

Town of East Hartford

Plan of Conservation & Development



Public Workshop #1
November 28, 2023

50 Chapman Place

East Hartford
Community Cultural Center
Department of Parks & Recreation
Department of Youth Services
Social Services
WIC

BFJ Planning

Introductions



Planning & Zoning Commission

John Ryan – Chairman

Peter Marra

Carol Noel

Henry Pawlowski

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Sidney Soderholm

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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?



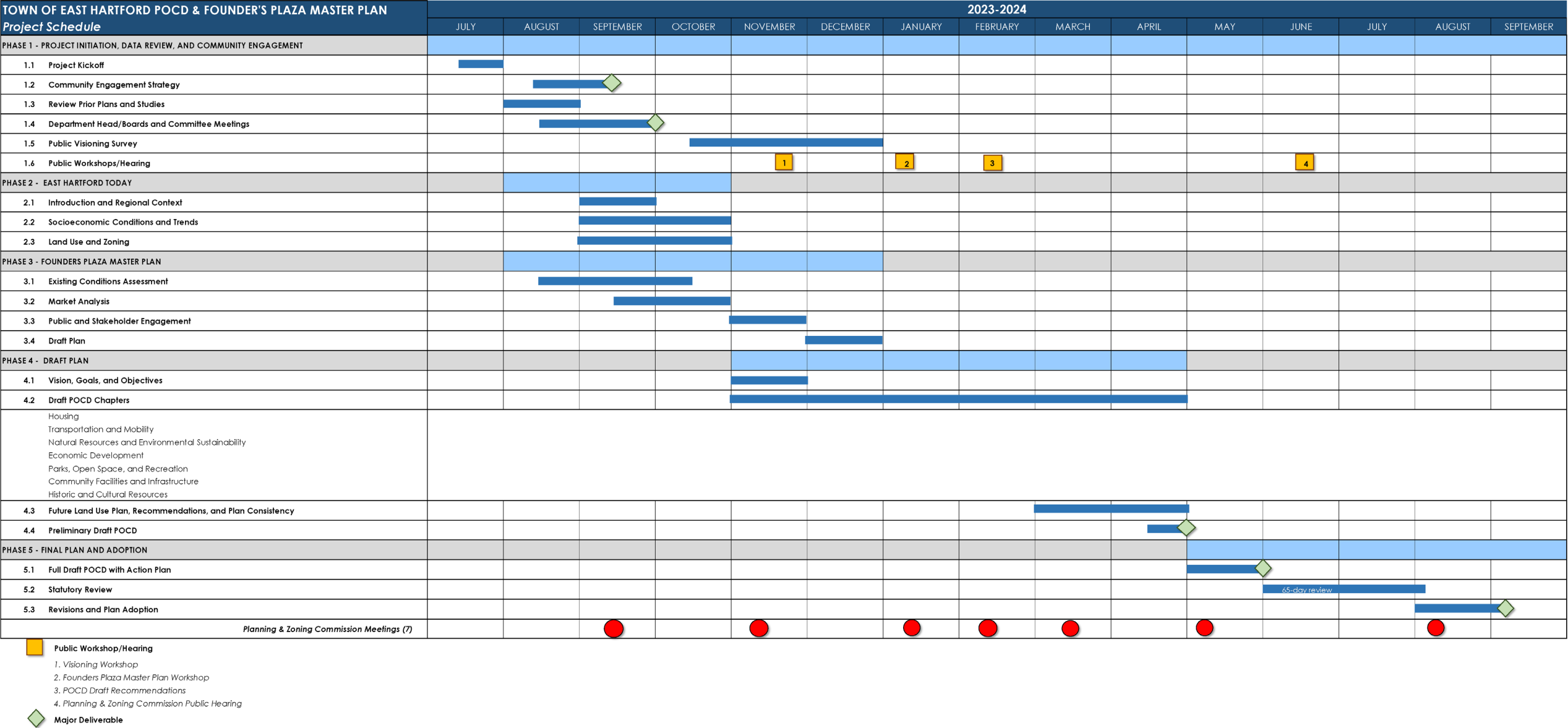
TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD
PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

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

Major Deliverable

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

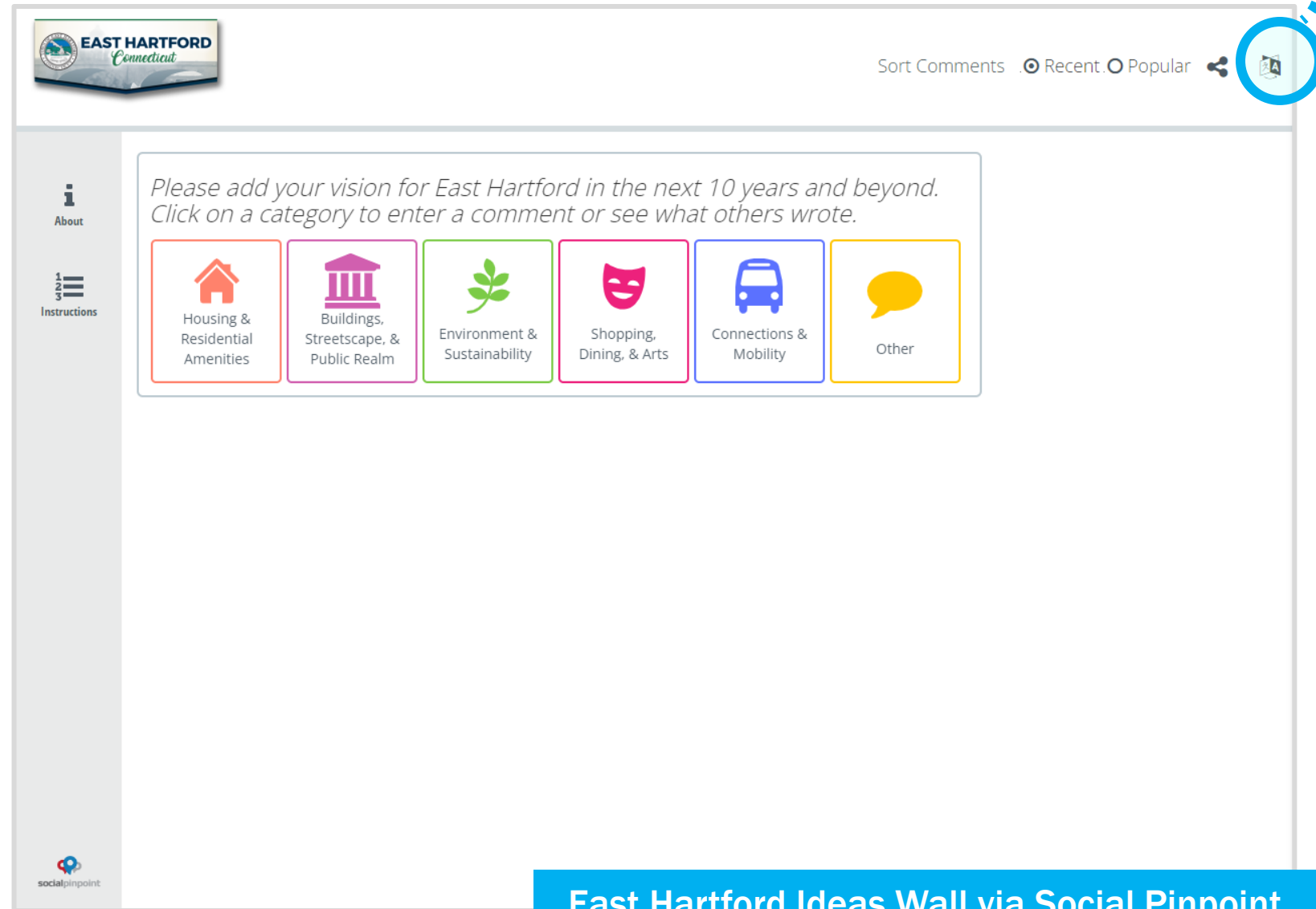
- Main Street in the Town Center needs pedestrian and streetscape improvements to make this a more attractive place to shop and dine; stakeholders consistently indicated they do not patronize the area due to lack of options.
- East Hartford needs an organized entity to support business development and 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

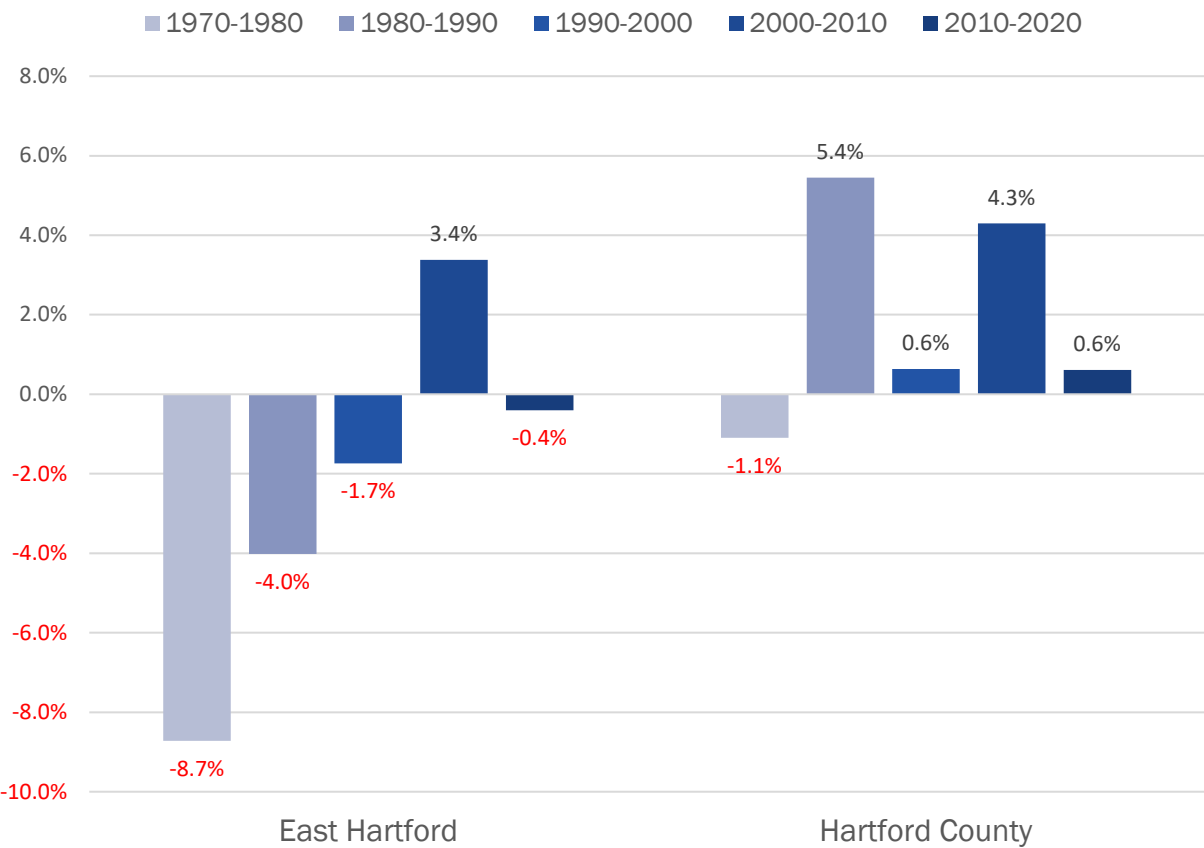


Initial Findings: Total Population

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



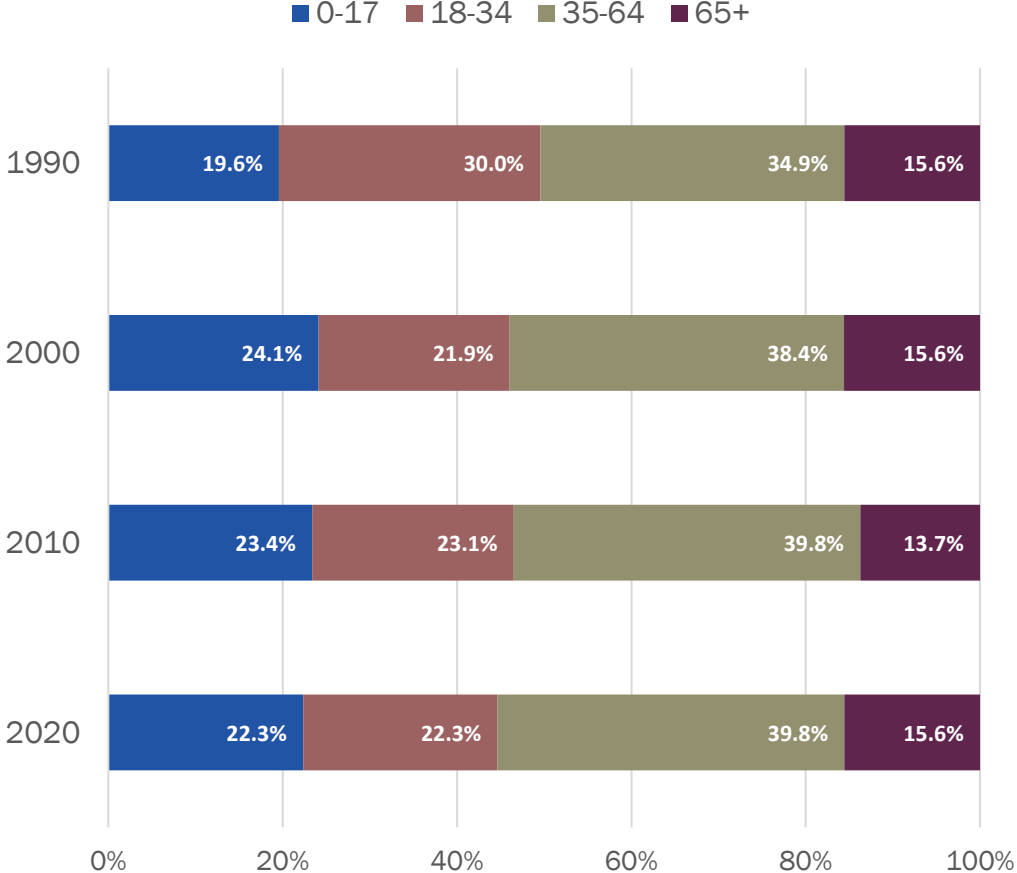
Source: UCONN Data Center, 2015

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



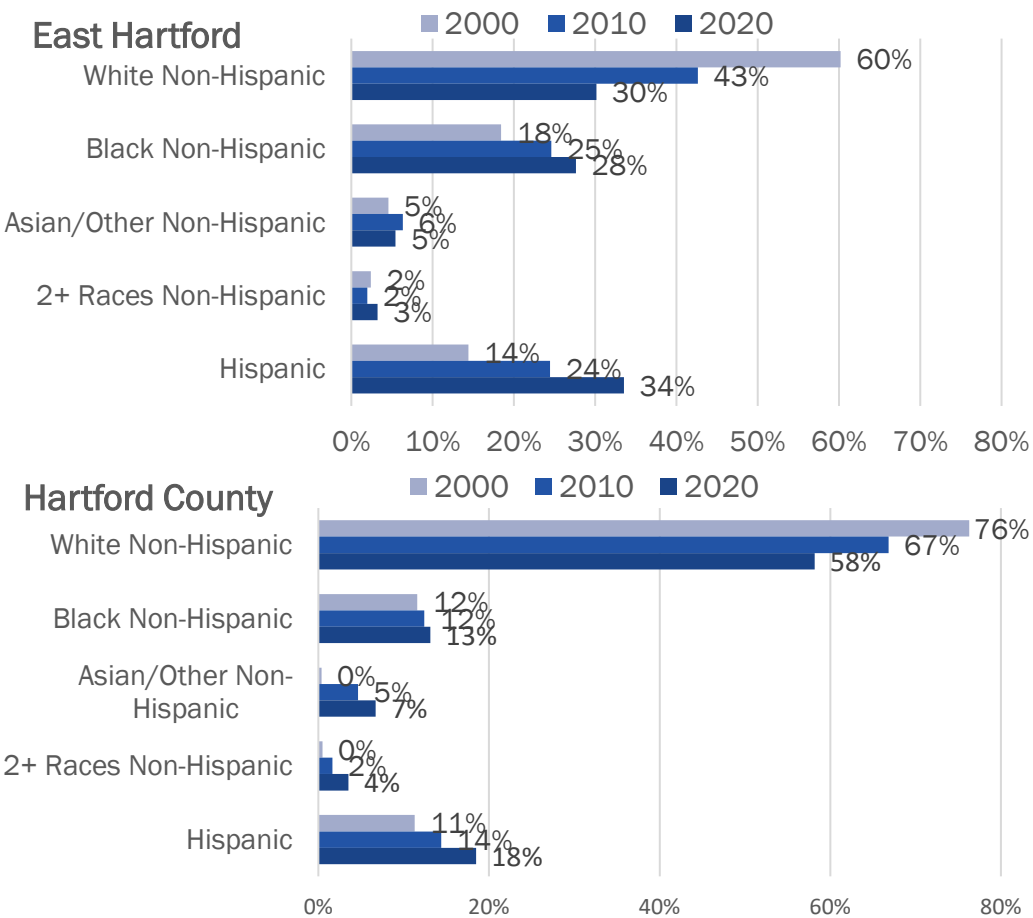
Source: US Decennial Census, 1990-2020

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



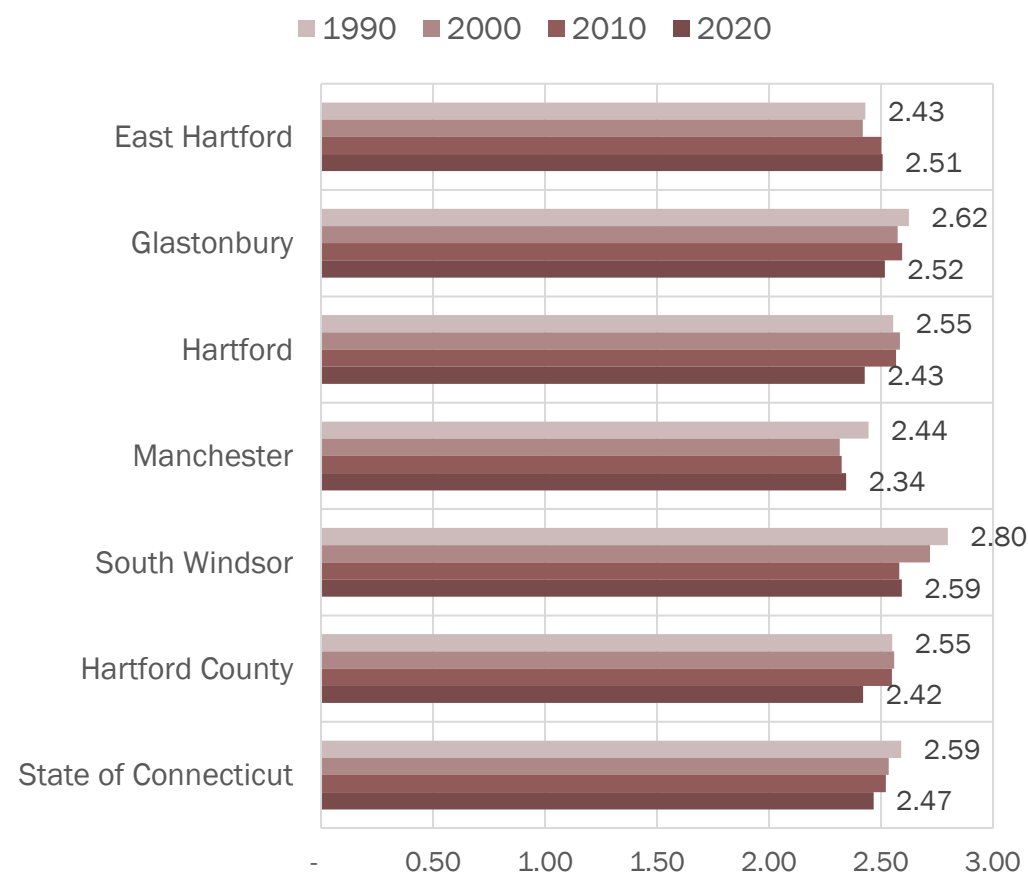
Source: US Decennial Census, 2000-2020

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



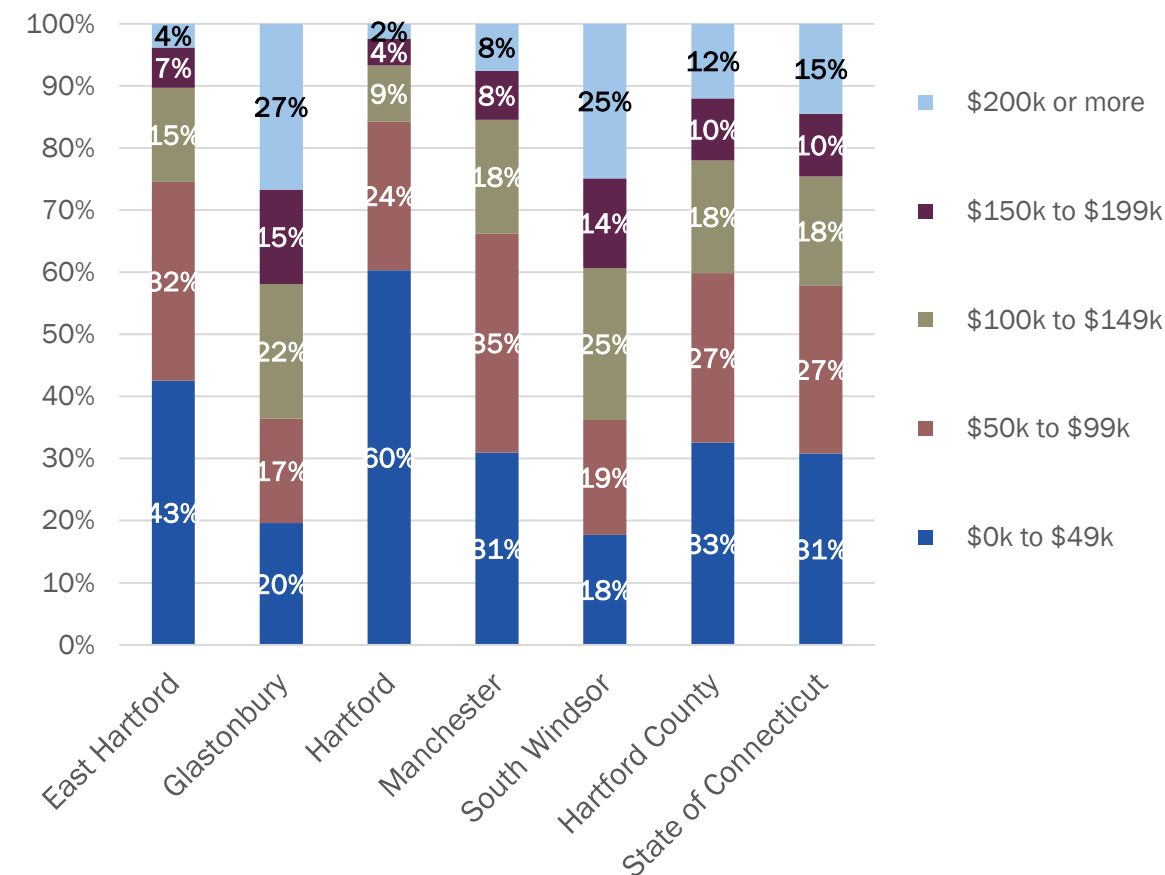
Source: US Decennial Census, 1990-2020

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



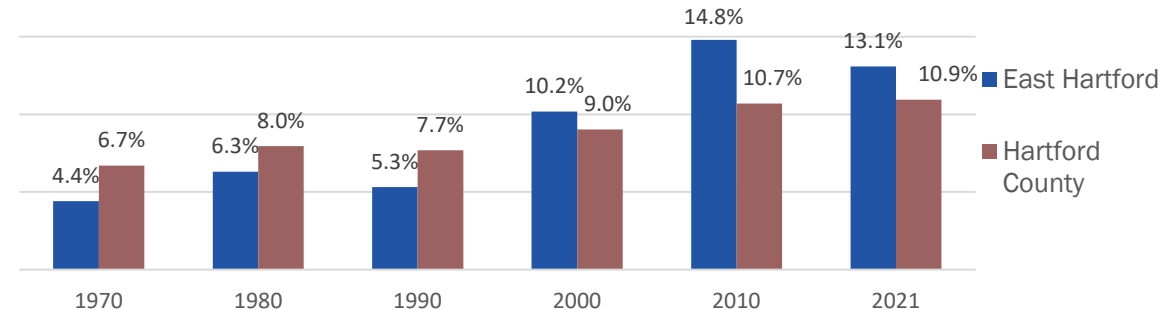
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimate.

Initial Findings: Poverty

Key Trends

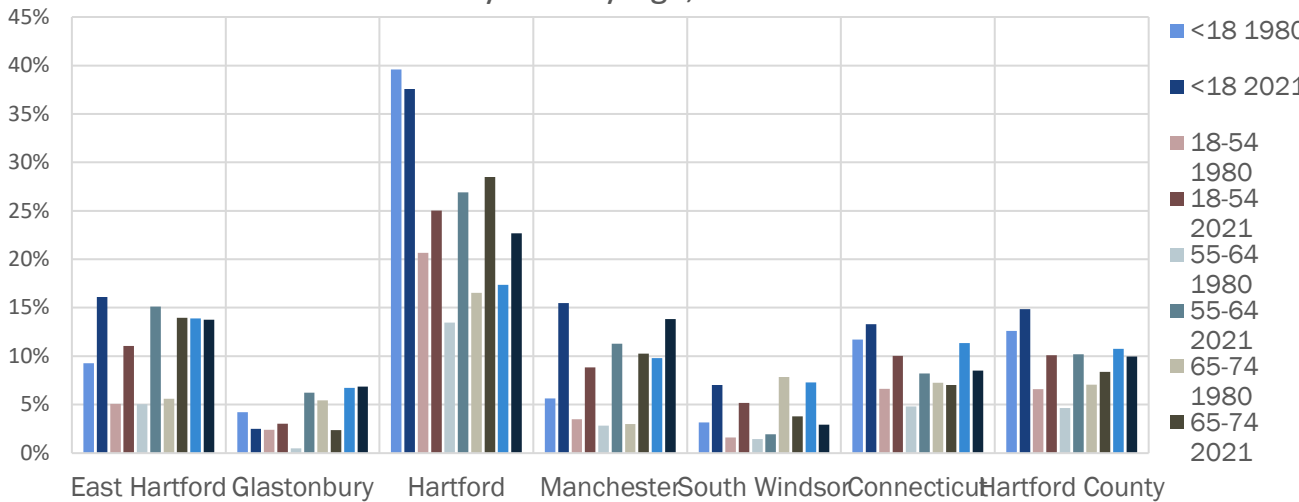
- The Town’s poverty rate has increased since 1970, nearly tripling in share from 4.4% in 1970 to 13.1% in 2021.
 - The poverty rate sharply increased for all East Hartford residents, except for older seniors 75+, whose already high level of poverty continued to stay elevated.
- In 2021, East Hartford 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



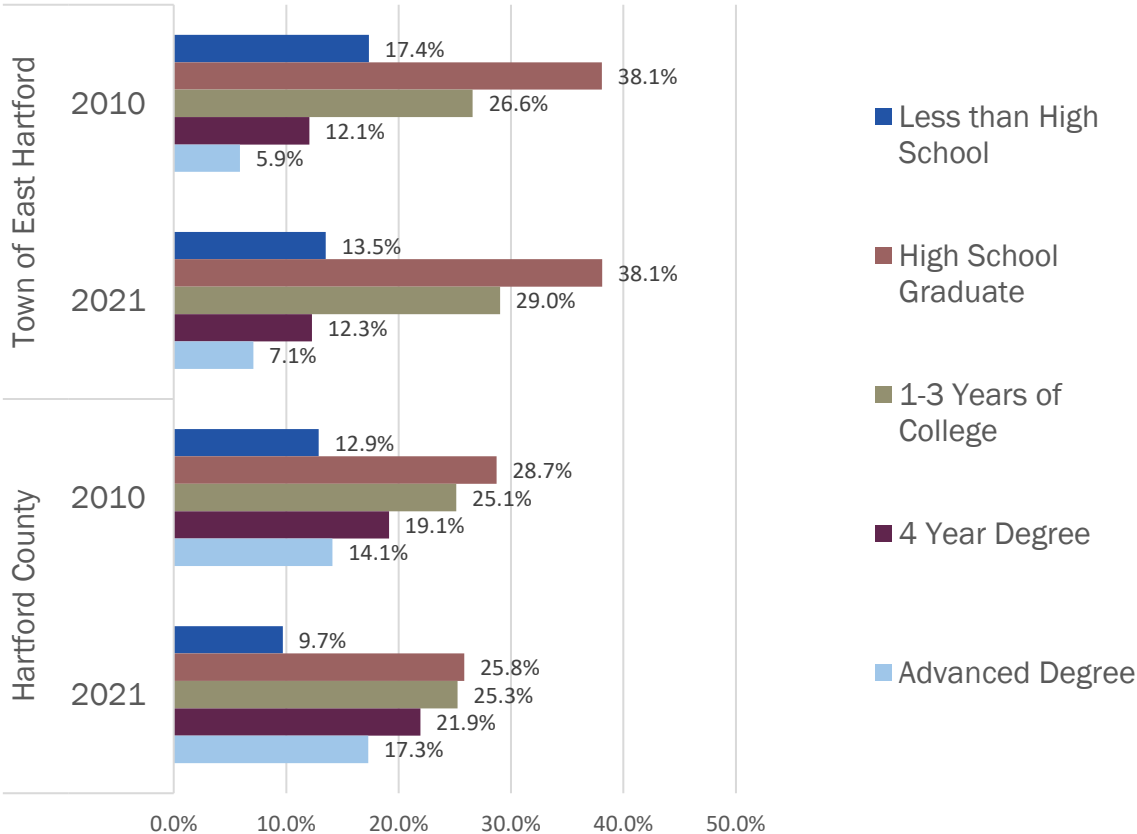
Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1980, American Community Survey, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimate.

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



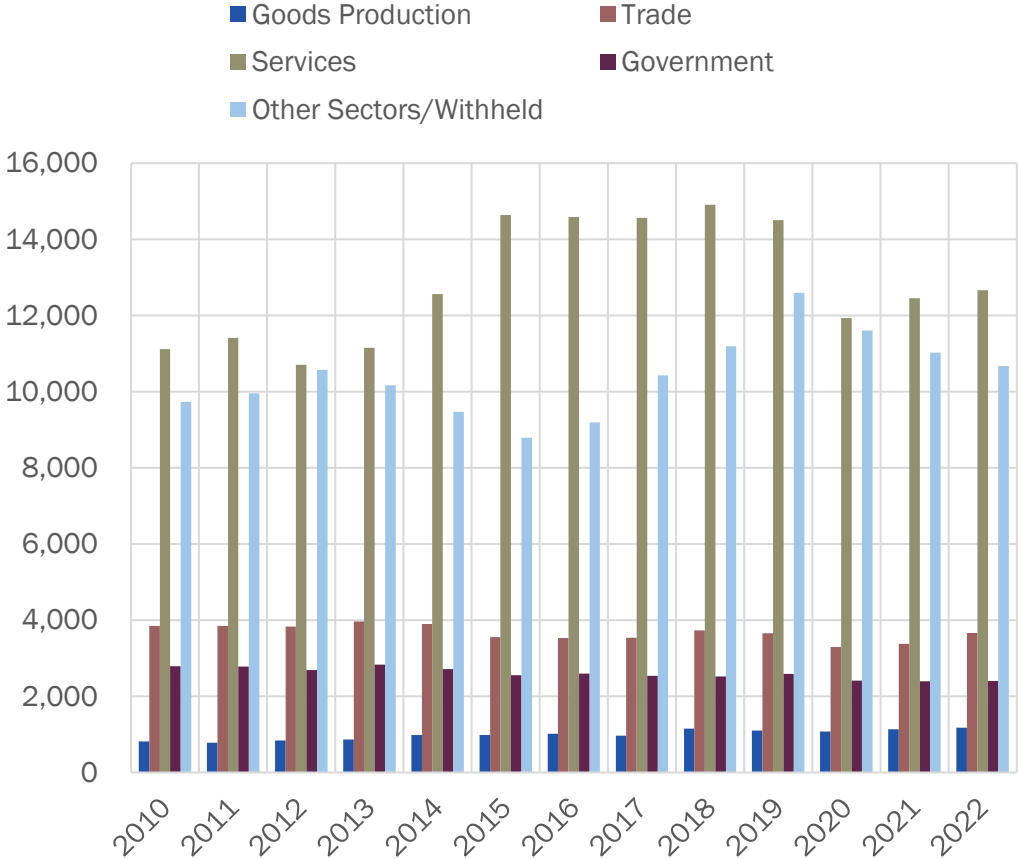
Source: CTDOL, QCEW, 2010-2022

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



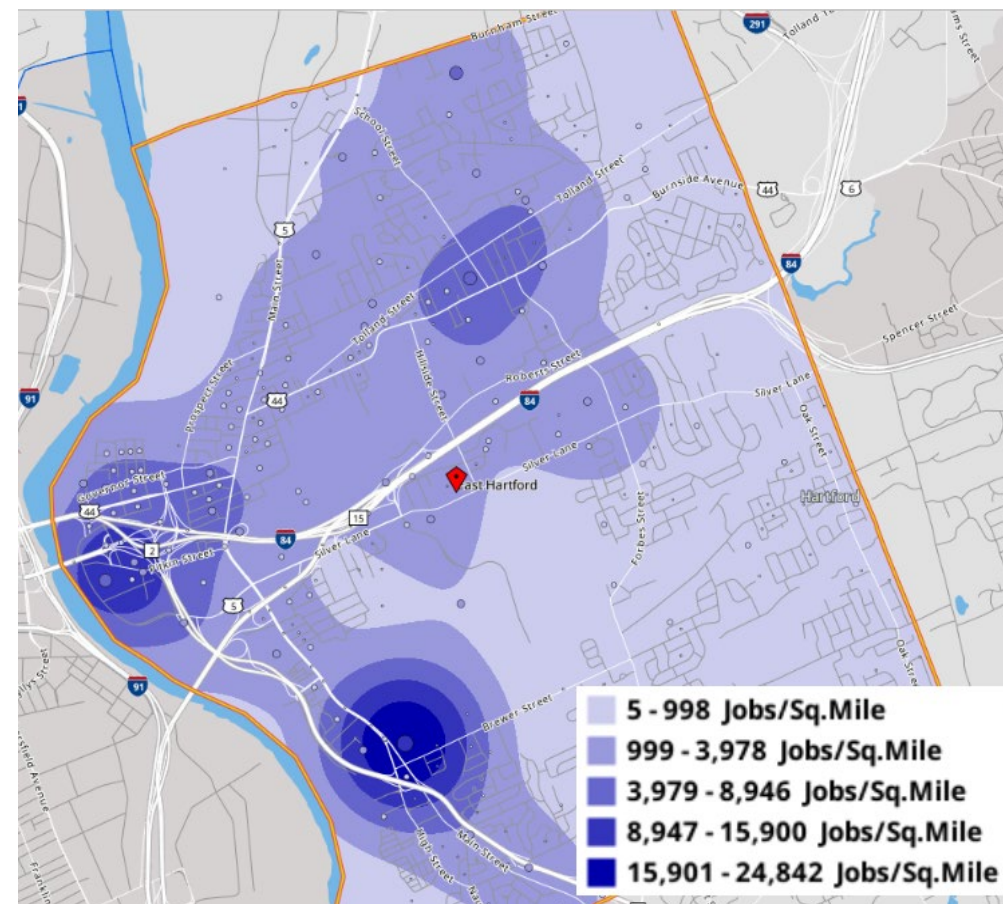
Source: CTDOL, QCEW, 2010-2022

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

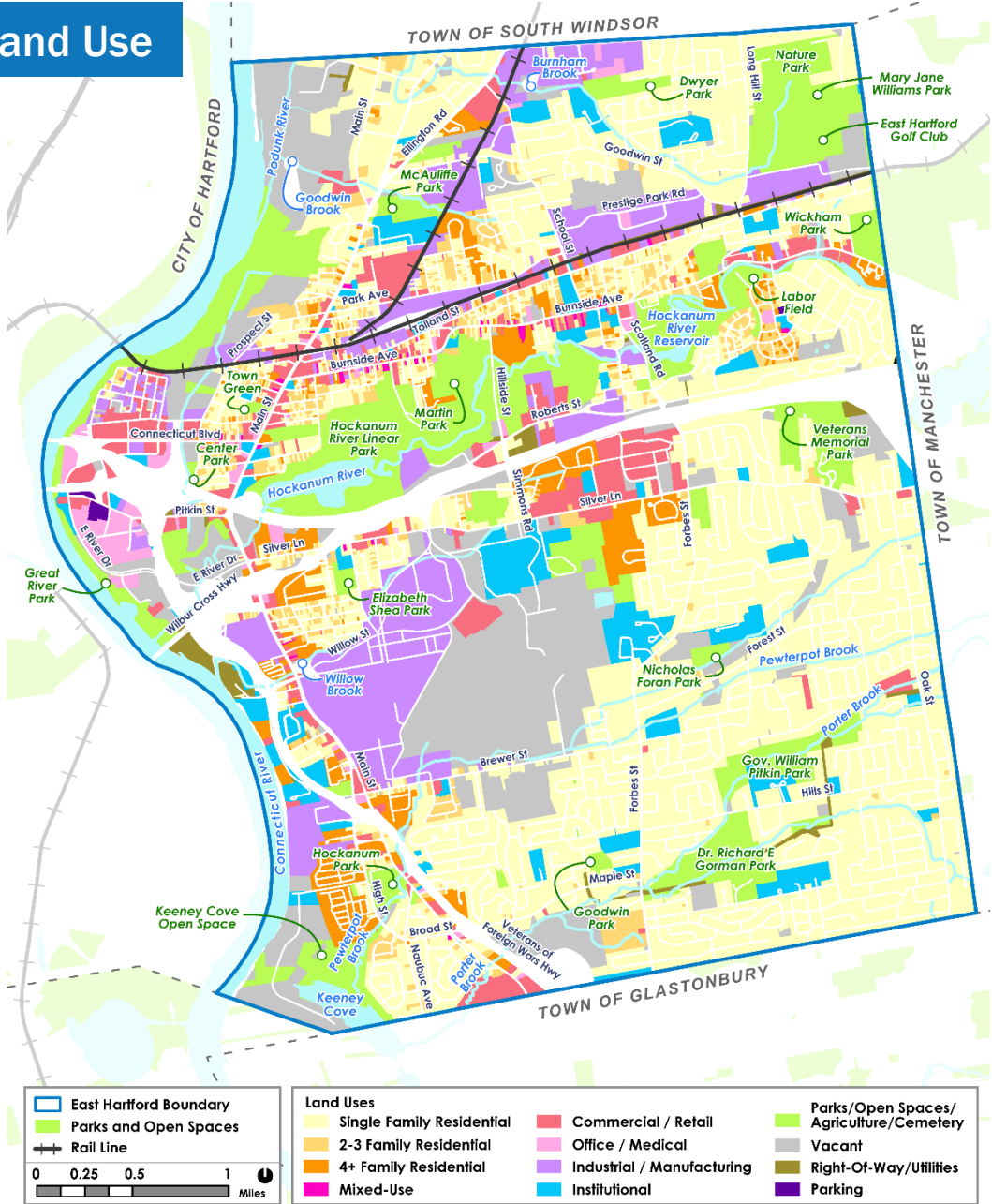
East Hartford Jobs per Sq Mile, 2019



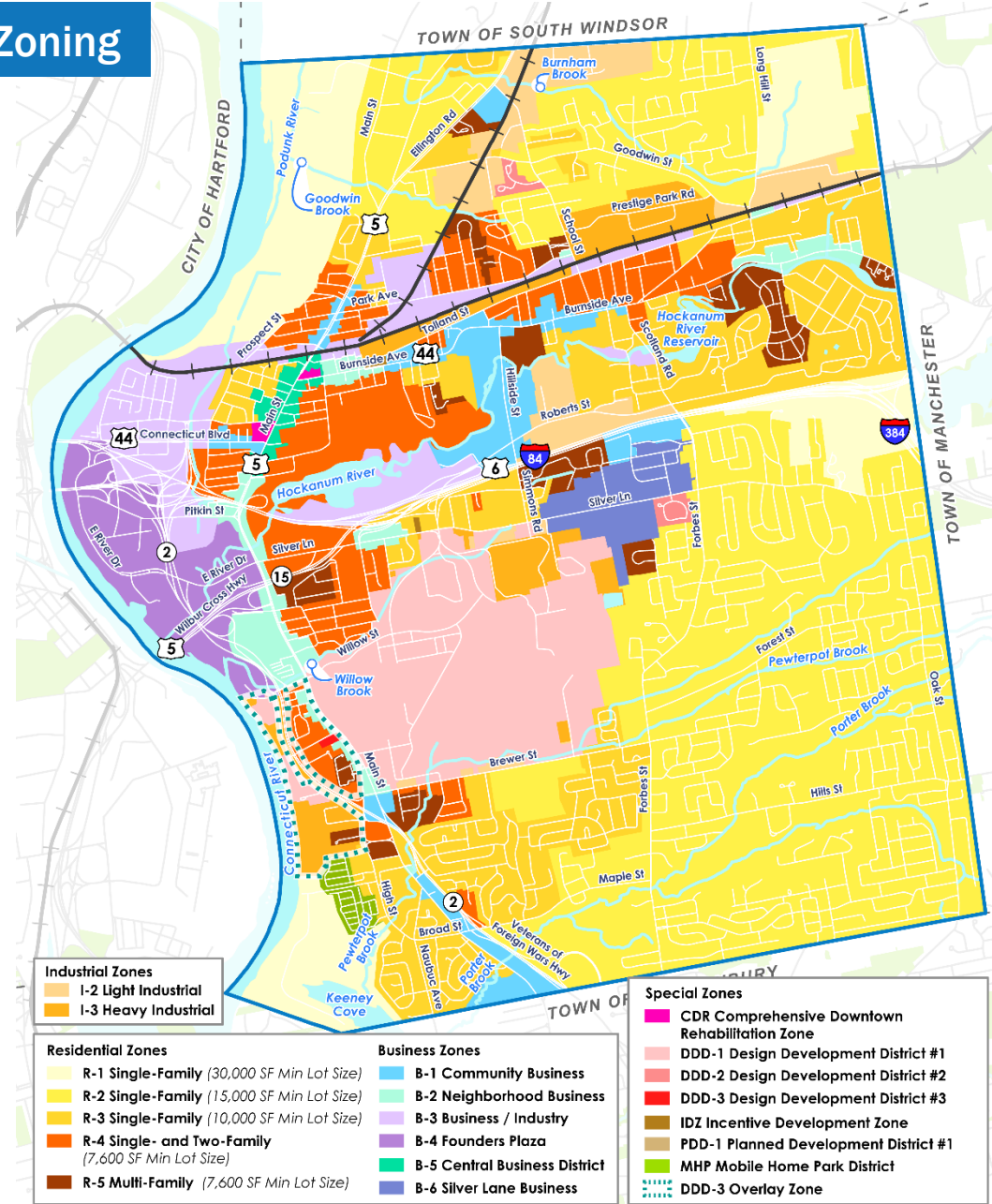
Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019

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?

