

# Multi-Family Housing & Accessory Dwelling Unit/Two- Family Dwelling Regulation Update

April 2024

# Why?

- “To provide for a broader and more affordable variety of housing in a development pattern by permitting an increase in density within the development and allowing alternative housing types with a site design that is in harmony with and preserves natural, scenic and historic site design features; and to provide incentives and opportunities for the creation of affordable housing”
  - Retention of our residents, both young and old
  - Reduce the P&Z imposed cost burden on these projects
  - Identify and improve confusing, redundant and overlapping regulatory sets
  - More clearly define where multi-family dwellings can be constructed
  - Stay ahead of a national trend that the State of CT has already put a focus on
    - Do it under our control and our timeline
  - Recognize the current state of need and development prospects in Columbia & our region:

[www.usafacts.org](http://www.usafacts.org)

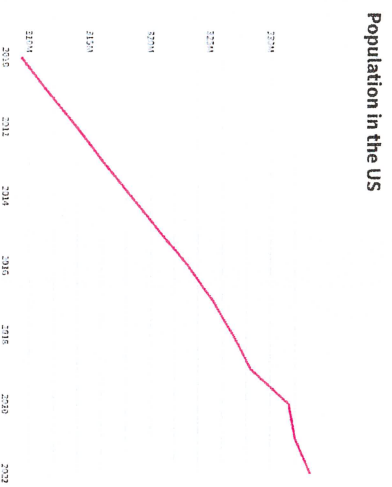
# Demographics

\*usafacts.org & the Census Bureau

Source: [Census Bureau](#)

## How many people live in the US?

The US population grew 7.7% from the 309.3 million people who lived there in 2010.



Source: [Census Bureau](#)

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### How has the population changed in Tolland County?

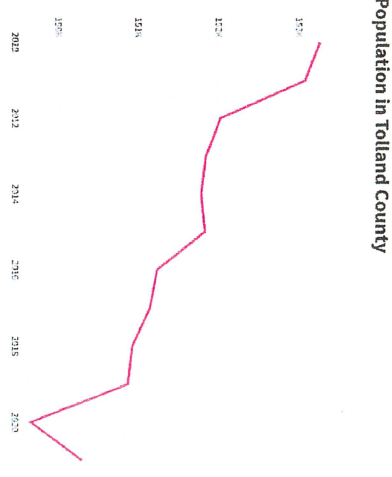
- How many people live in Tolland County?
- How has Tolland County's population changed over the years?
- How has Tolland County's racial and ethnic populations changed?
- How old is the population in Tolland County?
- How has the distribution of ages in Tolland County changed?
- How have the age and sex demographics of Tolland County changed?

What's the size of the US population and how has it

Source: [Census Bureau](#)

## How many people live in Tolland County?

Tolland County's population shrank 1.9% from the 153,242 people who lived there in 2010. For comparison, the population in the US grew 7.7% and the population in Connecticut grew 1.3% during that period.



Source: [Census Bureau](#)

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# Demographics

\*usafacts.org & the Census Bureau

## How old is the population in the US?

Among six age groups — 0 to 4, 5 to 19, 20 to 34, 35 to 49, 50 to 64, and 65 and older — the 65+ group was the fastest growing between 2010 and 2022 with its population **increasing 42.8%**. The 0 to 4 age group **declined the most** dropping 8.2% between 2010 and 2022.



Source: Census Bureau of

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How has the population changed in Connecticut?

- How many people live in Connecticut?
- How has Connecticut's population changed over the years?

- How has Connecticut's racial and ethnic populations changed?
- How old is the population in Connecticut?
- How has the distribution of ages in Connecticut changed?
- How have the age and sex demographics of Connecticut changed?

What's the size of the US

## How old is the population in Connecticut?

Among six age groups — 0 to 4, 5 to 19, 20 to 34, 35 to 49, 50 to 64, and 65 and older — the 65+ group was the fastest growing between 2010 and 2022 with its population **increasing 30.4%**. The 35 to 49 age group **declined the most** dropping 13.1% between 2010 and 2022.



Source: Census Bureau of

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## How?

- Collaboration with multiple groups and individuals within and outside town government who have identified a need for this type of housing
- Review of all applicable, current regulations
  - 52.7.19, “Neighborhood Retirement Housing” has been on the books since 2015
  - 52.7.21, “Multifamily Dwelling” regulations were established in 2022 in response to CT legislation
  - 8.3, “Accessory Living Unit” regulations were established in 1995
  - Lake Overlay better defined
- Review and update regulations in a comprehensive manner, avoiding arbitrary and burdensome requirements for our residents

## The Process?

- 52.7.19 and 52.7.21 were consolidated in this draft as they were duplicative in several respects
  - Now make up 52.7.19 – “Multifamily Dwellings”
  - The entirety of the regulations were reviewed for any overlapping or contradictory verbiage
  - Keep the process within a special permit in RA zone, site plan in CM zone
    - Multiple layers of checks and balances
  - Exempt the lake overlay “zone” from this type of project
- 8.3 was broadened to recognize reasonable and applicable ADU projects
  - Now make up 8.3 – “Accessory Dwelling Units & Two-Family Dwelling”
  - Add detached accessory dwelling units
  - Better delineate between single accessory dwelling units, duplexes and multifamily with three or more units.

## Major Points – 52.7.19

### Multifamily Dwellings

- Regulates projects with three or more dwellings in a higher density configuration
- Special Permit for RA zone, site plan for CM zone
- Lake overlay “zone” is exempt
- Remove age restrictions from original regulation
- Add affordable housing incentive utilizing Conn. Gen. Stats. 8-13m to 8-13x
  - If the developer takes advantage of 8-13m to 8-13x, they can develop 100% of the calculated density
  - If not, market rate density is 70% of the total unit capacity
- Remove redundancies and arbitrary requirements to reduce costs and confusion associated with zoning requirements
- Minimum lot requirement size of 150,000 square feet
- Minimum road frontage & setbacks of 50 feet
- Strong language around fire marshal/chief review & recommendations
- All other requirements are derived through scientific or practical method in conjunction with testing and permitting

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS CONCERNING MULTIFAMILY DWELLINGS  
**April 18, 2024 – Complete Approved Regulations Committee Draft**

**52.7.3.11 – Multifamily Dwellings, except in the Columbia Lake Watershed Overlay District, per Section 52.7.19 (Replaces the current regulation reference to Neighborhood Retirement Housing)**

**52.7.19 Multifamily Housing [Replaces current 52.7.19 "Neighborhood Retirement Housing" and 52.7.21 "Multifamily Dwellings"]**

52.7.19.1 Intent: To provide for a broader and more affordable variety of housing in a development pattern by permitting an increase in density within the development and allowing alternative housing types with a site design that is in harmony with and preserves natural, scenic and historic site design features, and to provide incentives and opportunities for the creation of affordable housing.

52.7.19.2 Required Approvals: A Special Permit shall be required for any proposed Multifamily Housing, except in the CM-1 District, where a Site Plan approval shall be required. The Special Permit may be issued only by the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission after a public hearing and shall be issued only in conformity to the provisions of Section 52.7.19 of these Regulations. A pre-application review with the Commission is strongly encouraged.

52.7.19.3 Definitions: For purposes of this Section, the following definitions shall apply:  
**Multifamily Housing:** A building, or group of buildings located on a single parcel of land or multiple contiguous parcels containing three or more total dwelling units.

**Dwelling Unit:** A single unit providing complete, independent living facilities including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

**Unbuildable area:** The area, expressed in square feet, within the site that is comprised of wetlands, soils, watercourses, lakes, ponds, swamps, marshes, flood zone A per FEMA maps, slopes greater than 20%, and easements prohibiting building development.

**Affordable Units:** Housing units that comply with Code, Gen. Stat. §§ 13A-1a & 13A-

52.7.19.4 Application for Multifamily Housing:

- A. Information required to be submitted:
  - 1. Application signed by the owner(s) and agent(s), if any, stating the ownership of the property to be developed and summarizing the developmental proposal.
  - 2. An appraisal of the site by the appropriate authorizing agency.
  - 3. An appraisal of the water supply system from the appropriate authorizing agency.
  - 4. Key map of the neighborhood on a scale of 1" = 400' showing the relation of the proposed development to adjoining properties, and to existing and proposed streets.
  - 5. Certified A-2 base map, on a scale of 1" = 400', showing the following:
    - a. Location of benchmarks.

1

- b. Size of the development in total acreage.
- c. Location of any ponds, brooks, or inland wetland areas, as certified by a soil scientist.

d. Two-foot contours extending fifty (50) feet beyond the boundaries. Contour information shall be collected by an actual field survey or by means of photogrammetry (aerial topography).

e. Location of unbuildable area. Notes should reflect total area (in square feet) of buildable and unbuildable areas on the site.

f. Location of subsurface sewage disposal area and site testing locations for the same.

g. Location of water supply.

h. Location, dimensions, and basement floor elevation of all buildings, as well as foundation and footing drains.

i. Location of internal private roads, individual driveways, parking areas, and parking spaces.

j. Location of accessory buildings, structures, and facilities.

6. Architectural plans showing accurate elevations, height, bulk, construction materials and other massing, architectural, and design features of the proposed development.

7. Stormwater Plan per Section 6.3 of Columbia Subdivision Regulations.

8. An erosion and sedimentation control plan prepared in accordance with Article VIII of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia.

9. Landscaping plan that demonstrates sufficient buffering between proposed development and adjacent residential properties (may be incorporated as a part of the Site Plan referenced in Section 54) including:

- a. Planting schedules - type, number, minimum size of trees and/or shrubs and other plants.
- b. Treatment of seeding and sodding.
- c. Pavement types for vehicular and pedestrian movement.
- d. Type, height and density of any proposed screening or fencing.

52.7.19.5 Standards: Any application for a Special Permit under the provisions of Section 52.7.19 shall meet the following requirements:

- A. Development Size and Location: The minimum size of Multifamily Housing development is 150,000 square feet, shall be located in a Residential District (RA) and shall have a minimum frontage of fifty (50) feet at the street line of a public street.
- B. Maximum Dwelling units per acre: The maximum number of dwelling units in the Multifamily Housing Complex shall be determined by soil capacity and State Public Health Code.
- C. Affordable Unit Density Incentive: 100% of maximum unit per acre density, as defined in 52.7.19.5 (B) may be utilized if a minimum of 20% of units are set aside as "affordable units" as defined in section 52.7.19.3.
  - 1. Affordability Percentage: At least twenty percent (20%) of the dwelling units will be rented or conveyed subject to an incentive housing restriction. Such restriction shall



- require that, for a least thirty (30) years after initial occupancy of the development, the dwelling units will be sold or rented at, or below, prices that will preserve the units as housing for which persons pay thirty percent (30%) or less of their annual income, where the income is less than or equal to eighty percent (80%) or less of the area median income. In determining compliance with this Section, the Commission will use regulations or guidelines published by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, the Connecticut Department of Housing, or any other successor agency designated in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stats. §§ 3-3m, to 8-13k.
- 2. **Affordability Plan.** Each applicant for multiple housing units within the Multifamily Housing development will provide an affordability plan that will detail the administration, monitoring, and enforcement of the dwelling units to be sold or rented at below market rates as described above. The plan will include proposed deed restrictions or covenants, lease agreements, common interest ownership documents, bylaws, rules and regulations, sample income calculations, and any other information as the Commission may require to establish compliance with this Section and Conn. Gen. Stats. §§ 3-3m, to 8-13k.
- 3. **Designation of Administering Agency.** The applicant will indicate the name, address, and other contact information for the agency that will administer the sale or rental of the dwelling units that are subject to the below-market sale or rental in accordance with this Section.
  - 4. Affordable dwelling units may be offered for sale or rental to individual, public, cooperative, or condominium ownership, incorporation as to management, organization, and incorporation of applicable ownership associations will be submitted to the Commission at the time of filing the application for a Multifamily Housing development.
  - 5. Affordable units shall be of a construction quality and design that is comparable to market-rate units within the development and shall be dispersed throughout the development.
- 4). Market rate housing unit yield shall be 70% of the total calculated unit density as defined in 52-7-19-5 (B) if less than 20% of the total units are set aside as restricted affordable units as defined in this Section
- E. **Commonly used buildings, recreational facilities and open spaces designed for, and used principally by, the residents, are permitted as accessory uses.**
- F. **Setbacks:** All buildings shall be setback 50 feet from property lines of residential properties that abut the perimeter of the applicant parcels.)
- G. **Sewage Disposal:** Each dwelling unit shall be connected to an approved sewage disposal system.
- H. **Water Supply:** Water Supply facilities must meet the requirements of the State Health Code.
  - 1. Parking, driveways and roads shall meet all standards set forth in sections 8.12, 8.12.2, 8.1 and all other Regulations applicable to parking, driveways and roads.
  - 1. **Home Detachment users shall be allowed in conformance with Section 8.5.3 of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia.**

K. Appropriate signage shall identify the entrance to the complex, intersections, directions and patterns of vehicular movement. The placement, size and height of the signs shall conform to the requirements of Section 62.

L. The Multifamily Housing development may be developed in stages. The initial site plan shall show the full development with the first stage depicted in detail. Future stages may be shown in concept. Future stages shall require Special Permit approval by the Commission.

52-7-19-6 Evaluation Criteria: In considering the proposed application, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall be guided by the following:

- A. The location of principal and accessory buildings in relation to one another.
  - B. The height, bulk, and density of buildings in relation to one another.
  - C. Traffic circulation within the site; amount, location, and access to parking; traffic load or possible circulation problems on existing streets; pedestrian safety throughout the site and in the immediate neighborhood.
  - D. Conformance with the intent and goals of the Plan of Conservation & Development.
- 52-7-19-7 The Commission may provide for bonding of all required common improvements and for soil and erosion control.
- 52-7-19-8 The owner of the development is responsible for the maintenance of all common improvements and for maintaining the provisions of the approved Special Permit and Site Plan and the verification of occupancy qualifications.

## Major Points – 8.3

### ADU & Two-Family

- Current regulations allow attached, accessory living units
- Updated 8.3 broadens to allow detached accessory living units and better defines “two-family dwellings”
  - 52.7.19 kicks in for 3 or more units
- Detached ADU requirements:
  - 30% floor area with a primary structure 1,650 square feet or larger
  - 500 Square foot maximum with primary structures under 1,650 square feet
- All other requirements are still derived through health code and other permitting /scientific methods

**Accessory Dwelling Unit and Two-Family Dwellings – Amendment Draft April 18, 2024**

**8.3**

**Accessory Dwelling Unit and Two-Family Dwellings:**

A second dwelling unit, either as an accessory dwelling unit or as a conversion to a two-family dwelling, may be added to a single-family house, or may be added in a new or existing free-standing structure, with approval from the Zoning Enforcement Officer, provided the following conditions are met:

8.3.1 A second dwelling unit located within the primary single-family structure may be created either within existing building footprint or through a structural addition.

8.3.2 A second dwelling unit created within the existing primary structure shall be considered a two-family dwelling and shall not have restrictions as to size other than the bulk standards generally applicable to single-family structures in the subject zoning district.

8.3.3 A detached or free-standing accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed 30% of the floor area of the primary dwelling unit, except that primary dwelling units having less than 1,650 square feet of floor area may have an accessory dwelling unit which does not exceed 500 square feet.

8.3.4 The new dwelling unit shall include an independent kitchen and bathroom.

8.3.5 The sanitary facilities have been approved pursuant to Public Health Code as being adequate to serve the increased requirements:

8.3.6 Adequate off-street parking is available on the parcel;

8.3.7 An accessory living unit meeting the above conditions may be added within an existing or newly-constructed customary accessory building, provided that no more than one accessory living unit may exist on a single parcel.

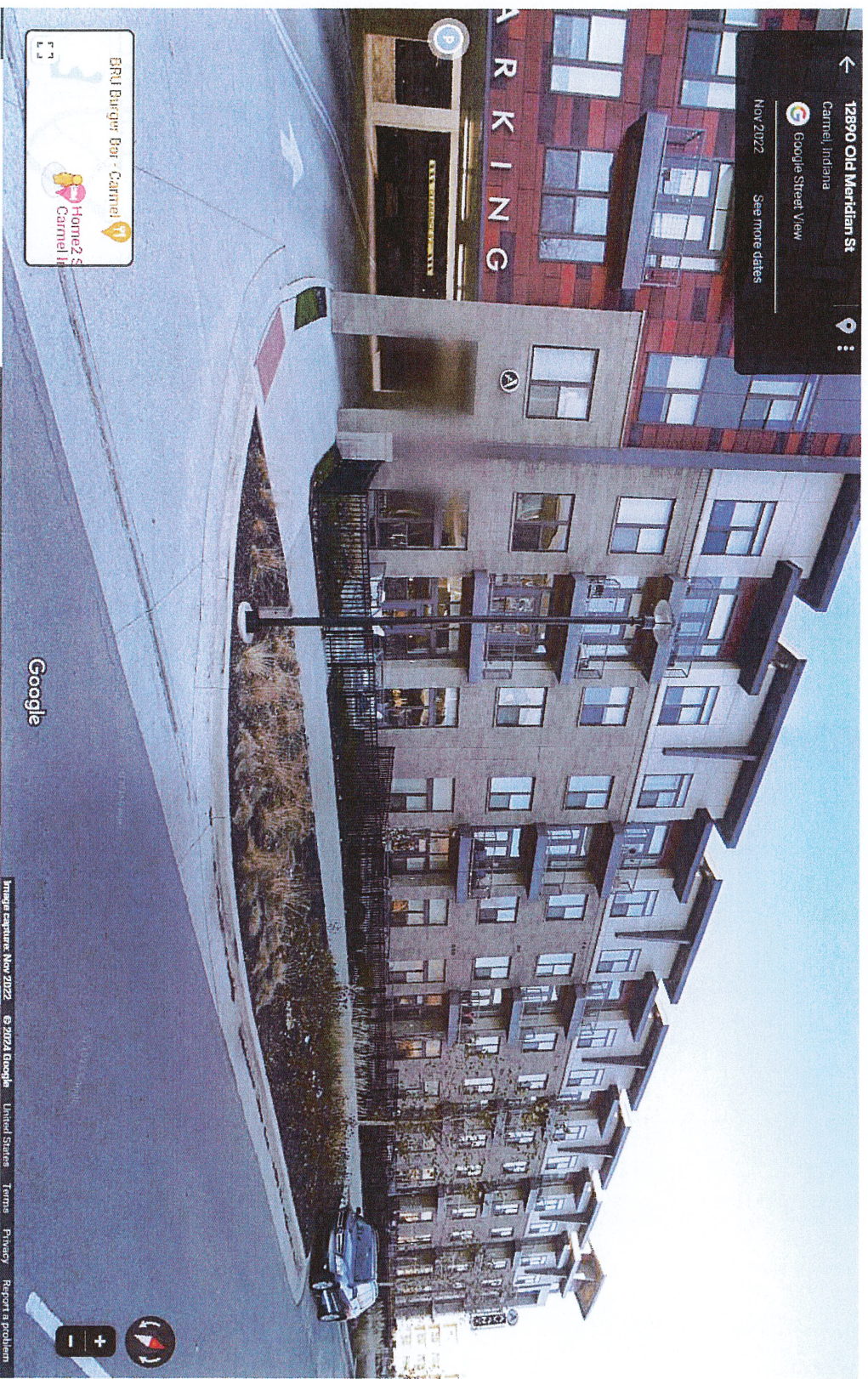
**8.3.8 Only two total dwelling units shall be allowed on each eligible parcel**

**8.3.9 All other Height, Area, and Yard Requirements of these Regulations shall be applicable to Accessory Dwelling Units and Two-Family Dwellings**

## What the Proposal IS NOT

- Sprawl
- Blight
- Out of control
- Going to turn Columbia in to a suburban or urban wasteland
  - We have no infrastructure to support large projects
  - We have expansive regulations outside of our control that will limit scope
  - We are not directly impacted by interstates or major highways that will influence development
- Our natural limitations from soil, topography and septic technology will allow modest and reasonable development if someone so chooses
- The special permitting process will put checks and balances on any developer
- “What if things change in 5 years?”

# What the Proposal IS NOT



What the Proposal IS NOT



## What the Proposal IS

- The average available lot size in Columbia is 14.92 acres
  - Project footprints reduced greatly when setbacks, wetlands, soils & topography considered
  - This type of project will most likely be smaller in size to accommodate a broader demographic
  - Natural limitations will play a significant role in project outcomes
- A need to recognize Connecticut's demographic shifts compared to other states & regions
  - The positive impact of keeping younger people and retirees

Examples – Nahaco Farms, Eastford



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Examples – Chaplin Woods,  
Chaplin





