



East Hartford 2024 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update

Public Workshop #1 Summary

Meeting Date: November 28, 2023

Prepared on behalf of:

Town of East Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission

Prepared by:

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BFJ Planning

Town of East Hartford 2024 POCD Update
Public Workshop #1 Summary

January 3, 2024

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Introduction

The Town of East Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission hosted the first public workshop as part of the 2024 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update. The opening workshop was held on November 28, 2023, at the East Hartford Senior Center. A total of about 30 participants attended, which included East Hartford residents, business owners, local stakeholders, Planning and Zoning Commission members, Town Council members, and Town staff. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the East Hartford community to the beginning of the POCD planning process and to hear feedback on 2014 POCD Vision, Goals, and Chapter Goals.

The meeting consisted of a presentation from the Town's consultant team followed by an open house session for participants to review and provide feedback at the open house stations. For more information about the POCD, please visit POCD website for more information and updates throughout the process:

<https://www.easthartfordct.gov/planning-and-zoning-commission/pages/2024-plan-of-conservation-and-development-update>

Presentation

The meeting began with an introduction from the Town Director of Development Eileen Buckheit. BFJ Planning ("BFJ"), the Town's consultant team, then presented an educational overview of a POCD, planning process timeline, comprehensive look at the community engagement opportunities to date and upcoming, and highlights from the engagement meetings. The key takeaways focused on the need for (1) upgrades to various municipal facilities, (2) additional support for social services-oriented departments, (3) more affordable housing, especially for families, seniors, and those with disabilities, (4) improved bus system and infrastructure, (5) pedestrian and streetscape improvements along Main Street, (6) organized entity to support business development and retention, (7) leverage the strong industrial/warehousing industries, (8) improve communication and data sharing across Town departments, boards, and commissions, (9) additional park maintenance, (10) increased visibility and organizational support for the arts, and (11) long-term planning needs including an emergency management plan, Town-wide climate change adaptation strategy, and comprehensive municipal facilities study.

BFJ then shared an online engagement tool called the East Hartford POCD Ideas Wall. This tool allows community members to share their ideas on how to improve East Hartford in the next 10 years and beyond. One may click on a category, provide their feedback, and interact with other comments written. Next, BFJ discussed the initial findings on demographics, land use, and zoning.



Open House Stations Review and Discussion

After the conclusion of the presentation, attendees were invited to review and comment on the overarching POCD vision statement and goals as well as the chapter goals of the 2014 POCD. The purpose of this exercise was to understand if the 2014 POCD vision and goals were still relevant and whether anything was missing. Seven stations were set up for people to browse and review in an “open house” format. The first station contained the 2014 POCD vision statement and goals. Following this, there was one station for each of the plan chapters: (1) Land Use, Zoning, and Housing, (2) Transportation and Mobility, (3) Economic Development, (4) Community Facilities, Infrastructure, Historic and Cultural Resources, and (5) Parks, Open Spaces, Recreation, and Environmental Resources. The final station consisted of a Town-wide map where participants were able to write their ideas and concerns about places in East Hartford. Attendees were invited to visit each station where they could speak with the moderator and share feedback.

The following sections summarize the feedback received at the open house stations. Some comments have been edited for clarity or combined, in the case of repeat comments. Comments listed below, however, are not necessarily proposed for inclusion in the final report. Photos of the presentation boards containing participant comments from the workshop are located in Appendix A. Appendix B contains a copy of the presentation that was shared at the workshop.



Workstations

Vision and Goals

2014 POCD Vision Statement

To promote a development strategy that balances targeted redevelopment for economic revitalization, enhancement of the tax base and job creation, with preservation and stabilization of residential neighborhoods to protect quality of life.

2014 POCD Goals

- Preserve the Town's sound housing stock and stable neighborhood
- Regulate infill development in keeping with the character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods and development
- Preserve and enhance the Town's open space and recreation areas
- Create linkages among open space, community facilities and residential neighborhoods
- Revitalize and rejuvenate the Central Business District
- Implement improvements to the Town's commercial corridors
- Connect redevelopment areas such as Rentschler Field, Founders' Plaza and the Goodwin College areas with the Central Business District and with each other
- Promote economic development to attract and retain business
- Promote future development efforts which provide new housing, recreation, business, and employment opportunities
- Support quality-of-life improvements

Workstation Comments

Recommendations for the 2014 POCD Vision Statement

- There were no public comments noted on the 2014 POCD Vision Statement.

Recommendations for the 2014 POCD Goals

- Meeting participants were asked to place a checkmark or an X on the goals that they believe should continue to be goals for the 2024 POCD. The following goals received continued support, illustrated with a range of one to three markings:
 - Preserve the Town's sound housing stock and stable neighborhood
 - Regulate infill development in keeping with the character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods and development
 - Preserve and enhance the Town's open space and recreation areas
 - Create linkages among open space, community facilities and residential neighborhoods
 - Implement improvements to the Town's commercial corridors
 - Connect redevelopment areas such as Rentschler Field, Founders' Plaza and the Goodwin College areas with the Central Business District and with each other
 - Promote economic development to attract and retain business

- Promote future development efforts which provide new housing, recreation, business, and employment opportunities

General Comments

- For the goal related to economic development, a meeting participant indicated that effective development opportunities are where people and businesses/restaurants/destinations overlap. Examples of this include public transit hubs and mixed-use areas.

Land Use, Zoning, and Housing

Workstation Comments – Below are the comments organized by topic areas.

- Land Use
 - Need for a community gym.
 - Encourage locations inside neighborhoods that meet the needs of the community, such as places where neighbors can meet each other and areas to promote walking.
 - Consider repurposing the Rite Aid located at School Street and Burnside Avenue.
- Zoning
 - Revise zoning and land use toward more, larger, and widespread mixed-use areas.
 - Provide more focus on mixed-use areas and allow for more variety in currently rigid, restricted zones.
 - Create less focus on preserving all currently low-density, inefficient, economically unsustainable, and car dependent neighborhoods.
 - Revise zoning and land uses to enable more variety in existing residential areas.
 - Allow a mix of single-family, multi-family, and ideally also small businesses in neighborhoods to build community and to create unique places across Town.
 - Create more historic districts that allow owners to use the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) tax credits.
 - Define neighborhoods such Burnside Village, etc.
- Housing
 - Help create more apartments and condominiums.

General Comments

- What is the status of the future planned Indian grocery store at the Big Y Supermarket Plaza/Old Monmouth Mart Finest located along Ellington Road between Helm Road and School Street?
- Recreate neighborhoods “vibes” by stimulating activities at schools and parks.

Transportation and Mobility

Workstation Comments – Below are the comments organized by topic areas.

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure
 - Improve walkability throughout the Town beyond the trails system – Many residential areas need sidewalks along connector streets so residents can walk a mile to commercial areas. For example, the Town should consider creating improved walking conditions from Blackstone Lane to Burnside Avenue. To address this, crosswalks and sidewalks should be added along Long Hill Drive.
 - Improve the Naubuc Avenue-Broad Street Historic District with streetscape and roadways enhancements for alternate modes of transit including biking, jogging, and walking.
- Streetscaping
 - Implement seating areas along Main Street.
 - Improve streetscaping along Main Street around the Pratt & Whitney and Goodwin University campuses.
 - Re-tree the neighborhoods.
- Public Transit
 - Invest in public transit – Recommended changes include:
 - Create dedicated bus lanes so buses are not stuck in traffic.
 - Ensure bus routes connect people to destinations.
 - Increase frequency of bus pick-up/drop-off times to the point where riders do not need to look at a schedule ahead of time.
 - Improve the visibility of bus stops with better signage.
 - Conduct a study to explore the potential to reinstate the Town's former trolley/streetcar system.
 - Prioritize reducing car dependency rather than investing in more car-oriented infrastructure. Examples include:
 - Implement protected bike paths
 - Create walkable neighborhoods
 - Modify traffic flow around Town instead of through downtown and business areas.
- Roadway Design
 - Design and implement physical traffic calming measures that incorporate modern standards based on benchmark cities' best practices as roads are resurfaced throughout the Town.
- Parking
 - Need to enforce the parking rules.
 - Perform a thorough parking study to evaluate parking usage in the downtown and business areas. The Town could consider setting minimum parking requirements in accordance with usage needs and planning for reduced parking needs as alternative modes of transit improve.

General Comments

- Utilize geography location with I-91/I-84 junction.
- Create vibrancy.

Economic Development

Workstation Comments – Below are the comments organized by topic areas.

- Collaboration
 - Work more with natural/environmental, cultural, and historical resources when planning for economic development.
- Businesses
 - Attract businesses.
 - Incentivize grocery stores to combat food desert problems.
 - Engage with small businesses, such as auto related, dentists, and businesses owned by veterans.
- Streetscape Improvements
 - Need to make Main Street more pedestrian friendly.
 - Incorporate new streetscaping elements near Pratt & Whitney along Main Street.
 - Promote walking.
 - Improve the visibility of bus stops with better signage.
- Management
 - Consider the creation of a Burnside Avenue Business Improvement District (BID).
- Land Use, Zoning, and Development
 - Modify zoning requirements to enable more varied repurposing in downtown or commercial areas. Recommended zoning modifications include:
 - Parking minimums.
 - Mixed-use zoning.
 - Allow more variety for new construction such as building height.
 - Explore infill developments that could convert unused parking lots into destinations, which would need support from alternative transit modes.
 - Create mixed-use neighborhoods, including converting R-1, R-2, and R-3 area into mixed-use to allow incremental development, improved property value, and encourage small unique businesses.
- Events and Programming
 - Create more events that are co-sponsored by the Town and businesses.
- Marketing
 - Opportunity to leverage East Hartford as a Connecticut community located in between New York and Massachusetts.

General Comments

- Healthcare is growing in neighboring communities. Why not here in East Hartford?
- Why is only Founders Plaza identified? Why not include: Goodwin University, Rentschler Field, Silver Lane, Burnside Avenue, and Main Street?
- Ask local Town businesses or taxpayers “What is needed for continuous development?”

Community Facilities, Infrastructure, Historic and Cultural Resources

Goal Specific Comments

- Under the 2014 POCD Goals for Historic and Cultural Resources, there was one checkmark indicating support for the goal that states, “Preserve the Town’s historic resources to enhance quality of life and promote economic development.”

Workstation Comments – Below are the comments organized by topic areas.

- Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Create “The Mills at Burnside Avenue” Historic District as indicated in the 2003 POCD. The meeting participant indicated that the recommendation was a great idea and never actualized.
 - Explore the creation of the Bissell Street Arts District. – This recommendation received one checkmark indicating support.
- Community Facilities
 - Develop social spaces for residents ages 20 – 50. – This recommendation received one checkmark indicating support.
 - Engage church communities to assist with their financial stability and sustainability in the future.
- Infrastructure
 - Fix sidewalks.

Parks, Open Spaces, Recreation, and Environmental Resources

Workstation Comments – Below are the comments organized by topic areas.

- Parks and Open Spaces
 - Consider investing in Town parks rather than in the Sports' Bubble.
 - Create a walkable or park areas in and around other existing destinations that are separated from vehicular traffic, such as downtown and shopping areas.
- Pedestrian Connectivity
 - Connect bike trails around the perimeter and throughout the Town.
 - Upgrade the Old Roberts Street section of the Hockanum River Trail.
 - Maintain/renovate the trail system.
 - Connect the existing greenway to the south end of the Town near Glastonbury and Wethersfield. Example of pedestrian connectivity include:
 - Naubuc Avenue/Main Street sidewalks tie into Glastonbury's sidewalk addition.
 - Goodwin University trails have been getting extended as well.
 - Create neighborhood connectors.
- Recreation
 - Increase participation in youth sports.
 - Consider creating a community gym in the near future.
 - Encourage healthy habits, such as walking, biking, and sustainability.
- Environmental Resources
 - Restore Burnside Avenue Reservoir along Old Roberts Street.
 - Re-establish the Hockanum River Commission to restore the river.
 - Sponsor/assist owners to plant trees set back from the road.
- Sustainability and Resiliency
 - Improve weather event recovery from flooding and snowfall to keep paths open and available.
 - Include and incorporate multiple transit modes. Examples include:
 - Bike paths and protected bike lanes on streets
 - Convenient pedestrian connectivity
 - Bus service
 - Shift to less parking and encourage alternate modes of transit
 - Plan for climate change and support efforts to mitigate impacts. Examples include:
 - Reduce car dependency
 - Improve alternate and varied transportation modes like dedicated and protected bus lanes.
 - Connect people to destinations with convenient alternatives.
- Civic Engagement
 - Build a community engagement task force.

General Comments

- Vibrancy.
- Engagement.

Interactive Map – Tell us your ideas and concerns about places in East Hartford!

Workstation Comments – Below are the comments organized by topic areas.

- Recreation
 - Youth Recreation – The Town is working on a Youth Needs Study. The study is estimated to be completed in the Spring 2024. It will be available on the Town’s website.
- Land Use, Zoning, and Development
 - Consider exploring the opportunity to repurpose or redevelop the Willgoos Turbine Laboratory as it is a prime location. There was a suggestion for the Town to converse with the property owner and potentially Pratt & Whitney representatives.
 - Perform a targeted study to recreate Burnside Village, which is approximately located at Church Street/Mill Area and roughly bound by Tolland Street, Burnside Avenue, Scotland Road, and Hillside Street.
 - Look into the potential of making Burnside Village into a Design Development District (DDD).
- Parks and Open Spaces
 - Implement more pocket parks along Main Street, specifically between Willow Street and Naubuc Avenue.
 - Connect the trails.
 - Add sidewalks along Long Hill Street/Long Hill Drive, especially between Nature Park and Burnside Avenue.
- Transportation and Mobility
 - Desire to bury the East Hartford Mixmaster made up of various routes clustered together.
 - Revitalize Connecticut Boulevard.
 - Improve and create more bus shelters along Main Street, specifically between Willow Street and Naubuc Avenue.

Conclusion

The first public workshop for the East Hartford Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) was successful in attracting a strong turnout of interested residents and stakeholders who provided feedback on the 2014 POCD Vision Statement and Goals as well as the 2014 POCD goals for each topic area. Attendees were engaged and offered support or critiques of the presented materials and added new ideas for the Town to consider. At the public workshop, the attendees were encouraged to send any additional comments to the POCD Team by emailing Steve Hnatuk, Deputy Director of Development, at shnatuk@easthartfordct.gov.

The next steps include reviewing the community's written comments from the public workshop and integrating feedback into the draft POCD plan. The BFJ team will work on developing the POCD plan chapters and the Founders Plaza Master Plan, which will capture the existing conditions of the Town and Founders Plaza.



Appendix A: Open House Workstation Boards

November 28, 2023, Public Workshop at the Senior Center

2014 POCD Vision Statement and Goals

VISION AND GOALS / VISIÓN Y METAS

2014 POCD Vision Statement / Declaración de Visión del POCD 2014:

To promote a development strategy that balances targeted redevelopment for economic revitalization, enhancement of the tax base and job creation, with preservation and stabilization of residential neighborhoods to protect quality of life.

Promover una estrategia de desarrollo que equilibre la reurbanización específica para la revitalización económica, la mejora de la base impositiva y la creación de empleo, con la preservación y estabilización de vecindarios residenciales para proteger la calidad de vida.

2014 POCD Goals / Las Metas del 2014 POCD:

- ✓ Preserve the Town's sound housing stock and stable neighborhoods / Preservar las viviendas sólidas existentes y los vecindarios estables del Municipio;
- ✓ Regulate infill development in keeping with the character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods and development / Regular el desarrollo de relleno de acuerdo con el carácter y la escala de los vecindarios y el desarrollo circundantes;
- ✓ Preserve and enhance the Town's open space and recreation areas / Preservar y mejorar los espacios abiertos y las áreas de recreación del Municipio;
- ✓ Create linkages among open space, community facilities and residential neighborhoods / Crear conexiones entre espacios abiertos, edificios comunitarios y vecindarios residenciales;
- Revitalize and rejuvenate the Central Business District / Revitalizar y rejuvenecer el Distrito Central de Negocios;
- Implement improvements to the Town's commercial corridors / Implementar mejoras a los corredores comerciales del Municipio;
- ✓ Connect redevelopment areas such as Rentschler Field, Founders' Plaza and the Goodwin College areas with the Central Business District and with each other / Conectar áreas de reurbanización como Rentschler Field, Founders' Plaza y las áreas de Goodwin College con el Distrito Central de Negocios y entre sí;
- ✓ Promote economic development to attract and retain business / Promover el desarrollo económico para atraer y retener negocios;
- ✓ Promote future development efforts which provide new housing, recreation, business and employment opportunities / Promover esfuerzos de desarrollo futuros que proporcionen nuevas oportunidades de vivienda, recreación, negocios y empleo;
- Support quality-of-life improvements / Apoyar mejoras en la calidad de vida.

LAND USE, ZONING, & HOUSING / USO DE LA TIERRA, ZONIFICACIÓN, Y VIVIENDAS

Land Use and Zoning / Uso de la Tierra y Zonificación

2014 POCD Goals / Metas del 2014 POCD:

- Promote balanced use of land to enhance fiscal benefit and protect quality of life / Promover el uso equilibrado de la tierra para mejorar el beneficio fiscal y proteger la calidad de vida.
- Ensure that zoning regulations support the desired use of land and appropriately control development while allowing for creativity and flexibility to achieve planning objectives / Asegurar que las regulaciones de zonificación respalden el uso deseado de la tierra y controlen adecuadamente el desarrollo, al tiempo que permitan la creatividad y la flexibilidad para lograr los objetivos de planificación.

Comments / Comentarios:

The comments section contains several handwritten notes on sticky papers. The notes are written in Spanish and discuss various aspects of land use, zoning, and housing. Some notes mention specific areas like 'Paseo de la Reforma' and 'Centro Histórico'. Other notes talk about the importance of maintaining the character of neighborhoods and the need for flexible zoning regulations. One note mentions 'helping people who are homeless'.

Housing / Viviendas

2014 POCD Goals / Metas del 2014 POCD:

- Focus on enhancing and preserving its neighborhoods / Enfocar en mejorar y preservar sus vecindarios.
- Provide opportunities for the development of a diverse range of new housing, including market-rate as well as affordable, that meets the needs of people at various stages in their life / Proveer oportunidades para el desarrollo de una gama diversa de viviendas nuevas, incluidas las de precio de mercado y asequibles, que satisfagan las necesidades de las personas en las distintas etapas de su vida.
- Increase the percentage of owner occupied housing within the Town and support programs that assist homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining their homes / Aumentar el porcentaje de viviendas ocupadas por sus dueños dentro del Municipio y apoyar programas que ayuden a los dueños de casa a rehabilitar y mantener sus hogares.

Comments / Comentarios:

This section also contains handwritten notes on sticky papers. These notes continue the discussion from the previous one, focusing more specifically on housing issues. They mention the importance of supporting first-time homebuyers and the need for more affordable housing options. There's also a note about the role of local government in ensuring housing stability.

Transportation and Mobility

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY / TRANSPORTE Y MOVILIDAD

Transportation and Mobility / Transporte y Movilidad

2014 POCD Goals / Metas del 2014 POCD:

- East Hartford should maintain an efficient transportation system which meets the needs of community residents, while respecting existing land use and development patterns. The Town should maximize use of the existing road network to support employment centers and work to improve the aesthetics of its highways and commercial streets / East Hartford debe mantener un sistema de transporte eficiente que satisfaga las necesidades de los residentes de la comunidad, respetando al mismo tiempo el uso de la tierra y las pautas de desarrollo existentes. El Municipio debe maximizar el uso de la red de carreteras existentes para apoyar los centros de empleo y trabajar para mejorar la estética de sus carreteras y calles comerciales.
- Provide general roadway improvements and implement transportation strategies as development and reinvestment of existing properties occurs. Such improvements should serve to mitigate and calm traffic flow; improve traffic circulation, parking, vehicular and pedestrian safety; and encourage multi-modal transportation / Proporcionar mejoras generales a las carreteras e implementar estrategias de transporte a medida que se produzca el desarrollo y la reinversión de propiedades existentes. Estas mejoras deberían servir para mitigar y calmar el flujo de tráfico; mejorar la circulación del tráfico, el estacionamiento y la seguridad de vehículos y peatones; y fomentar el transporte de múltiples modales.
- Provide financially viable improvements that encourage economic and physical revitalization, especially those projects with clear funding sources / Proporcionar mejoras financieramente viables que fomenten la revitalización económica y física, especialmente aquellos proyectos con fuentes de financiamiento claras.

Comments / Comentarios:

[Handwritten notes on sticky notes and paper scraps, including: "East Hartford should maintain an efficient transportation system...", "The town should maximize use of the existing road network...", "East Hartford debe mantener un sistema de transporte eficiente...", "El Municipio debe maximizar el uso de la red de carreteras...", "Proporcionar mejoras generales a las carreteras...", "Implementar estrategias de transporte...", "Mitigar y calmar el flujo de tráfico...", "Mejorar la circulación del tráfico...", "Fomentar el transporte de múltiples modales..."]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / DESARROLLO ECONOMICO

Economic Development / Desarrollo Económico

2014 POCD Goals / Metas del 2014 POCD:

- Promote economic development activity to attract new business and employment opportunities as a way to benefit population, housing and economic trends in East Hartford / Promover actividades de desarrollo económico para atraer nuevos negocios y oportunidades de empleo como una forma de beneficiar la población, las viviendas y las tendencias económicas en East Hartford.
- Build on the existing industrial and manufacturing base to promote new diversified business investment in the town / Construir sobre la base industrial y manufacturera existente para promover nuevas inversiones comerciales diversificadas en el municipio.
- Revitalize Main Street as a showcase of the town, establishing the central business district and the southern end (Goodwin College area south of the Charter Oak Bridge and north of Brewer Street) as vital and active nodes for living, eating, working and entertainment / Recrear Main Street como escaparate del municipio, estableciendo el distrito comercial central y el extremo sur (área de Goodwin College al sur del Charter Oak Bridge y al norte de Brewer Street) como nodos vitales y activos para vivir, comer, trabajar y entretenerse.
- Take advantage of the location, views and amenities associated with the riverfront as leverage for economic development and tax base for the Town / Aprovechar la localización, las vistas y las comodidades asociadas con el borde del río como apalancamiento para el desarrollo económico y la base impositiva del Municipio.
- Plan for and develop viable and attractive commercial areas outside of the central business district to meet the needs for goods and services of residents and visitors to East Hartford / Planificar y desarrollar áreas comerciales viables y atractivas fuera del distrito comercial central para satisfacer las necesidades y bienes y servicios de los residentes y visitantes de East Hartford.

Comments / Comentarios:

[illegible]

Community Facilities, Infrastructure, Historic and Cultural Resources

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE, HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES / EDIFICIOS COMUNITARIAS, INFRAESTRUCTURA, RECURSOS HISTÓRICOS Y CULTURALES

Community Facilities and Infrastructure / Edificios Comunitarias y Infraestructura

2014 POCD Goals / Metas del 2014 POCD:

- East Hartford should provide community facilities and services which respond to residents' needs in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner / East Hartford debe proporcionar edificios y servicios comunitarios que respondan a las necesidades de los residentes de manera oportuna, eficiente y económico.
- Effectively manage and control stormwater drainage to minimize hazards to property and the public and protect East Hartford's built and natural environment / Administrar y controlar eficazmente el drenaje de aguas pluviales para minimizar los peligros para la propiedad y el público y proteger el entorno construido y natural de East Hartford.

Historic and Cultural Resources / Recursos Históricos y Culturales

2014 POCD Goals / Metas del 2014 POCD:

- Preserve the Town's historic resources to enhance quality of life and promote economic development / Preservar los recursos históricos del Municipio para mejorar la calidad de vida y promover el desarrollo económico.

Comments / Comentarios:

2009 400-D
residents' concern
historic district
order historical
order 1123

First School
Example: daily
Public Library
School 1114

High School
Public

Ball of
this District

Solid 400-50
Apr 20-50

Public Library
residents' concern
historic district
order historical
order 1123

Just
Example: daily
Public Library
School 1114

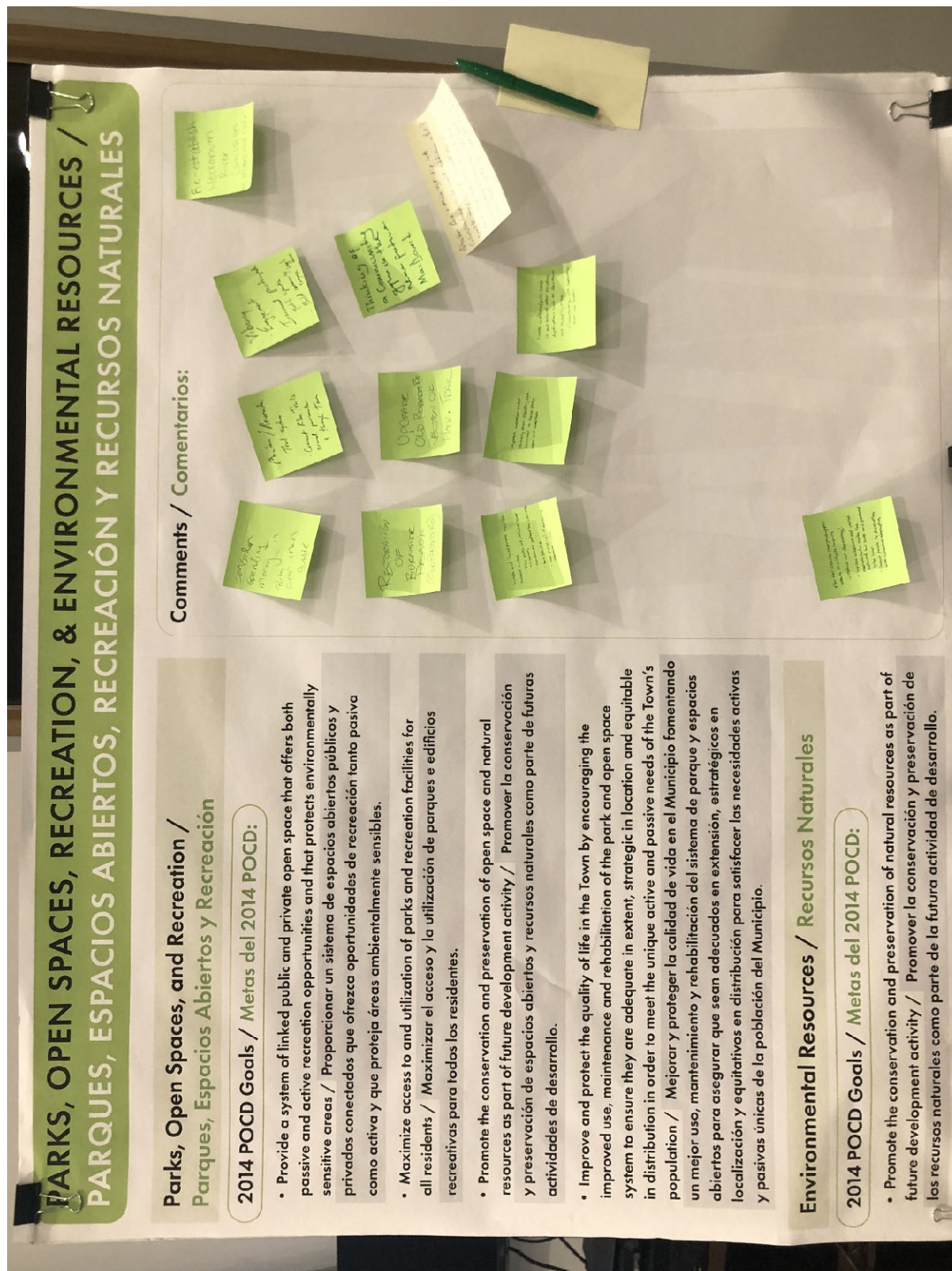
High School
Public

Ball of
this District

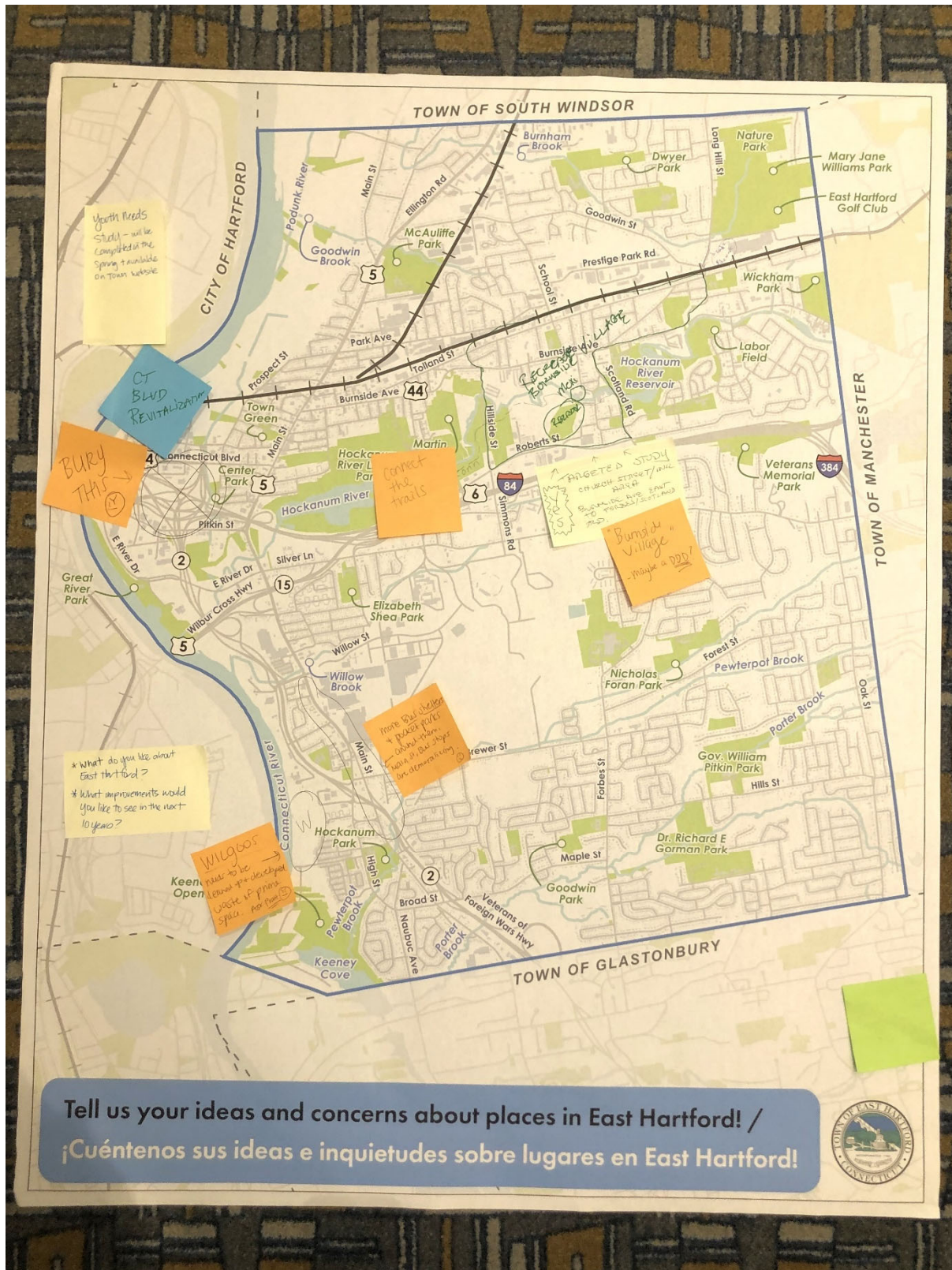
Solid 400-50
Apr 20-50

Public Library
residents' concern
historic district
order historical
order 1123

Town of East Hartford 2024 POCD Update
Public Workshop #1 Summary



Interactive Map – Tell us your ideas and concerns about places in East Hartford!



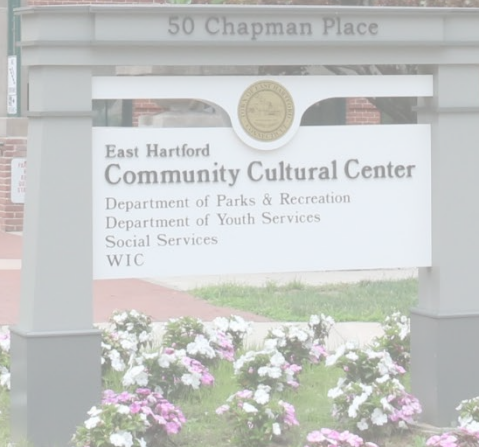
Appendix B: Presentation

Town of East Hartford

Plan of Conservation & Development



Public Workshop #1
November 28, 2023



BFJ Planning

Introductions



Planning & Zoning Commission

John Ryan – Chairman

Peter Marra

Carol Noel

Henry Pawlowski

Valentine Povinelli

Stephen Roczynski

Sidney Soderholm

Wesaneit Tsegai

Bfj Planning

Town Staff and Consultant Team

Eileen Buckheit, Director of Development

Steve Hnatuk, Assistant Director of Development

Carlene Shaw, Town Planner

Susan Favate, AICP, PP – Principal in Charge

Thomas Madden – Associate Principal

Christine Jimenez, LEED GA – Project Planner

Nile Johnson – Planner

Agenda

- 1 What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?**
- 2 Project Overview**
- 3 2014 POCD Goals**
- 4 Stakeholder and Community Engagement**
- 5 Initial Findings on Demographics and Land Use/Zoning**
- 6 Interactive Open House**

What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?



- An expression of the community's shared vision of the future.



- A Town-wide framework for plans, initiatives, and investments. It lays the groundwork for decisions on the zoning code, capital budget, and general policy.



- A “to-do list” for the Town to track implementation of short-, medium, and long-term goals.

What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?



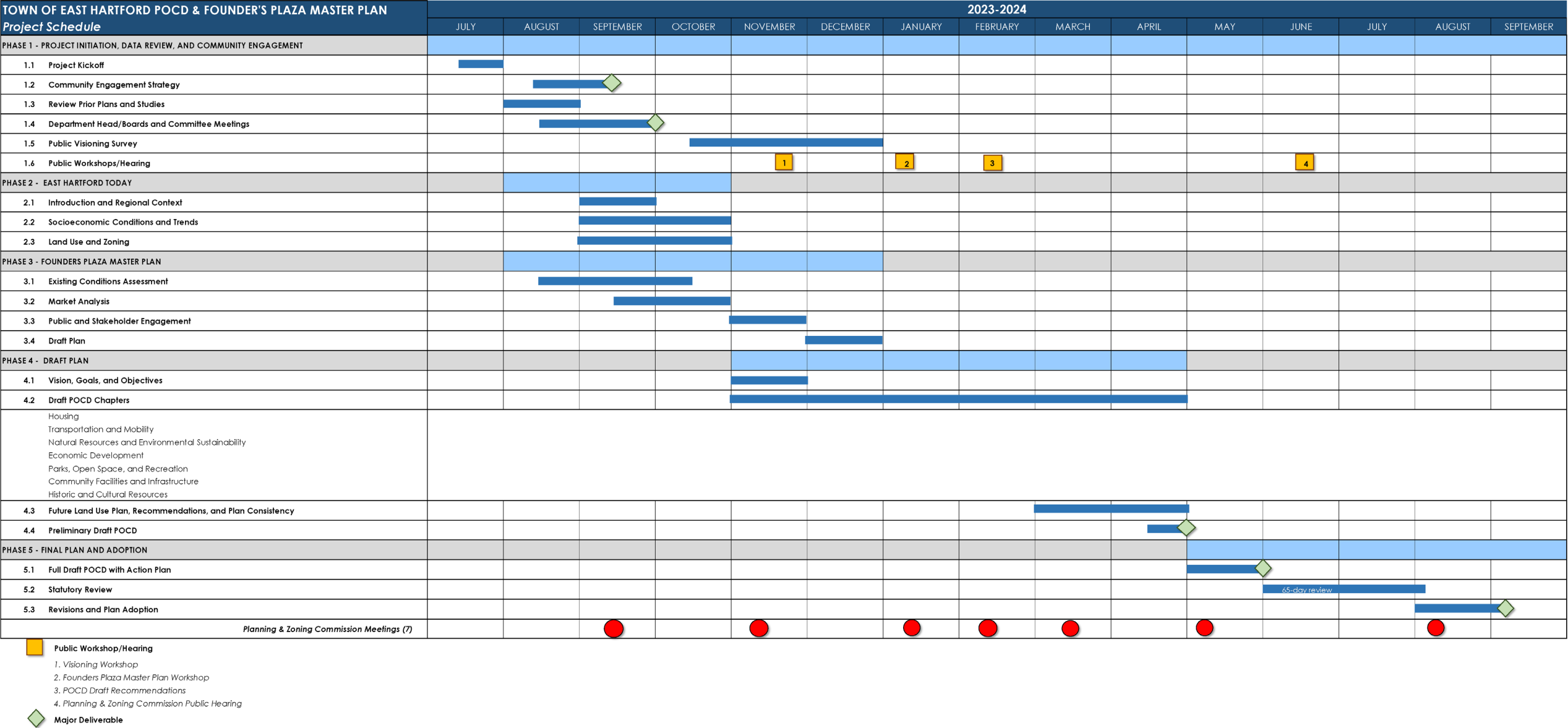
TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD
PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

June 2014

BFJ Planning

- State law requires that municipalities review and update POCDs at least every 10 years. East Hartford's POCD was adopted in 2014 and revised most recently in 2022.
- POCDs are not laws or regulations; they make recommendations on the Town's future. However, zoning must be consistent with the POCD.
- Certain POCD chapters are required by the State, but municipalities can look at additional topic areas.

Project Overview: POCD Timeline



Project Overview: POCD Plan Chapters

2014 POCD Organization

1. Introduction and Background
2. Demographics
3. Land Use and Zoning
4. Environmental Resources
5. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation
6. **Community Facilities**
7. Historic Resources
8. Housing
9. **Transportation and Circulation**
10. Economic Development
11. **Special Study Areas**
12. Future Land Use Plan
13. Action Agenda

2024 POCD Organization (Proposed)

1. Introduction and Background
2. Demographics
3. Land Use and Zoning
4. Housing
5. **Transportation and Mobility**
6. Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability
7. Economic Development
8. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation
9. **Community Facilities and Infrastructure**
10. Historic and Cultural Resources
11. **Founders Plaza Master Plan**
12. Future Land Use Plan
13. Action Agenda/Recommendations
14. **Plan Consistency**

2014 POCD Goals: What's Changed? What's Missing?

- Preserve the Town's sound housing stock and stable neighborhoods.
- Regulate infill development in keeping with the character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods and development,
- Preserve and enhance the Town's open space and recreation areas.
- Create linkages among open space, community facilities and residential neighborhoods.
- Revitalize and rejuvenate the Town Center.
- Implement improvements to the Town's commercial corridors.
- Connect redevelopment areas such as Rentschler Field, Founders' Plaza and the Goodwin College areas with the Town Center and with each other.
- Promote economic development to attract and retain business.
- Promote future development efforts which provide new housing, recreation, business and employment opportunities.
- Support quality-of-life improvements.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- Meetings with Town staff, representatives of boards and committees
- Three (3) in-person public workshops (one focused on Founders Plaza)
- Online visioning survey via Social Pinpoint
- Additional targeted stakeholder meetings (e.g. on Founders Plaza)
- Web presence (Town website)
- Public hearing

Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Meetings So Far

Town Staff Meetings

Kickoff with Development Department – July 13, 2023

Kickoff with Mayor’s Office – July 13, 2023

Public Library – August 23, 2023

East Hartford Works – August 28, 2023

Youth Services – August 28, 2023

Economic Development, Finance, & Grants – August 31, 2023

Parks, Recreation, & Sustainability – August 31, 2023

Senior Services – September 13, 2023

Public Works, Engineering & Public Safety – September 18, 2023

MDC – October 13, 2023

Boards and Commissions Meetings

Commission on Aging – September 6, 2023

Commission on Culture & Fine Arts – September 13, 2023

Veterans Commission – September 13, 2023

Economic Development Commission – September 13, 2023

Commission on Services for Persons with Disabilities – September 14, 2023

Housing Authority – September 14, 2023

Redevelopment Agency – September 20, 2023

Historic District Commission – November 14, 2023

Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Key Takeaways So Far

- There is a need for upgrades to various municipal facilities to reflect current space needs and modern standards. DPW and fire facilities have substantial repair and renovation requirements, and there is a general need for more meeting space (especially with built-in technology) to ease demand on the libraries and Community Cultural Center.
- Many of the social services-oriented departments rely on grants and lack a consistent source of funding. They need staff to support non-English speakers, maintain programs, and improve communication and awareness.
- Affordable housing needs are acute, especially for families, seniors, and those with disabilities. The Town needs a balanced housing stock in various forms: not just apartments. Town also lacks a homeless shelter; users must go to Hartford.
- Many stakeholders noted the need for improvements to the bus system, including more stops and routes, on-time services, and ADA access.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Key Takeaways So Far

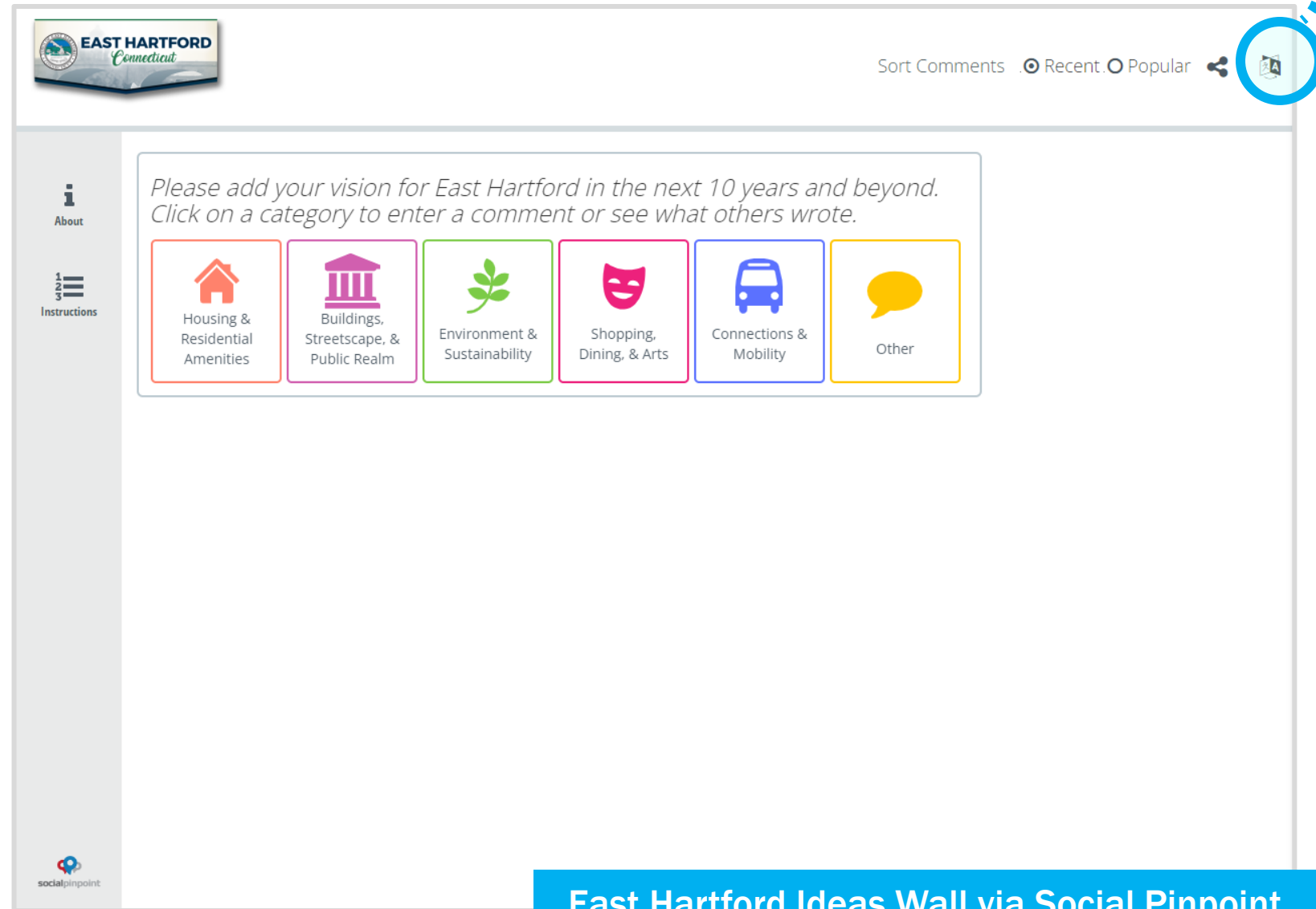
- Main Street in the Town Center needs pedestrian and streetscape improvements to make this a more attractive place to shop and dine; stakeholders consistently indicated they do not patronize the area due to lack of options.
- East Hartford needs an organized entity to support business development and retention and facilitate a strong aesthetic environment, especially along Main Street. A Business Improvement District (BID) could take on these responsibilities.
- Office and traditional retail are viewed as weak (in the region overall). In East Hartford, light industrial/warehousing is a strength, as are restaurants (but many people aren't aware of the restaurant options available).
- There is a general lack of communication and data sharing across Town departments and boards/committees.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Key Takeaways So Far

- Park maintenance is challenging, and parks need to serve multiple purposes. There are opportunities for indoor sports/bubble facilities that could also be rented out. Other targeted park needs will be addressed in POCD.
- Lack of visibility and organizational support for arts (performance and visual).
- Several long-term planning needs were identified: 1) emergency management plan; 2) Town-wide climate change adaptation strategy, and 3) comprehensive municipal facilities study.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Online Engagement

- Social Pinpoint is a software platform used for community engagement and public participation
- Allows users to interact with an Ideas Wall or maps to identify specific locations and provide comments, suggestions, or concerns related to proposed developments, and infrastructure improvements



East Hartford Ideas Wall via Social Pinpoint

Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Online Engagement

The Irmisch Ave corridor between Hoffman and the park could use a continuous sidewalk path.

Connections & Mobility | 3 months ago Like Dislike

Some type of auto cleaning or easy cleaning public bathrooms would be great, in service and available 24/7 would be great, perhaps with an "in use" light that officers passing by could see at night as well as an emergency 911 phone

Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm | 3 months ago

Like Dislike -2

Enough of the apartment building and two family dwellings.

Housing & Residential Amenities | 3 months ago

Like +1 Dislike -2

Utilize the signage above the LIRR to advertise local events and small business instead of a giant law firm.

Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm | 3 months ago

Like +4 Dislike

Expand the gazebo area to cover the blocked-off parts of Hoffman. It should be converted to green space and connected with the areas under the railroad to include a rail trail, as others have suggested. The gazebo park should include restrooms, bike racks, and possibly a playground. It should also utilize ecological landscaping to use native plants in its gardening and plant more trees to shade us, cool us, and clean our air. This would also be a great area to host a farmers

The north side of the LIRR tracks directly opposite the platform is a great opportunity to grab the attention of LIRR passengers, but the small old buildings are in dire need of investment and cleanup. The oil depot tanks could be used for community art to grab the attention of LIRR riders, improving the image of our Village. Attached is a photo of painted tank examples from the Winwood art district in Miami.



Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm | 3 months ago

Like +1 Dislike

Speaking of clear conflicts of interest, why is it legal for the town's dishonorable Judge John Bopp to have a local tax evading law firm within the NYF zone? If the town targets you for whatever reason, ordinance or buildings dept. parking violations, the judge you see may also own the

Something needs to be done to alleviate the traffic on Wellwood Ave. With that constant traffic those of us that live on the Gary St, Easton St, and Hartford St are constantly having to deal with people driving very quick down our blocks to utilize Irmisch St and work their way out of the traffic. It's dangerous and don't need to constantly worry about my pet or child being out front and being hit by the speeding. Perhaps speed bumps on the blocks?

Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm | 3 months ago

Like Dislike

There was a "study" done years ago that said the angled parking on Wellwood in the village was at a bad angle and the angle of the spaces needed to be fixed for better visibility when pulling out. Whatever happened to that? Why hasn't it been fixed? We all know this is a problem, but nothing has been done!

View the discussion (2)

Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm | 3 months ago

Like +4 Dislike

As a coastal town, Lindenhurst is prone to flooding. We should build rain gardens and implement restoration projects to naturally sequester rainwater and in the process filter excess nutrient pollution. We must also stop unsustainable development such as in the example of "the Wel" apartments being built on top of a creek.

Environment & Sustainability | 3 months ago

Like +5 Dislike

Continue to attract and bring in more fine dining restaurants. Something other than pizzerias. It would be nice to have a building perhaps built on the former Waldbaums lot facing the railroad tracks that would sit a nice music hall / dance hall. Similar to how Mulcahy's is in Wantagh. Attract a lot of attention to Lindenhurst! The rest of this former Waldbaums lot can still house a supermarket like Shop Rite and provide parking for the stores and the businesses of the village.

Shopping, Dining, & Arts | 3 months ago

Like +2 Dislike

Adding a dog park in the village would be great. Maybe a playground and then separate fenced off area with a dog park so people do not need to go to neighboring towns to enjoy a day with their dogs/families.

View the discussion (1)

Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm | 3 months ago

Like +4 Dislike -2

The intersection of Hoffman Ave & Wellwood Avenue on the southside needs a face lift, the signage is an eyesore and looks tacky. The North side is looking great with the beautiful Belfast and Village Square kept well maintained. That effort should be restored into those corner stores to continue elevate the village. The Metro PCS is a prime location would have better appeal if it was small business vs. a chain cell phone store.

View the discussion (1)

Shopping, Dining, & Arts | 3 months ago

Like +3 Dislike

Please add more blacktop path that runs around the entire perimeter of the fireman's / feller's pond park. That way we could have a nice path to walk around during the nice weather and get our cardio in. Currently it just runs around the pond. Would be nice if it ran along the sides of the ball fields and bathroom area that's on the Byrd St side. Also would love to have a dog park placed in this park somewhere. A lot of dogs in this neighborhood.

Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm | 3 months ago

Like Dislike

Add side walks on both sides of the road to upcoming main roads like Delaware and Broadway, between Hoffman and Montauk. These roads are becoming increasingly busy with downtown becoming busier. It is a safety concern walking on Delaware to the village without side walks and we have a lot of kids on bikes and pedestrians walking around.

View the discussion (2)

Connections & Mobility | 3 months ago Like +6 Dislike

All municipal and town-owned properties should take climate-smart action and utilize solar panels for self-sufficient energy as the Lindenhurst Library and Village Hall have. Opportunities for expanding this to other locations include the middle school, and local businesses should be incentivized to install solar panels on their roofs.

View the discussion (2)

Environment & Sustainability | 3 months ago

Like +4 Dislike -1

Stakeholder and Community Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop 1: Introduction & Vision Setting

Public Workshop 2: Founders Plaza Master Plan

Public Workshop 3: Draft Recommendations & Feedback

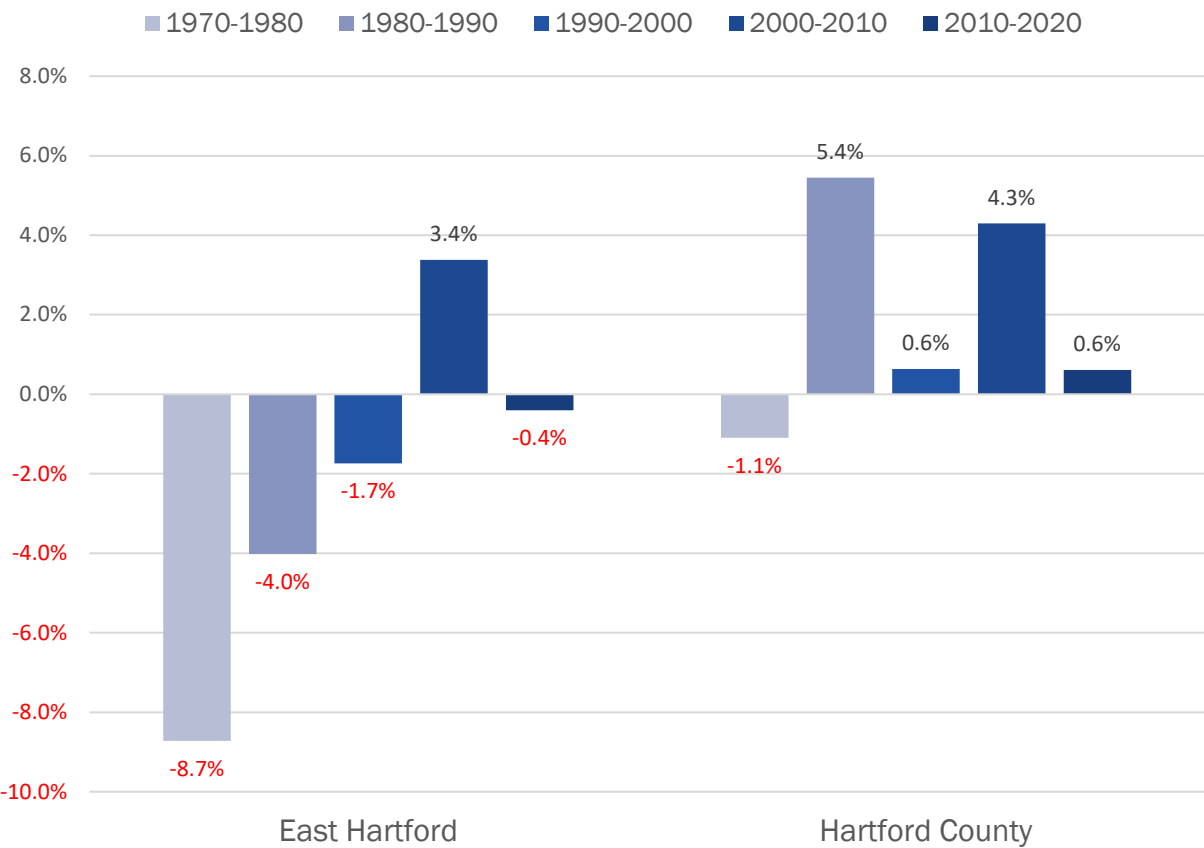


Initial Findings: Total Population

Key Trends

- Town’s population has fallen in four of the past five decades including from 2010 to 2020 (-0.4%) while Hartford County has generally seen modest but continuous growth.
- However, East Hartford’s population loss has slowed with each consecutive decade through 2010 and is stabilizing, suggesting that it’s becoming increasingly attractive for prospective residents.
- As its population has become increasingly diverse in race/ethnicity, the loss of White non-Hispanic residents has continued to outpace the gain in black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC).
- Improvements to community resources, housing stock, and local job opportunities may be needed to ensure the Town remains desirable for potential residents across many socioeconomic groups.

Total Population, Decennial % Change



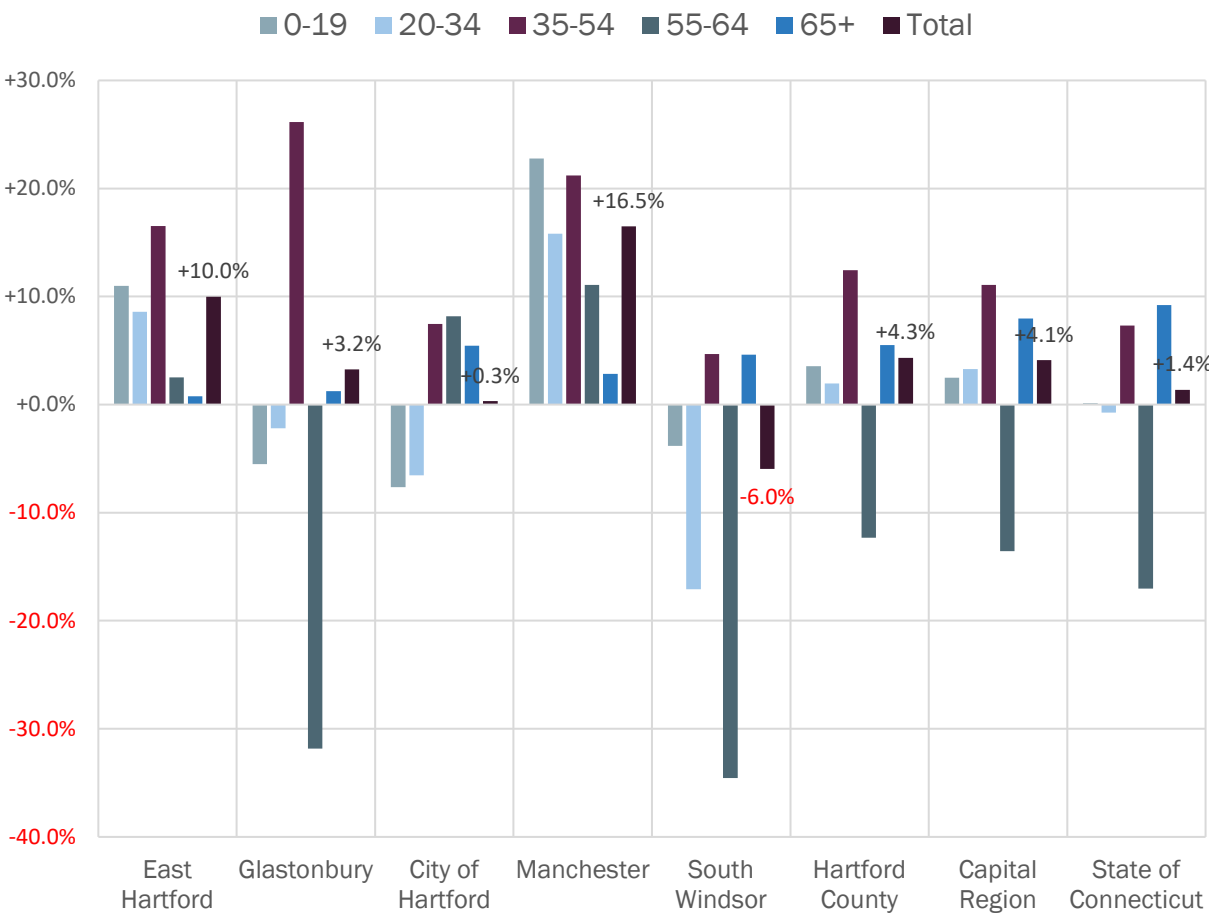
Source: US Decennial Census, 1970-2020

Initial Findings: Population Projections, 2020-2040

Key Trends

- According to CT Data Center’s latest projections released in 2015, East Hartford’s population is expected to increase by 10%, a larger increase than all its neighbors except for Manchester (+16.5%)
- Youth population growth in East Hartford is projected to be second-strongest (+11%) among its neighbors, after Manchester (+22.8%)
- Strong growth also projected in East Hartford among younger and prime labor force age adults (+8.6% & +16.5%)
- Unlike neighboring communities, minimal growth is projected in East Hartford among older workers aged 55-64 (+2.5%) and seniors 65+ (+0.8%)

Population Growth %, 2020-2040



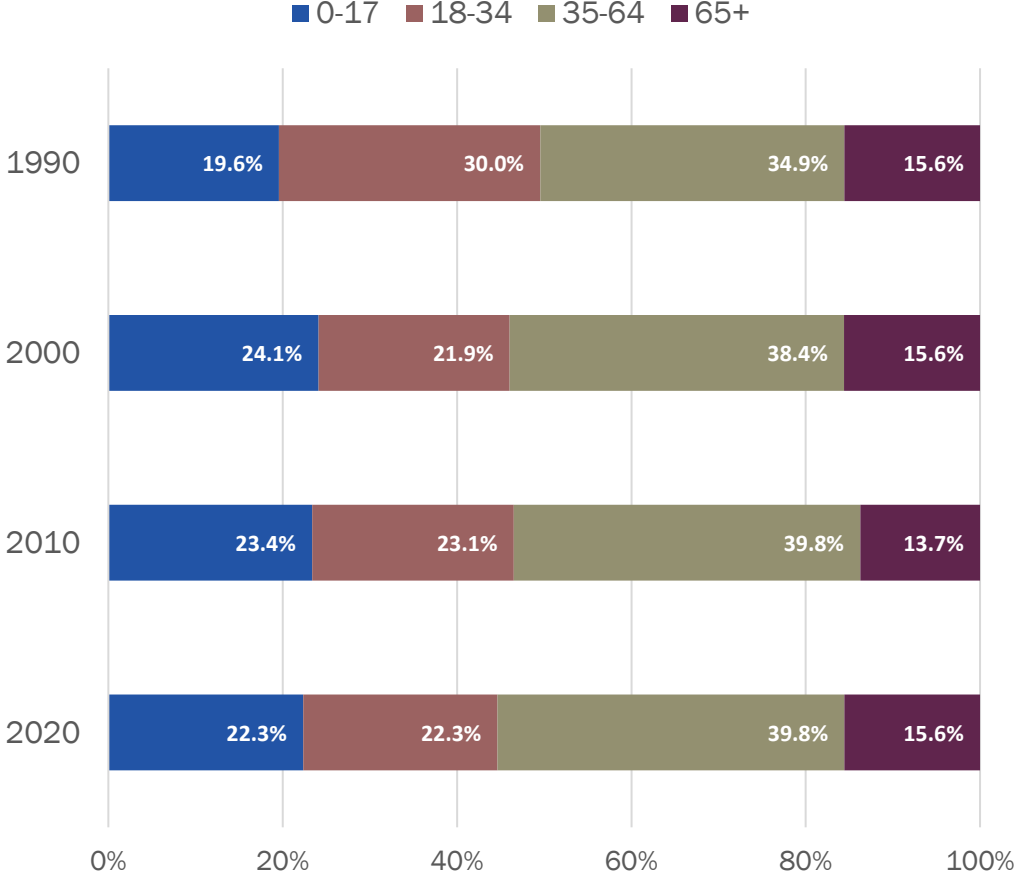
Source: UCONN Data Center, 2015

Initial Findings: Age

Key Trends

- Since 1990, East Hartford’s share of seniors hasn’t changed, while shares of the older labor force and youth under 18 have grown and the younger labor force has decreased.
 - This trend is somewhat in contrast to regional trends where shares of seniors increased and youth under 18 decreased.
- East Hartford’s age distribution has remained largely stable since 2000 with little variation across major age groups.
- East Hartford’s median age (39) is 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.

Population Share by Age, 1990-2020



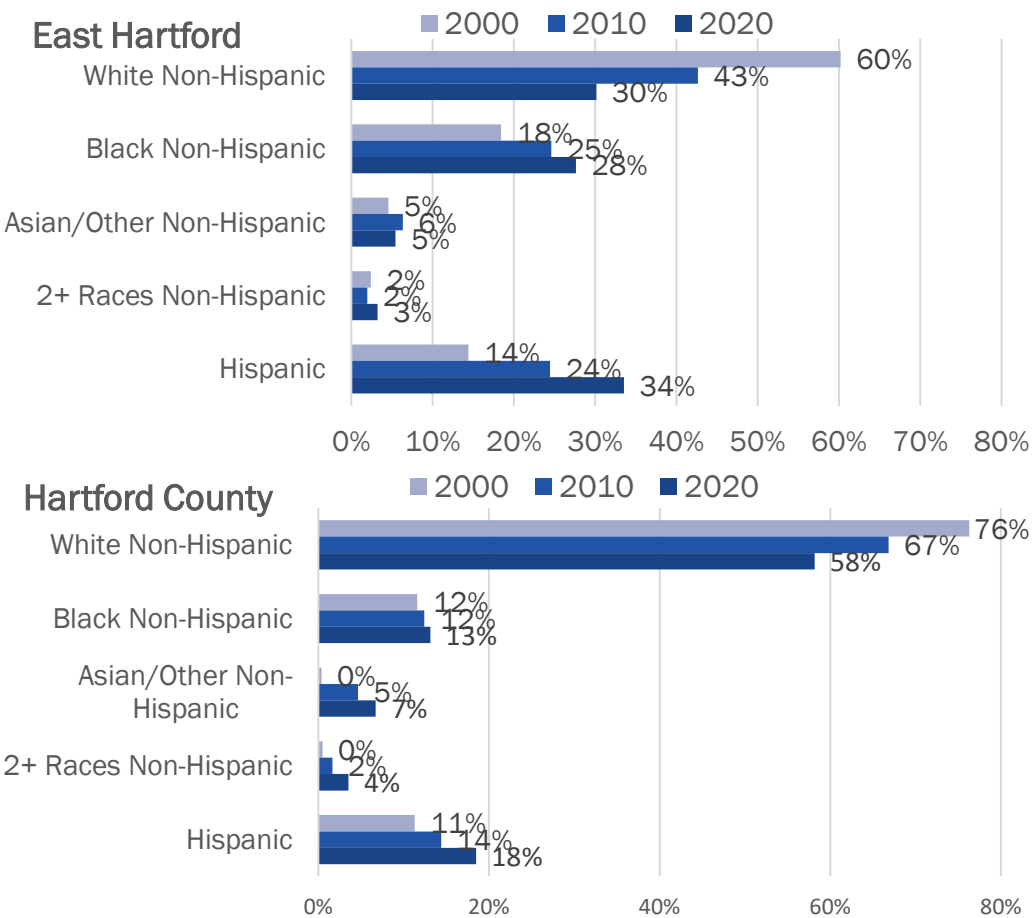
Source: US Decennial Census, 1990-2020

Initial Findings: Race/Ethnicity, Nativity, and Language

Key Trends

- Over the past 20 years, Hartford County’s population has grown increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity with gains in Hispanic, Black, Asian, and other population groups.
- East Hartford has historically been more diverse than the County:
 - From 2000 to 2020, East Hartford’s Hispanic population more than doubled (+10,050).
 - Black non-Hispanics increased by 5,050 residents.
- Today, 38% of East Hartford residents speak a language other than English at home; 27% speak Spanish
- 21% of East Hartford residents are foreign-born. Major shares are from Jamaica (18%), Peru (13%), El Salvador (7.4%), Ghana (6%), and Vietnam (4%)

Race & Ethnicity, 2000-2020



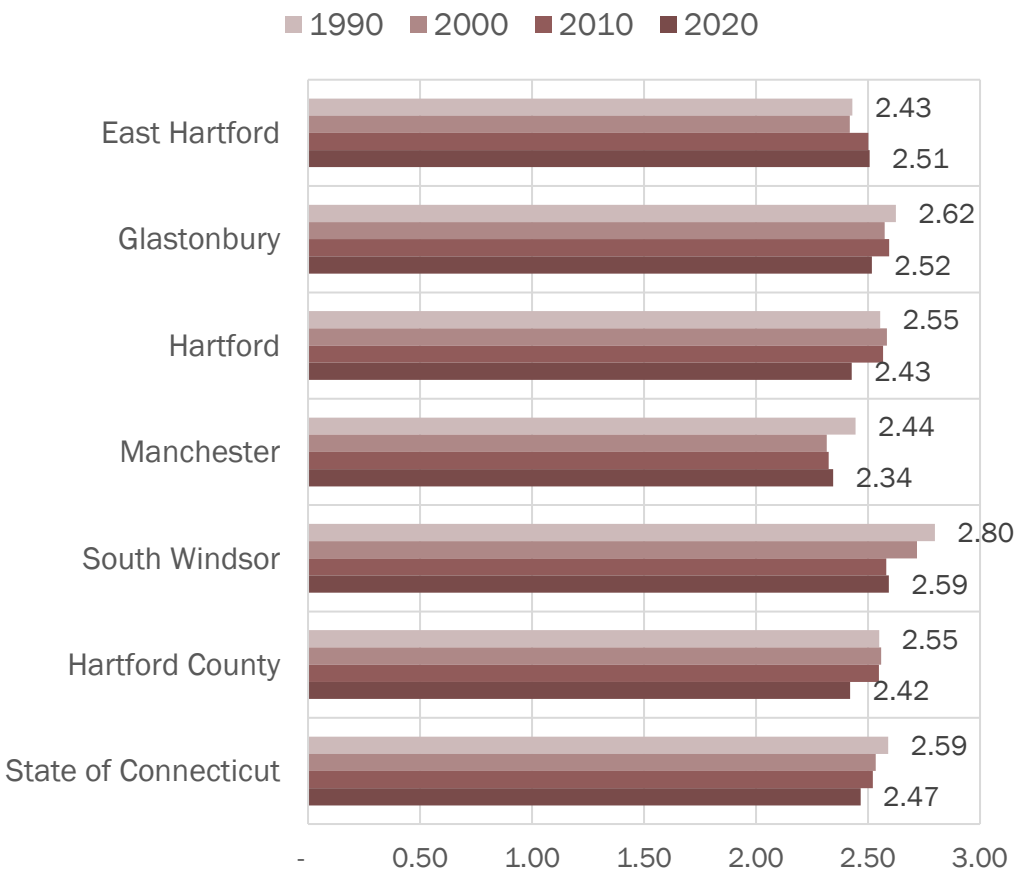
Source: US Decennial Census, 2000-2020

Initial Findings: Household Size

Key Trends

- While neighboring communities' household sizes have generally decreased over the last few decades, East Hartford is unique for its relatively stable average household size (2.43 to 2.51 from 1990 to 2020).
- 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.

Average Household Size, 1990-2020



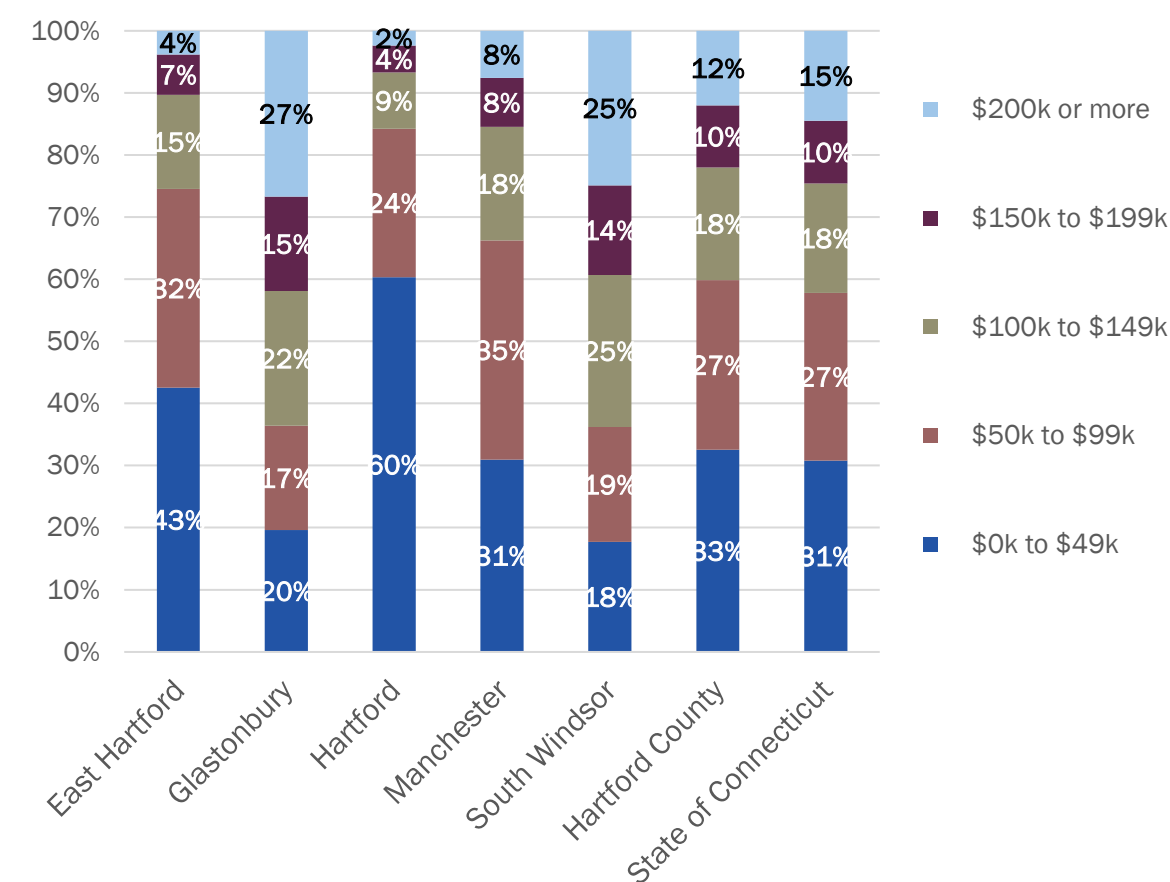
Source: US Decennial Census, 1990-2020

Initial Findings: Household Income

Key Trends

- East Hartford has a lower median household income (\$58,920) than most of its neighbors, except for Hartford (\$37,480).
- 43% of East Hartford households earn less than \$50,000 annually versus 33% of County households.
- Just 26% of East Hartford households earn \$100,000 or more, far less than in Glastonbury & South Windsor (both 64%), Manchester (34%), and Hartford County (40%) but more than the City of Hartford (16%).

Distribution of Household Income, 2021



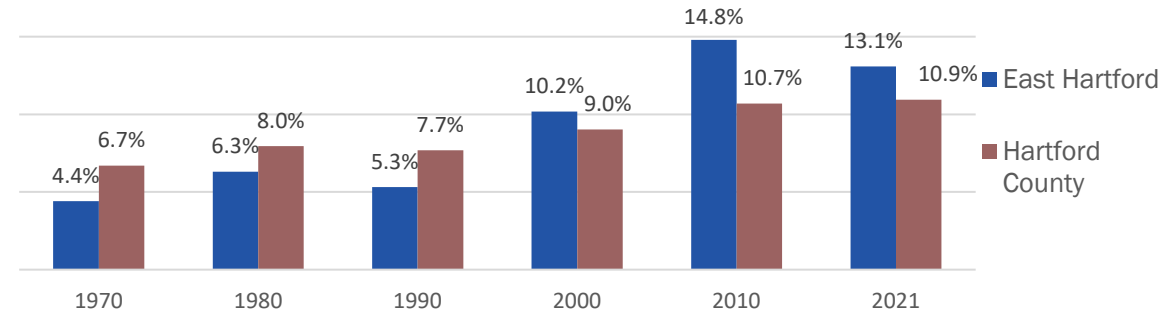
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimate.

Initial Findings: Poverty

Key Trends

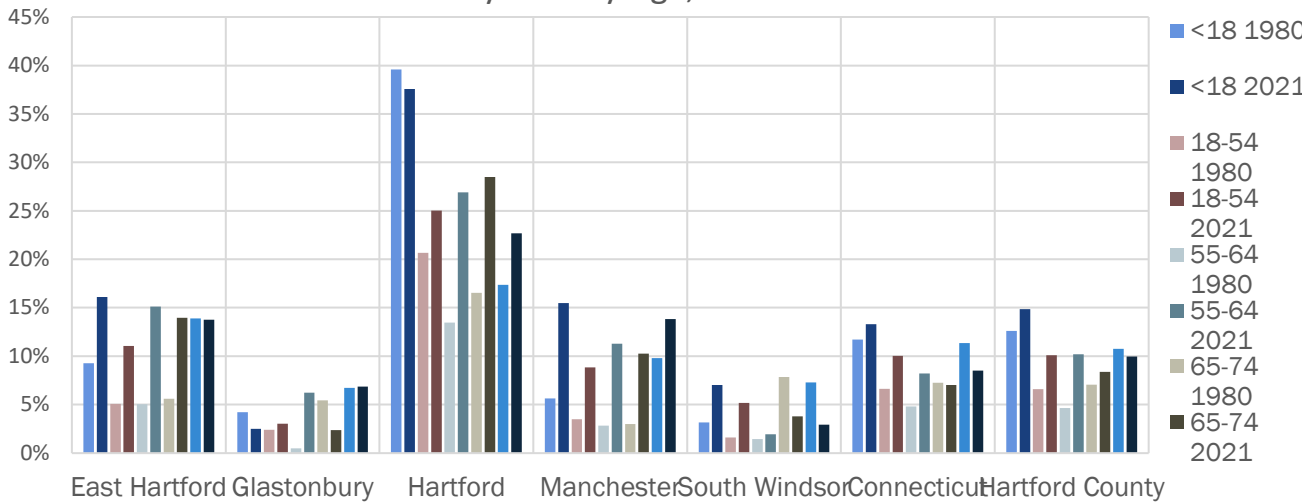
- The Town’s poverty rate has increased since 1970, nearly tripling in share from 4.4% in 1970 to 13.1% in 2021.
 - The poverty rate sharply increased for all East Hartford residents, except for older seniors 75+, whose already high level of poverty continued to stay elevated.
- In 2021, East Hartford residents experienced poverty rates over 15% among youth aged 6-17, and older adults aged 55-64. Poverty rates among older adults (45+) and teenagers were well-above County levels.
- These trends may indicate a need for additional supportive services for youth, families, and seniors and older working age residents.

Poverty Rate, 1970-2021



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1970-2000, American Community Survey, 2010 & 2021 5-Year Estimates

Poverty Rate by Age, 1980 & 2021



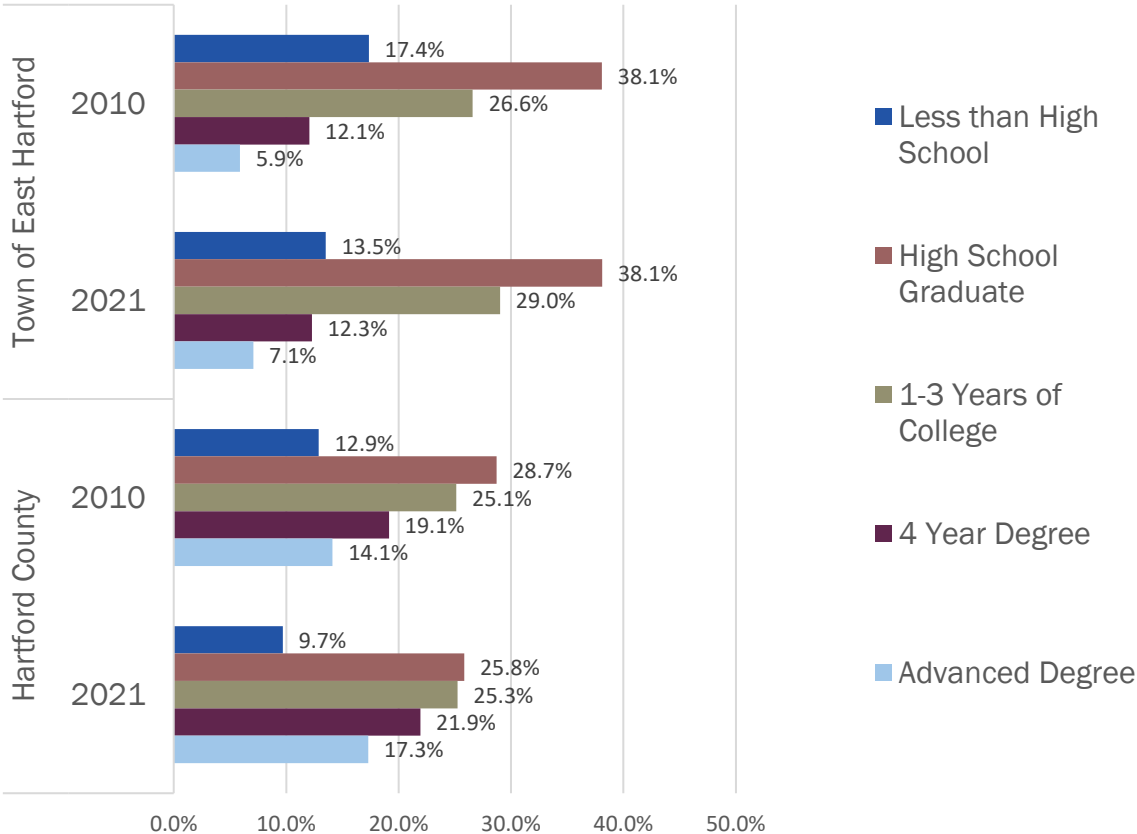
Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1980, American Community Survey, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimate.

Initial Findings: Educational Attainment

Key Trends

- The Town has lower levels of educational attainment than the County, with just 48.4% of residents aged 25+ with some college education or more compared with 64.5% of County residents.
- For residents with a 4-year college degree or higher, East Hartford share of such residents (19.4%) is half that of the County (39.2%).
- The share of population with less than a high school education has decreased by almost 4 percentage points, but the educational gap has widened considerably versus the broader region, suggesting that the Town remains one of the few viable places for working class people to live.

Educational Attainment, 2010 & 2021



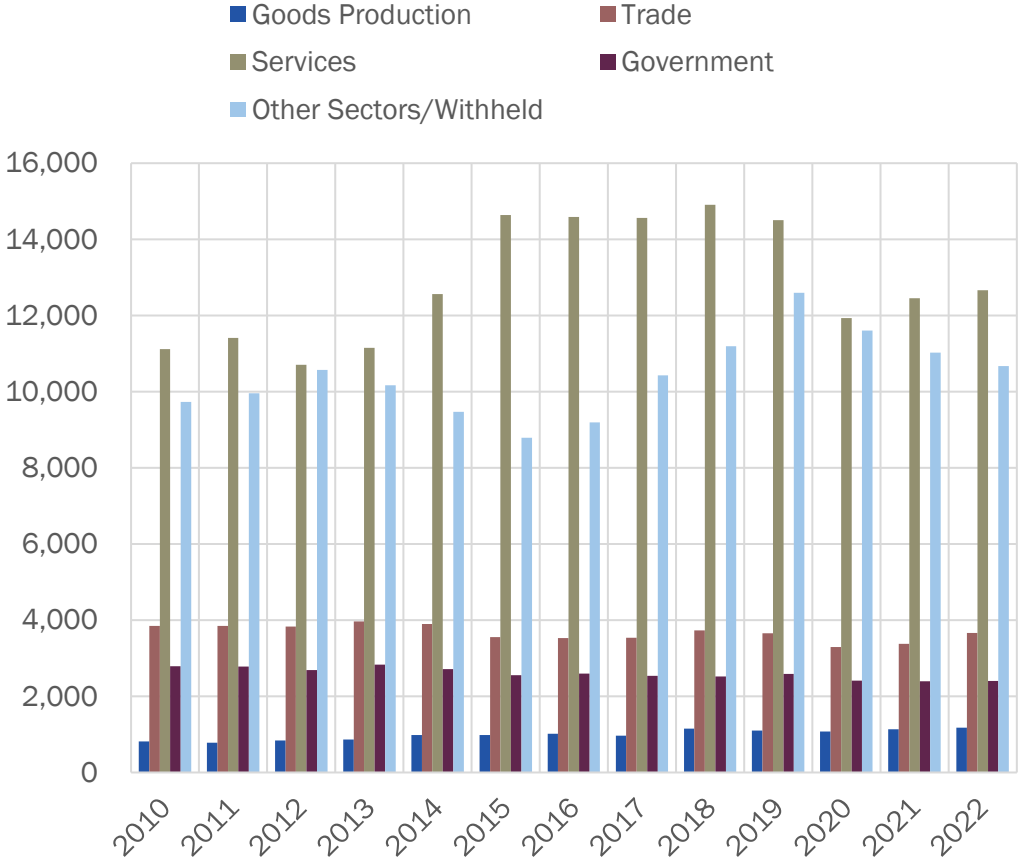
Source: CTDOL, QCEW, 2010-2022

Initial Findings: Employment

Key Trends

- East Hartford’s total employment is estimated at 30,580 jobs in 2022, down 11.2% from 34,440 in 2019, but up 8.1% from 28,300 in 2010.
- Although Goods Production and Trade industries have both added jobs since 2019 (+6.8% & +0.2% respectively), the services and government sectors are continuing to recover jobs lost (-12.7% & -7.2% respectively).
- The services sector added the largest number of jobs since 2010 (+1,550) led by gains in Admin., Support, & Waste Mgmt (+1,520); Health Care & Social Assistance (+190), and Mgmt of Businesses & Enterprises (+140). In other sectors, Construction added 340 jobs, and Wholesale Traded added 150 jobs.

Jobs by Supersector, 2010-2022



Source: CTDOL, QCEW, 2010-2022

Initial Findings: Jobs and Commutation

Key Trends

- While there was contraction in local jobs from 2019 to 2020 (-11.6%) likely due to pandemic-related shutdowns, the spatial distribution of places of employment remained largely unchanged in East Hartford over the past 10 years
- 3 major job clusters in the Town:
 - Pratt & Whitney Campus
 - Founders Plaza
 - Prestige Park
- The primary destinations of employment for East Hartford residents are Hartford (18.1%), East Hartford (11.7%), Manchester (7.5%), South Windsor (4.9%), & Glastonbury (4%)
- The share of residents employed in East Hartford has dropped 2.7% since 2010 as workers have moved to decentralized employment and work-from-home options

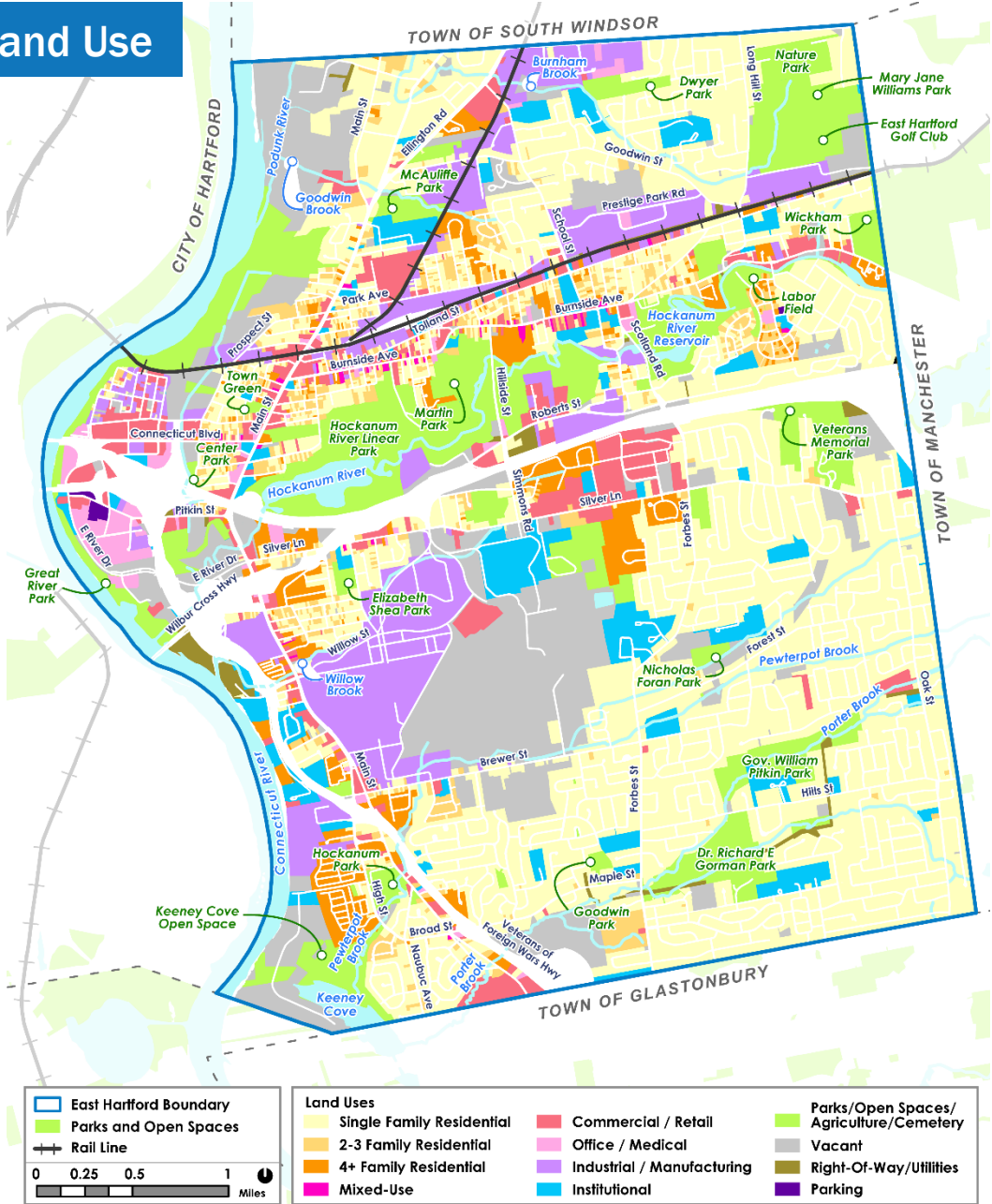
East Hartford Jobs per Sq Mile, 2019



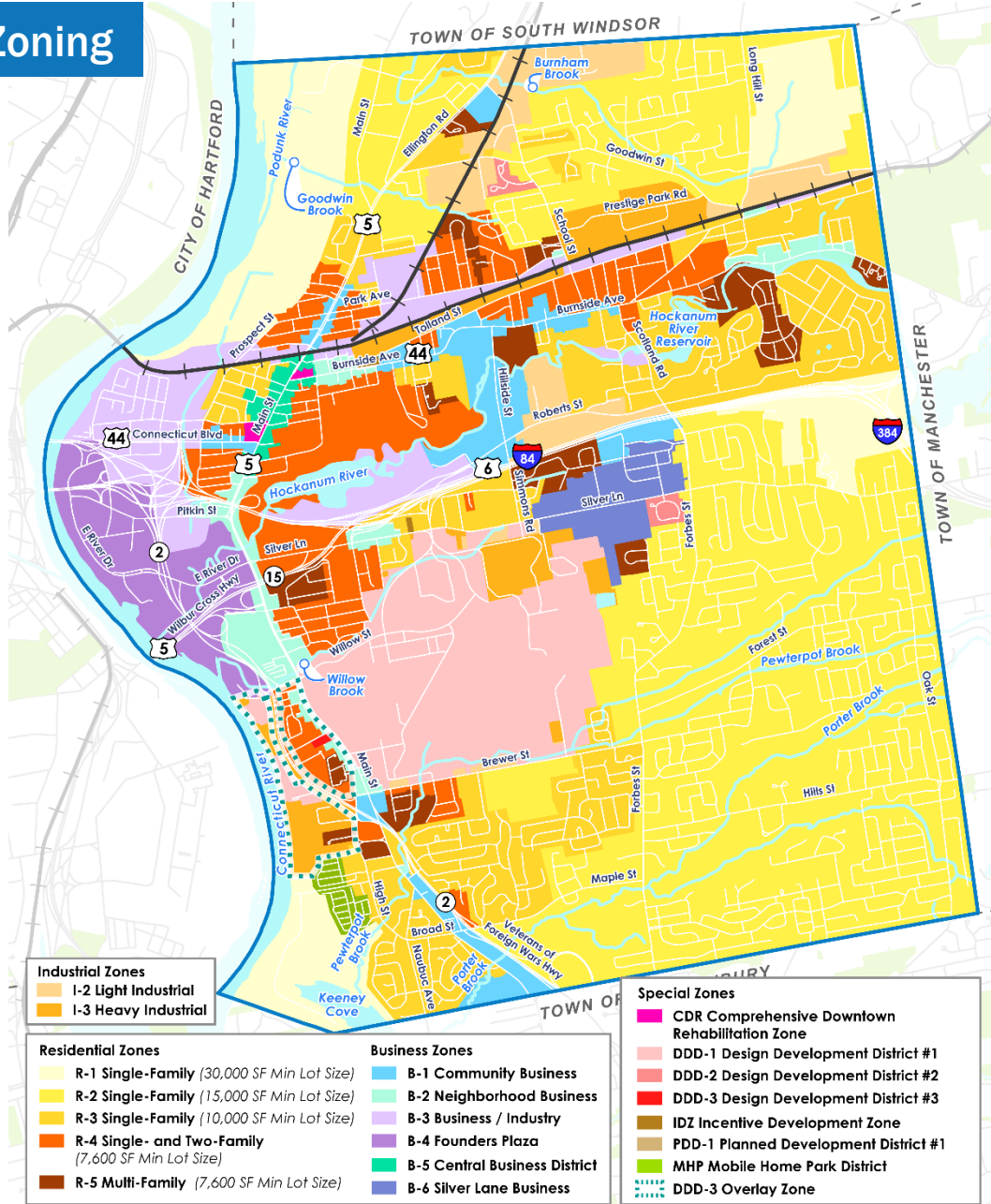
Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019

Initial Findings: Land Use and Zoning

Land Use



Zoning



Initial Findings: Major Zoning Changes Since Last POCD

- **Streamlined regulations for:** parking requirements for manufacturing uses, site plan and sign permit application requirements and procedure, and special use permit requirements (2016)
- **Developed Design Development District 3 (DDD-3)** regulations to allow for a mixed-use college district around Goodwin College (2019)
- **Added breweries and brewpubs** as special permit uses in all business zones and one industrial district (2019)
- **Incorporated zoning recommendations** from Silver Lane Revitalization Plan into the POCD to support required zoning regulations (2020)
- **Revised Incentive Development Zone regulations** to allow residential cluster development as a special permit use to facilitate redevelopment of 550 Burnside Ave. (2021)

Initial Findings: Major Zoning Changes Since Last POCD (cont.)

- Removed the 1,000-foot distance requirement between restaurants serving alcohol (2021)
- Created definition for “small box discount store” and set a 2,000-foot distance requirement to limit locations of dollar stores (2021)
- Created Planned Development District to facilitate Silver Lane corridor zoning changes (2021)
- Established zoning regulations for cultivation and sale of cannabis (2021-2022)
- Comprehensive update of zoning regulations (2022)

Initial Findings: Preliminary Land Use Issues

- **Future zoning for Founders Plaza to facilitate redevelopment**
- **Current zoning for commercial corridors** – Does the Town need all the business zones? If not, what should the land use vision be?
- **Opportunity to review and revise mixed-use designations** – Does zoning support these mixed-use designations? Which areas should be classified as mixed-use? (i.e. Burnside Avenue)
- **Explore options for future uses of office buildings and other high-vacancy spaces such as private schools and churches.** – How should the Town encourage re-purposing of these spaces?
- **Multifamily and housing regulations** – Should the Town expand the permitted zoning districts for multifamily housing? Should the process to approve housing become simpler?
- **Silver Lane Plan Recommendations for Re-Zoning** – Are the recommendations still relevant?

Interactive Open House

What Happens Now?

- Visit one of the seven work stations:
 - Vision and Goals
 - Land Use, Zoning, and Housing
 - Parks, Open Spaces, Recreation, and Environmental Resources
 - Community Facilities, Infrastructure, and Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Transportation and Mobility
 - Economic Development
 - Map for general ideas/priorities/concerns

Tell us what you think!

Use pens and Post-It notes to tell us what's missing or no longer relevant in the 2014 POCD goals.

Engage with project team members to tell us your key concerns, priorities, and questions.

Questions and Comments?

