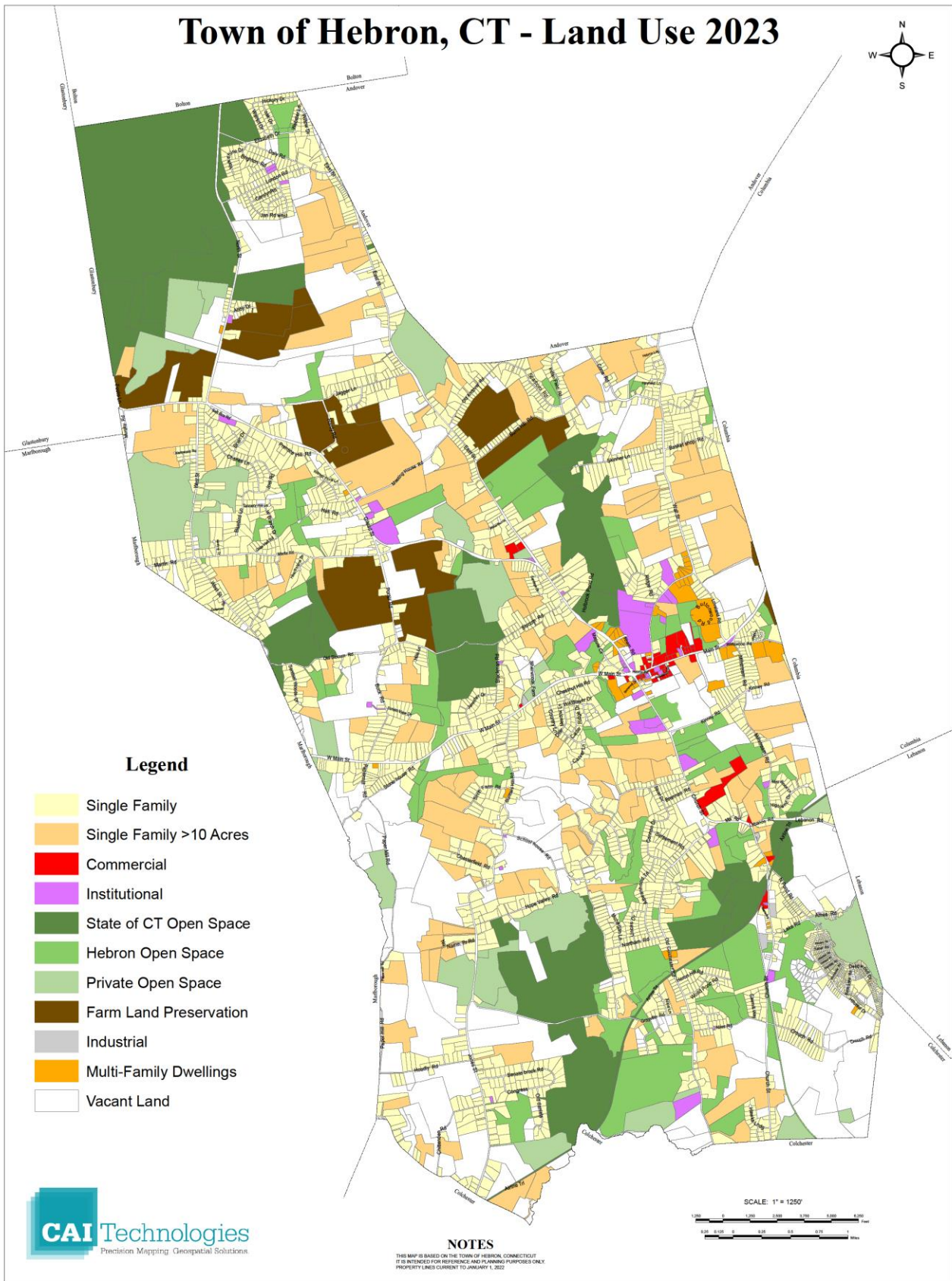
Of the total land area devoted to agriculture, 1,118 acres (4.7% of the Town) is permanently preserved agricultural land through the State's highly successful Farmland Preservation program. Approximately 200 acres of land was added to this land use category through this highly program since the last Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted in 2014. As permanently preserved open land, these 1,118 acres are shown under the permanent "open space" land use category in various sections of the plan. The remaining agricultural land, over 1,000 acres, is not permanently preserved. These areas are shown as part of the vacant land category as this land is subject to possible future development.

Institutional Land Use

Land devoted to institutional uses (churches, cemeteries, town and regional schools, firehouses, etc.) accounts for about 253 acres of land in Town or 1.1% of the Town's land area. These uses are routinely found throughout residential neighborhoods of the Town as they generally serve residential land uses.

Developed and Committed Land

A total of 15,374 acres of land are now considered to be either developed or committed to permanent open space. This land area represents approximately 64.5% of the total land area in Hebron. This area is comprised of 8,981 acres developed as houses, stores, offices, schools, roads, etc., 5,275 acres of public open space, and 1,118 acres of preserved agricultural lands.



Vacant Land

This leaves 8,445 acres of land in Hebron, which are considered vacant, representing approximately 35.5% of the Town's land area. This acreage is comprised of non-protected farmland, privately owned open space, and other vacant properties. Private open space is included in this category as those properties are generally larger parcels of land, presently being used for very low intensity uses, but potentially could be developed in the future for higher density uses.

A 1987 land use analysis of the Town, conducted by RPPW, Inc., a planning consulting firm, determined that as of 1987 approximately 17,430 acres were vacant. This represented 73% of the Town's land area.

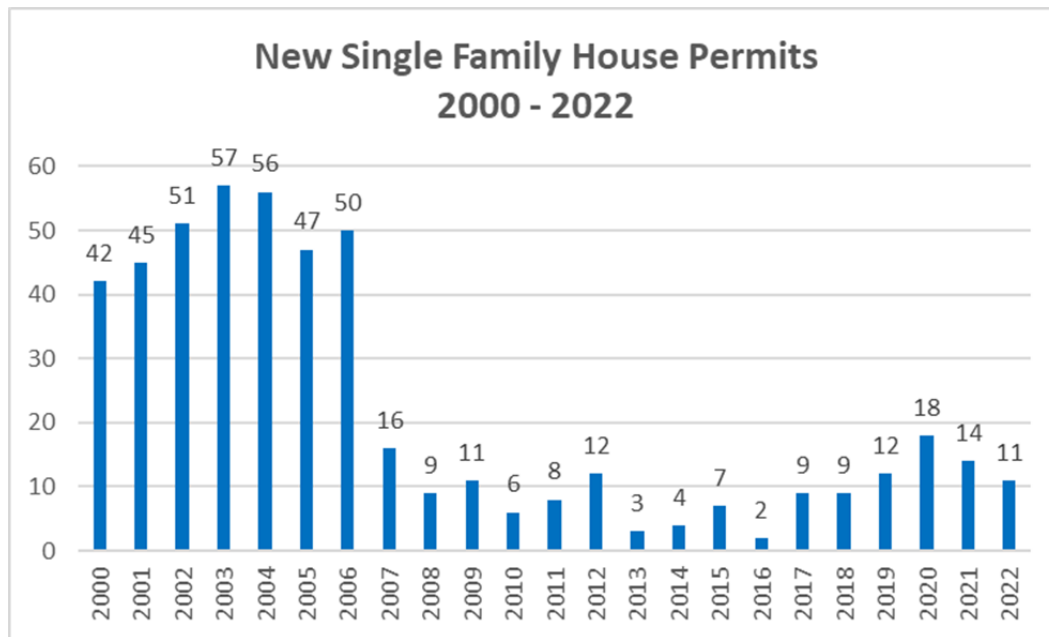
In the intervening 36 years (1987 - 2023) over 8,985 acres were converted from the vacant land use category to a developed / committed land use category. This acreage represents approximately 37% of the entire Town land area. The majority of this acreage was converted to single-family development. Other lands were developed with business uses, became open space through either the subdivision process or through outright purchases, or became protected farmland via the purchase of development rights. The remaining acreage was developed for institutional uses or other types of land use changes.

Of the 8,445 acres of land now vacant, approximately 143 acres are located within the Town's business districts, and approximately 8,302 acres are residentially zoned. An analysis of this vacant land, and the potential that this holds for future housing and population growth, is contained later in this Plan.

C. Housing

Number of Housing Units

Hebron's housing stock is primarily single-family housing, although, there exists some small apartment buildings and duplex units constructed around Hebron Center in the 1970s and 1980s as well as some apartment and condominium developments on Wellwood Road. With the introduction of sewers around 1990, some additional diversity in the housing stock began to appear. A private housing development for the Town senior population was constructed within the sewer service district in the 1990's. At the same time, a Town-owned senior housing development was constructed along with a senior center next to the Town center. In the past decade, another 55-and-old community was constructed in the Town center on Loveland Road; and a cluster single-family non-age restricted development began construction in the same area. Most recently a 113-unit assisted living development was constructed on Horton Boulevard.



Single – Family Housing: Hebron has experienced a significant growth in the number of new single family housing units each decade since 1960 through the mid-2000's. From 1960 through 2000, the Town averaged over 650 permits for new single-family dwellings every ten years. The early 2000's began with a similar strong construction market with the years 2000 through 2006 experiencing an average of 50 new single family housing units per year. However, the national

economic downturn beginning in 2007 had a dramatic effect nationwide on the construction industry in general and the single-family housing market in particular. Since 2007, the number of new single family home permits has averaged less than 10 permits per year. The Town experienced a slight increase in the number of permits during the 2020 pandemic year as people sought to move to more rural locations. However, this appears to be a short-term event.

Hebron's Affordable Housing Units

In 2022, Hebron approved its first affordable housing plan, the "2022-2027 Plan for Housing Choices" (Plan). The data in this section is derived from that Plan.

When we talk about affordable housing, it is housing that costs thirty percent or less of the household income (CGS Section 8-39a). A household spending more than 30 percent of its income on housing might be considered "housing cost burdened." And data from the American Community Survey, estimates that 852 existing households in Hebron are potentially housing cost burdened since they are spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing. This includes 751 owner occupied households and 101 renter households.

Naturally Affordable Units

There are affordable housing units in Hebron and all communities that are considered "naturally affordable" as they are affordable to a household at 80% of the area median income, and they are not the result of any government programs or controlled by a deed restriction.

The Plan states that these are the naturally affordable housing units in Hebron:

- Hebron may have had about 1,137 ownership units in 2019 valued at \$250,000 or less (affordable to a household at 80% of area median income).
- Hebron may have had about 191 rental units in 2019 which had a gross rent of \$1,500 or less per month (affordable to a household at 80% of area median income).

Since almost all of the above units are not deed-restricted, they are not considered by the State of Connecticut toward meeting the criteria for affordable housing and do not count towards Hebron's affordable housing totals.

State of Connecticut Recognized Affordable Housing

To meet the State definition of affordable housing, they must fall into the one or more of the following categories:

- It is assisted housing,
- The owners have a CHFA/USDA mortgage,
- The tenants receive tenant rental assistance, or
- The unit meets the requirements for a deed-restricted unit.

The State “Affordable Housing Appeals List” prepared by the Department of Housing recognizes 105 housing units in Hebron qualifying as “State defined affordable housing units.” These units count towards the Affordable Housing Appeals List. The 105 recognized affordable housing units listed below, represents 2.9% of the 3,567 total housing units in Hebron.

Assisted Housing:

Stonecroft Village (Housing Authority) – 25 units

Hillside Farms Apartments - 32 units

Bolton Group Homes – 1 unit

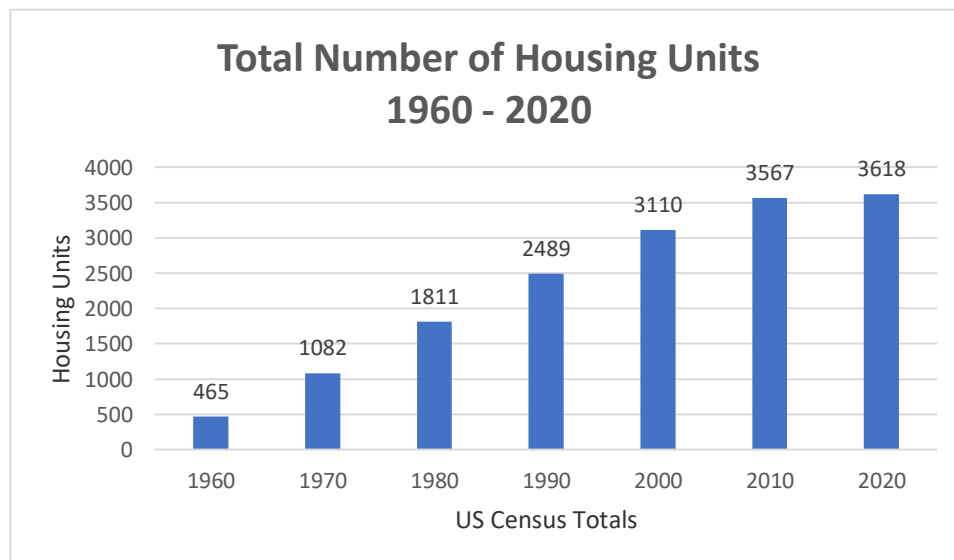
Other Housing:

Tenant Rental Assistance - 3

CHFA/USDA Mortgages – 44

Although there are additional units in Hebron that are deed restricted, they do not meet the State’s definition of affordable housing, so they are not included in their totals for Hebron.

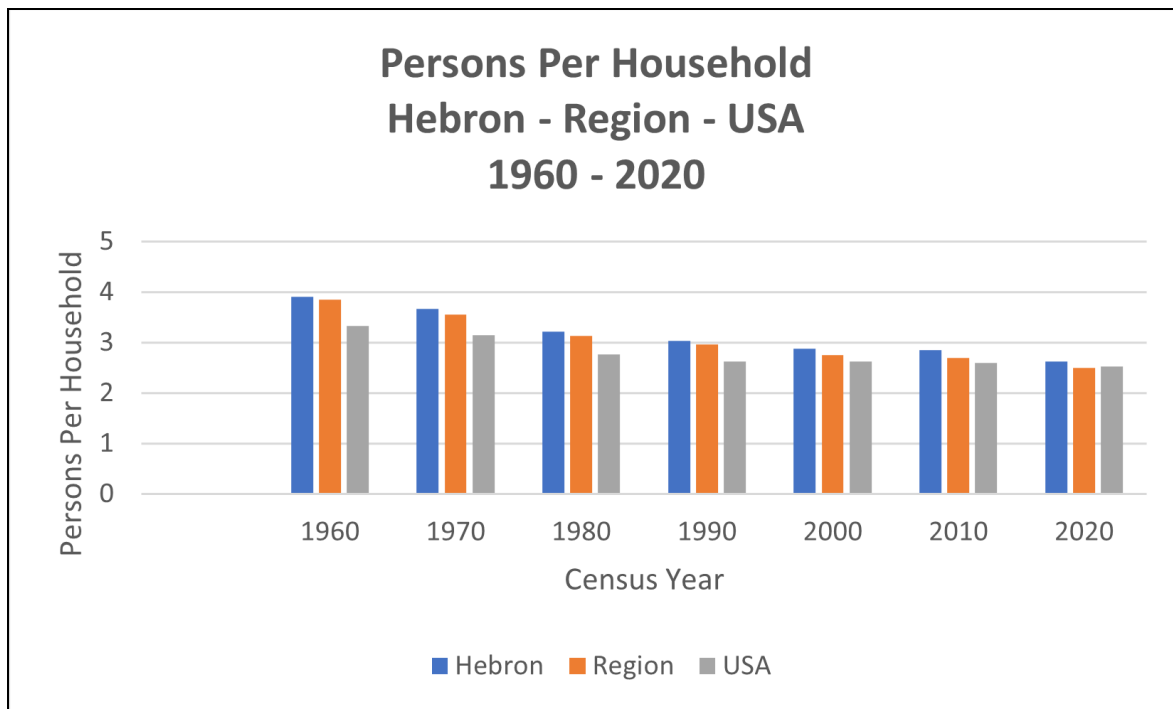
Overall Residential Growth: In reviewing historic housing unit growth, during the 1960 - 2000 period, the rate of growth in the number of housing units in Hebron has been near the highest rate of growth in any single town in the region. The overall number of housing units reported by the US Census report was: in 1960 – 465 units; In 1970 – 1082 units (132% increase); in 1980 - 1,811 units (67% increase); In 1990 - 2,489 units (37.4% increase); In 2000 – 3110 units (25% increase); In 2010 – 3567 units (14% increase); and, in 2020 – 3618 units (1.4% increase). In both the 1980’s and 1990’s, Hebron had the highest or second highest percentage increase in housing units of any town in the Hartford Capitol Region. However, these numbers as well as the chart below shows that housing growth in Hebron has significantly slowed in the past two decades.



Household Size

Average household size has been decreasing nationally since the post-World War II period. Hebron's average number of persons per household has dropped from 3.91 in 1960, to 3.66 in 1970, to 3.21 in 1980, to 3.03 in 1990, to 2.88 in 2000, and 2.85 in 2010. The 2020 census reported the current persons per household size to be 2.5. This represents a 36% decrease over this period.

This drop in the average size of households over time is a national and state demographic trend and is attributed to a number of factors including lower birth rates, higher divorce rates, later marriages, increased longevity, and a generally higher number of single person households. However, it is interesting to note that the decline in the persons per household rate is leveling off, and in fact has started to rise in some States during this past decade. The economic slow-down and impacts of the pandemic during the past few decades has slowed new housing starts, has prompted an increase in multi-generational housing, and has forced many college students and other young people to return to their parents' home due to a limited housing supply, housing cost, and at times uncertain employment opportunities.



It is worth noting a comparison of Hebron's persons per household with those of other area towns. Although the average is significantly declining, Hebron's average persons per household has been consistently higher than those of surrounding towns. From 1990 through 2010, Hebron had the highest average number of persons per household in the Capitol Region. While this is no longer the case, according to the 2020 Census, Hebron still has one of the highest average household sizes in the region.

This can be seen simply as a reflection of a generally younger town, somewhat typical of eastern Connecticut towns, which have attracted younger families for a number of reasons including comparatively attractive real estate values, a higher level of municipal services, excellent educational opportunities, an attraction to the rural character of the community, desirable State and Municipal open space, and park and recreation opportunities.

The Town of Hebron Plan of Conservation and Development

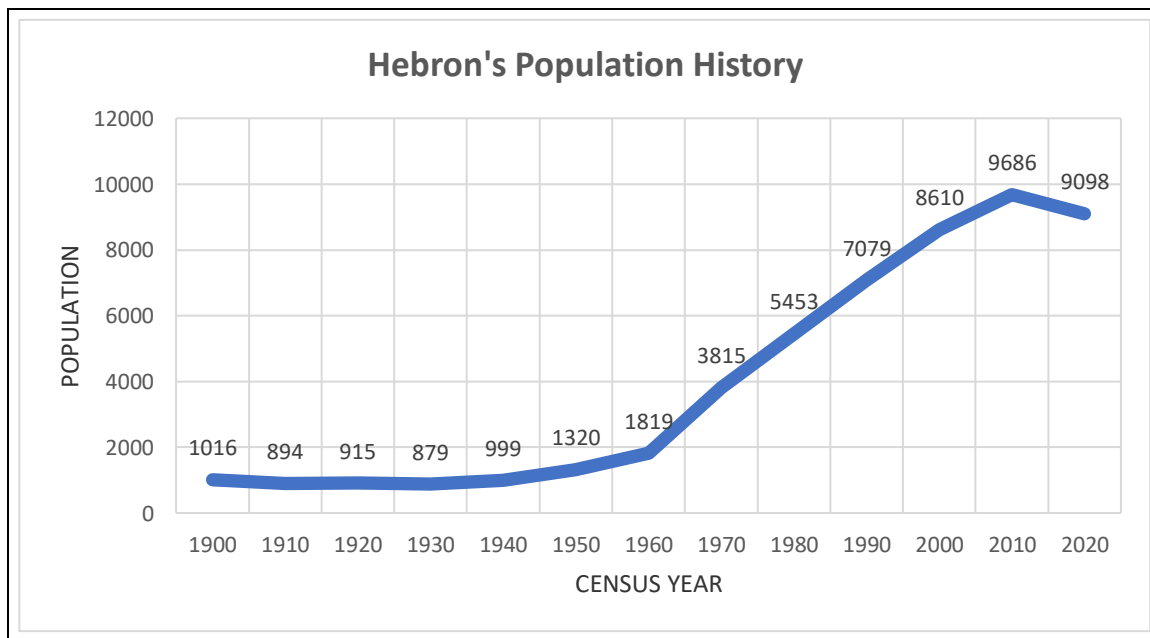
Section 1

Community Profile

D. Population

Historic Growth

Hebron's population, like many rural, outlying Connecticut towns, remained relatively stable until the post-World War II period. This is when the population experienced a modest upswing. However, it was not until the 1960's that Hebron was discovered as a convenient place to live and commute to work.



The decades of the 1960's through the 1990's saw significant growth in terms of new population, which outpaced many, and at times all, of its surrounding neighbors. This rate of growth is particularly significant when compared to the regional and State populations that have remained relatively stable during the past two decades.

Population growth during the most recent decades is particularly important to review because they are the most recent trends that would suggest what future growth is likely for the town.

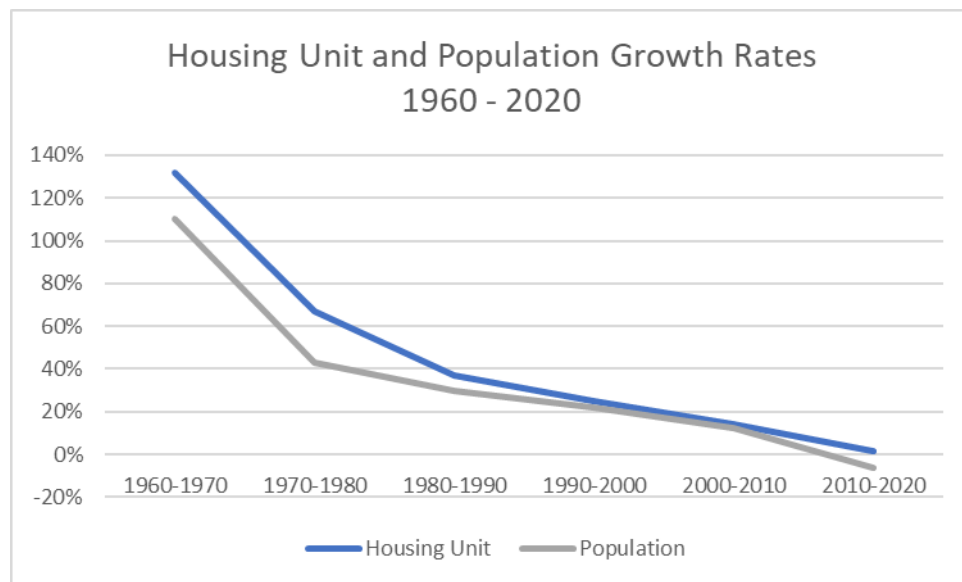
Hebron's population in 1960 was 1,819. This grew by 109.7% to 3,815 by 1970. The 1970's saw Hebron's population grow to 5,453 by 1980, a 42.9% increase. This rate of growth was unabated during the 1980's which saw a 29.8% increase in population to 7,079 by the 1990 U.S. Census. The 2000 Census determined that the town population grew to 8,610, a 21.6%

rate of growth, and the 2010 US Census population figure was reported at 9,686, a 12.5% increase. The 2020 US Census reported a population of 9,098, a 6% decrease since 2010. This was the first population decline in Hebron's US Census figures since the early 1900's. This decline was somewhat surprising but was reflective of the soft housing market in Hebron, and similar small towns, in this decade. In fact, of the seven towns that abut Hebron, all but one had a loss in population reported between 2010 and 2020. This was similar throughout eastern CT and for most smaller towns in western CT, as the State's population during this period was relatively flat (+0.9%), and most population growth occurred in the cities. The state's overall population increased by 31,847 people in the last decade, with particular population growth in Fairfield County, where there are 40,590 more people than there were in 2010. Hartford County increased by 5,484 and New Haven County increased by 2,358. The other counties — Litchfield, Windham, Tolland, Middlesex, and New London all lost population. Overall, the state's 10 largest municipalities increased by 37,109 people, while the other 159 towns actually got smaller by 5,262.

It is interesting to note that following the 2020 Census, and during the 2020 pandemic, Hebron saw a spike in housing starts and population increase, as there was a noticeable increase in people seeking housing in more rural areas, particularly where work-from-home situations became more available. The state's Department of Public Health has estimated the Town's 2021 population to have jumped to 9,512, a 4.5% increase from the 2020 Census numbers.

Historic Housing growth vs. Population Growth

As noted in the previous section on Housing, over the last 10 years housing grew at a rate of 1.4% compared to the negative 6% population growth. In fact, since 1960 the number of housing units in Town grew by 678% compared to the population increase of 400%. The following chart demonstrates growth in both of these categories and shows that housing growth outpaced population growth each decade. This is also reflected in the above decrease in persons per household.



Age Changes Within the Population

While overall growth changes to the Town's population are important to document, age changes within the Town's population are equally significant to understand. The 2012 Census data has shown significant developments within two specific age groups that have impacts on the character of the community as well as on public policy and community services.

Between 2010 and 2020, Hebron's school age population (between ages 5 and 19) decreased by 27%; and a similar decrease was reported in the under-5 population. At the other end of the age spectrum, the Town's elderly population is another age group growing more rapidly than the population as a whole. The age group 65 years old and older increased by 14.9%; and the over 85 population increased by 76.4%. Increased demands for services for the elderly are likely and planning for housing for this segment of the population is also warranted.

Also of interest are the middle-age groups. The 25 – 34-year-old age group, this mobile young population, just beginning their careers, declined by 39% from 2000 to 2010, but decreased only slightly in the past decade (-1.4%). But the prime working age groups, the 35 – 44 age group decreased by 23% from 2010 to 2020, and the 45 - 54 age group declined by 14%.

These changes to the population profile in Hebron over the past decades can be best seen graphically in the following chart “Population Profile; Hebron, CT; 1990 – 2020”.

**Population Profile
Hebron, CT
1990 - 2020**

