

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager
DATE: March 7, 2022
SUBJECT: Update from the Advisory Committee for the Affordable Housing Plan

Summary of Agenda Item:

The Town Council created an Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to prepare a draft affordable housing plan for consideration by the Town Council. Pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes § 8-30j, each municipality must prepare/amend, adopt, and submit an affordable housing plan by June 1, 2022, and at least once every five (5) years thereafter. The Town hired FHI Studio to assist in the preparation of its Affordable Housing Plan in coordination with the preparation of an update to the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

Since its creation in late 2021, the Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee has worked to prepare the draft Plan with the assistance of FHI, Corporation Counsel and Town staff. The Committee conducted community outreach meetings (including a meeting at the Senior Center), it conducted a survey, and it met with developers, realtors, banks, mortgage brokers, Town Departments, and the Central Connecticut Health District. It gathered information on the history of affordable housing in Berlin, the need for affordable housing, and land use and zoning issues. The Committee also had a joint meeting with the Plan of Conservation and Development subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission and started to discuss the community values statement, and plan goals, strategies, and actions. Additional meetings are planned, and the Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee expects to submit a draft Plan for Town Council consideration in April.

Actions Needed:

None

Attachments:

PowerPoint presentation from the February 24 joint meeting of the Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee and the Plan of Conservation and Development subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Prepared By:

Maureen Giusti, Acting Town Planner
Jim Mahoney, Economic Development Coordinator



Town of Berlin

2023 Plan of Conservation and Development Committee
Meeting #6 & Affordable Housing Plan Meeting
2/24/22

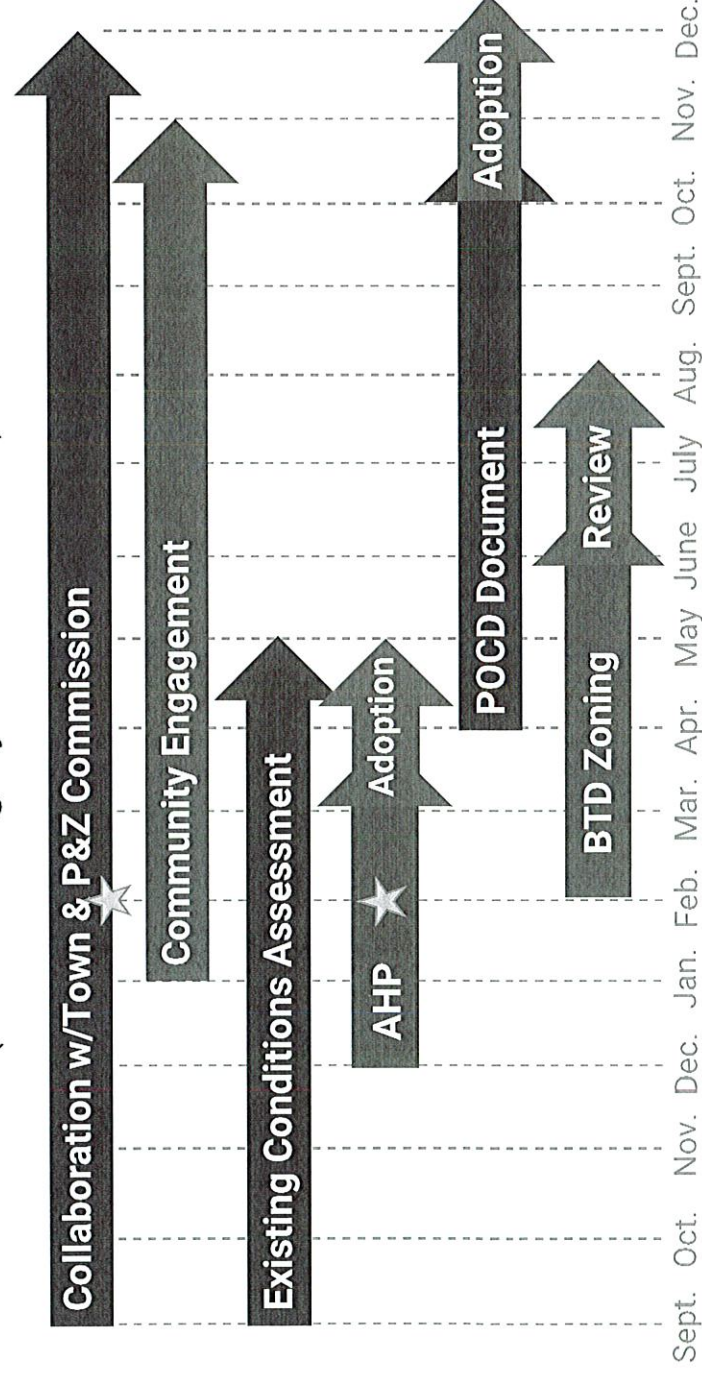


Agenda

1. Review Connecticut affordable housing requirements
2. Review Berlin's affordable housing stock and trends
3. Review housing plan survey results
4. Review housing needs assessment
5. Review zoning and land use assessment
6. Questions for discussion
7. Review draft values statement
8. Discuss potential plan strategies and actions
9. Next steps

POCD Project Schedule

15 months (concluding by end of 2022)



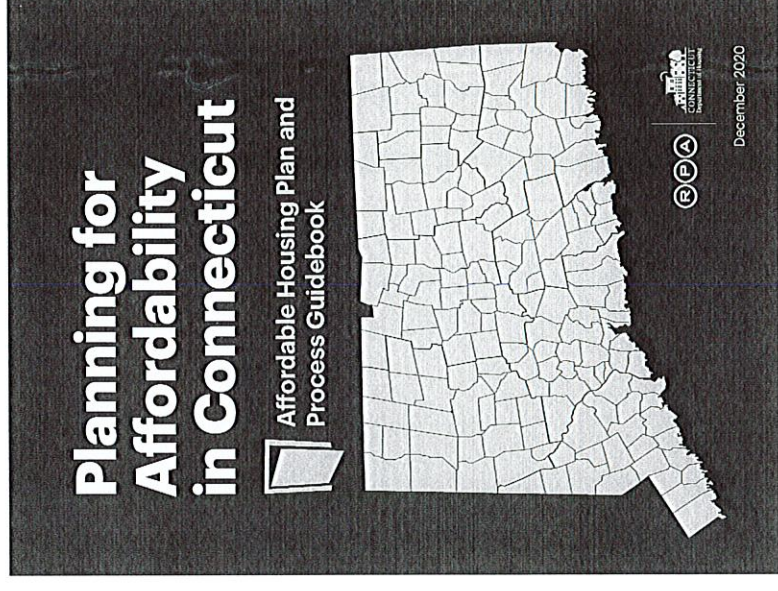
Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development and Affordable Housing Plan

CT Statute 8-30j: The Affordable Housing Plan Requirement

- At least once every five years, every municipality must prepare or amend and adopt an affordable housing plan.
- The plan must specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments within the municipality.
- The municipality may hold public informational meetings or organize other activities to inform residents about the plan development process.
- The municipality must provide at least 35 days notice for a public hearing on adoption of the plan and must make the draft plan available to the public for review prior to such public hearing.
- Following adoption, the municipality must regularly review and maintain their affordable housing plan.

Affordable Housing Plan Elements

- Values/Vision Statement
- History of Affordable Housing
- Housing Needs Assessment
 - Demographics
 - Housing Supply
 - Economic Indicators
 - Gap Analysis
- Land Use and Zoning Assessment
- Housing Market Assessment
 - Rental Market
 - Sales Market
- Implementation Strategy
 - Principles
 - Goals
 - Actions



Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development and Affordable Housing Plan

CT Statute 8-30g

- CT Statute 8-30g compels Connecticut's towns and cities to achieve or make progress towards achieving 10% "affordable housing" stock. This is a measure of the share of the total housing units in a municipality.
- Towns and cities that do not achieve or demonstrate progress towards achieving the 10% affordable housing goal are susceptible to affordable housing development appeals. These appeals can circumvent local zoning regulations in the development of affordable housing.
- *Berlin is not exempt from affordable housing appeals as it has a qualified affordable housing supply of 9.24%, which is currently 62 units short of the goal. This gap will jump to approximately 110 units with the 2020 census estimates.*

CT Statute 8-30g Qualified Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined by the statute as:

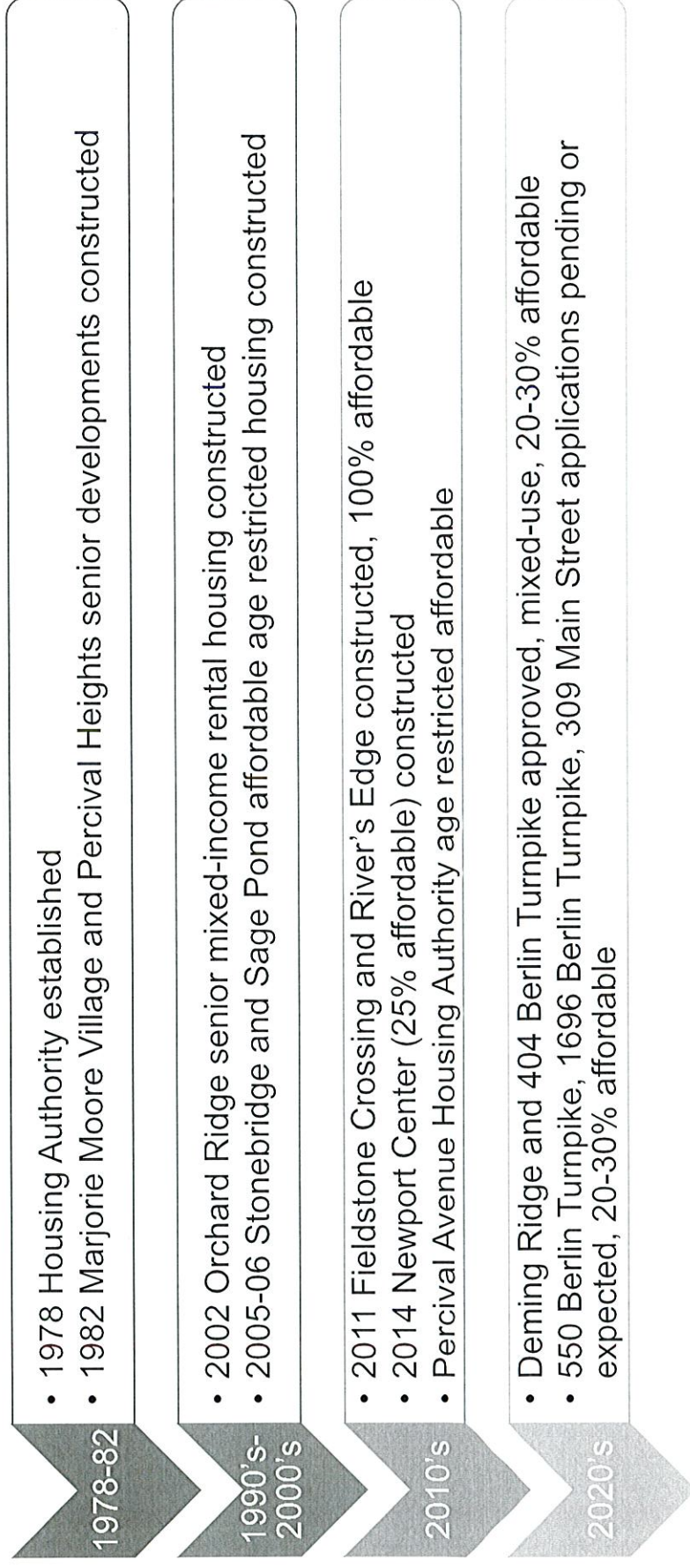
- Deed Restriction: Rental or ownership deed restrictions. *Limits rental or sales of units to persons or families with an annual income equal to or less than 80% of the median income and may only be rented or sold for the amount as formulated in CT Statute Section 8-30g 8(d).*
- Government Assisted: Properties that have received financial assistance that requires the housing to be provided to low-income households at affordable rates. Examples are developments built with state or federal grants such as the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC) or state Competitive Housing Assistance for Multifamily Properties (CHAMP) program.

CT Statute 8-30g Qualified Affordable Housing (cont.)

Affordable housing is defined by the statute as:

- Tenant Rental Assistance: State Rental Assistance Program (RAP) certificate or Federal Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8). *In general, the applying family's income cannot exceed 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live.*
- Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) or USDA (Rural Development Guaranteed Housing Loan program, Berlin is not eligible) mortgages.

History of Affordable Housing in Berlin



Location of Affordable and Multifamily projects

Projects are located:

- Where sewer and water infrastructure will support density
- Where impacts to established single family neighborhoods would be minimal
- In proximity to transportation infrastructure
- In proximity to goods and services

Berlin's Qualified Affordable Housing Supply

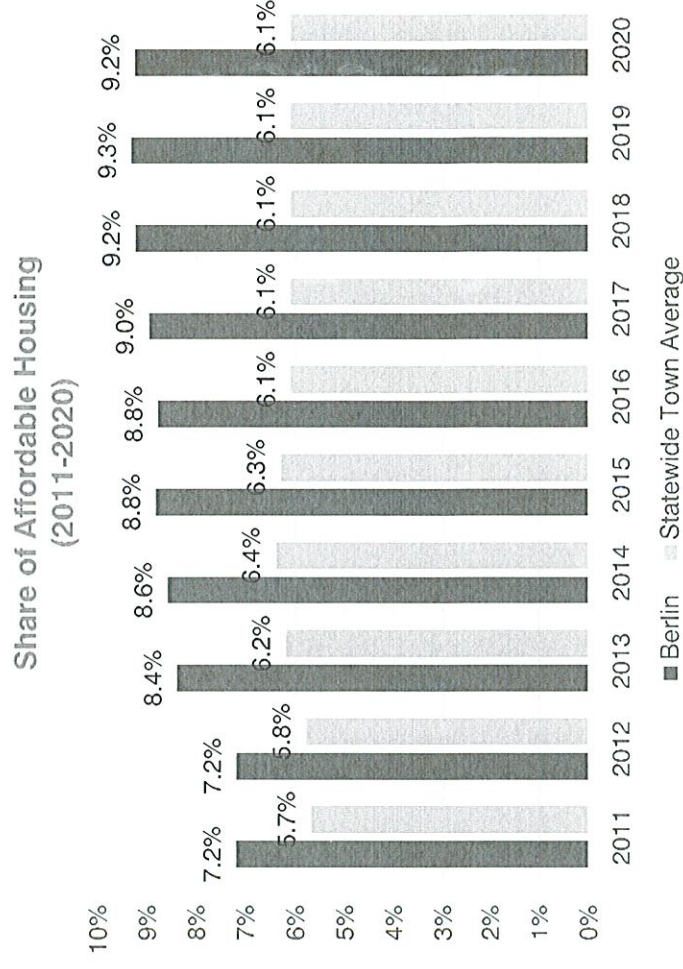
- 556 government assisted units
- 50 tenant rental assistance
- 142 CHFA
- 4 deed restricted units (government assisted units may be deed restricted too)

2020 Affordable Housing Appeals List - Non-Exempt Municipalities							
Town	2010 Census	2020 Gov Assisted	2020 Tenant Rental Assistance	2020 Single Family CHFA/USDA Mortgages	2020 Deed Restricted Units	2020 Total Assisted Units	2020 Percent Affordable
Andover	1,317	18	1	32	0	51	3.87%
Ashford	1,903	32	0	36	0	68	3.57%
Avon	7,389	244	16	44	0	304	4.11%
Barkhamsted	1,589	0	6	23	0	29	1.83%
Beacon Falls	2,509	0	4	46	0	50	1.99%
Berlin	8,140	556	50	142	4	752	9.24%
Bethany	2,044	0	2	13	0	15	0.73%
Bethel	7,310	192	26	154	87	459	6.28%

There are 138 non-exempt municipalities in Connecticut (including Berlin). Only one (Wethersfield at 9.52%) has a higher percentage of affordable housing.

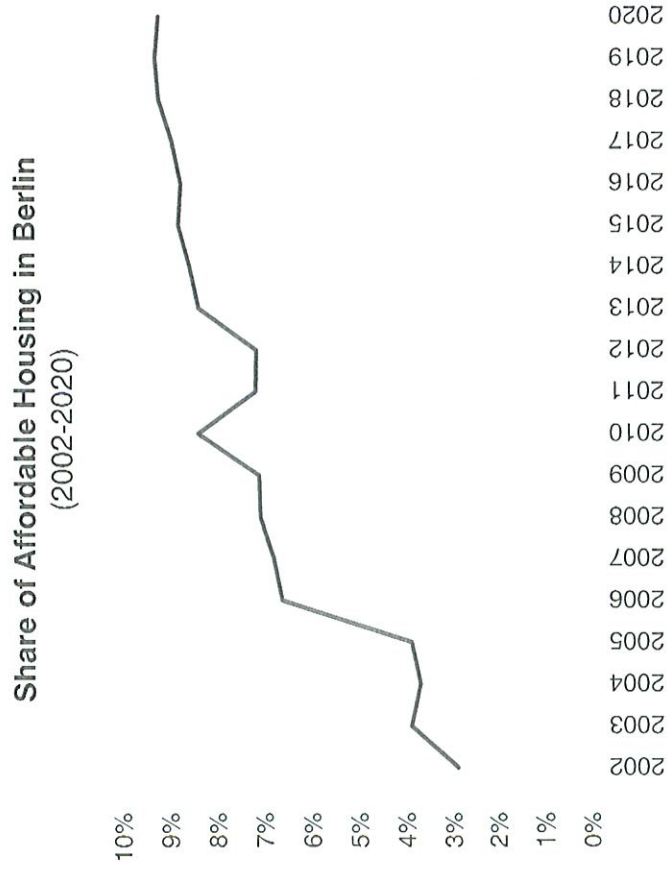
Affordable Housing

- Berlin is close to meeting the State's mandate of 10% affordable housing (as defined by the State).
- Berlin's share of affordable housing has increased consistently since 2011.
- Berlin exceeds the statewide average for affordable housing by approximately three percentage points.



Affordable Housing

- Berlin's share of State qualified affordable housing increased from 2.9% in 2002 to 9.2% in 2020.



Source: CT Department of Housing

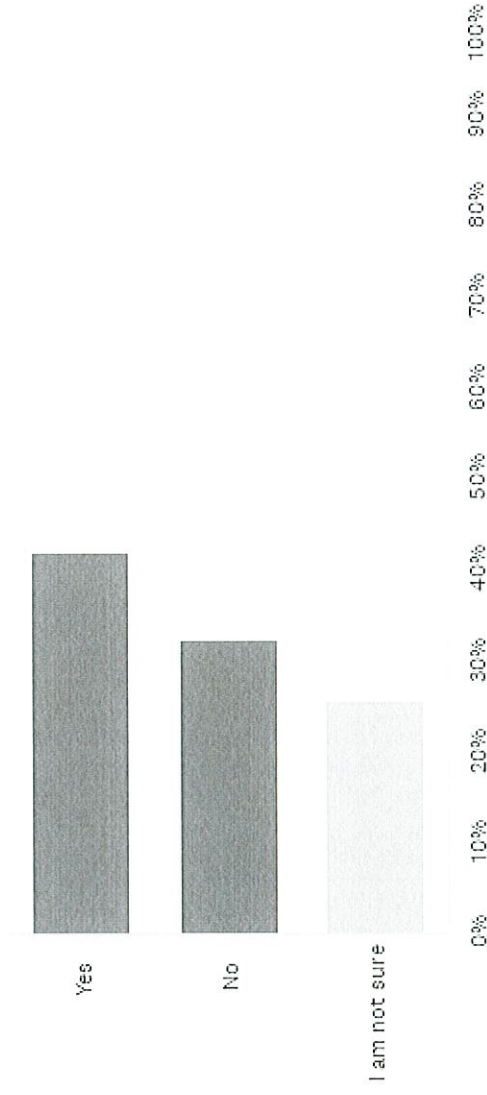
Questions or comments about the State requirements and Berlin's supply of affordable housing?

Affordable Housing Survey Results

- 753 participants
- We heard primarily from residents that have been in Berlin for 20 years or more
- We heard from residents of all ages, with most participation coming from those age 30 to 69
- We heard from a range of income levels and households with varying housing costs
- We heard almost exclusively from homeowners
- Most participants live in single-family detached homes
- We heard mostly from those living in family households

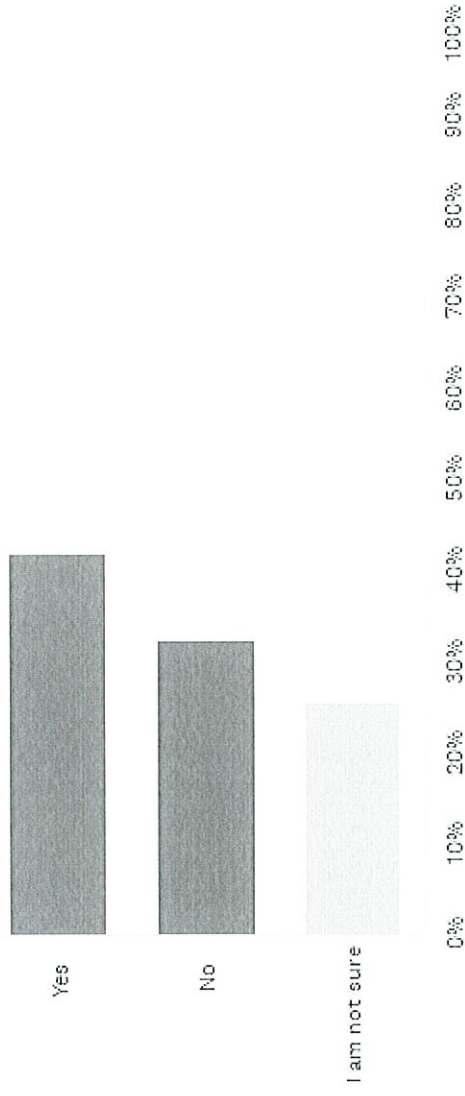
Affordable Housing Survey Results

Do you think that there is enough housing in Berlin right now to meet the Town's future needs?



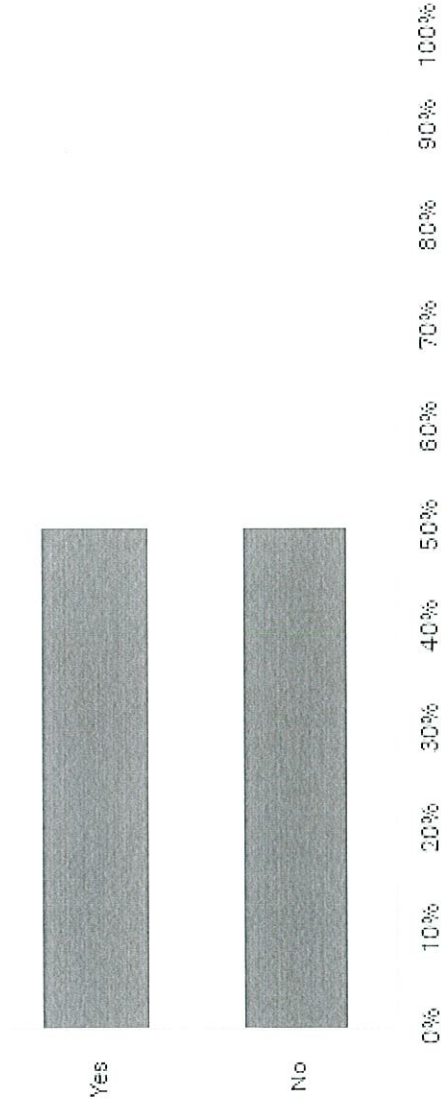
Affordable Housing Survey Results

Are you concerned about the cost of housing or homeownership in Berlin?



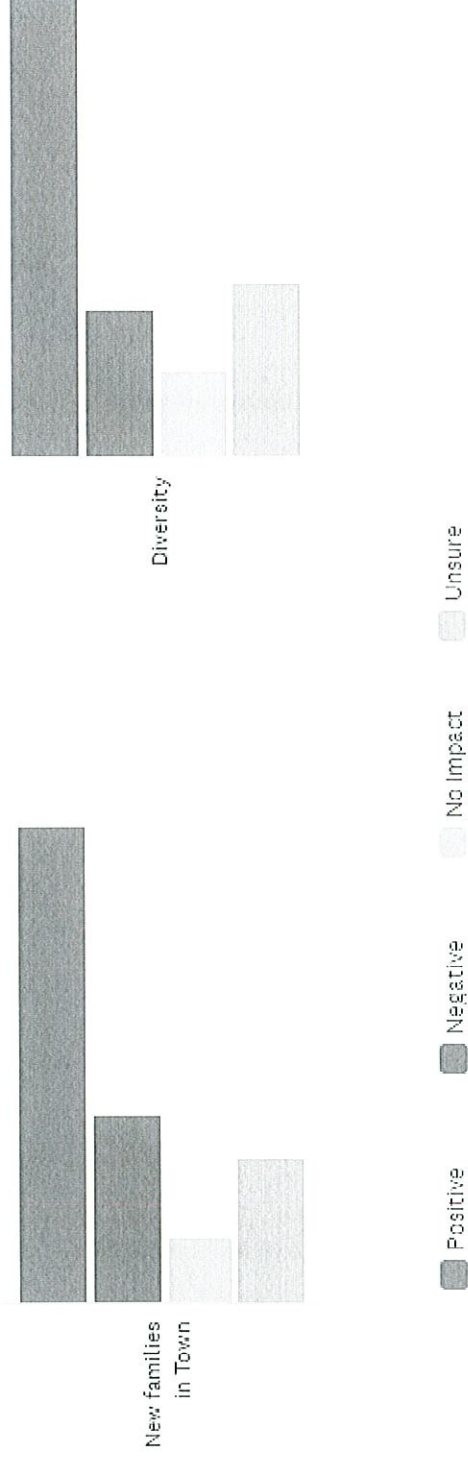
Affordable Housing Survey Results

Do you think Berlin might benefit from offering more housing choices/options, including more housing which is affordable?



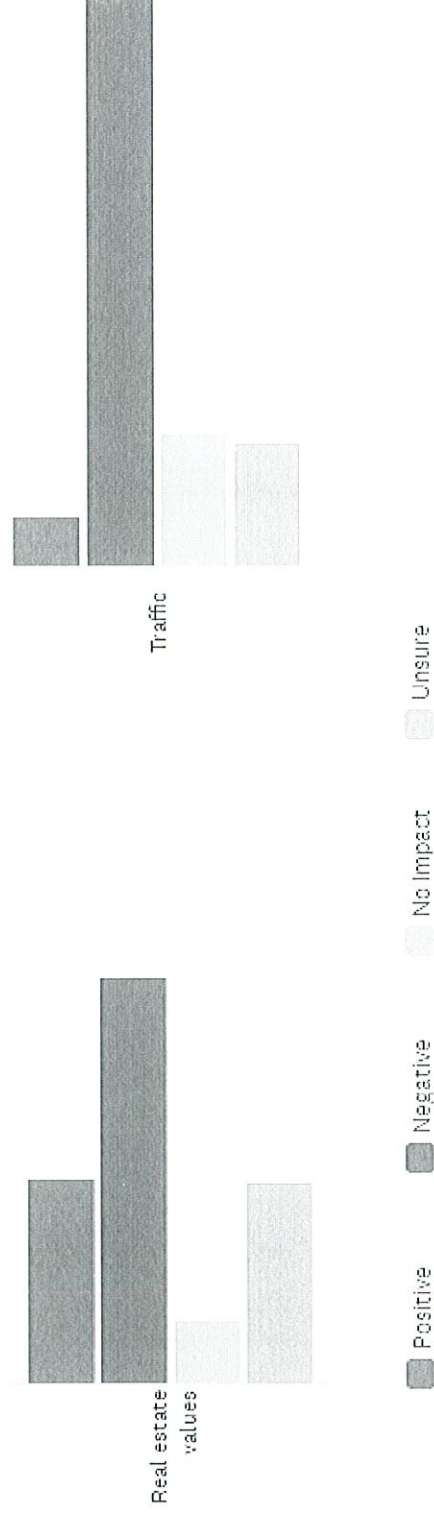
Affordable Housing Survey Results

How do you think offering more housing choices/options, including more housing which is affordable would impact the community? (Positive, negative, no impact, unsure)



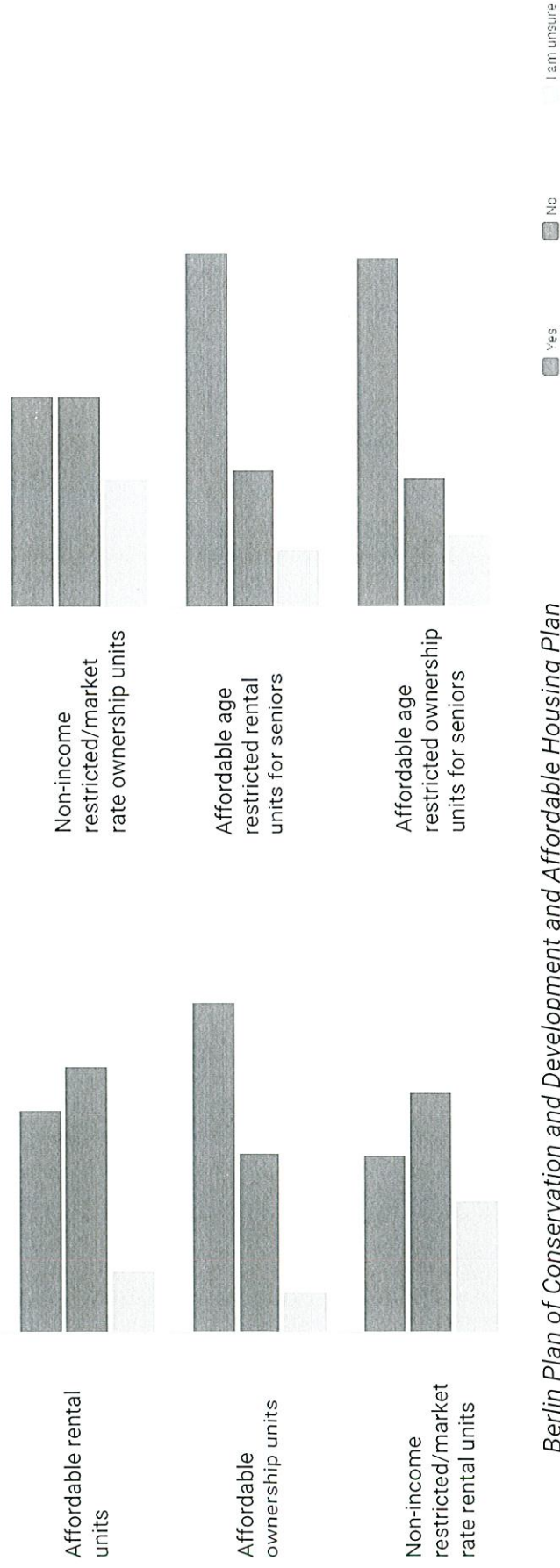
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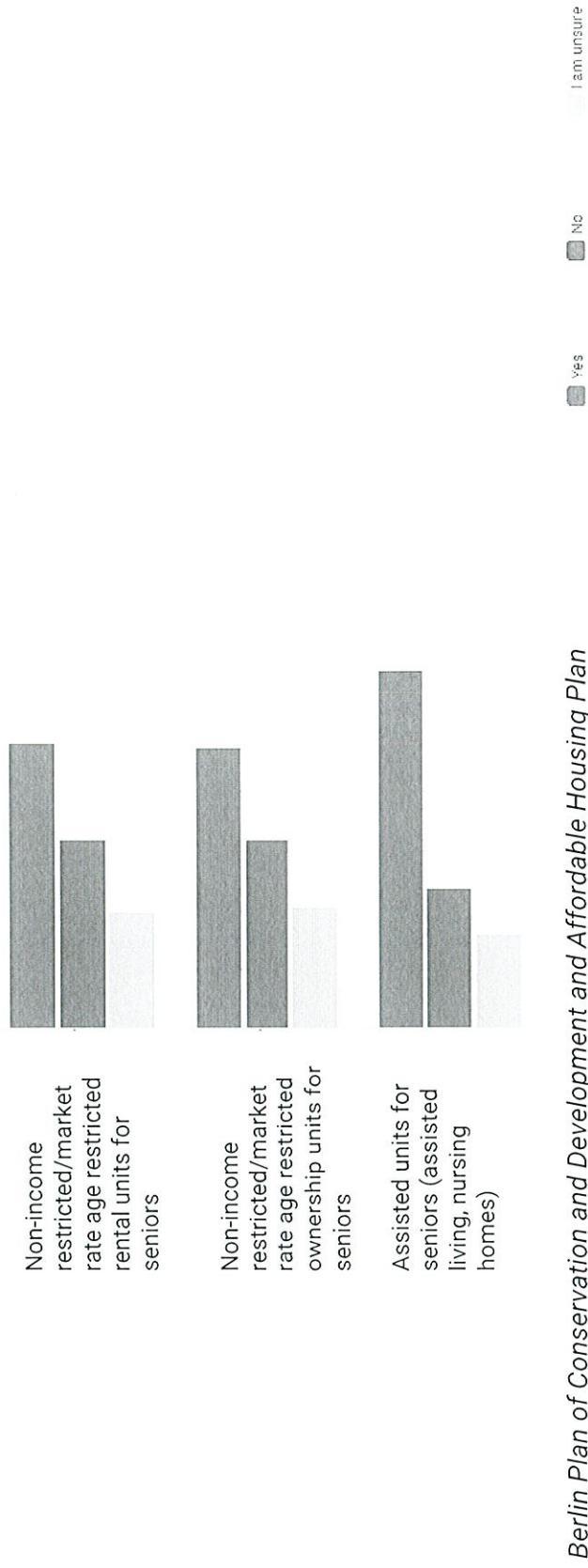
Affordable Housing Survey Results

Keeping in mind Connecticut's definition of affordable housing explained at the beginning of the survey, which types of ownership and/or rental housing units do you think that Berlin needs?



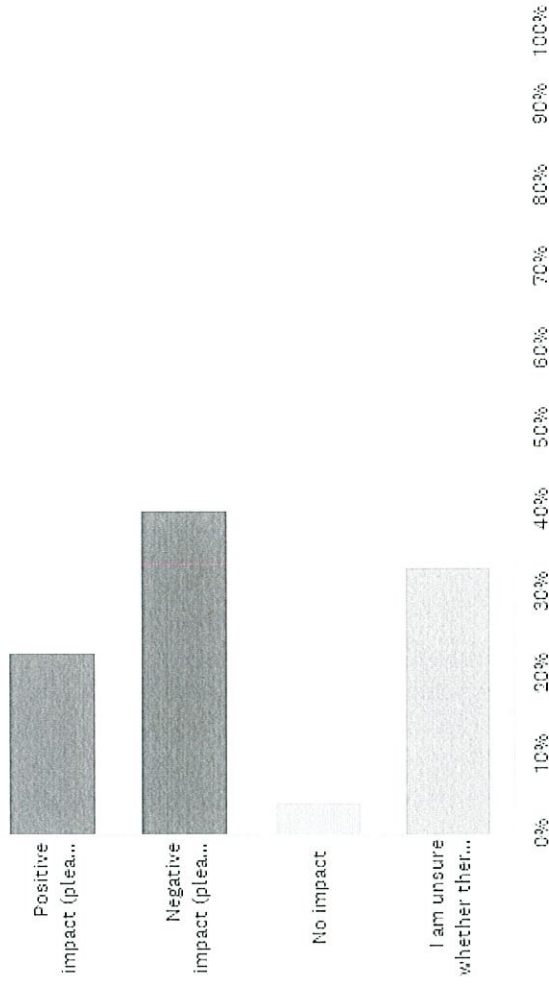
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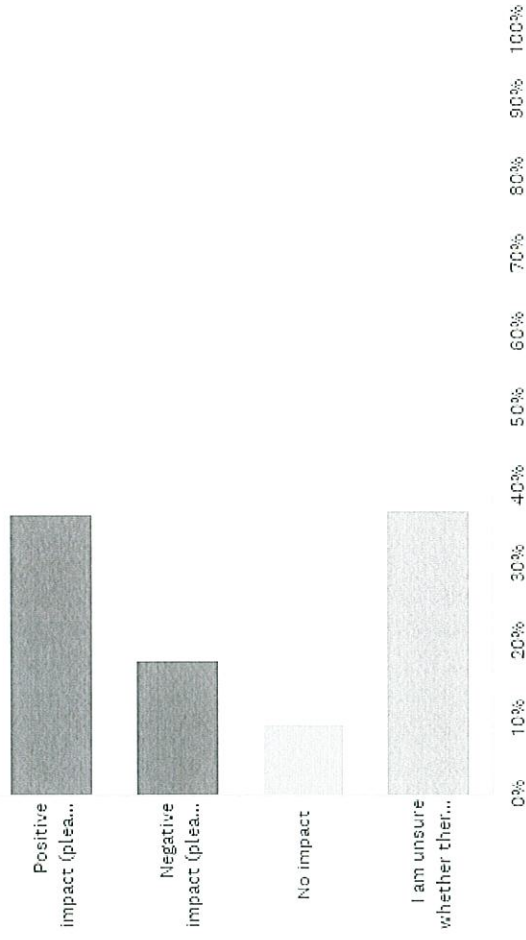
Affordable Housing Survey Results

If there were more rental housing units in Berlin, what type of impact do you believe the increase would have on the community and why?



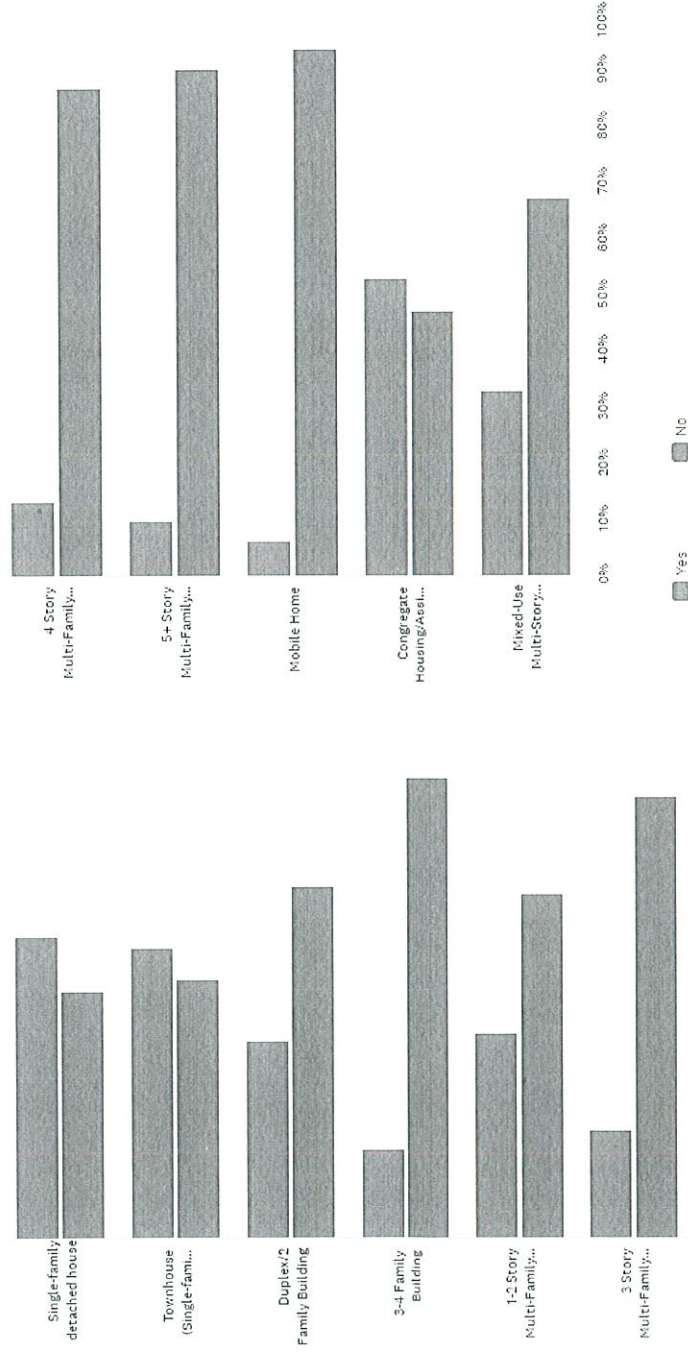
Affordable Housing Survey Results

If there were more ownership housing units in Berlin, what type of impact do you believe the increase would have on the community and why?



Affordable Housing Survey Results

Please state whether you believe Berlin needs more of the housing type below.



Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development and Affordable Housing Plan

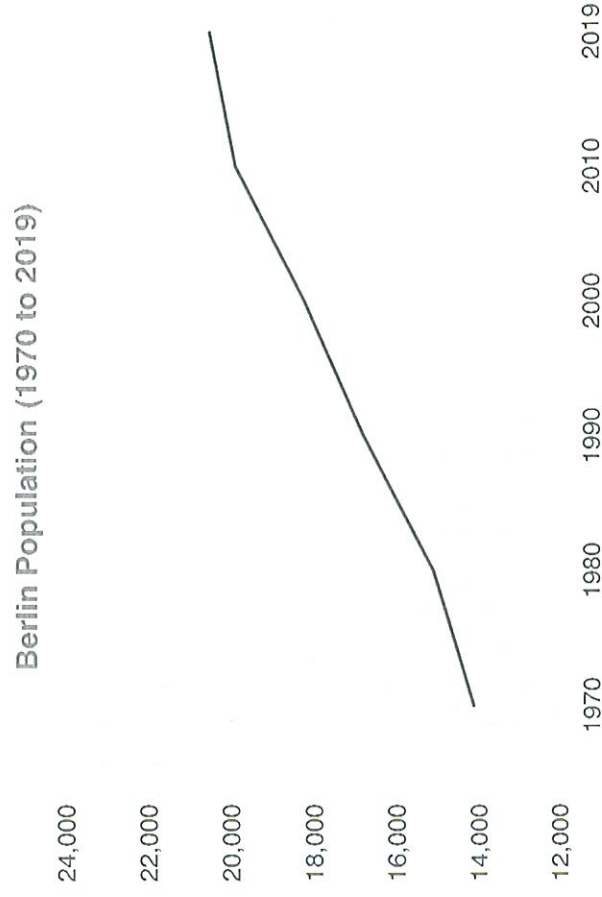
Questions or comments about the Survey?

Housing Needs Assessment

- Population Change
- Housing Supply
- Housing Permit/Development Activity
- Home Ownership Costs
- Housing Cost Burden
- Housing Affordability Gap
- Housing Supply and Demand Gap

Population Change

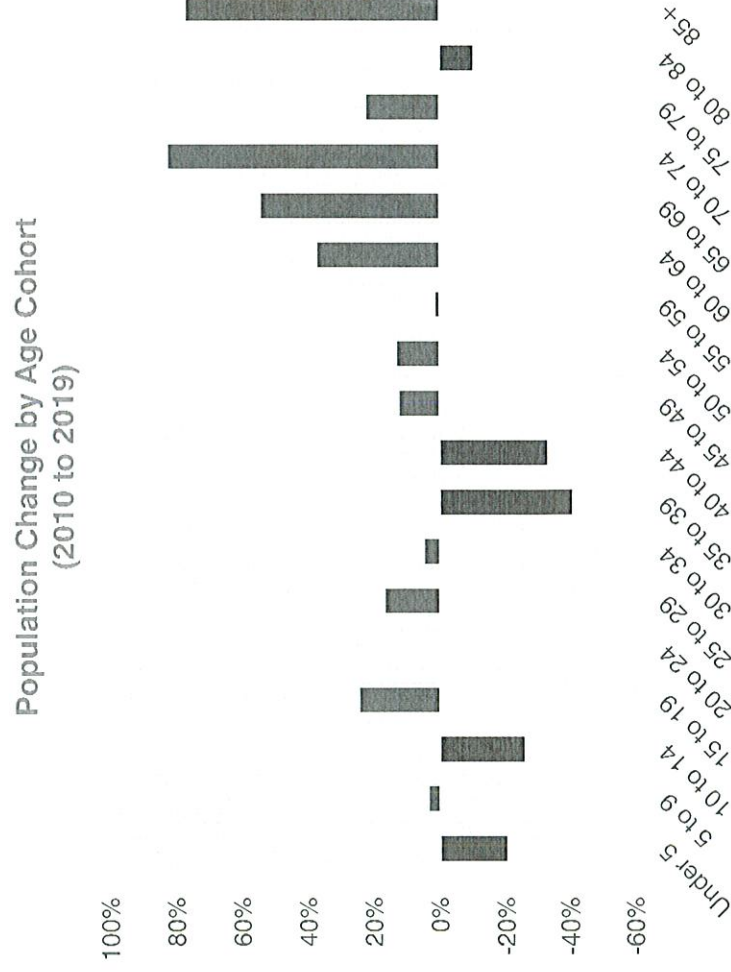
- Berlin's population grew at a steady rate in the 30 years between 1980 and 2010.
- Growth has slowed since 2010



Source: US Census and American Community Survey

Population Change

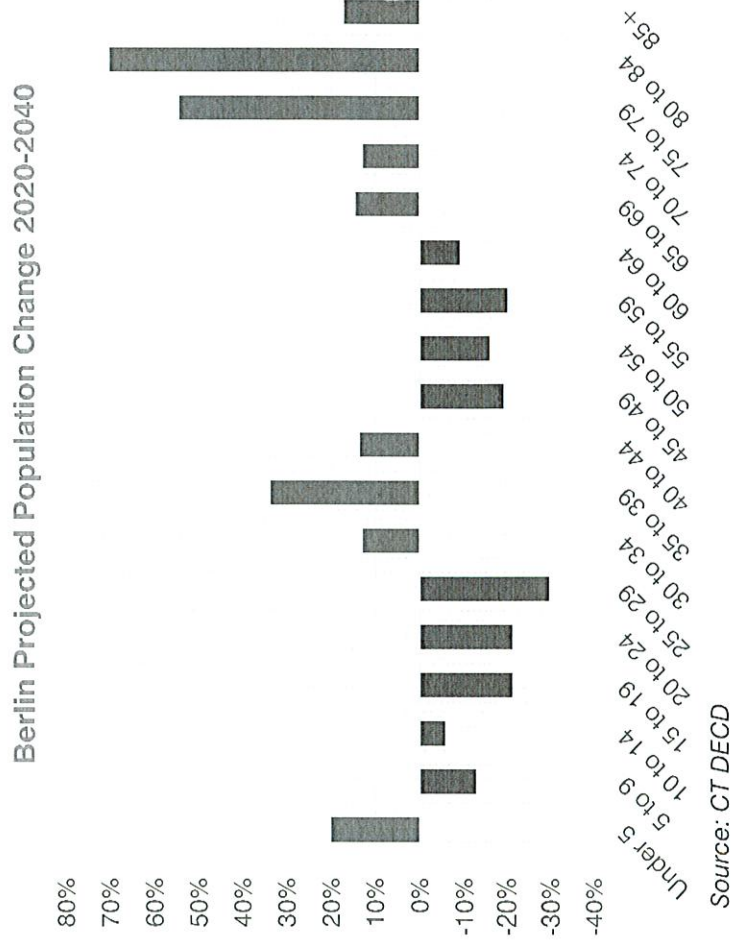
- Berlin's population is growing in those age 45 and older with exception of ages 80-84.
- Population shrunk or grew at a slower rate in those below the age of 45.



Source: US Census and American Community Survey

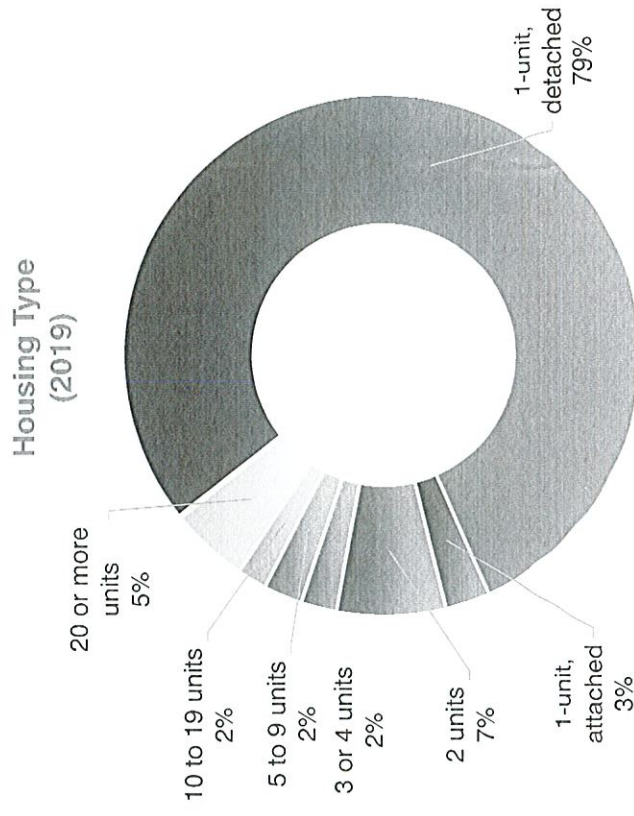
Population Projections

- According to projections conducted by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, Berlin's population is expected to contract in the age cohorts between 5 and 29 years old and 45 and 64 years old.
- *Projections were conducted in 2017 and may not reflect recent demographic shifts.*



Housing Supply

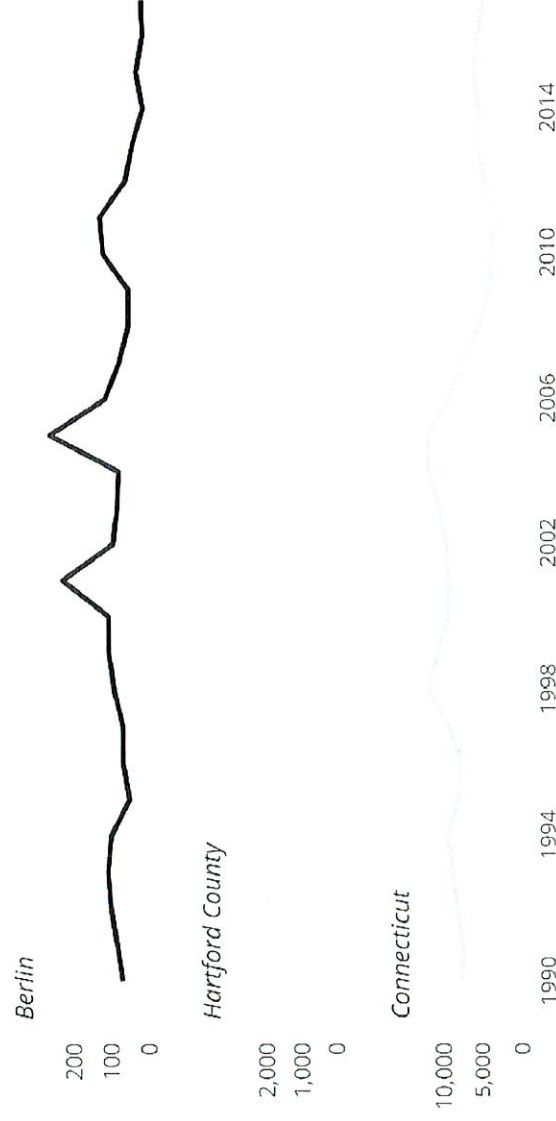
- Most (79%) of Berlin's housing is single-family detached housing
- Housing with 20 or more units comprises 5% of the town's housing.



Source: American Community Survey

Housing Permit Activity 1990-2017

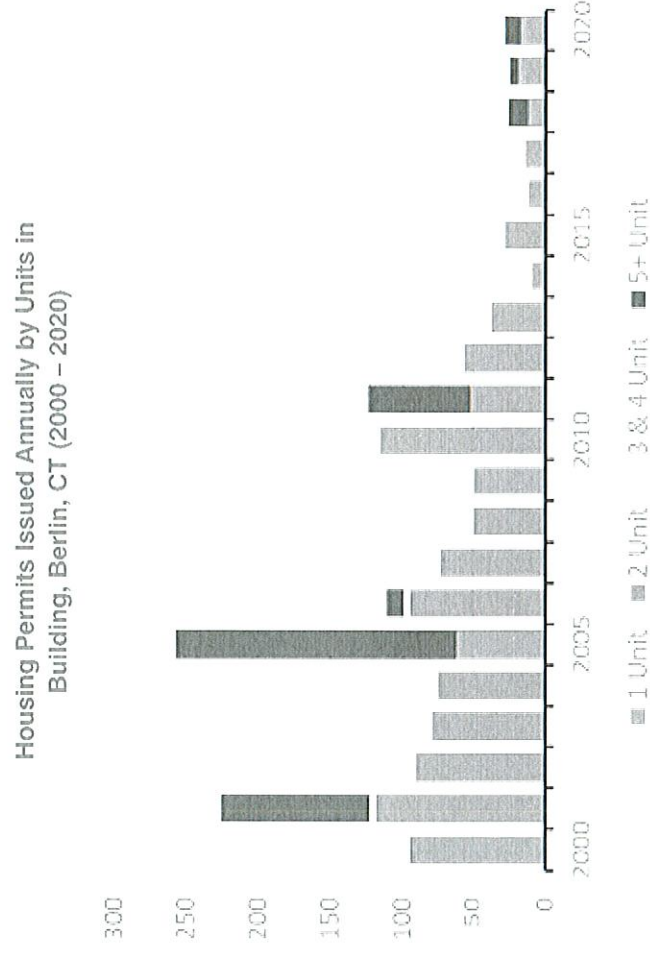
- Housing permit activity in Berlin followed similar trends as both Hartford County and the State between 1990 and 2017.
- Housing permit activity in Berlin has been relatively low since 2010.



Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

Housing Permit Activity 2000-2020 by Unit Type

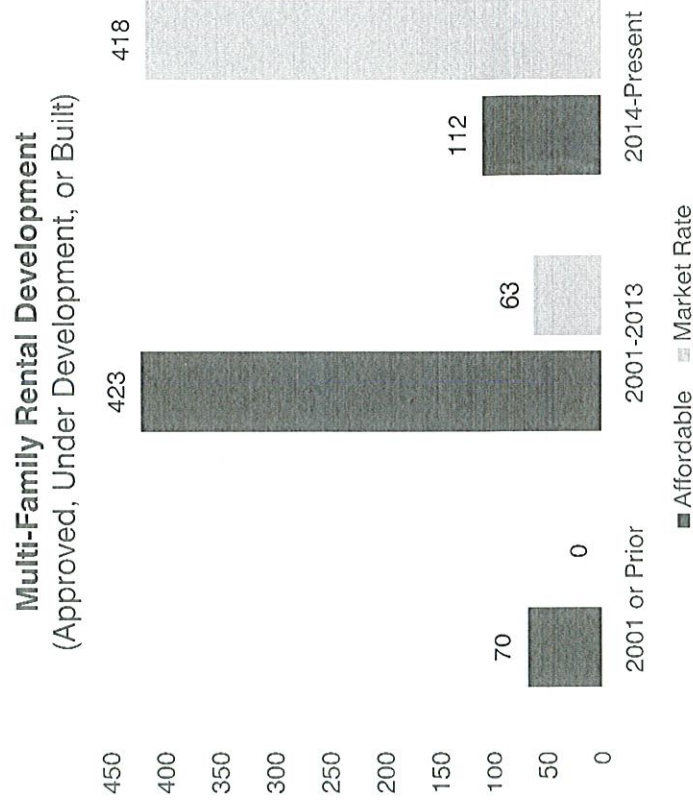
- Single family unit permit activity is down compared to ten or twenty years ago
- Multifamily unit permit activity is inconsistent from year to year with most units permitted in 2001, 2005, and 2011.



Source: CT DECD, Town of Berlin

Multi-Family Rental Development

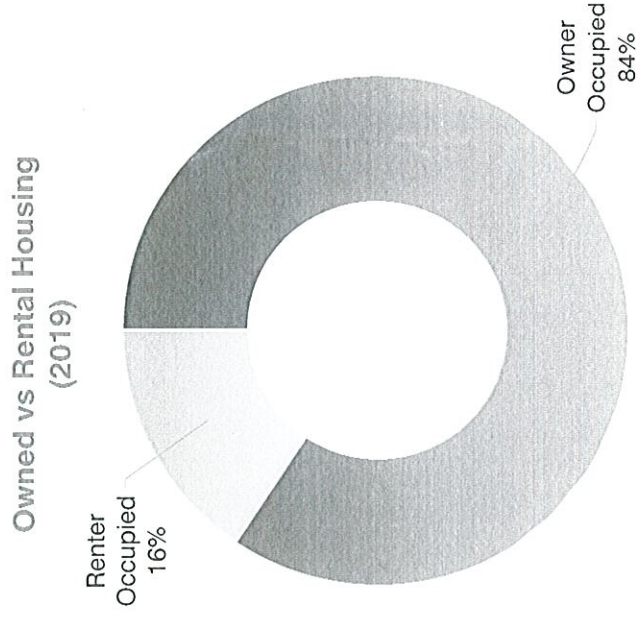
- 36 of 530 approved housing units in multi-family residential developments have been built in Berlin since 2014.
- 556 housing units in multi-family residential developments were built in Berlin prior to 2013.
- Built and approved developments include a mixture of market rate, mixed income, age restricted mixed income, and age restricted affordable apartments.



Source: Town of Berlin

Housing: Ownership vs Rental

- Most of Berlin's housing is owner occupied

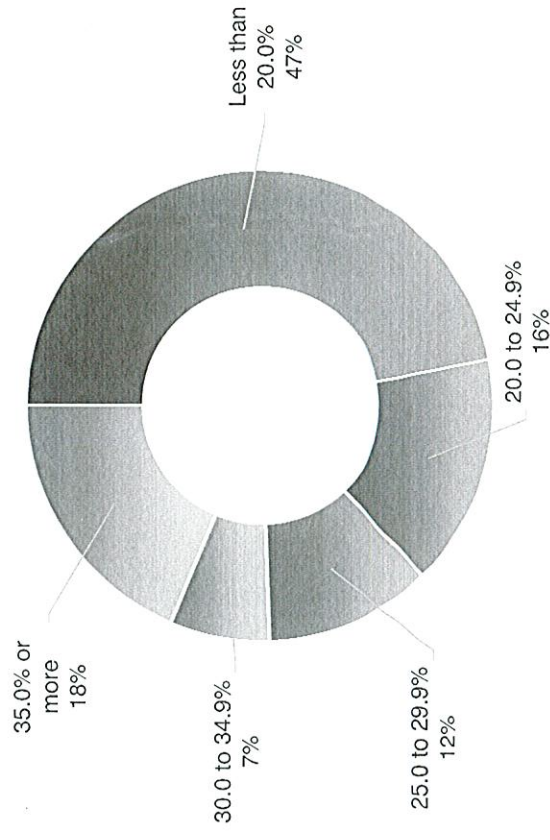


Source: American Community Survey

Ownership Cost vs Income

- 25% of homeowner households with a mortgage spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

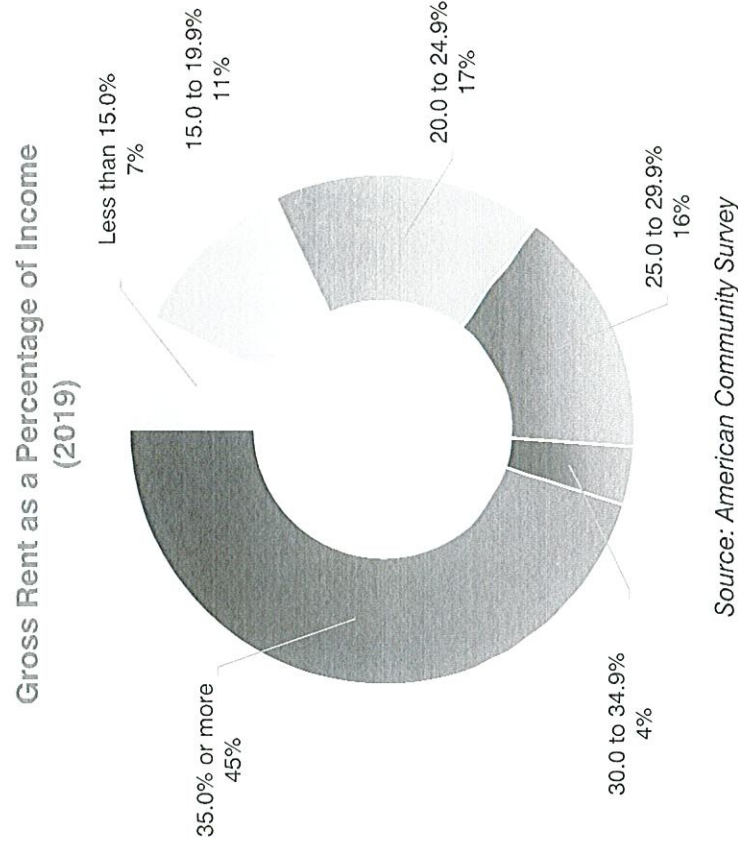
Ownership Cost as a Percentage of Income
Homes with a Mortgage
(2019)



Source: American Community Survey

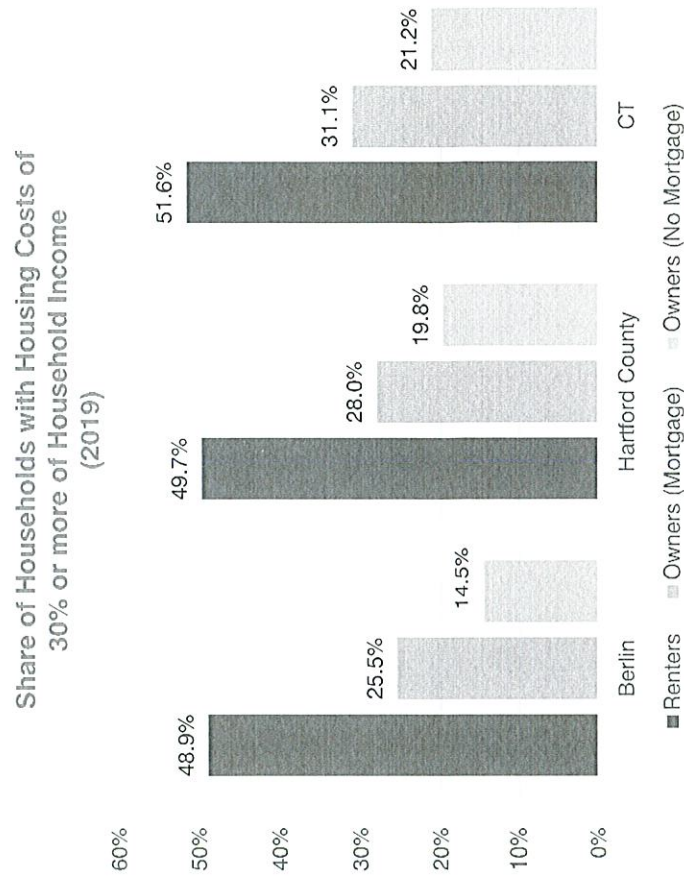
Rental Cost vs Income

- Almost half (49%) of renters in Berlin spend 30% or more of their income on rent



Housing Cost Burdened Households

- Berlin has a lower share of housing burdened households than both Hartford County and the State.
- This includes renter and homeowner households.



Source: American Community Survey

Housing Cost

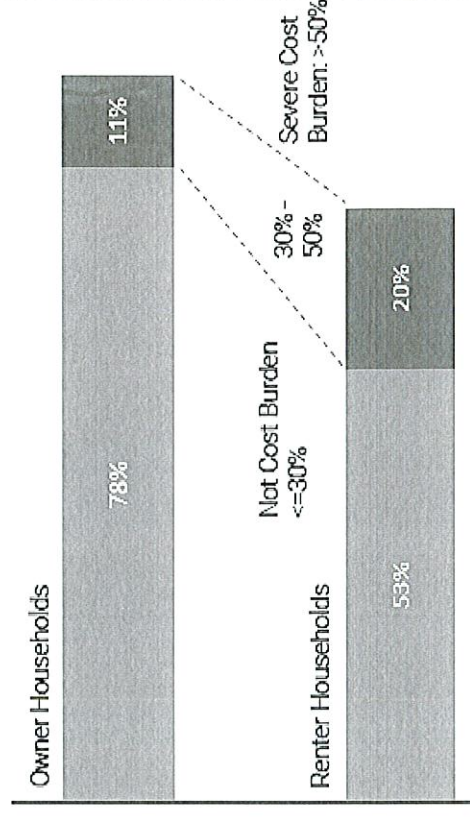
- Renters in Berlin have substantially lower incomes than homeowners and have a higher share of housing cost as a percentage of their income.



Housing Cost Burden

- Housing cost burden is experienced by more renter households in Berlin (47%) than owner households (21%).
- Severe cost burden is also more common among renter households (27%) than owner households (10%).

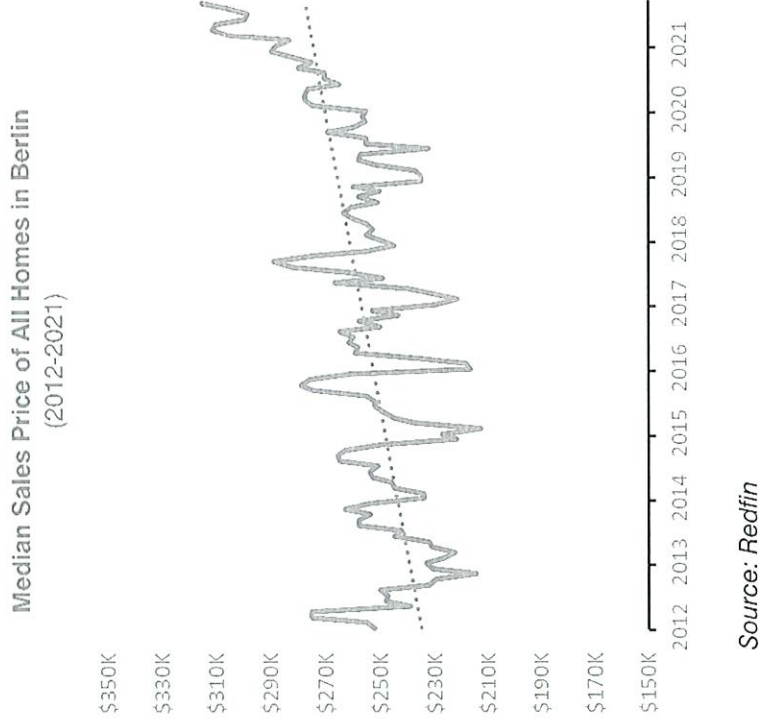
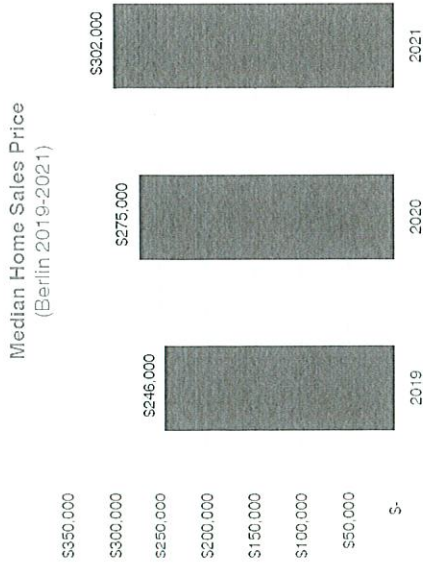
Cost Burdened Owner vs Renter Households (2018)



Source: CHAS

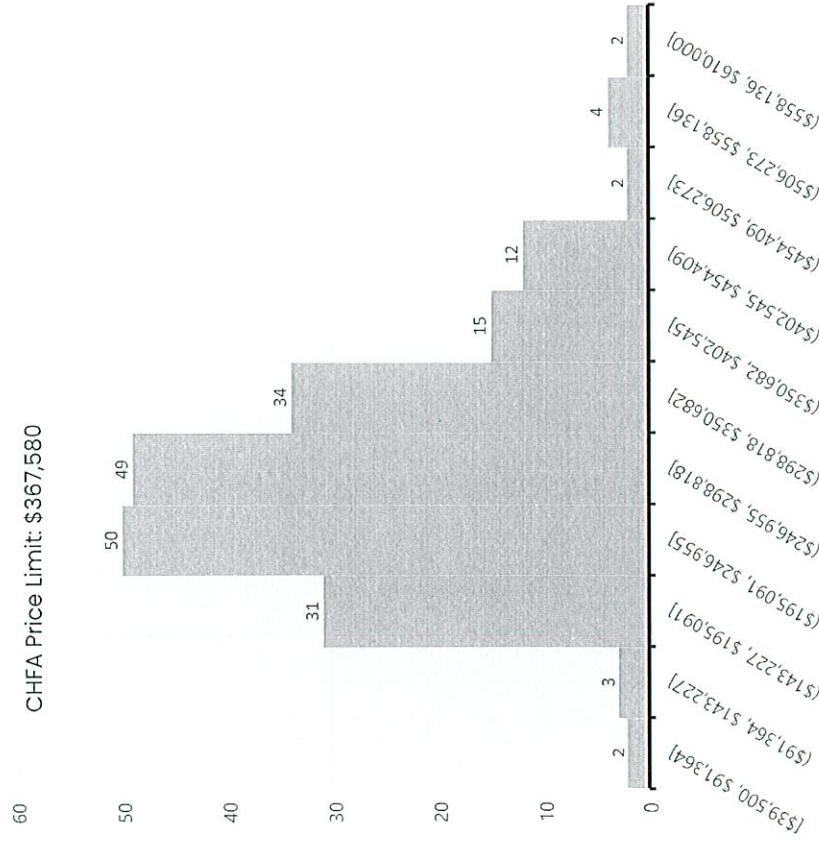
Sales Price

- Median home sales prices have trended up (overcoming seasonal fluctuations) over the past decade.
- Median sales prices have increased significantly in the past two years.



Distribution of Single-Family Home Sales (2019)

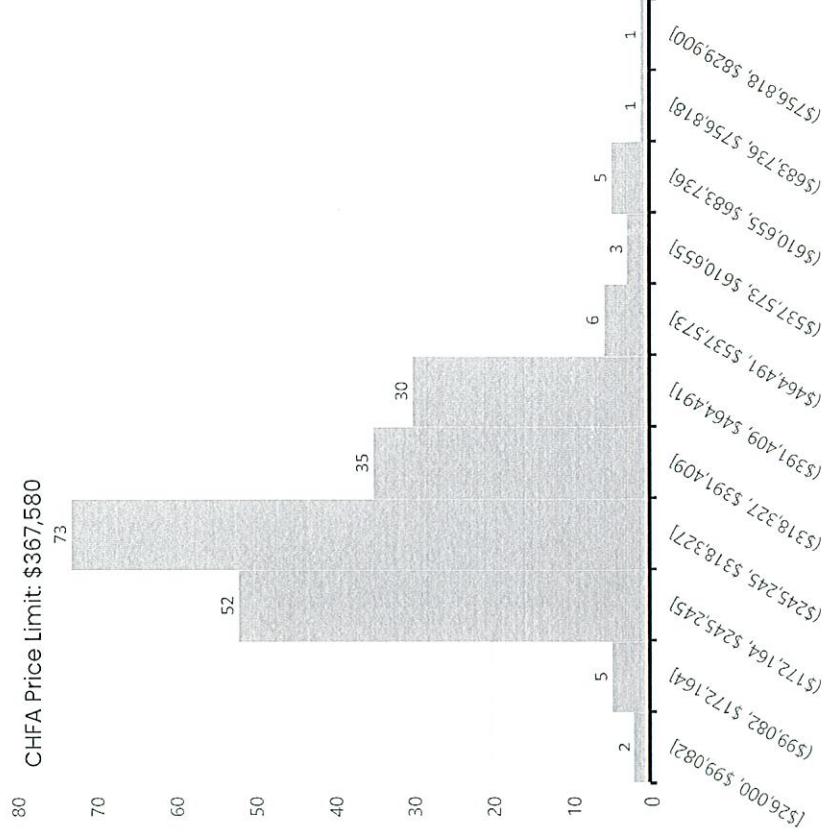
Source: Redfin Market Data



173 out of 204 home sales were below the CHFA price limit in 2019

Distribution of Single-Family Home Sales (2020)

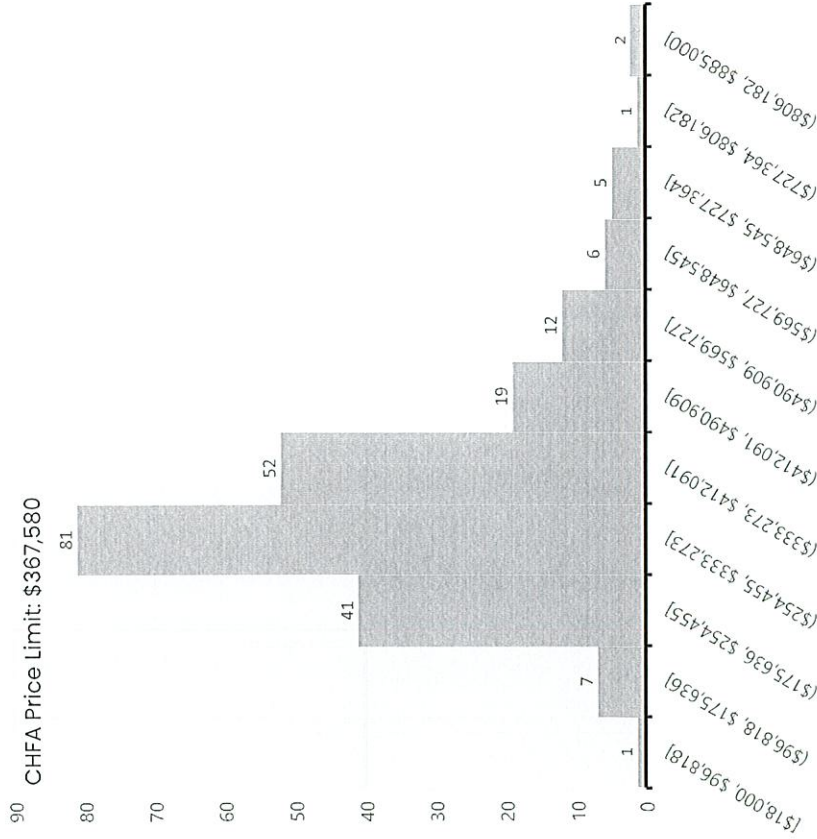
Source: Redfin Market Data



158 out of 213 home sales were below the CHFA price limit in 2020

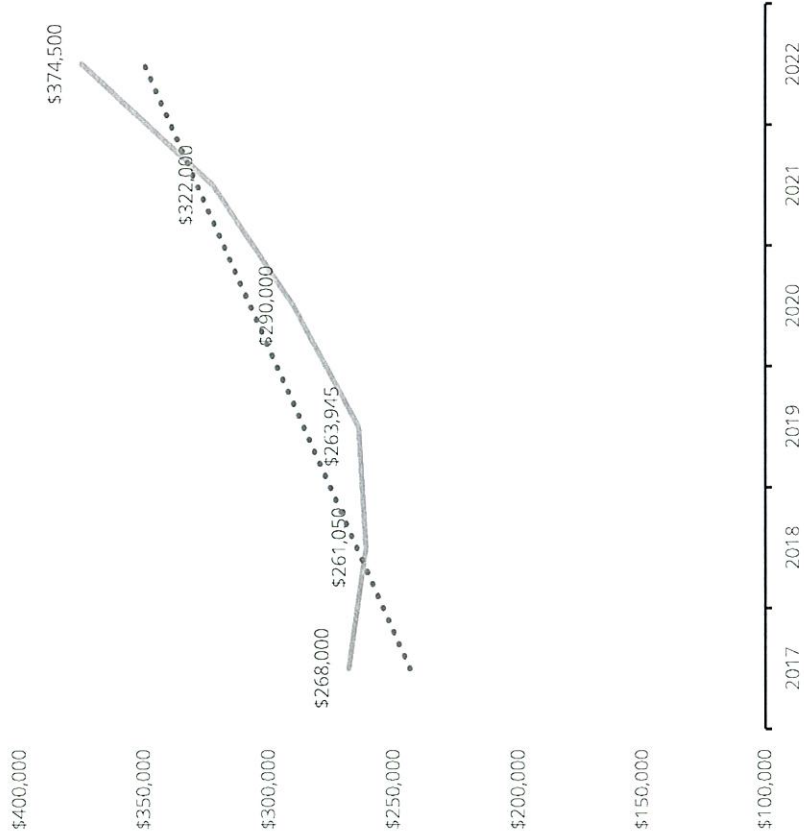
Distribution of Single-Family Home Sales (2021)

Source: Redfin Market Data



Median Sale Price Single-Family Homes

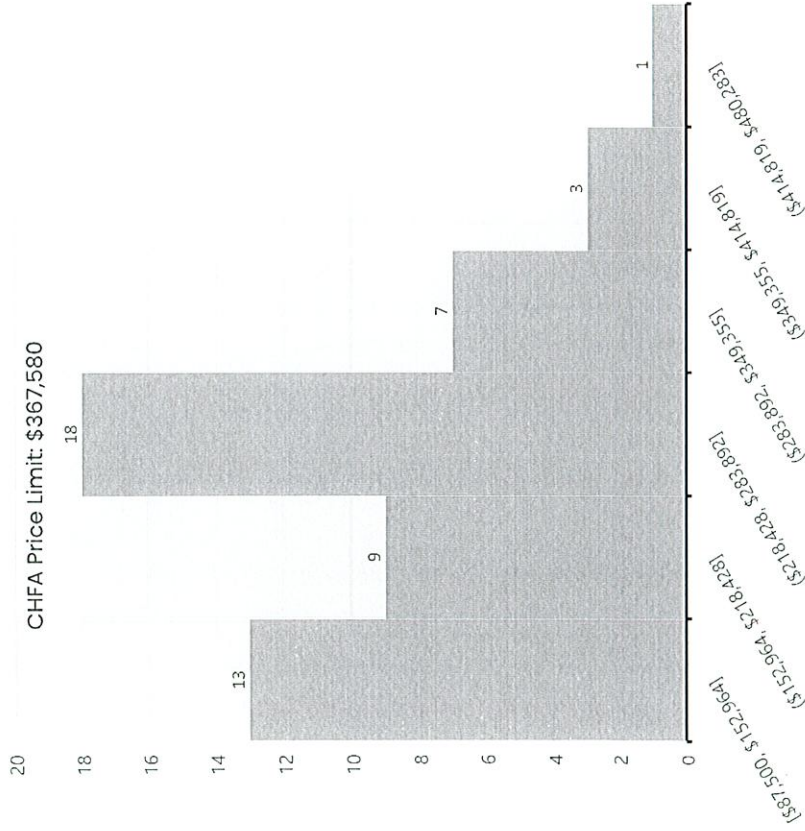
Source: Redfin Market Data (2017 - 2021)



159 out of 227 home sales were below the CHFA price limit in 2021

Distribution of Condo Sales (2019)

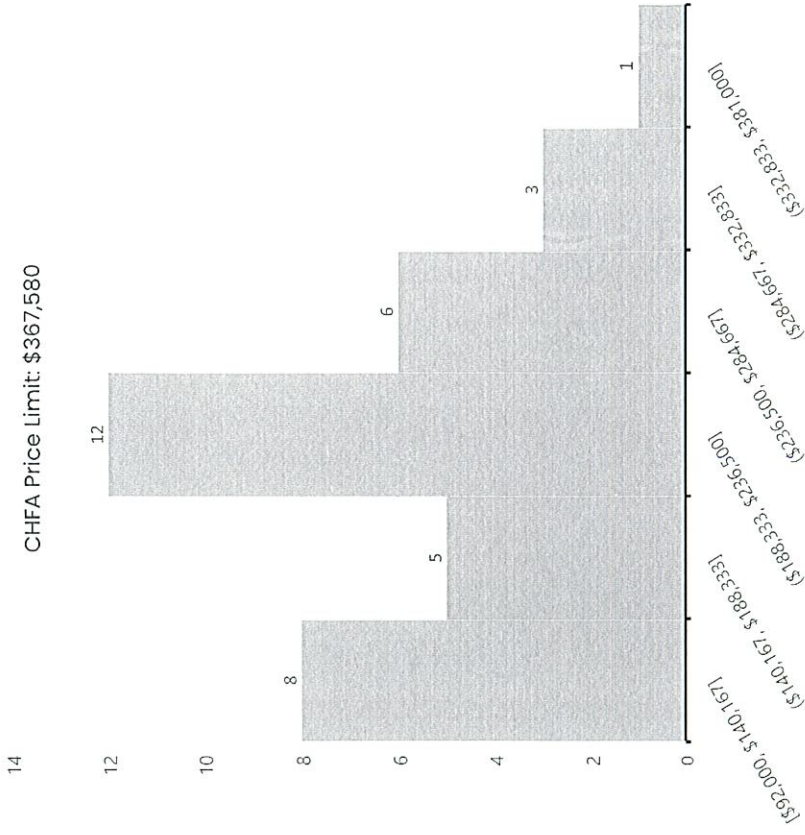
Source: Redfin Market Data



47 out of 51 condo sales were below the CHFA price limit in 2019

Distribution of Condo Sales (2020)

Source: Redfin Market Data

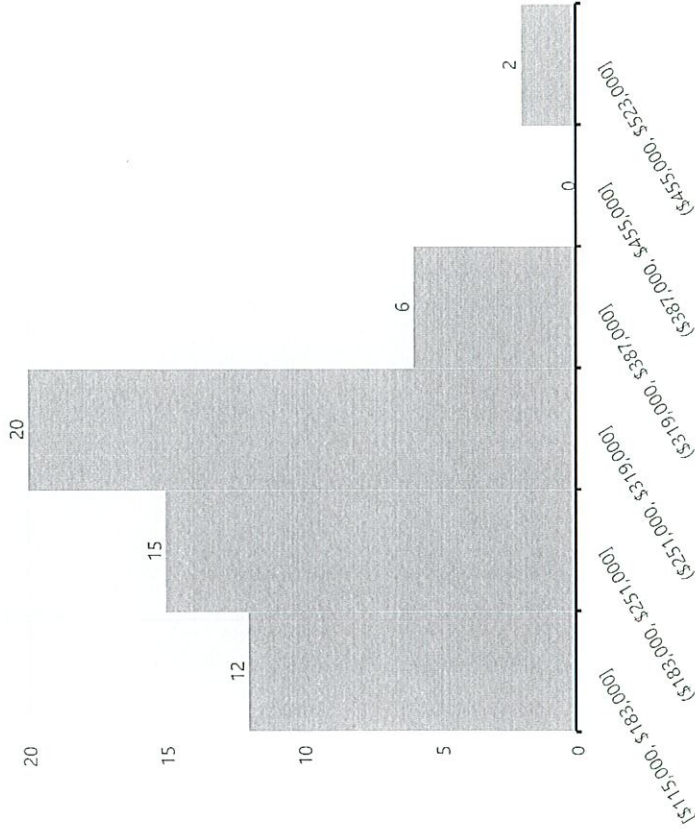


34 out of 35 condo sales were below the CHFA price limit in 2020

Distribution of Condo Sales (2021)

Source: Redfin Market Data

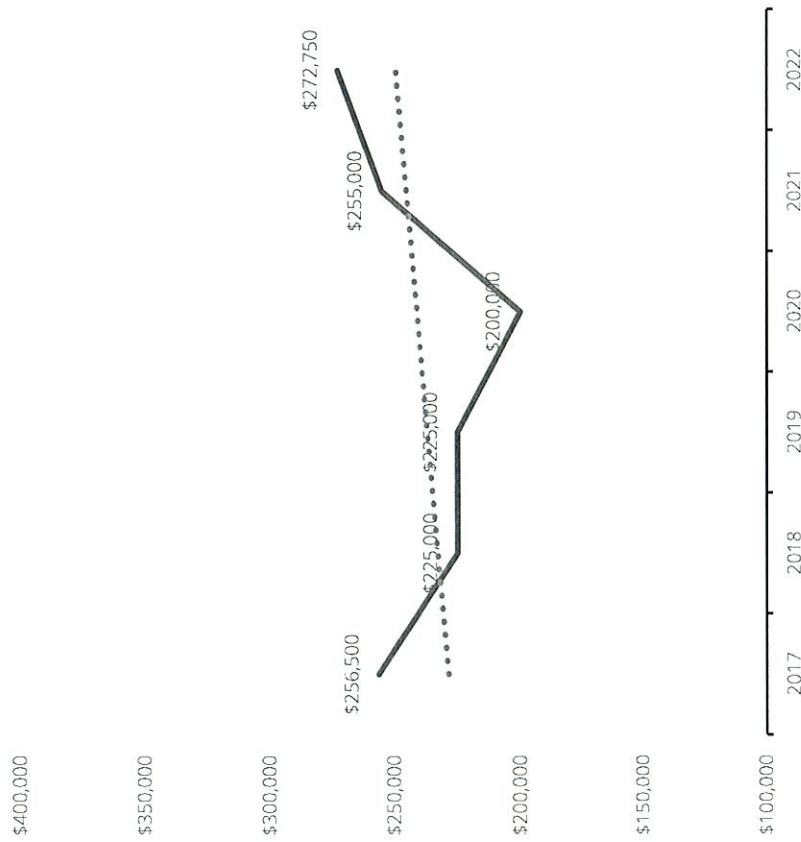
25 CHFA Price Limit: \$367,580



53 out of 55 condo sales were below the CHFA price limit in 2021

Median Sale Price Condos

Source: Redfin Market Data (2017 - 2021)



Housing Affordability Gap

- 16.7% of Berlin's owner households are at or below 50% of the area median income (AMI).
- These households can afford a home that costs \$169,001 or less.

Housing Affordability for Berlin Households
(2019)

Area Median Income Threshold	Owner Households		Affordable Home Purchase Price			
	#	%	FHA		Conventional	
			Single Family	Condo	Single Family	Condo
30% AMI (Extremely Low Income)	440	6.4%	\$83,685	\$51,350	\$101,326	\$60,858
50% AMI (Very Low Income)	709	10.3%	\$139,577	\$107,243	\$169,001	\$128,532
80% AMI (Low Income)	670	9.7%	\$208,675	\$176,340	\$252,664	\$212,196
100% AMI (Moderate Income)	755	10.9%	\$279,155	\$246,820	\$338,001	\$297,533
120% AMI (Moderate Income)	648	9.4%	\$460,312	\$415,880	\$615,149	\$553,773
Above 120% AMI (Middle Income +)	3,684	53.3%	\$460,313+	\$415,881+	\$615,150+	\$553,774+

Source: HUD 2021, ACS, RKG Associates

Housing Affordability Gap

- 45.1% of Berlin’s renter households are at 50% of the area median income (AMI) or below.
- The affordable monthly rent for these households is \$1,010 or less.

Housing Affordability for Berlin Households
(2019)

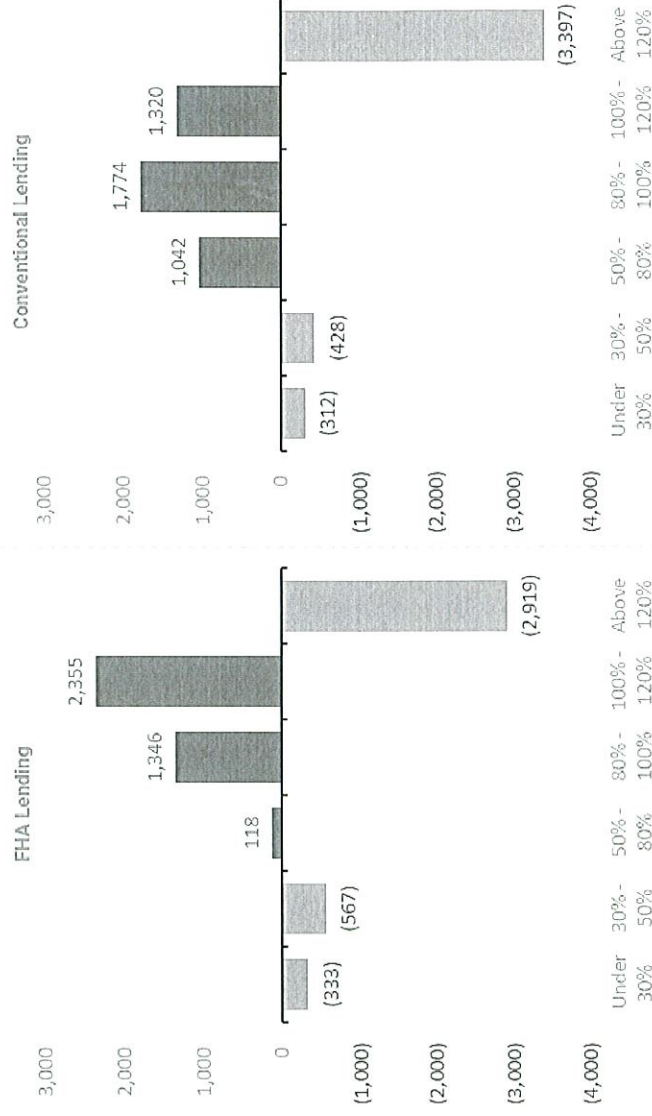
Area Median Income Threshold	Income	Renter Households		Affordable Monthly Rent
		#	%	
30% AMI (Extremely Low Income)	\$24,200	327	25.6%	\$605
50% AMI (Very Low Income)	\$40,400	249	19.5%	\$1,010
80% AMI (Low Income)	\$60,400	273	21.4%	\$1,510
100% AMI (Moderate Income)	\$80,800	212	16.6%	\$2,020
120% AMI (Moderate Income)	\$96,960	83	6.5%	\$2,424
Above 120% AMI (Middle Income +)	\$96,961+	132	10.3%	\$2425+

Source: HUD 2021, ACS, RKG Associates

Ownership Supply and Demand Gap

- Berlin has a deficit in housing supply for homes that are affordable to families at or below 50% area median income (AMI)
- Berlin also lacks housing supply in the affordability range of those above 120% of the AMI.

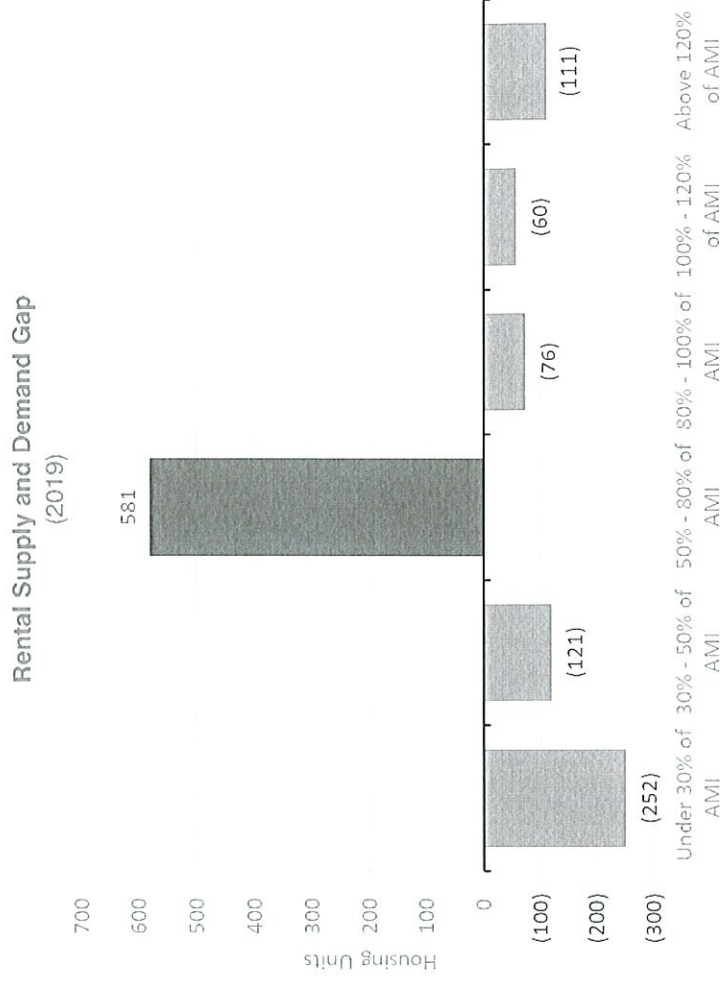
Supply and Demand Gap for Ownership Housing Units (2019)



Source: HUD, ACS

Rental Supply and Demand Gap

- Berlin has an oversupply of rental housing for those earning 50-80% of area median income (AMI) and a lack of supply for all other income levels.



Source: HUD, ACS

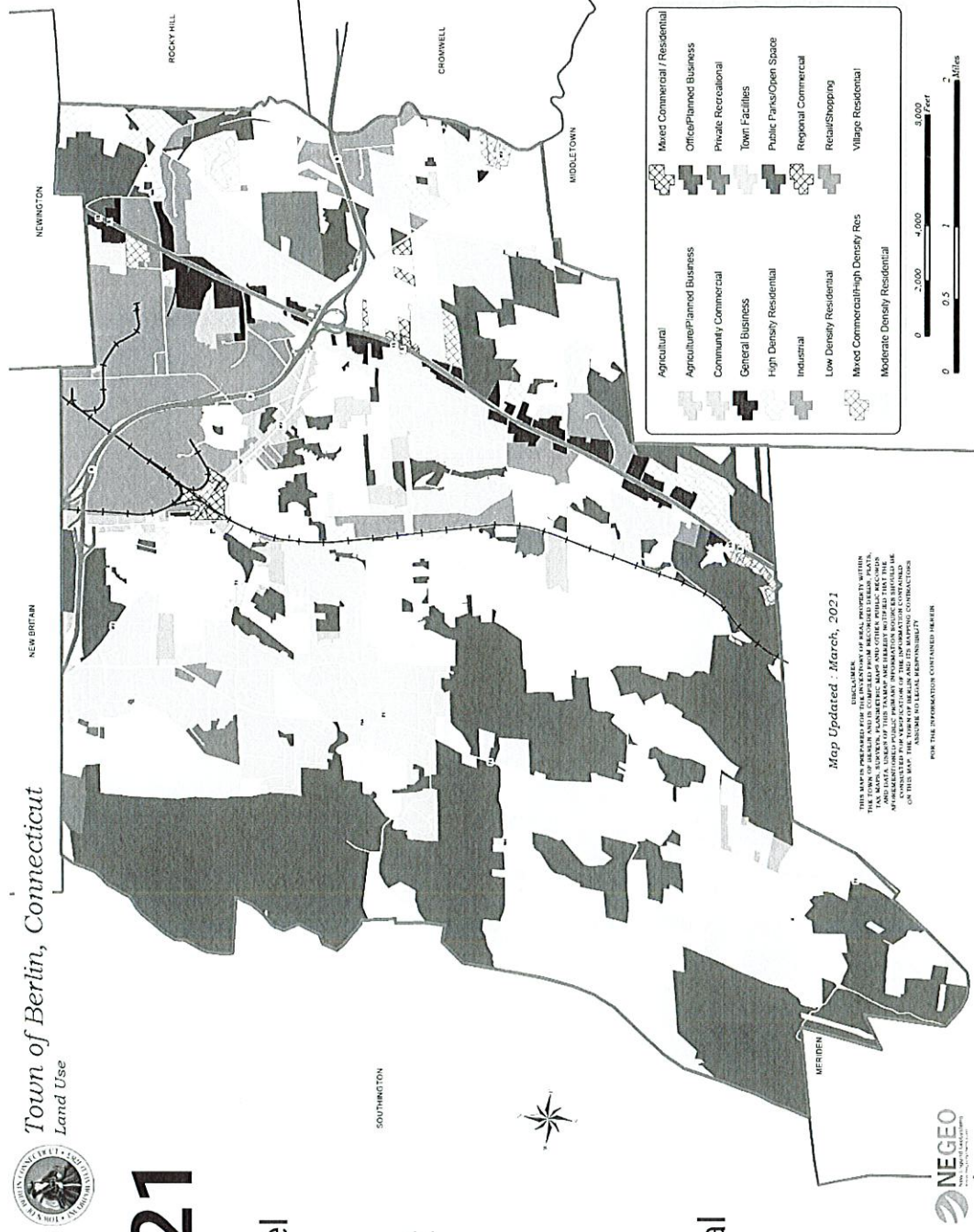
Questions or comments about the housing needs assessment?

Land Use and Zoning Assessment

- Town-wide Land Use
- Single-family Land Use
- Multi-family Land Use
- Multi-family Developments
- Zoning
- Build-out Analysis

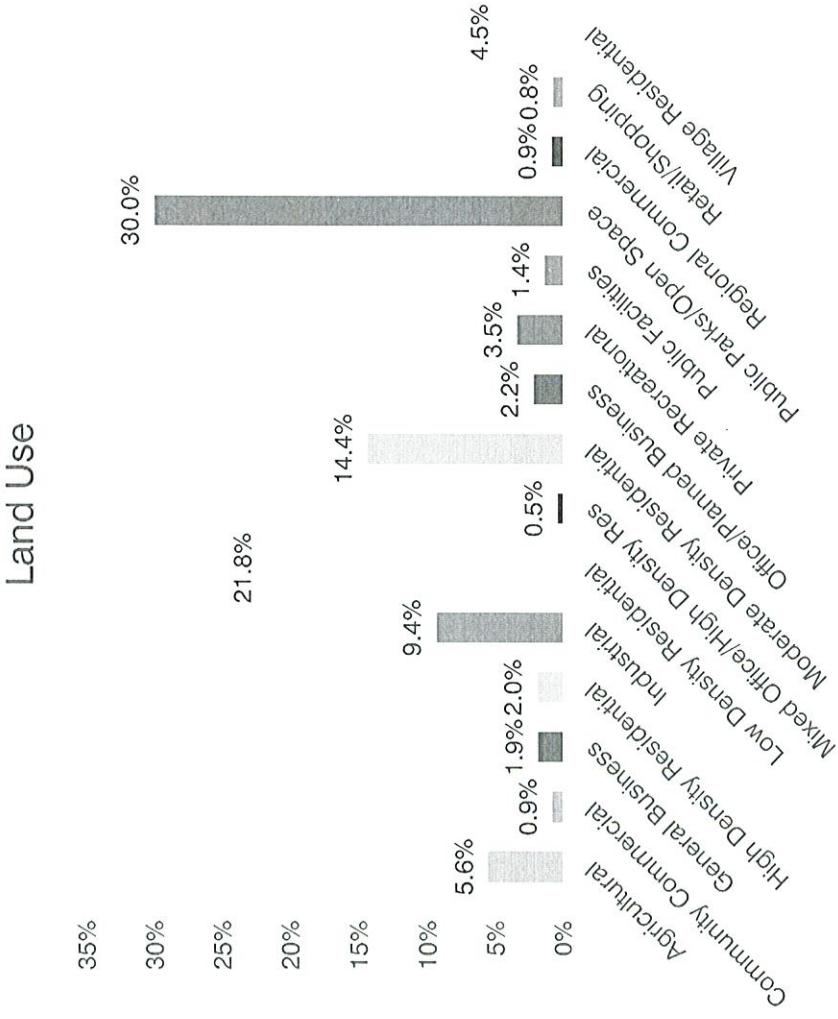


Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development and Affordable Housing Plan



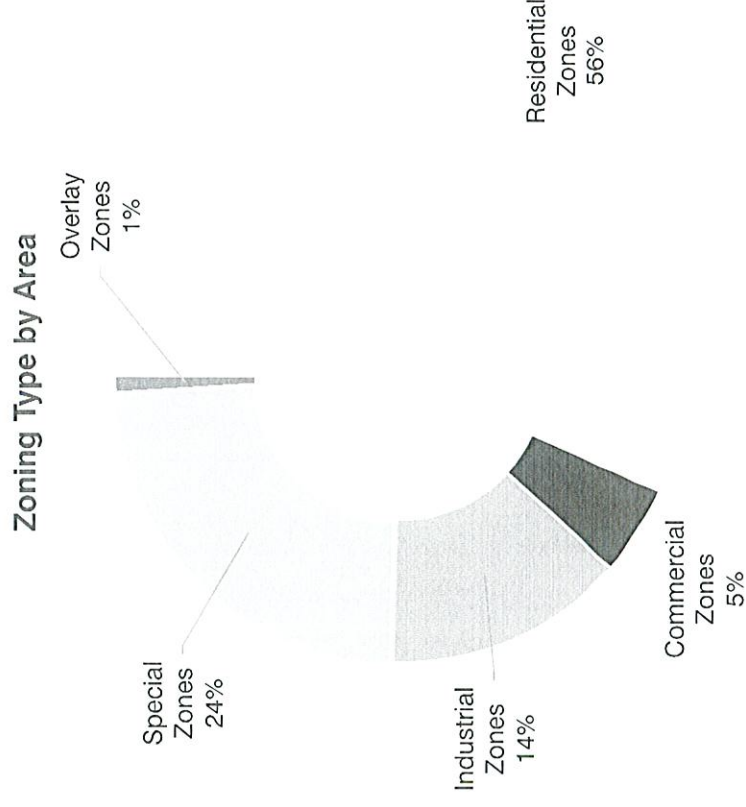
Land Use 2021

- Low and moderate density residential land uses are the most common active land uses in Berlin.



Zoning

- Residential zoning is the most prevalent zoning type in Berlin.
- The share of residential zoning districts in the Town (56%) exceeds residential land use (which totals 38%) by 18 percentage points.



Zoning Districts Allowing Higher Density Multifamily Housing

Zoning districts that permit multifamily housing of more than 4 units per acre include:

- Kensington Village Core 1&2
- Planned Residential (PR-3)
- Berlin Turnpike District (BTD)
- Workforce Housing Development (WHD)
- Office Technology 2 (OT-2)
Adult multifamily only
- Planned Office/Residential (POR)



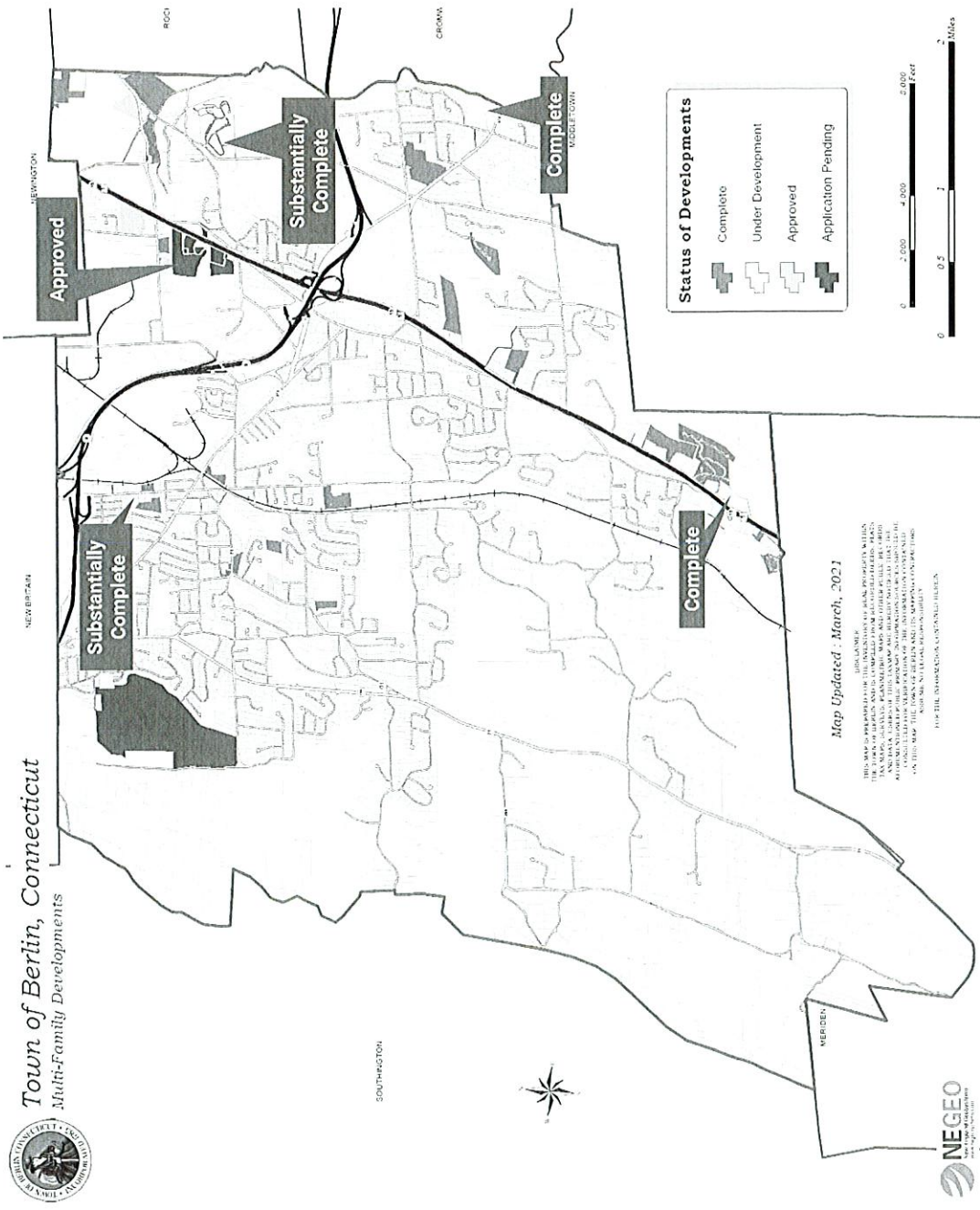
Other Multifamily Development

- Multifamily development is also permitted in single family zones for Housing Authority developments for seniors and for redevelopment of obsolete industrial and educational structures.

Status of Multifamily Developments

Multifamily Rental

- 530 units approved
 - 36 completed
 - 16 under construction
 - 478 not started
- Applications pending
- P&Z (106 units)
- Wetlands (42 units)

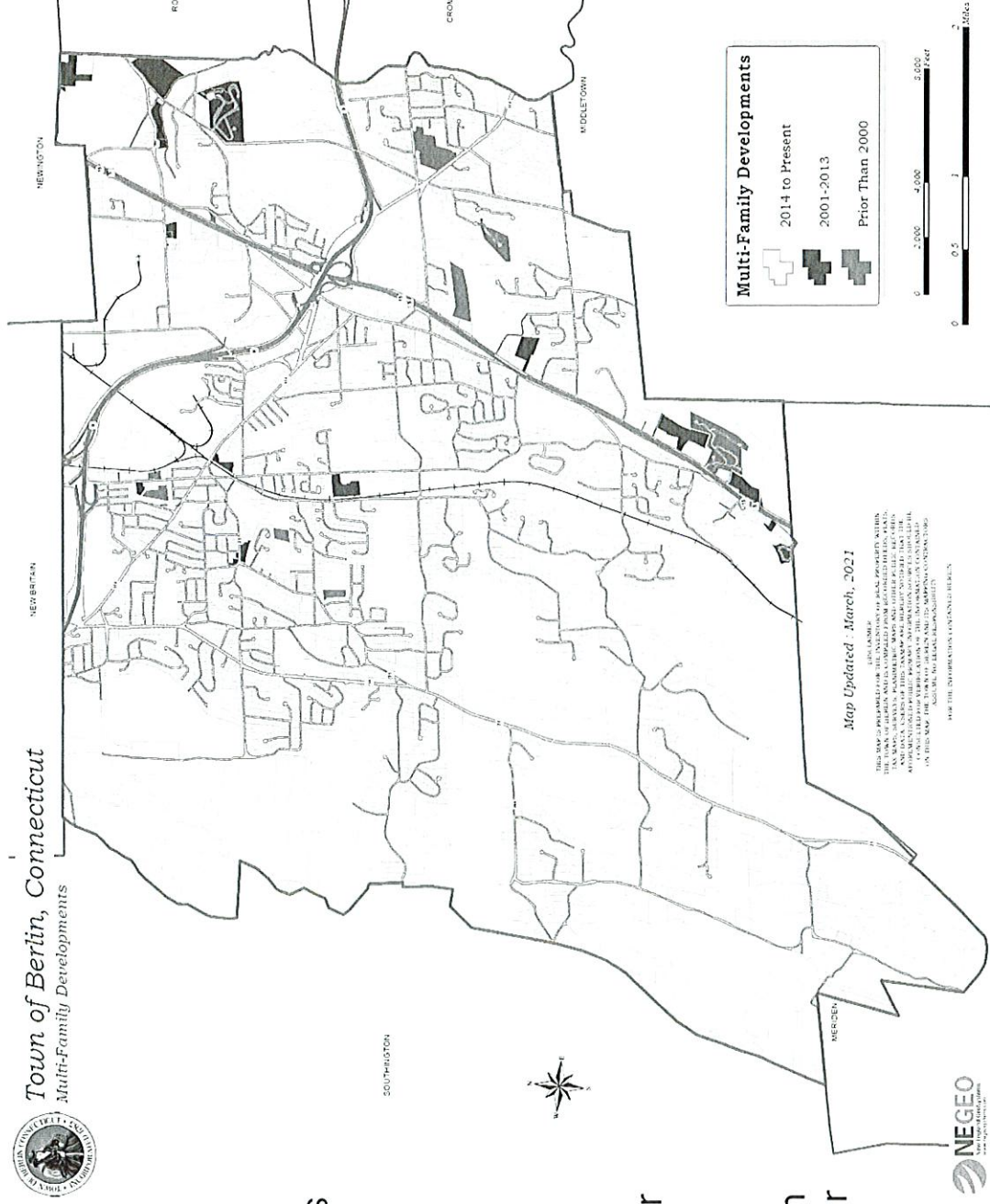


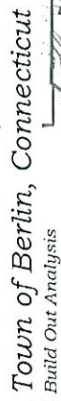
Multi-Family Developments

- Multifamily development has occurred across Berlin over the past two decades.
- Development has been concentrated on the north and east sides of the town near Routes 9 and 15.
- Does Berlin have capacity for more multifamily development?
- Are there other areas of town that should be considered for multifamily development?



Town of Berlin, Connecticut Multi-Family Developments





- A build-out analysis conducted by the Town identifies multiple developable properties across the town.
- Many of those properties are located on the western side of town in more rural and naturalized areas



Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development and Affordable Housing Plan

Questions or comments about land use and zoning?

Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development and Affordable Housing Plan

Questions for Discussion

- How do you think the Town is doing with respect to creation of affordable housing?
- Should the Town continue its strategy of approving multi-family and affordable housing at higher densities at sites with all utilities and good road access in the TOD area, the Berlin Turnpike corridor and at the margins where single family and commercial zones meet?
- Is more affordable rental housing needed for seniors? Where should it be located?
- Should the zoning be modified to allow the Berlin Housing Authority to develop non-age restricted projects in single family residential zones.
- Should the Town explore ways to assist in the development of deed restricted ownership opportunities for affordable housing? Where should it be located?
- Should the Town consider deed restricting lots at the Town trailer park to reserve these as affordable?
- What is the vision for multi-family housing in the TOD area? For example, should the Town increase the density allowed in the Kensington Village core area 2 zone in the next tier of properties near the train Station to provide additional housing opportunities and to support area redevelopment? Should the increased density be tied to providing at least 20% of the units as affordable?

Questions for Discussion

- Should zoning modifications should be considered to expand opportunities for accessory apartments? What modifications should be considered?
- Should multi-family uses be allowed in the Worthington Ridge Historic District to provide additional housing opportunities and to support the preservation of historic structures?
- Should improvements be made to the existing Town's Beckley Quarry and Woodlawn properties to enhance Town open space in the Deming Road, Berlin Turnpike vicinity to support the large number of new multi-family housing units planned in that area?
- Should inclusionary zoning provisions be added to require a percentage of units be affordable in all new developments? In developments of a certain size? Of a certain type?
- Should the Town consider increasing allowed densities in residential areas? How would that help expand affordable housing opportunities?

Questions for Discussion

- Should the POCD be modified to emphasize or de-emphasize multi-family development on the Berlin Turnpike?
 - Should the BTB zone definition be expanded to allow more properties to be eligible? Note – we have a mapping analysis of eligible properties based on the present definition
- Should zoning supportive of multi-family housing be allowed in an expanded area or at greater density in the TOD area near the Berlin Train Station?
 - Should increases in density in the Kensington Village Overlay require a 20% affordable requirement?
- Should scattered site multi-family development be considered in other residential zones?
- Is there an opportunity to develop smaller scale multi-family projects to expand the types of multi-family development choices? If yes, where?
- Are there other areas or situations (outside of the TOD and BTB areas) that would be appropriate for multi-family housing and aid redevelopment goals?
 - Secondary retail locations like Ferndale Center and the Webster Square area?

Draft POCD Vision Statement

Berlin is a community with a small-town feel founded in a rural and historically agrarian landscape that benefits from its location at the center of the state. The town has a rich history, strong community, and provides a peaceful atmosphere for its residents. Berlin will continue to grow, but in a sustainable manner and without compromising the town's natural resources or outgrowing its ability to provide high-quality services to its residents. Strong connections to the region and within town are highly valued by the community for all modes of travel. Berlin will balance growth against preservation of its historic landscape and village centers. The town's village centers, and farmland are important to the history and identity of Berlin; protecting and improving areas such as Kensington Center will remain a priority for the town.

Housing Goal from the 2013 POCD

Goal: The Town shall work to preserve the current balance of housing stock while infusing any new growth with a sense of traditional neighborhood design, compatibility with adjacent uses, and ownership options that support housing choice for people of different ages and means.

- Policy A: The Neighborhood shall be the primary component of residential development. All new residential development should support existing neighborhoods, and create a neighborhood environment with activity centers, recreational areas, and pedestrian circulation.
- Policy B: Residential development design should support the principles of both Berlin's development and its conservation policy, including the integration of elements that preserve and protect Berlin's unique natural environment.
- Policy C: New residential development should be of the highest design standards, in a manner that creates a high quality residential environment and enhances the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Draft Values Statement

Berlin will be recognized as a historic and progressive Town with an engaged citizenry committed to the betterment of the entire community. To that end, high quality services will be provided to a diverse population living and working in a balanced blend of open space, residential housing, and commercial properties supported by stable and equitable revenues.

Berlin embraces a diverse and inclusive housing stock that provides affordable homeownership opportunities, quality rental options, and housing choice for all household types, income levels, and life stages. Berlin contains many unique neighborhoods ranging from rural areas with large lots and open space, to smaller lot single family residential areas in the Town's three villages in Berlin, East Berlin and Kensington, to an historic district of predominately residential uses to mixed-use commercial areas with a strong residential component in Kensington Village and on the Berlin Turnpike. Multi-family housing is concentrated in the Kensington Village transit-oriented development area, on the Berlin Turnpike, on Deming Road near the Berlin Turnpike and at a few other locations at the border between residential and commercial/industrial areas. Future housing development should continue to align with the unique characteristics of each neighborhood, in accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development. ...

Draft Values Statement (cont.)

Berlin has a strong and diverse local economy that has retained a vibrant manufacturing sector, a good balance between its workforce and job opportunities in the community, an open economy with a majority of residents working outside of Town and a majority of local jobs filled by non-Berlin residents as reflects the large workforce and employment base in a short commute to and from Berlin via a convenient highway network, a low mill rate, and strong fiscal management. Understanding that its low mill rate helps maintain reasonable housing costs for all residents, Berlin will continue to focus on economic development and fiscal responsibility.

Finally, Berlin prides itself on its excellent quality of life for all residents, including its highly rated school system, quality town services, and farms and rural attributes, access to open space, community events like the Berlin Fair, and recreational opportunities. A diverse housing stock will allow all residents to take advantage of what Berlin has to offer and ensure that existing residents can continue to live in the community as they age or as their life circumstances change.

Plan Goal

Achieve the development of additional affordable housing units in Berlin that will meet the needs of town residents and will meet and exceed the State's mandate of a 10% affordable housing supply.

Strategy 1: Provide more affordable home ownership opportunities

Potential Actions to Consider:

- Implement a first-time homebuyer down payment assistance program to assist middle-income households who may be struggling to enter the homeownership market.
- Promote USDA & CHFA loan programs with real estate brokers, banks, and even town employees who may be in contact with people looking to buy homes in Berlin. Units purchased using these mortgage packages will count on the town's affordable housing appeals list.
- Support a home repair/maintenance program for low- and moderate-income households.

Strategy 2: Provide more affordable housing for seniors

Potential Actions to Consider:

- Implement tax relief programs for older residents who are on a fixed income, this could be a program like property tax relief or a senior tax work-off program.
- Loosen restrictions on accessory dwelling units consist with new state statute.
- Explore options for advancing senior housing such as co-housing, assisted living, or smaller cluster developments of single-story residential structures.
- Ensure universal design features are incorporated into new multifamily housing structures by requiring a percentage of units be constructed with these features.
- Identify ways to partner with the Berlin Housing Authority to provide additional housing for the town's most vulnerable residents.

Strategy 3: Refine existing zoning regulations to better support affordable housing

Potential Actions to Consider:

- Review residential zoning districts for opportunities to add additional housing typologies that may not be allowed today (i.e. two-family, 3-4 unit buildings, 6-8 unit multifamily)
- Rezone additional areas along commercial corridors for the inclusion of housing and/or mixed-use development.
- Implement a similar program to TEDs where sites for housing or mixed-use with a residential component could be encouraged.
- Implement an Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) to provide opportunities for by-right development so long as the project includes 20% affordable units.
- Introduce a density bonus in the TOD area if affordable units are included.
- Review BTZ zoning to ensure that the regulations adequately support the development of affordable housing
- Allow greater densities and require less parking per unit in the Kensington Village Core 2 overlay district.

Strategy 4: Maintain a Focus on Expanding Affordable Housing Supply

Potential Actions to Consider:

- Continue Affordable Housing Programs through the Berlin Housing Authority and consider expansion of existing programs.
- Review and Recommend Action to Diversify the Town's Housing stock as part of the Town's ongoing 2023 update to its Plan of Conservation and Development and subsequent POCD implementation plan.
- Establish a Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee to track Plan Implementation especially with respect to housing diversification and affordability.
- Maintain adequate staffing and skill sets to administer affordable housing programs.
- Provide Affordable Housing Training to staff and members of land use boards.
- Continue to monitor and provide support to proposed and approved rental and affordable housing projects, as necessary and appropriate, through completion.
- Continue tax incentives for mixed-use, inclusionary projects.

Other Potential Actions

- Consider establishing a housing trust fund to accumulate funds that can help support housing programs or initiatives.
- Identify any surplus land that is owned by the town and could be leveraged for affordable housing production.
- Develop a public education campaign in town to communicate the need for affordable housing and discuss the need and benefits of housing across all types and income spectrums. Discuss and present housing as an economic development tool in Berlin.

POCD Next Steps

- Launch Community engagement efforts
 - Develop press release and social media content
 - Launch online survey
 - Develop list of key stakeholders for interviews/focus group meetings. Conducts meetings late February or early March.
- Continue to coordinate mapping with NEGeo
- Collect information on transportation, facilities, and infrastructure
- Continue collection of data for the Affordable Housing Plan

Next POCD Meeting

- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Meeting date Thursday
March 24th at 6:00 pm.

MARCH 2022						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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Agenda Item No. **6**
Request for Town Council Action

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager
DATE: February 23, 2022
SUBJECT: Allowing taxpayers to vote in the Referendum

Summary of Agenda Item:

The Town Council should vote to allow any person who is a citizen of the United States, of the age of eighteen (18) years old, and who is liable to the town for taxes assessed against him/her on an assessment of not less than one thousand (\$1,000.00) on the last completed grand list of such town to vote in the budget referendum on April 26, 2022.

Action Needed:

Move to allow any person who is a citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen (18) years or more who, jointly or severally, is liable to the town for taxes assessed against him/her on an assessment of not less than one thousand (\$1,000.00) on the last completed grand list of the town to vote in the budget referendum on April 26 and May 24, 2022.

Attachments:

None

Prepared By: Kate Wall, Town Clerk

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://berlingov.zoom.us/j/86032212004?pwd=OUJkTXpna0R3TFVsQkx0aElTOXFXdz09>

Meeting ID: 860 3221 2004

Passcode: 201019

1-929-205-6099 (New York)

**TOWN OF BERLIN
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, March 1, 2022
Town Council Chambers
Remote Meeting
7:00 P.M.**

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kaczynski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

C. ROLL CALL

Those in attendance were:

Councilor Jack Fazzino
Mayor Mark Kaczynski
Councilor Brenden Luddy
Councilor Charles Paonessa
Councilor Mike Urrunaga
Councilor Donna Veach

Those absent:

Councilor Peter Rosso

Also in attendance:

Town Manager Arosha Jayawickrema
Corporation Counsel Jeffrey Donofrio

D. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

None

E. MAYOR'S UPDATE

A combined Plan of Conservation and Development & Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee meeting was held on February 24th.

Mayor Kaczynski attended the February 23rd Board of Education meeting and stated that the mask mandate was ended. Some residents were upset that the Social Justice and Equity Committee had

been disbanded but Board of Education President Julia Dennis stated that it was going to be revisited.

A Special Meeting of the Community Senior Center Advisory Committee was held on February 24th with a presentation and discussion with the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA. The Committee will be gathering the information they have obtained to present to the Town Council by April.

F. MEETING AGENDA – Immediately Following the Mayor’s Update

G. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **Topic re: Accept donations to the Berlin Animal Control Donation Account for \$ 20.00 and Pet food valued at \$50.00. – Animal Control**
2. **Topic re: Accept monetary donations totaling \$3,353.66 for the Berlin Peck Memorial Library and deposit \$1,500.00 into the library agency account to be used to purchase children’s books by African American and Latinx authors and deposit \$1,851.68 into the friends of the library miscellaneous account for the purchase of 3 adult programs, child/teen program supplies, 7 museum passes and coffee supplies and deposit \$1.98 into the friends of the library credit card account for the purchase of child/teen program supplies and move to accept the donation of books with an estimated value of \$78.97 to be added to the collection. – Berlin-Peck Memorial Library**
3. **Topic re: Accept the donations of \$95.00 and appropriate the funds to the Supplies Expenditure Account. – Police Department**
4. **Topic re: Approve Alex Joslyn of J&S Soccer Camps, LLC to charge a registration fee of \$50 for the J & S Youth Soccer Camp which will take place April 11 – 15, 2022 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM on Sage Auxiliary Field at Sage Park. The camp will have approximately 25 children. – Parks and Recreation**
5. **Topic re: Approve Berlin High School to be able to sell food, beverages and charge an entrance fee of \$275 per team for the Lineman Challenge Competition on Saturday, July 9, 2022 at Sage Park; Scalise Field and Sage Auxiliary Field from 8:00AM 3:00PM. – Parks and Recreation**
6. **Topic re: Approve waiving estimated field usage fees not to exceed the amount of \$9,170 for the 2022 Nutmeg State Games to be held at Scalise Field, Sage Park Auxiliary Field and Baretta Field from July 14 through July 31, 2022. – Parks and Recreation**
7. **Topic re: Approve Berlin Little League to be able to sell food, beverages, ice cream, candy, and merchandise for the 2022 baseball season at the following locations: Petit fields, Garrity and Pulcini, Dennehy and Centurelli fields. – Parks and Recreation**
8. **Topic re: Approve acceptance of the donations to the fishing derbies in the amount of \$1,550 for the Berlin Parks and Recreation Departments youth fishing derbies to be held on Saturday, April 23, and Saturday, April 30, 2022 at Sage Park Pond from 8 AM to 10 AM. – Parks and Recreation**

- 9. Topic re: Approve John Paul Demko and Max Delorenzo of P & Q Enterprises LLC to charge a registration fee of \$175 for the Central CT Youth Football Camp taking place June 15, 16, and 17, 2022 or possibly June 20 – 24, 2022 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM for approximately 65 children at Scalise Field. – Parks and Recreation**

Councilor Luddy moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Topic re: Report out from Central Connecticut Health District

Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) Director of Health Charles Brown stated that this presentation is given annually to member towns although due to Covid there was no annual update last year.

The CCHD is one of 20 regional public health departments in Connecticut and was founded in 1996. It serves residents of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield with a combined population of nearly 97,000. Their office is located in Rocky Hill and employs 14 full-time employees including three Covid-19 grant funded positions, they receive oversight from a 14-member Board of Health made up of board members appointed by their member towns which includes three members from Berlin.

CCHD revenues come from town contributions, program revenue, grants, and interest income. CCHD expenses include salaries, employee benefits, operating costs and contracting.

Mr. Brown explained that Public Health's primary focus is the population as a whole whereas Health Care's focus is on the individual. Public Health intervention includes assessment, policy development and assurance that those policies are followed. The outcome of Public Health is to provide a healthy community.

The purpose of a Public Health Agency is to prevent epidemics and the spread of disease, protect against environmental hazards, prevent injuries, promote and encourage healthy behaviors, respond to disasters and assist communities in recovery, and to assure the quality and accessibility of health services.

Covid-19 data for Berlin as of February 23, 2022 included 3,417 cases, 47 deaths, and 15,754 people tested. Berlin had 100% of their elderly residents vaccinated against Covid-19 soon after the vaccine was available which was crucial to protecting that vulnerable population.

CCHD Covid-19 response activities included vaccination of vulnerable populations, daily reporting of cases to member towns, contact tracing, health education, technical support for schools, being subject matter experts for the press and residents, providing regional support of other local health departments, and distributing PPE to medical providers and long-term care facilities.

Besides the services provided during the Covid-19 pandemic the CCHD also provided over 1,300 flu shots and disease follow up for illnesses such as salmonella and lead poisoning in children. They also worked to prevent epidemics and the spread of mosquito and tick-borne diseases. The CCHD has also responded to the opioid crisis by being the convener of local response agencies in their member towns.

Environmental health services provided by the CCHD include providing inspections, responding to complaints, and providing home visits with asthma patients, as well as radon kit distribution and lead poisoning prevention. During Covid-19 these services continued by adapting and developing alternative ways to provide them.

Emergency Preparedness Planning continued with flu clinics acting as drills for medical countermeasure dispensing and preparing for flooding and other natural disasters.

The CCHD continues to prepare and adapt for the future with the sanitary code revision being adopted and providing community health assessments for their member towns and improved planning for future needs.

Mayor Kaczynski thanked Mr. Brown for the report and his continued work for the Town of Berlin and other member towns.

NO ACTION NEEDED

2. Topic re: Update by Jucunski Humes Architects, LLC on the Police Department Locker Project. – Public Works

Public Works Director Mike Ahern stated that last year the Town Council referred the Police Department Locker Room renovation project to the Public Building Commission (PBD) with the intent to determine the cost and feasibility of expanding and renovating that facility. Jukunski Humes Architects (Jukunski Humes) was hired to review the overall plan as well as determine how the locker rooms can be phased into that renovation. Brian Humes of Jukunski Humes is providing his company's findings tonight.

Mr. Humes began his presentation by stating that Jukunski Humes of Berlin has led the State in public safety experience and currently has more public safety work than any other architecture firm in Connecticut.

Regarding the proposed plans for the Town of Berlin Mr. Humes first provided a plan of the existing Town Hall lower-level floor plan and stated that the Police Department is not using the space in the most efficient manner as they have had to conform the space to their needs over time.

Mr. Humes then provided a proposed lower-level floor plan that improves the efficiency of the space and shows expansion into the Board of Education (BOE) storage area which increases the Police

Department space by approximately 4,000 square feet. He explained that his firm then needed to determine how to best utilize that 4,000 square feet and what the rest of the Police Department space becomes if areas are vacated and moved into the new space.

To determine what was most needed by the Department Jukunski Humes used the Space Needs Assessment that had been endorsed by the Police Department and the Police Commission and reviewed the needs to determine what would be a priority for the space if it did become available. In addition to interior renovations there was also a request to provide carport structures for the cruisers and fleet vehicles. Thirteen spaces are being proposed which would be the primary site improvement for the project.

When Mr. Humes presented the plan to the PBC, he informed them that it did not support a completely ADA accessible facility because the public does not have access to a handicap accessible restroom. Therefore, his firm was tasked with making the public restroom, along with the dispatcher's restroom, ADA accessible. These two items are the only areas that they are expanding the footprint of the building.

Along with the Board of Education space that is being considered for use by the Police Department, Jukunski Humes looked at the area of Town storage that is currently being utilized as a food pantry for the Social Services department.

Mr. Humes stated that the proposed plan received support from the Police Department, the Police Commission, and the PBC. Jukunski Humes was then asked to determine if the project could be done in phases while making sure the Police Department remained fully operational.

A plan showing the proposed phases of construction was shown to Town Council with phase one including renovation of the BOE storage area and new ADA compliant restrooms taking about six months, phase two including renovations to the former locker rooms and prisoner processing area taking about four months during which time the department would need to utilize neighboring departments for prisoner processing and detention, and phase three including renovation to the training classroom taking about two months. An additional phase that would include construction of the carport canopy and conversion of the town hall storage area can be incorporated into any phase.

Jukunski Humes then obtained the services of a professional cost estimator for hard costs then added those to the soft costs and broke down the costs by phase. Built into the number is a 10 percent estimating contingency as well as a 3.5 percent escalation factor. Mr. Humes added that the main building renovation is \$235.29/square foot which is less than half of current new construction

Mr. Humes provided photos of recent police department renovations which included locker rooms with large lockers and storage areas, prisoner processing booking rooms which provide separate areas for prisoners and officers which provide for officer safety, and fitness areas which have been shown to boost morale. He added that the current sally port is tight and does not provide for officer safety, the plans provide for two larger ports with the second port allowing for evidence-vehicle holds. A new training room would allow for public access to Police Commission meetings or other public events without allowing public access to staff areas. Covered carports have become a year-round need as they provide for faster response during snow events and provide protection from heat and sun for the electronic equipment now being installed in vehicles.

Mr. Humes stated that accreditation standards in the Police Accountability Act require facilities to be accredited and this plan will support those accreditation requirements.

Public Works Director Ahern stated that the PBC would like to move forward with this project and asked Jukunski Humes to break out the design-bidding phase in advance to see the cost which would be between \$250,000 and \$300,000. He added that the Police Department has a bonding appropriation for over \$900,000. The PBC is looking at a two fiscal year approach for phase one which is about \$3.4 million

Councilor Veach asked if the 15% contingency is realistic due to current market conditions for building materials. Mr. Humes stated that the professional cost estimate only assumes an escalation into the summer or fall of 2022. If the project is delayed further those numbers would change.

Councilor Luddy stated that he likes the phased approach for the project and thanked the BOE for giving up space for this project.

Mr. Humes added that he does not see this project as a temporary fix but as a 20-plus year solution for the Police Department. Potential future growth would be in the locker room area as patrol staff increases.

Police Chief Matthew McNally stated that he was involved in the Danbury Police Department renovation a number of years ago, as well as with the building of their new Police Department. He believes that the renovation will improve morale and the flow of function looks good, his only concern is for expansion in the future. Chief McNally added that he liked the training room and added it could even be used to generate revenue.

Finance Director Kevin Delaney stated that there are a few options to pay for this project, one of them being bonding. Another option for funding, especially if the project is phased in, is to incorporate the capital costs into the budget. Mr. Delaney stated that the Board of Finance has stated that they do not want to bond.

Mayor Kaczynski stated that with this project and the proposed Community/Senior Center it would be a good idea for the Town Council to get together with the Board of Finance to discuss funding options.

NO ACTION NEEDED

3. Topic re: Appropriate \$5,348,046.16 of America Rescue Plan (ARPA) grant funds to the HVAC Upgrades account in the American Rescue Plan fund, pending approval by the Board of Finance. – Finance Department

Finance Director Kevin Delaney stated that under the American Rescue Plan Berlin was awarded just over \$6 million in grant money to address issues that arose from the Coronavirus pandemic.

In May of 2021 the US Treasury (the Treasury) published the Interim Final Rule describing eligible uses of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. In January of 2022 the Treasury issued the Final Rule stating where and how these funds can be used. The areas discussed for use at a Joint Board of Finance/Town Council meeting in early 2021 still remain available, however the Treasury did

provide an expanded opportunity to offset a revenue loss of up to \$10 million as a standard allowance which provides for additional options and more streamlined reporting. That money can then be used for governmental services such as road building and maintenance, environmental remediation, and purchasing of emergency vehicles.

The Town has already appropriated \$700,000 into the fiscal year 2022 budget which will be classified as revenue loss. However, if the Town wants to take into account the lost revenue calculation and use the money for general services that needs to be identified by the April 30, 2022 reporting period. This is a one-time option to decide between the formula or the assumed amount.

The Town also has the option of appropriating the additional \$5 million-plus for other areas. The project that has been identified is the HVAC system upgrade at all three elementary schools which has a projected cost of \$15 to \$20 million. Using these funds would provide a substantial down payment for the project and the Governor has proposed a \$90 million HVAC grant program in his recent fiscal year 2023 budget submission which could assist the project.

Mayor Kaczynski questioned the total cost of the project and Finance Director Delaney stated that they originally figured about \$2-3 million per school but as they got through the design those figures increased.

Councilor Veach stated that in meeting with other State Representatives there is the possibility of 50% matching grant funds being available from the State for HVAC as Mr. Delaney mentioned above. Economic Development Coordinator Jim Mahoney stated that getting plans in place for the HVAC project would put the Town in a good position to compete for the grant funds.

Councilor Veach added that since those State grant funds may be available for the HVAC project perhaps these ARPA funds could be shifted to other priorities of the Town. Mr. Delaney reminded the Council that the ARPA funds must be used to address those that were harmed by or negatively impacted by the Coronavirus.

Mayor Kaczynski suggested that this item be tabled for now to reconsider other funding options for the HVAC project as well as determine other areas the ARPA funds can be used. The Town Manager added that it needs to be understood that \$90 million of State funds spread across 169 towns will not necessarily lead to a large grant to the Town for the HVAC project.

NO ACTION TAKEN

4. Topic re: Refer to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a Section 8-24 review the plan for the Town and BOE to lease space in McGee and Hubbard Schools to the YMCA for the purpose of operating its daycare services program. – Board of Education/Facilities

Berlin Public Schools Director of Operations Jeffrey Cugno stated that at the July 20, 2021 Town Council meeting the Town Council approved the proposed Facility Use and Rental Agreement between the Town of Berlin and the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA for use of space at Hubbard Elementary and McGee Middle Schools for daycare facilities.

As the YMCA will be leasing a Town facility the plan must be referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a Section 8-24 review.

Councilor Luddy moved to refer to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a Section 8-24 review the plan for the Town and BOE to lease space in McGee and Hubbard Schools to the YMCA for the purpose of operating its daycare services program.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

5. Topic re: Approve a bid waiver for Show Lighting, Corp. of Berlin, CT and authorize a purchase order increase up to \$25,000 for repairs to the Catherine M. McGee School auditorium stage lighting system as this is in the best interest of the Town. – Facilities

Director of Facilities Doug Solek stated that the 40-plus year-old auditorium stage lighting system at McGee Middle School needs replacement of major control components. Several of the components are available through retrofit options, along with equipment saved from the Berlin High School auditorium lighting system prior to renovation.

Show Lighting Corp of Berlin has serviced the existing equipment for 30 years and has offered several repair options with cost saving measures to further extend the existing system until substantial upgrades can be funded.

Councilor Luddy moved to approve a bid waiver for Show Lighting, Corp. of Berlin, CT and authorize a purchase order increase up to \$25,000 for repairs to the Catherine M. McGee School auditorium stage lighting system as this is in the best interest of the Town.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

6. Topic re: Authorize the Town Manager to increase the pre-referendum fee and existing purchase order by \$100,000.00 as a contingency for Quisenberry Arcari Malik, LLC, to continue to support the Senior/Community Center project, as this is in the best interest of the Town. – Public Works

Public Works Director Mike Ahern stated that the Public Building Commission (PBC) is requesting to secure a contingency of \$100,000 for Quisenberry Arcari Malik, LLC (QA+M) to provide as-needed support to the Town Council Advisory Committee, revise the schematic design and associated cost estimates in response to anticipated requests from the PBC and Town Council, and provide other support in preparation for public referendum

Mayor Kaczynski stated that his only concern is that he would rather wait until the information being compiled by the Community/Senior Center Advisory Committee is returned to the Town Council and suggested that the PBC return to Council at a later date with this request.

NO ACTION TAKEN

7. Topic re: Authorize staff to submit a change of use application to the Connecticut Department of Health to permit open space use in combination with future water supply use of the Town of Berlin and Berlin Water Control District owned, 66-acre parcel at the rear of Woodlawn Road (Map 10-1, Block 83, Lot 16). – Economic Development/Water Control

Economic Development Coordinator Jim Mahoney stated that the Town owns a 66-acre parcel at the rear of Woodlawn Road that is registered with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) as a potential future water supply source although there are no imminent plans to use it for that purpose. The property is adjacent to new development at 404 Berlin Turnpike as well as 550-554 Berlin Turnpike which has an application for mixed-use development pending before the Planning and Zoning Commission.

FHI was hired to create a concept plan for potential open space use of the parcel and although the property has significant wetland areas the FHI study concluded that there is good potential for open space use. The Conservation Commission has endorsed the submission of a change of use application to the DPH.

Water Control Manager Ray Jarema stated that this well goes back to 1966. The Berlin Water Control does not want to give up the diversion permit for the well as there is a two-year permit process. Although there are some water quality issues it is a high producing well and has potential to be a well field in the future.

The DPH does not allow the property to be sold without another utility having first option, however a change in use can be applied for and passive use is allowed. The Berlin Water Control Commission approved moving forward with the change of use application.

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize staff to submit a change of use application to the Connecticut Department of Health to permit open space use in combination with future water supply use of the Town of Berlin and Berlin Water Control District owned, 66-acre parcel at the rear of Woodlawn Road (Map 10-1, Block 83, Lot 16).

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

8. Topic re: Authorize the Town Manager to enter into a purchase agreement with Roger Svensk for acquisition of a one-acre property and a 0.1-acre easement on Reservoir Road for a price of \$42,000, subject to review and approval of Corporation Counsel. This motion replaces the

\$40,000 purchase agreement for the same property previously approved by the Town Council on January 18, 2022. – Economic Development

Economic Development Coordinator Mahoney stated that the Town Council previously authorized the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with Roger Svensk to purchase a one-acre strip of land on Reservoir Road.

After further investigation it was determined that there is a steep slope where the parcel meets Timberlin Park and that a future trail would be better routed along the south side of the parcels before entering Timberlin.

The current property owner has agreed to include an easement along a ten-foot strip on the southerly boundary of the parcel for a cost of \$2,000. A modification of the previous authorization by the Town Council is needed to increase the purchase price.

Councilor Luddy moved to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a purchase agreement with Roger Svensk for acquisition of a one-acre property and a 0.1-acre easement on Reservoir Road for a price of \$42,000, subject to review and approval of Corporation Counsel. This motion replaces the \$40,000 purchase agreement for the same property previously approved by the Town Council on January 18, 2022.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

9. Topic re: Waive the bidding process and authorize the Town Manager to enter a contract amendment with Loureiro Engineering of \$8,850 for additional 2022 services related to 889 Farmington Avenue with the cost be charged to the Municipal Brownfields Grant account, as this is in the best interest of the Town. – Economic Development

Economic Development Coordinator Mahoney stated that the Town requested that Loureiro Engineering provide them with a proposal for additional services expected to be required in 2022 on the 55 Steele Boulevard (fka 889 Farmington Avenue) project. The two main items are additional general consulting services and an additional round of ground water testing.

Councilor Luddy moved to waive the bidding process and authorize the Town Manager to enter a contract amendment with Loureiro Engineering of \$8,850 for additional 2022 services related to 889 Farmington Avenue with the cost be charged to the Municipal Brownfields Grant account, as this is in the best interest of the Town.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

I. APPOINTMENTS:

1. **Board of Ethics - Alternate** –Term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D or U.
2. **Cemetery Committee – Alternate – Vacancy** -Term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
3. **Commission for Persons with Disabilities – Vacancy** -Term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
4. **Conservation Commission - Alternate – Vacancy** -Term would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with an R or U.
5. **Constables – Vacancy** -Term would be until December 2023. Can only be filled with D or U (with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6)).
6. **Constables – Vacancy** - Term would be until December 2023. Can only be filled with D or U (with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6)).
7. **Constables – Vacancy** - Term would be until December 2023. Can only be filled with D or U (with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6)).
8. **Historic District Commission** – New term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
9. **Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission – Vacancy** – Term will be until January 31, 2024. Can be filled with a D or U.
10. **Parks and Recreation Commission** – New term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R, or U.
11. **Plainville Area Cable Television Advisory Council (PACTAC) – 2 Vacancies** – New terms would expire on June 30, 2023. Can be filled with a D, R or U. There are only two members from Berlin for this board.
12. **VNA – Vacancy** - New term would be until January 31, 2024. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

Councilor Luddy placed in nomination the name of Cynthia Costa (R) of 15 Tanglewood Court for appointment to the Berlin VNA.

Mayor Kaczynski asked if there were any further nominations. There being no further nominations, he declared the nominations closed.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski.

Vote being 6-0 in favor of Cynthia Costa (R) to serve on the Berlin VNA. Term ending January 31, 2024.

13. VNA – Vacancy - New term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

14. VNA – Vacancy - New term would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

15. Water Control Commission –Vacancy -New term would be until January 31, 2023. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

Councilor Luddy placed in nomination the name of Liam Mitchell (R) of 1005 Kensington Road for appointment to the Water Control Commission.

Mayor Kaczynski asked if there were any further nominations. There being no further nominations, he declared the nominations closed.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski.

Vote being 6-0 in favor of Liam Mitchell (R) to serve on the Water Control Commission. Term ending January 31, 2023.

16. Water Control Commission –Alternate - Vacancy -New term would be until January 31, 2024
Can only be filled with a D or U.

17. Zoning Board of Appeals - Alternate – Vacancy – Term would be until January 31, 2024. Can be filled with D, R, or U.

J. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT:

- The Berlin Police Department Workers Comp memo previously approved by Town Council was received back from Legal Counsel and reviewed by the Fraternal Order of Police. All are in agreement and the document was signed.
- Berlin Police Pension program – The Town Manager and Finance Director have met with the actuaries to discuss plan scenarios. More information will be presented to the Town Council when it is available.
- Golf Commission – At the March 17th Golf Commission meeting a recommendation will be made to the Town Manager regarding outsourcing of the maintenance of Timberlin Golf Course. The numbers show a savings however the course is preparing to open for the season and there will be time involved for Town Council approval, legal review, and Blue-Collar Union review. The Town Manager also mentioned to the Golf Commission that he is

planning to combine the Golf Director's position with the Golf Pro. Therefore, the Golf Commission has agreed to table the discussion of maintenance outsourcing for the time being.

- VNA Director/Clinical Supervisor Barbara Vujs will be leaving as she is moving out of state.
- The wearing of masks at the Berlin-Peck Library is now up to the individual, following the Board of Education's removal of the mask mandate in schools. Covid cases have been decreasing in Berlin.
- Electronic communication to Town residents – The Town Manager along with Town Clerk Kate Wall and Director of Community, Recreation and Park Services Jen Ochoa viewed a demonstration by TextMyGov which provides Town information to residents who sign up for text notifications. The system will be shown to department heads next week.
- The Board of Education (BOE) and Town budgets will be presented to the Board of Finance (BOF) at their meeting on Wednesday March 2, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. Budget Workshops are scheduled for March 9th and 16th when the BOF will ask questions and make adjustments to the budgets. On March 29th Budget Forums will be held at 1:00 p.m. at the Berlin Senior Center and 7:00 p.m. at Berlin High School where the BOE and Town budgets will be presented.

If the BOF accepts the budget on that date the Town Council has five days to accept it and return it to the BOF to set the mil rate. The Town Manager encouraged Council members to become familiar with the budget now and attend the BOF meeting of March 2nd as well as the workshops.

The Budget Referendum will be held at the end of April.

K. SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None

L. COUNCILORS' COMMUNICATION:

Councilor Fazzino stated he was impressed with the student that presented her Capstone project on the stock market in front of a very large audience at the February 23rd Board of Education meeting.

M. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

February 15, 2022

Councilor Luddy moved to accept the Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2022.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veach, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

N. ADJOURNMENT:

Councilor Luddy moved to adjourn at 9:28 p.m.

Seconded by Councilor Paonessa.

Those voting in favor: Councilor Fazzino, Councilor Luddy, Councilor Paonessa, Councilor Urrunaga, Councilor Veatch, Mayor Kaczynski

Vote being 6-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Submitted by,

Kathryn Wall
Clerk of the Meeting