

2. Demographics

Population

East Hartford's population growth and later decline in the 20th century was closely tied to the activities of the Town's primary employer, Pratt and Whitney, which moved its main operations across the river into a 1,100-acre campus in East Hartford in 1929. As the company expanded over the next 50 years to become one of New England's largest employers, East Hartford's population grew exponentially, increasing by over 30% a decade, on average, from 1900 to 1970 (see Table 1).

East Hartford's population reached its most recent peak at 57,583 residents in 1970. From 1970 to 2000, the Town's population contracted, following a loss in local and regional jobs led by Pratt and Whitney's transition from a wartime to peace-time manufacturer, the relocation of service-sector jobs in East Hartford to neighboring suburbs, and the Hartford metro area losing insurance workers as major firms downsized local operations. By the 2000s, East Hartford's population decline slowed as the regional economy began expanding again and diversifying with gains in service-sector jobs, resulting in regional in-migration and renewed interest in development within East Hartford's former industrial parks. The decade from 2000 to 2010 marked the first decade of net population growth since 1970; since 2010 the Town experienced a slight decline, but the population remains among the highest in several decades.

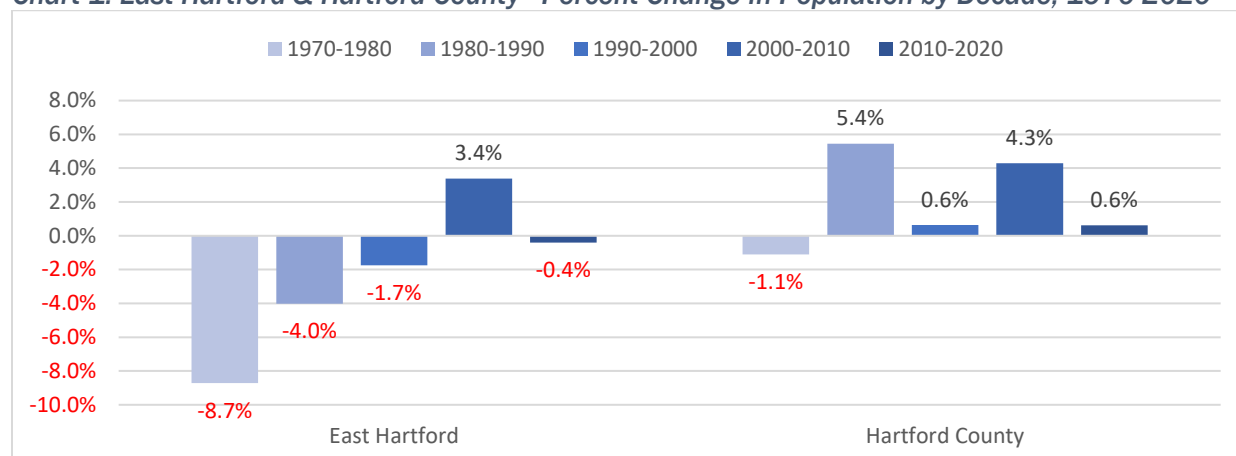
Table 1: East Hartford Population, 1900-2020

Year	Population	Change from Previous Decade	% Change from Previous Decade
1900	6,406		
1910	8,138	1,722	27.0%
1920	11,648	3,510	43.1%
1930	17,125	5,477	47.0%
1940	18,615	1,490	8.7%
1950	29,933	11,318	60.8%
1960	43,977	14,044	46.9%
1970	57,583	13,606	30.9%
1980	52,563	-5,020	-8.7%
1990	50,452	-2,111	-4.0%
2000	49,575	-877	-1.7%
2010	51,252	1,677	3.4%
2020	51,045	-207	-0.4%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 1900-2020

East Hartford's population trajectory has historically been linked to other urban communities in the Hartford metropolitan area, including the City of Hartford, New Britain, West Hartford, and Manchester. Over the past five decades, East Hartford generally lost population, while Hartford County has experienced modest but continuous growth, primarily in its suburban communities (see Chart 1). However, the Town's population loss has slowed with each consecutive decade through 2010 and is stabilizing, suggesting that East Hartford has become an increasingly attractive community for prospective residents.

Chart 1: East Hartford & Hartford County - Percent Change in Population by Decade, 1970-2020

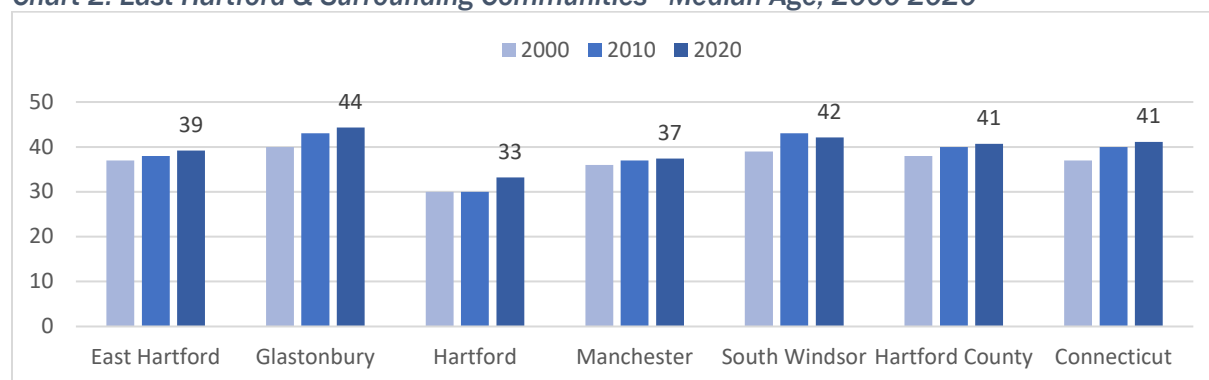


Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 1970-2020

Age

East Hartford's median age has increased from 37 years in 2000 to 39 years in 2020, reflecting a broader regional and national trend toward an aging population after a decline in birth rates. Chart 2 shows the historical trend in the Town and surrounding areas. In 2020,¹ East Hartford's median age (39) was lower than its high-income neighbors, Glastonbury (44) and South Windsor (42), but higher than Hartford (33) and Manchester (37), indicating a stable working-age population.

Chart 2: East Hartford & Surrounding Communities - Median Age, 2000-2020



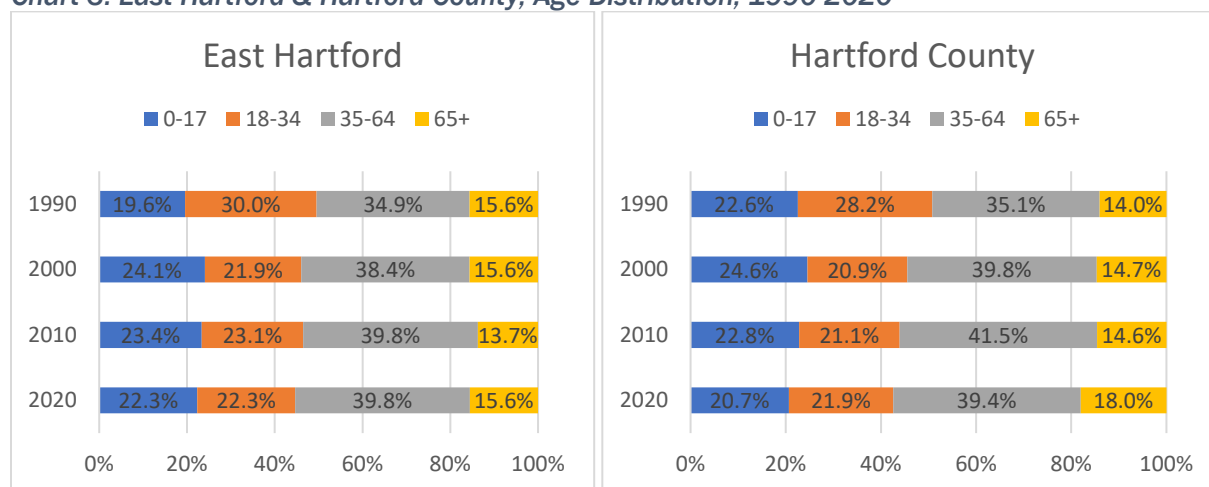
Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2000-2020

The trend in the Town's population shares by age group (see Chart 3) signifies a relatively consistent distribution since 2000, with little variation across major age cohorts. Since 1990, East Hartford's share of seniors aged 65 and older has been unchanged; while shares of the older labor force aged 35-64 and youth under 18 have increased, and the younger labor force aged 18-34 has decreased. This trend is somewhat in contrast to regional trends in the County, where shares of seniors grew,

¹ The selection of data years for this narrative was chosen to ensure the use of the most reliable and current information available at the time of writing. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Decennial Census, based on a 100% count of the population, was identified as a more reliable source compared to the more recently released ACS 2018-2022 5-Year Estimate, which is drawn from a small sample of household surveys conducted over a five-year period.

and youth under 18 decreased over this period. East Hartford's growing population share of youth under 18 suggests that the Town is becoming increasingly more attractive to families with children.

Chart 3: East Hartford & Hartford County, Age Distribution, 1990-2020



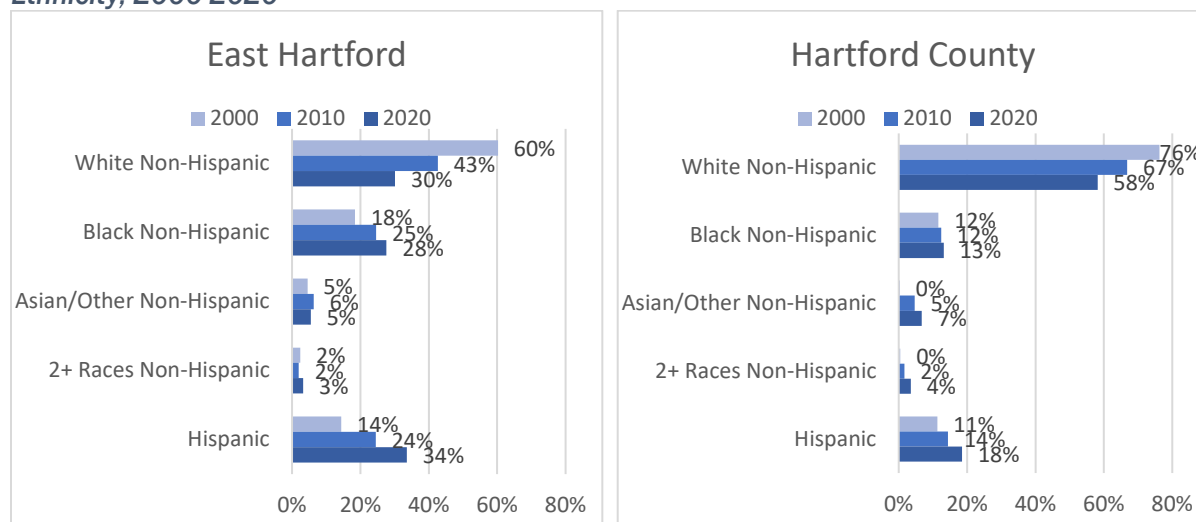
Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 1990-2020

Mutually Exclusive Race & Ethnicity

Over the past 20 years, Hartford County's population has progressively diversified in terms of race and ethnicity, with gains in Hispanic, Black, Asian, and other non-White population groups. East Hartford has historically been more diverse than the County and continues to attract residents from across the United States and the globe.

From 2000 to 2020, the Town's share of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), increased from 40% to 70% (+16,122 residents). In comparison, Hartford County's BIPOC share increased from 24% to 42% during the same period. Over these years, East Hartford's Hispanic population more than doubled (+10,048 residents) while Black non-Hispanics increased by 5,053 residents.

Chart 4: East Hartford & Hartford County - Population Distribution by Mutually Exclusive Race and Ethnicity, 2000-2020



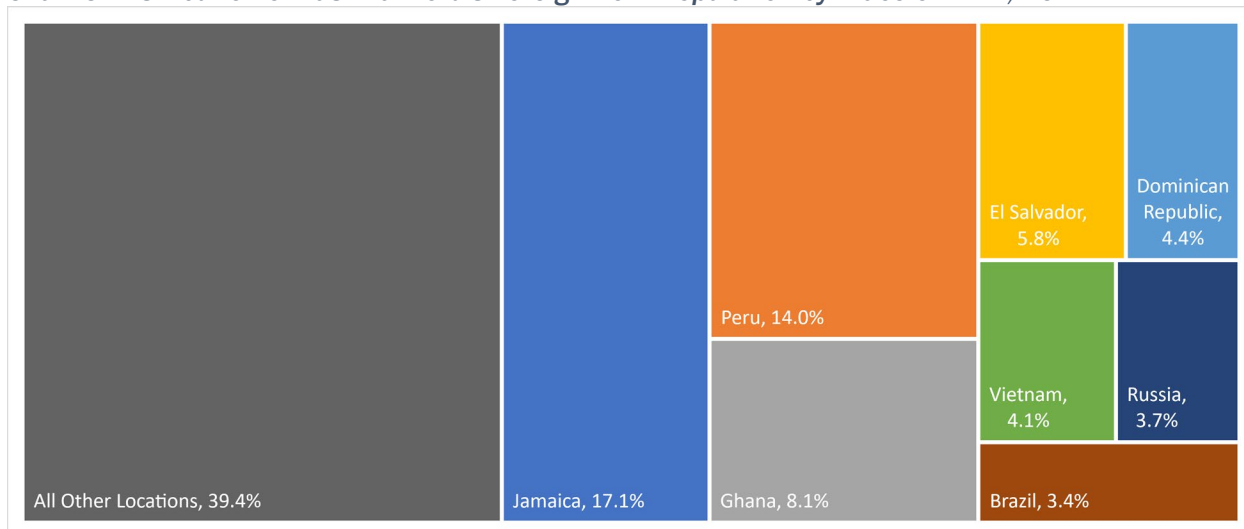
Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2000-2020

Nativity and Language

Today, 18,670 (39%) of East Hartford residents speak a language other than English at home, including 13,533 Spanish speakers (28%) and 5,137 residents speaking other languages. Hartford County has a higher percentage of English-only speakers at 75%; just 14% of the County's residents speak Spanish at home. Most East Hartford residents speak English very well (88%), compared with 91% of County residents, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).

Although East Hartford has a high share of residents who speak a language other than English at home, its proportion of foreign-born residents is considerably smaller, at 20% (9,918 residents). Sizeable shares of the Town's foreign-born population are from Jamaica (17%), Peru (14%), Ghana (8.1%), El Salvador (5.8%), and the Dominican Republic (4.7%) (see Chart 5).

Chart 5: Distribution of East Hartford's Foreign-Born Population by Place of Birth, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimate.

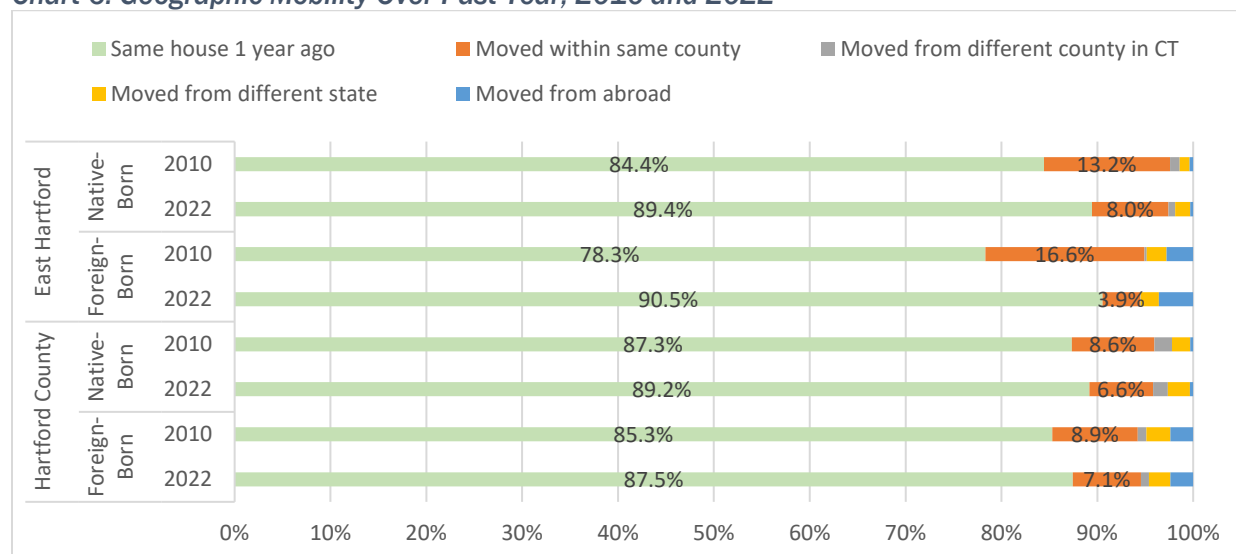
Migration

In the decades following East Hartford's population peak, its socioeconomic composition has changed considerably, as long-time residents aged in place or relocated, and new residents replaced those that left. Looking at more recent trends over the past 10 years, the Town's population has stabilized in terms of the total number of residents, although there is consistent residential turnover.

According to the ACS, from 2018 to 2022, a higher share (90%) of residents in the Town than the County overall (89%) resided at the same house from one year to the next, a strong indicator of housing stability. This share was higher than the City of Hartford (84%) and Manchester (88%), but less than Glastonbury (91%) and South Windsor (91%). Additionally, the share of foreign-born East Hartford residents who moved to a different house from 2010 to 2022 dropped from 22% to 9.5%, a significant improvement (see Chart 6).

East Hartford's share of foreign-born residents that moved to East Hartford from another country over the past year increased from 2.8% in 2010 to 3.6% in 2022, well above Hartford County levels (2.4% in both 2010 and 2022).

Chart 6: Geographic Mobility Over Past Year, 2010 and 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010 & 2022 5-Year Estimates.

Household Size

Over the past 30 years, East Hartford's average household size (based on population in households and total households), has moderately increased, from 2.43 to 2.51 persons per household. Its current household size is not particularly high, but just above the state average of 2.47 (see Table 2). While neighboring cities and town's household sizes have generally decreased over the last few decades, East Hartford is unique for its relatively stable average household size and the fact that it has not decreased over the period.

Over the past decade, East Hartford, Manchester, and South Windsor saw slight increases in average household size, reflecting population growth. In East Hartford, the recent increase was driven by an expansion of 3- and 4-person households as individuals living alone, 2-person and 5+ person households declined in number.

Table 2: East Hartford & Environs - Average Household Size, 1990-2020

	1990	2000	2010	2020	Change. 1990- 2020
East Hartford	2.43	2.42	2.50	2.51	+0.08
Glastonbury	2.62	2.57	2.59	2.52	-0.11
Hartford	2.55	2.58	2.57	2.43	-0.13
Manchester	2.44	2.32	2.32	2.34	-0.10
South Windsor	2.80	2.72	2.58	2.59	-0.20
Hartford County	2.55	2.56	2.55	2.42	-0.13
State of Connecticut	2.59	2.53	2.52	2.47	-0.12

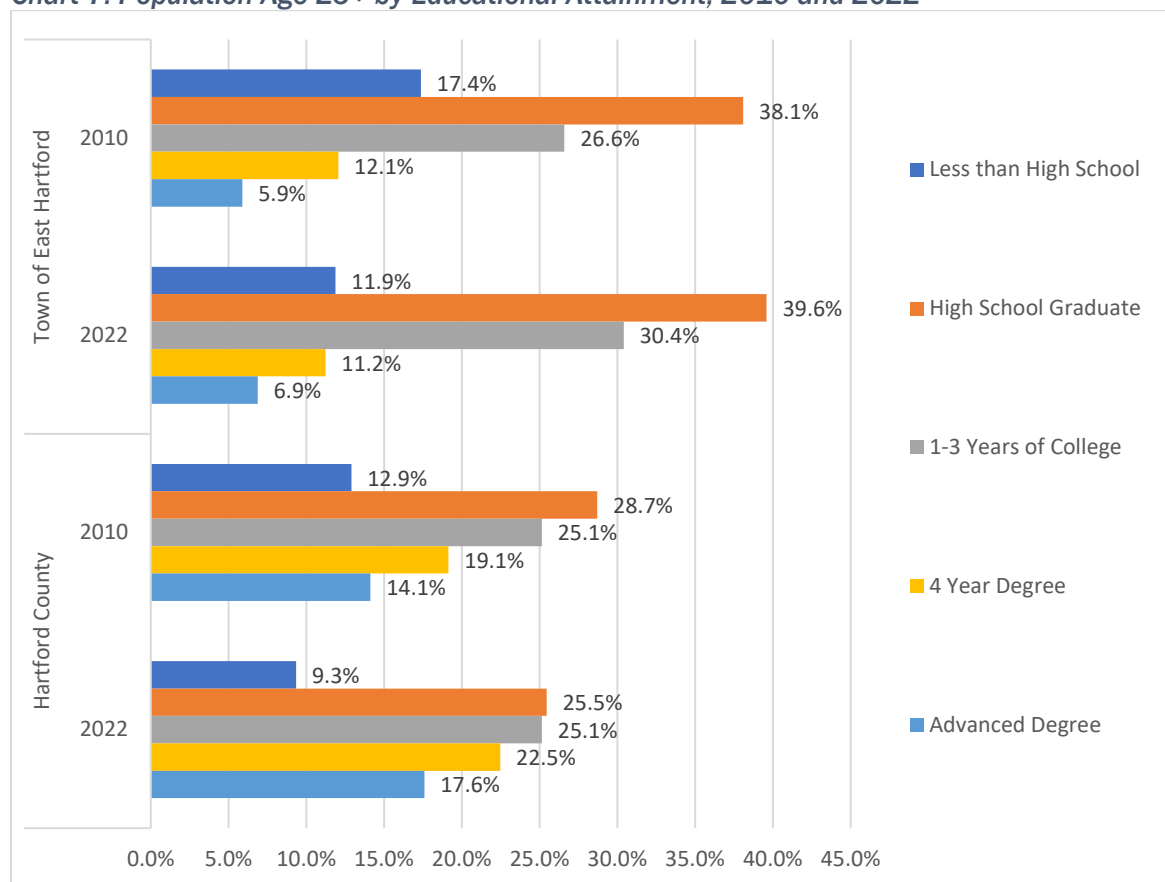
Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 1990-2020

Educational Attainment

East Hartford has somewhat lower levels of educational attainment than Hartford County as a whole, with just 49% of residents aged 25+ with some college education or more, compared with 64% of County residents (see Chart 7). Looking at residents with a four-year college degree or higher, East Hartford's share of such residents (18%) is about half that of the County (40%).

Over the past decade, the share of the Town's population with less than a high school education has decreased by almost four percentage points, but the educational gap has widened considerably compared to the broader region, suggesting that East Hartford remains one of the few viable places for working-class people to live.

Chart 7: Population Age 25+ by Educational Attainment, 2010 and 2022



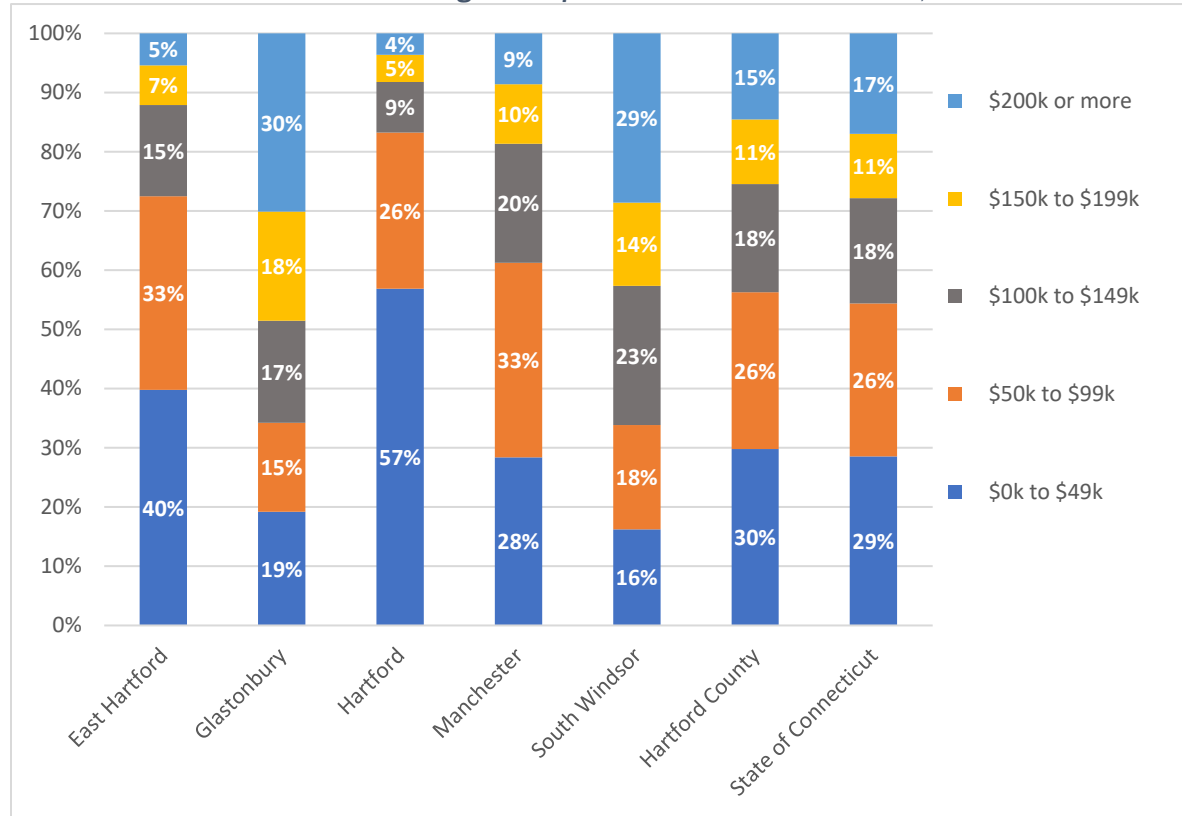
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010 & 2022 5-Year Estimates.

Household Income

East Hartford has a lower median household income (\$64,244) than most of its neighbors, except for Hartford (\$41,841). It is less than half that of Glastonbury (\$144,134) and South Windsor (\$134,080). Since 2010, East Hartford's median household income increased at a rate of 32.2%, which was several percentage points less than the rate of inflation over that period (34.2%) and below that of its neighbors. East Hartford's moderate income growth suggests that it does not suffer from the effects of gentrification; however lower household median incomes are a concern, given regionally high housing costs.

Chart 8 illustrates the household income distribution of East Hartford as compared to its neighbors, the County, and the State in 2022. Notably, 33% of East Hartford households earn less than \$50,000 annually, versus 30% of County households. Further, just 28% of East Hartford households earn \$100,000 or more, far less than in Glastonbury (66%), South Windsor (66%), Manchester (39%), and Hartford County (44%) but more than the City of Hartford (17%).

Chart 8: East Hartford & Surrounding Municipalities - Income Distribution, 2022

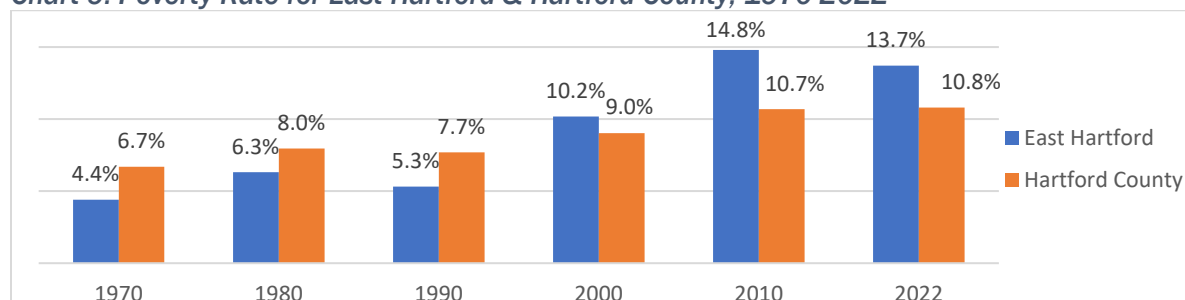


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2022 5-Year Estimate.

East Hartford's poverty rate has sharply increased since 1970 (see Chart 9), nearly tripling in share from 4.4% in 1970 to 14% in 2022. This increase was significant for all East Hartford residents over the past few decades except for older seniors 75+, whose already high level of poverty remained largely unchanged (see Chart 10). The poverty rate declined by 1.7 percentage points over the past decade but remains very high.

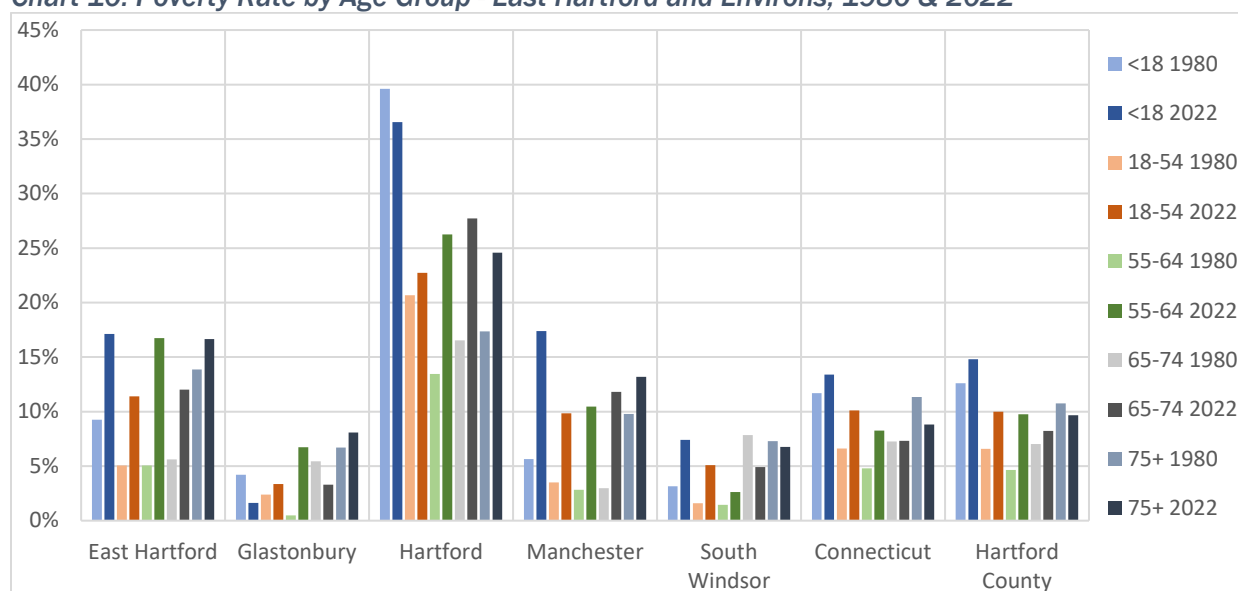
In 2022, poverty rates above 15% were estimated in East Hartford among youth under age 12, as well as older adults aged 55-64 and 75+. Poverty rates among older adults (45+) and teenagers in East Hartford were well above County levels. These trends may indicate a need for additional supportive services among youth, families, seniors, and older working-age residents.

Chart 9: Poverty Rate for East Hartford & Hartford County, 1970-2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1970-2000; American Community Survey, 2010 and 2022 5-Year Estimates.

Chart 10: Poverty Rate by Age Group - East Hartford and Environs, 1980 & 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1980; American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimate.

Household income in East Hartford is not evenly distributed by geography. As shown in Figure 1, the highest-income households in the Town are concentrated in the eastern portion, while the lowest-income households tend to be found in the central portion of the Town.

Varying quality-of-life conditions can be illuminated through a community resiliency framework. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) aggregates metrics that depict the resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health, stresses such as natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks. Population characteristics in this dataset include metrics such as poverty status, lack of vehicle status, crowded housing, unemployment, minority status (see <https://svi.cdc.gov>).

This tool was established to help local officials identify communities that may need support in preparing for hazards and recovering from disaster. Figure 2 depicts areas in East Hartford that experience the highest levels of CDC-defined social vulnerability, correlating closely with income.

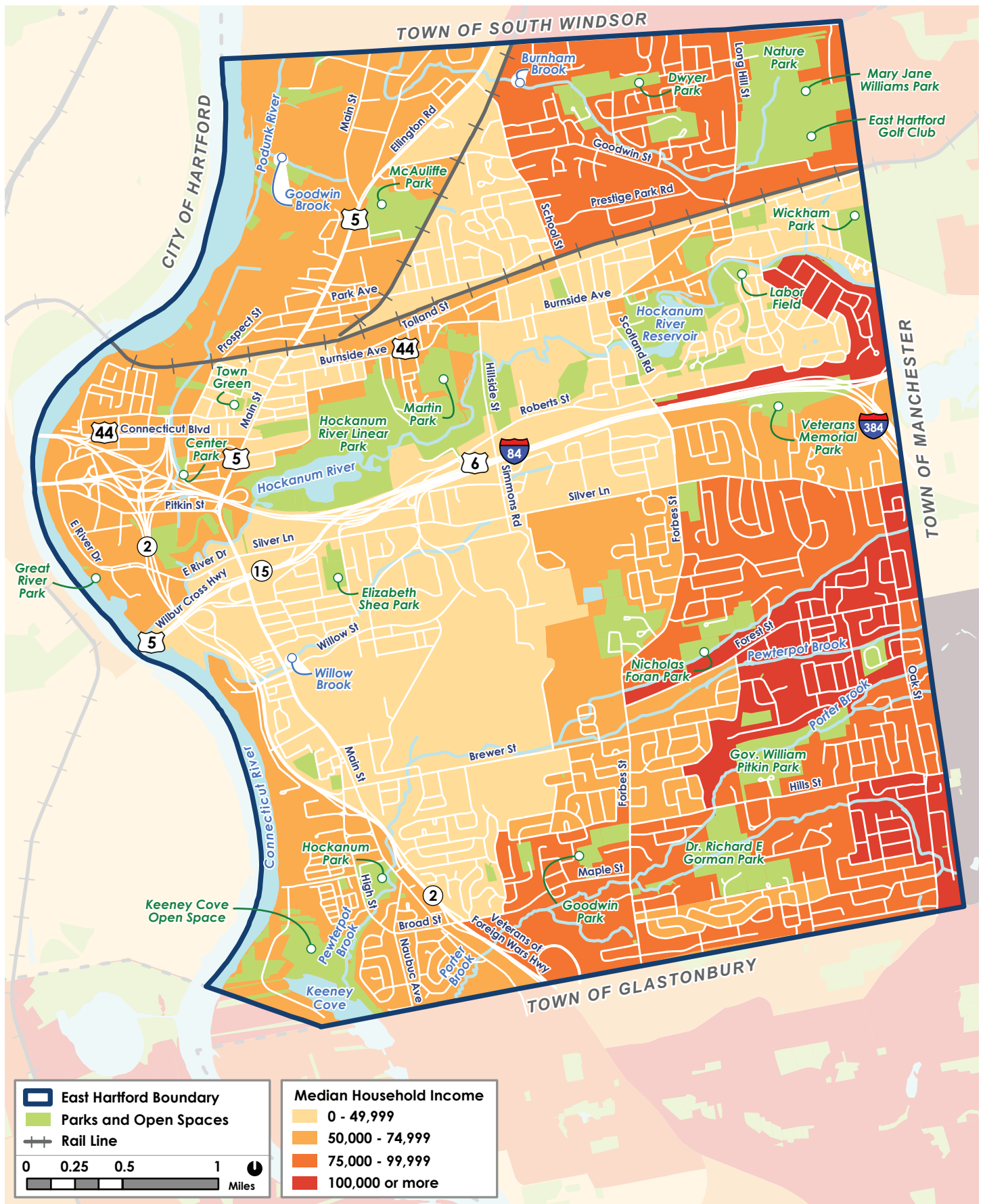


Figure 1: Median Household Income

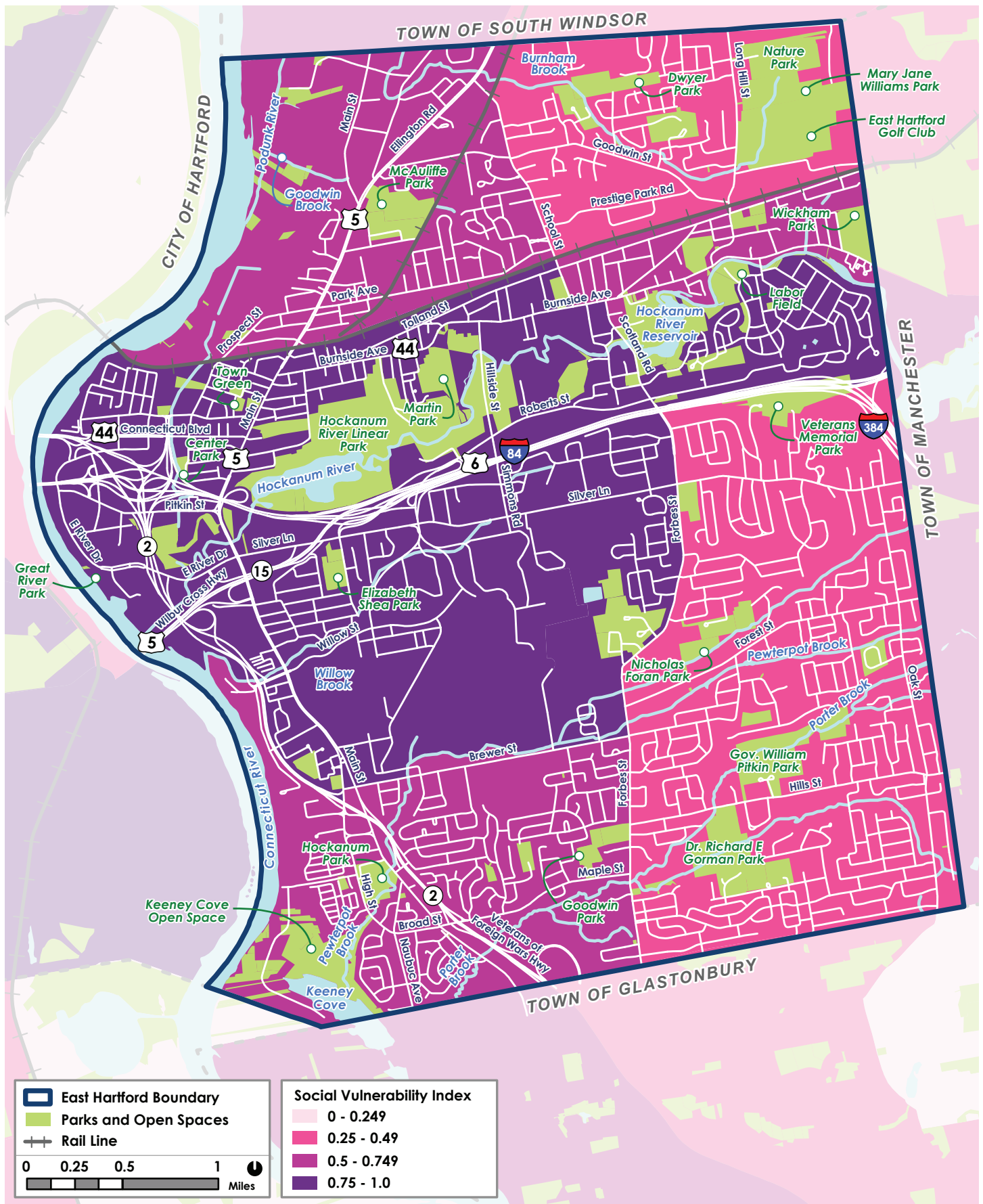


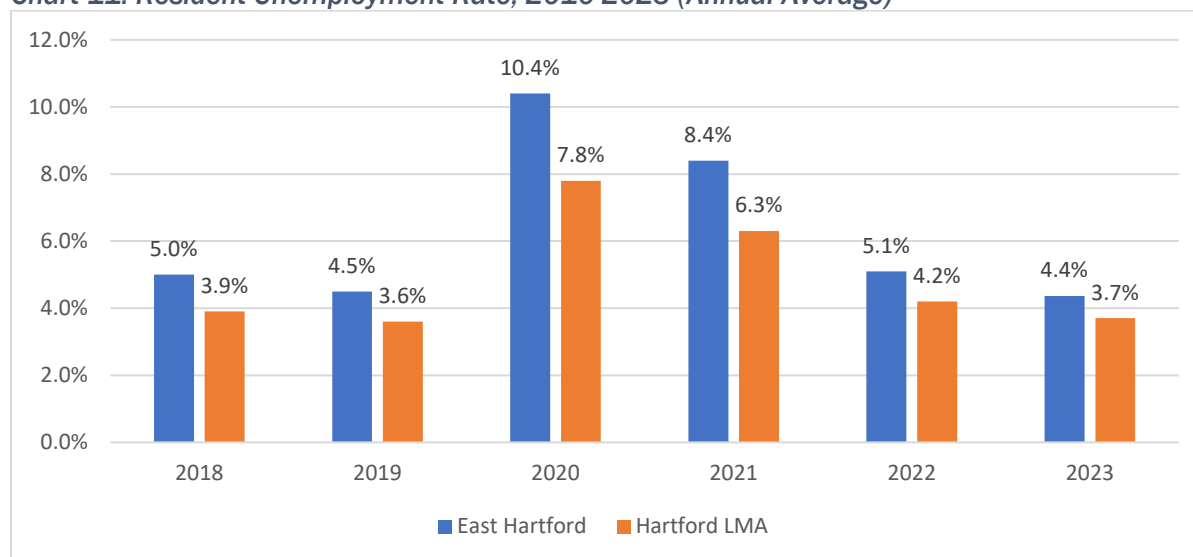
Figure 2: Social Vulnerability Index

Labor Force

The resident unemployment rate in East Hartford has historically followed that of the broader Hartford Labor Market Area (see Chart 11). Due to the character of the Town's labor force, which is predominantly employed in working-class and service occupations and industries with fewer benefits and job security policies than the broader economy, its unemployment rate is generally several percentage points higher than the region. According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, East Hartford's unemployment rate was 4.4% on average in 2023, just 0.7 percentage points above the Hartford Labor Market Area as a whole and down 6.0 percentage points from the 2020 monthly average of 10.4%.

East Hartford's labor force participation rate, determined based on the share of the population either employed or seeking employment, was 66.3% in 2022, compared with 62.5% in the City of Hartford, 66.4% in Glastonbury, and 68.9% in South Windsor. Lower participation rates are typical for areas with sizeable shares of populations with young children or seniors that do not participate in the labor force, and this may also contribute to lower household income and higher poverty levels due to the lower number of wage earners.

Chart 11: Resident Unemployment Rate, 2010-2023 (Annual Average)



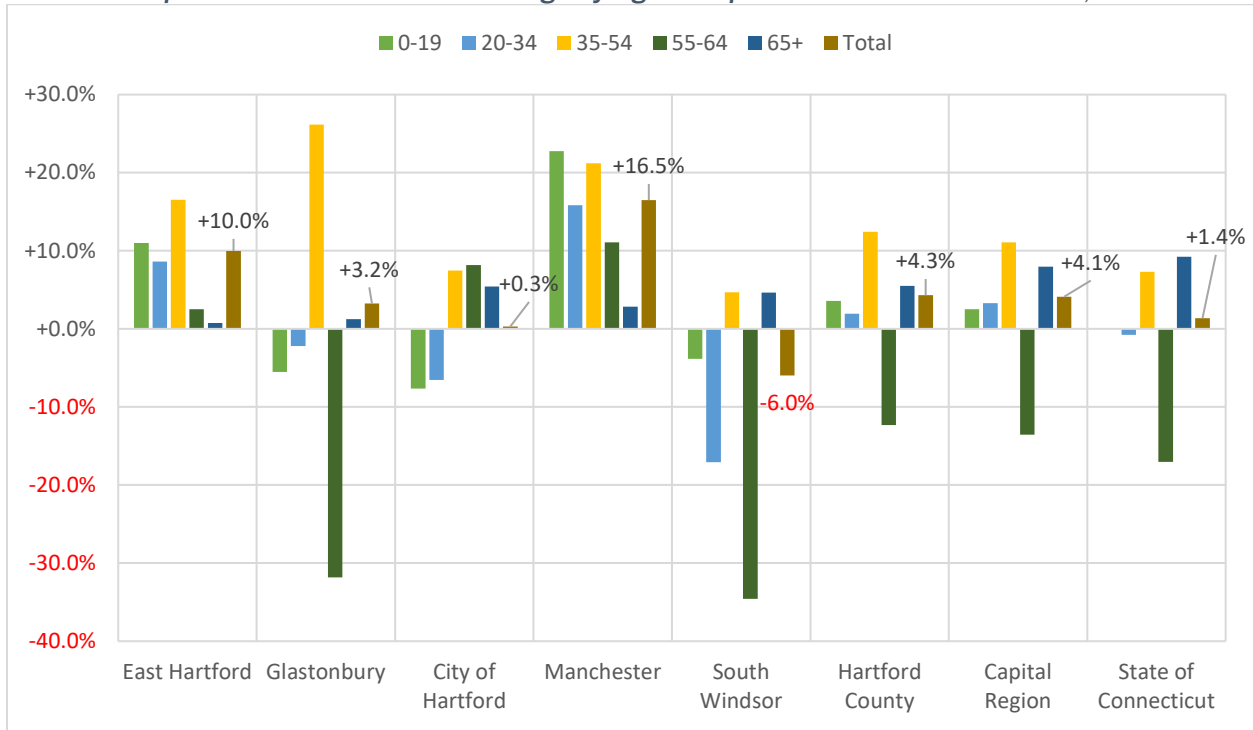
Source: CTDOL, LAUS Program, 2010-2023

Population Projections

According to the Connecticut Data Center's latest population projections released in 2015 (see Chart 12),² East Hartford's population is expected to increase by 10% through 2040, a larger increase than all its neighbors except for Manchester (+17%). Youth population growth in East Hartford is projected to be the second strongest (+11%) among its neighbors, after Manchester (+23%). High growth is also projected in East Hartford for younger and prime labor force-age adults (+8.6% and +17%, respectively). Unlike neighboring communities, minimal growth is projected in East Hartford among older workers aged 55-64 (+2.5%) and seniors 65+ (+0.8%).

² The results of the Census Bureau's latest decennial population count for 2020 suggest that the population forecast for East Hartford is optimistic. CT Data Center will revise its statewide population forecast in the coming years using the decennial count, which was not available when its forecasts were prepared.

Chart 12: Population Growth Percent Change by Age Group – East Hartford & Environs, 2020-2040



Source: UCONN Data Center, 2015

Summary of Key Findings

East Hartford has begun to reverse a decades long trend in population declines, with an increasingly diverse and globally connected population, and that trend is expected to continue at a greater rate than most nearby communities. With household size remaining stable, the Town appears to be attracting a growing share of small families, while single-person and large households are declining. Despite fluctuations in its industrial and service-sector base, East Hartford remains solidly working-class, with lower median household incomes than most of its neighbors. Although the Town has seen slight gains in education levels and its unemployment rate is now on par with its neighbors, the poverty rate has grown substantially in recent years and remains higher than in surrounding areas.

These trends have implications for long-term planning in East Hartford that will inform strategies in later chapters, including housing affordability, transportation access to jobs, provision of social services, and distribution and adequacy of community facilities.