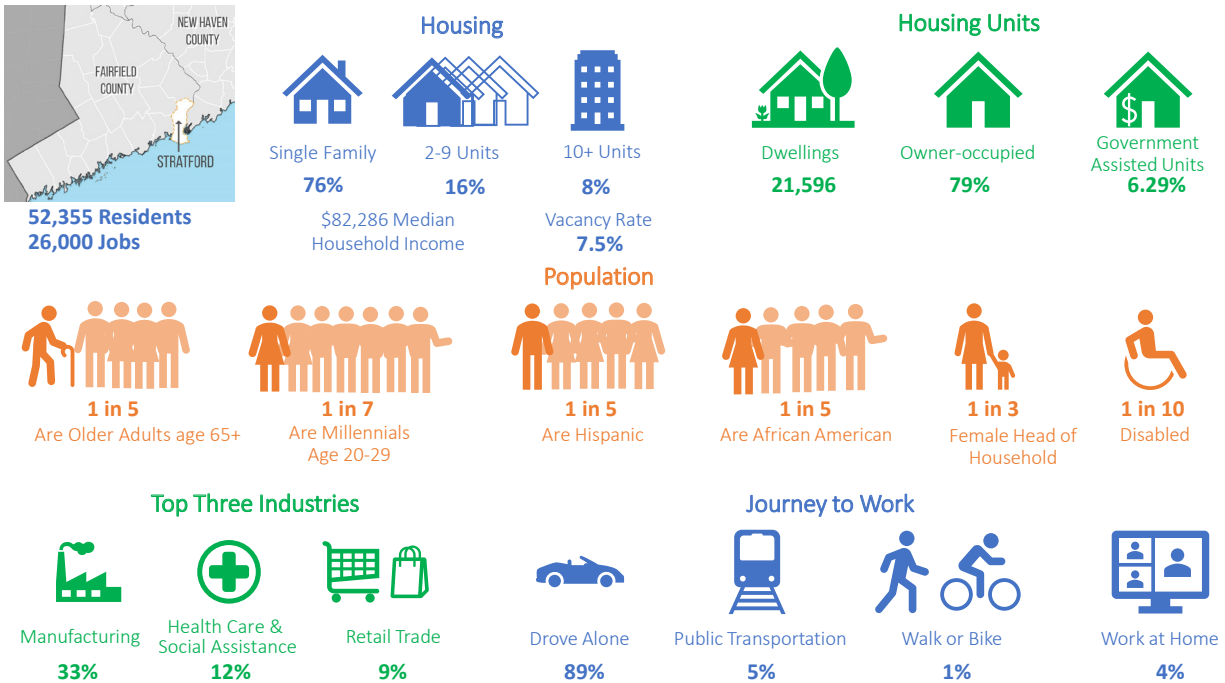




Demographic Trends

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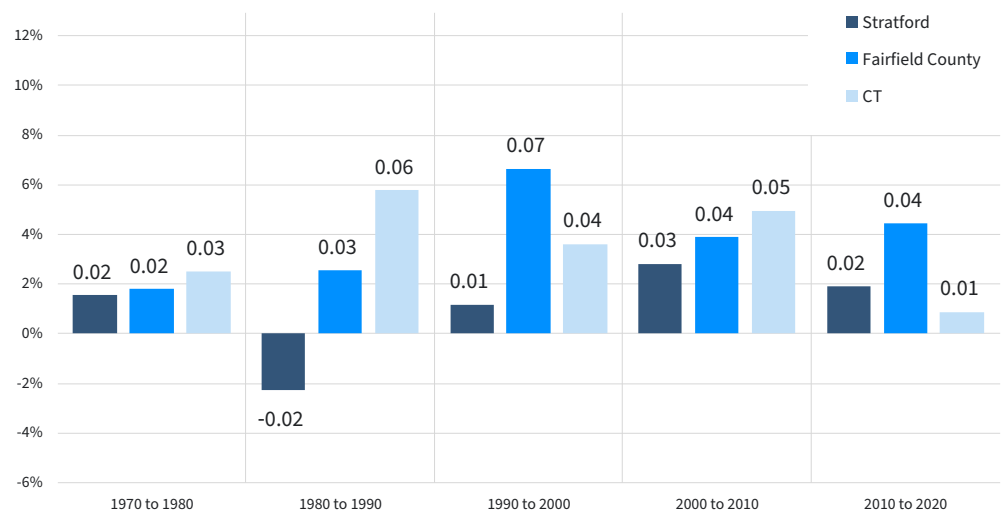
Analysis of socio-economic and housing data provides a basic understanding of where Stratford is today, what changed over the past decade, how Stratford compares with other communities in the region and the state, and an estimate of what lies ahead with respect to physical growth and development. Community conversations held during the planning process have aided in uncovering the gaps in the data gathered, and provided the planning team with useful information which helped shape the recommendations in this document. A brief summary of key data trends and planning issues are summarized in this chapter. More detailed topic based data is discussed in subsequent chapters.



Population Growth

Stratford has a population of approximately 52,300 residents. Population has increased since 1990 but growth has lagged behind both Fairfield County and the State, with exception of the period from 2010 to 2020 when Stratford exceeded the State's growth rate. Stratford only lost population during one decade (1980-1990) in the past fifty years. Since then, growth in Stratford has exceeded 1% per decade and growth is projected by the State over the next two decades.

Figure 2.1. Population Growth vs. Region

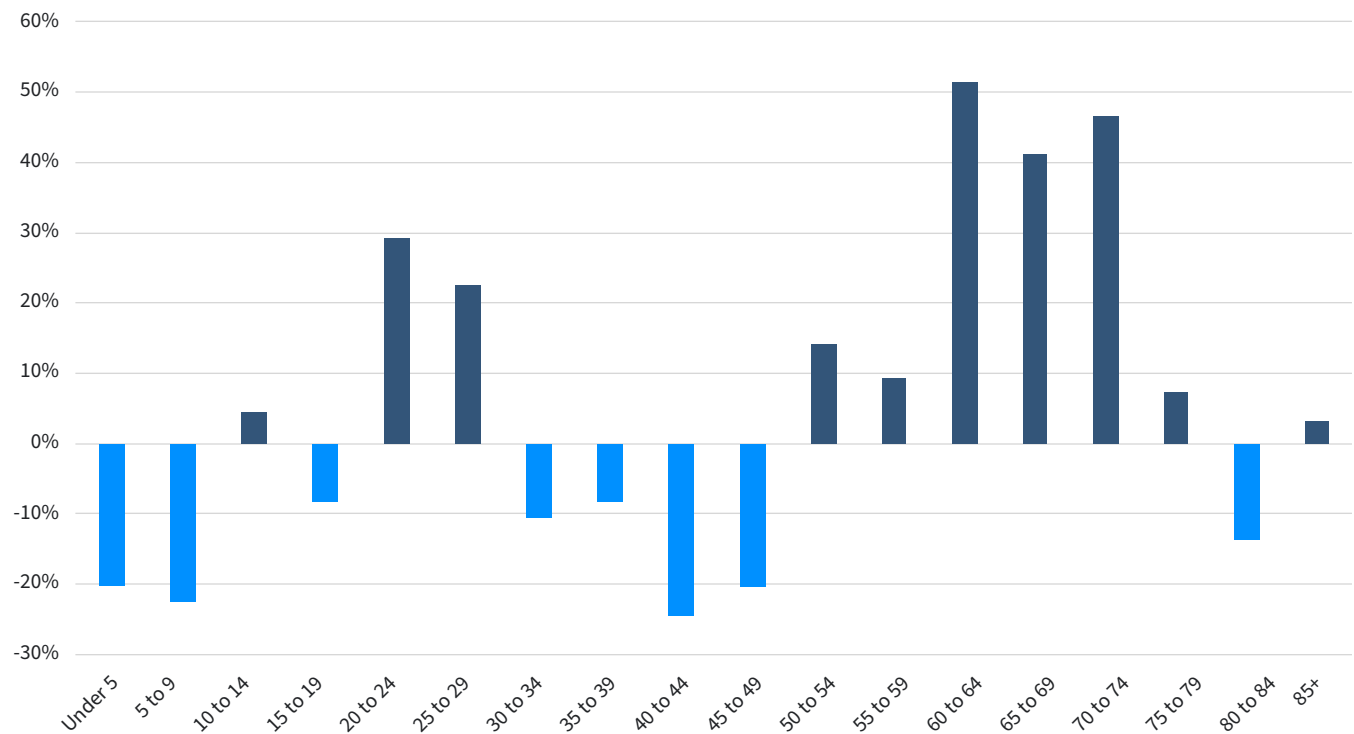


Source: United States Census Bureau, 1970 – 2020 Decennial Census

Stratford’s population is growing the most in those between the ages of 20 and 29 and between the ages of 55 and 75. These demographics include younger adults and those residents nearing or entering retirement age. Stratford’s population has shrunk in residents under age 20 and between age 30 and 55. Shifting demographics in Stratford towards older and smaller households suggest the need for a greater diversity of housing stock.

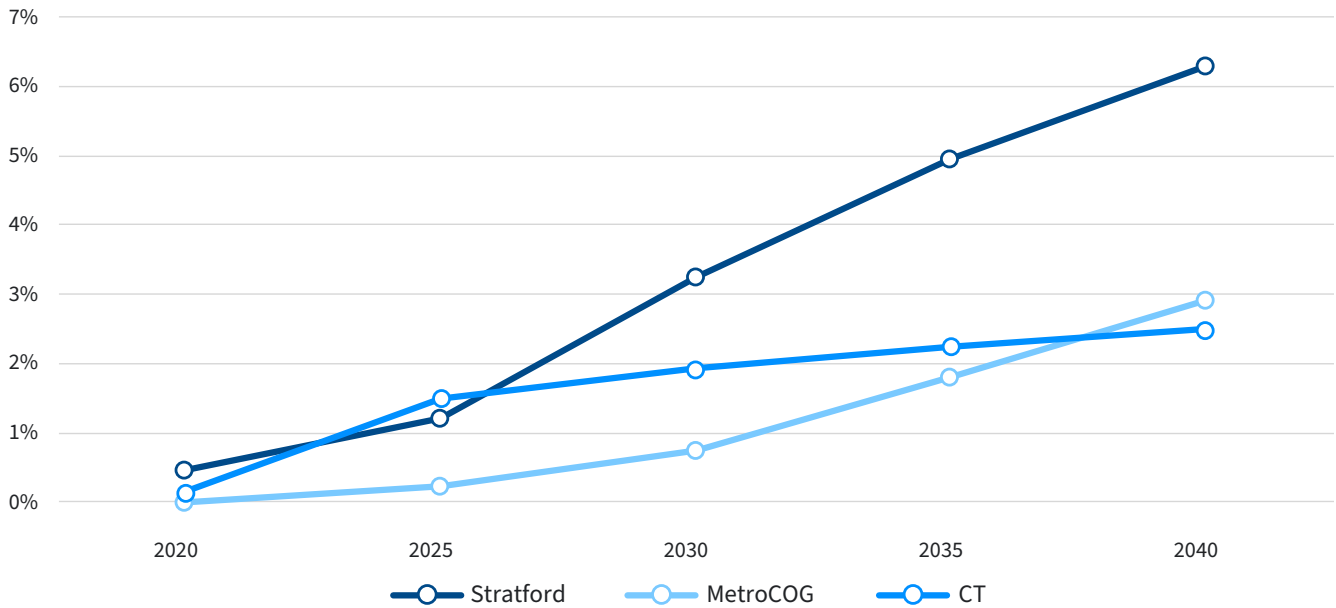
According to population projections conducted by the State, Stratford’s population is expected to remain positive through 2040 and is expected to outpace the growth in both the MetroCOG Region (the six-town planning region that Stratford belongs to) and the State. With the exception of Fairfield, Stratford is projected to grow more than any other municipality in the Region. Stratford’s population is projected to grow nearly 7% over the course of the next 20 years. School-age residents between the ages of 5 and 19 are expected to contribute most towards growth over the 20-year period, countering trends that have occurred over the past decade.

Figure 2.2. Stratford Population Change by Age Cohort (2010 to 2021)



Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Figure 2.3. Projected Population Change 2020-2040 vs. MetroCOG Region and State



Source: CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), 2016 Projections

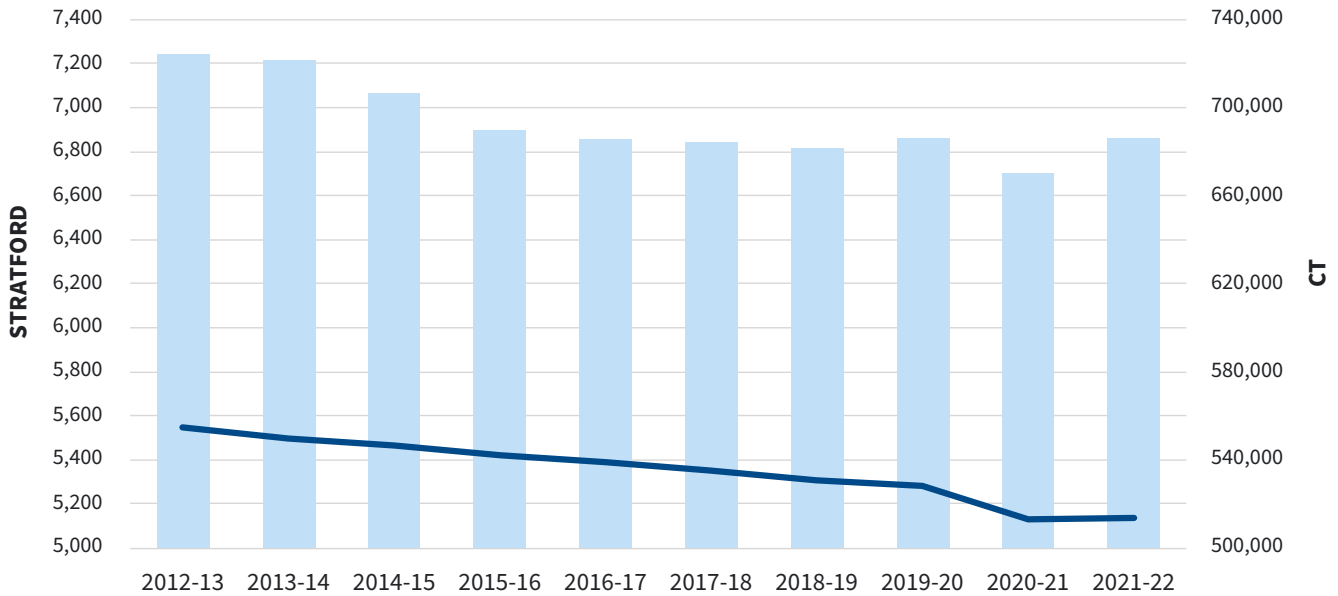
Table 2.1. Projected Population Change 2020-2040 vs. MetroCOG Region and State

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Stratford	0.45%	1.20%	3.25%	4.94%	6.70%
Bridgeport	-0.43%	4.23%	5.79%	6.47%	6.19%
Easton	-0.44%	-15.63%	-20.26%	-24.51%	-28.57%
Fairfield	0.35%	-5.47%	-4.13%	1.32%	8.68%
Monroe	-0.28%	-21.08%	-28.36%	-33.99%	-38.81%
Trumbull	-0.47%	-4.35%	-6.42%	-7.80%	-7.84%
MetroCOG	-1.30%	-1.07%	-0.56%	0.47%	1.58%
CT	0.15%	1.50%	1.93%	2.25%	2.49%

Source: CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), 2016 Projections

School Enrollment

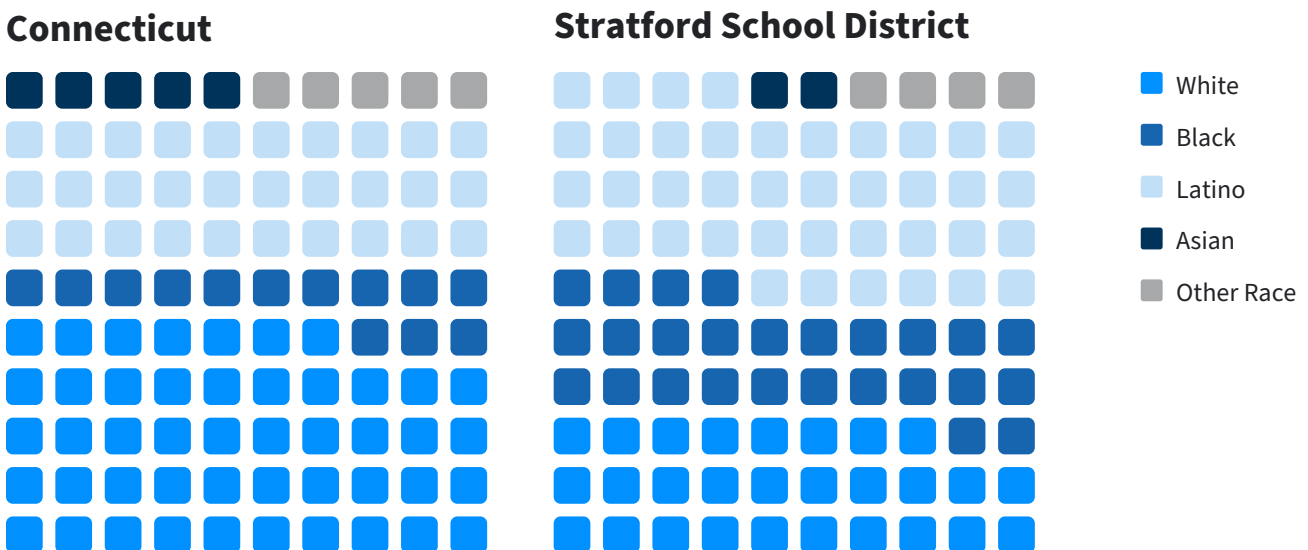
Figure 2.4. Stratford Public Schools Enrollment vs. State 2012-2013 to 2021-2022



Source: CT Department of Education, Stratford Public Schools

Stratford’s public school enrollment has mirrored the State’s enrollment trends over the past ten years. During the 2021-22 school year Stratford’s public schools experienced a small bump in enrollment with 6,860 students enrolled that year, but this is a nearly 400 student decline since the 2012-13 school year. With population projections anticipating growth in Stratford’s school age children, it is reasonable to expect that the school’s enrollment numbers will stabilize or potentially increase. While the Town’s school enrollment has shrunk over the past decade, it has also become more diverse. Stratford’s public school students are more racially and ethnically diverse than those in the average school district across the State.

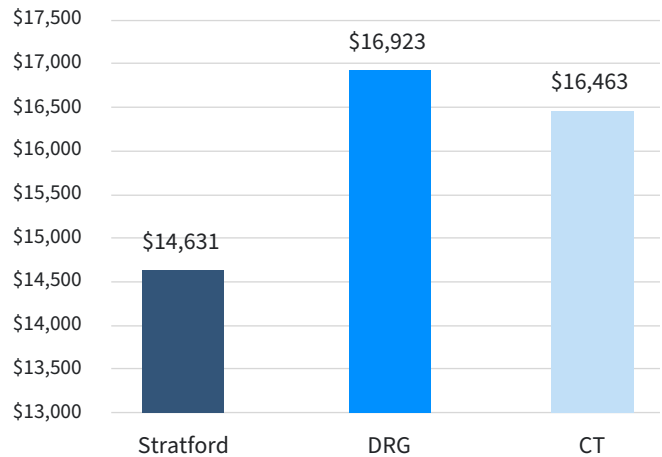
Figure 2.5. Public K-12 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity per 100 Students, 2022-23



Source: 2023 Equity Profile, Datahaven and CT Department of Education

When analyzing per pupil expenditures compared to the State and the District Reference Group (DRG), Stratford is in Group G, which includes 17 municipalities. Stratford spends over \$2,000 less per student than the DRG which is a classification system in which districts are grouped based on similar socioeconomic conditions, and over \$1,800 less than the State.

Figure 2.6. Per Pupil Expenditures - 2016

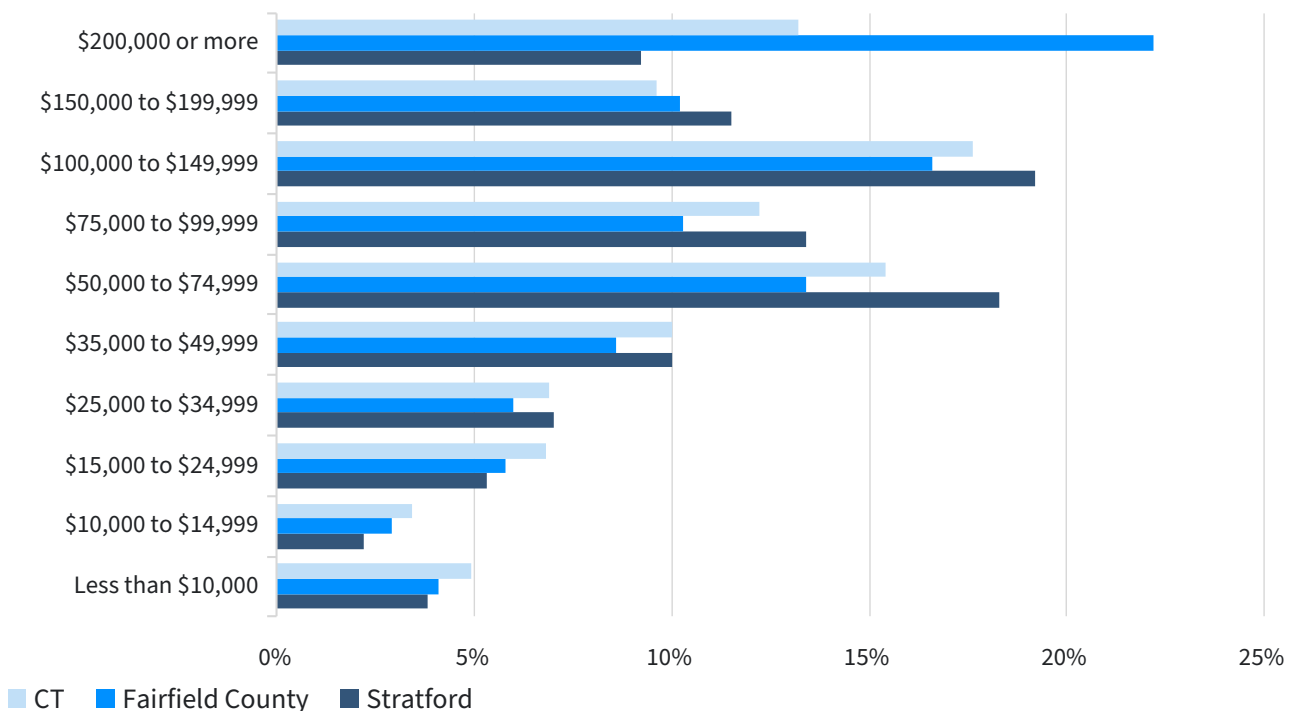


Source: Stratford Board of Education, 2016

Income and Education

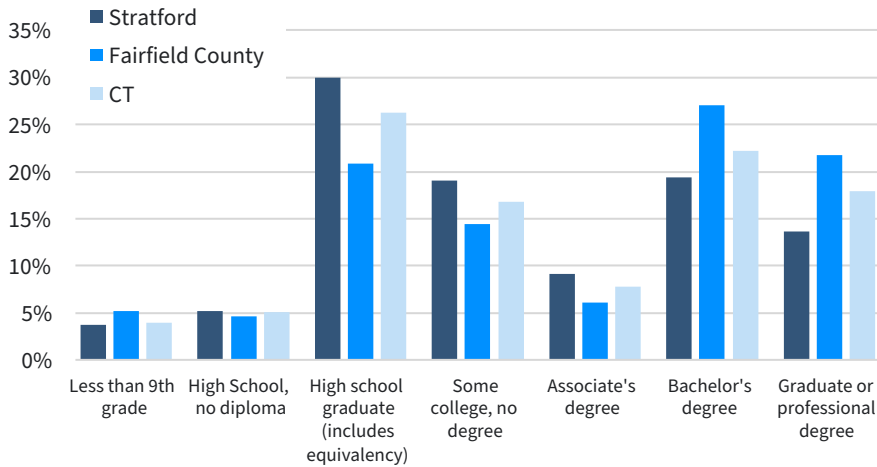
The median household income in Stratford was over \$86,000 in 2021, an increase of nearly \$20,000 since 2015. This is above the State’s median but is about \$15,000 less than the median income of Fairfield County. Stratford has a higher share of households earning between \$50,000 to \$200,000 than both the County and State and has a lower share of households in income brackets below \$25,000.

Figure 2.7. Percentage of Households by Income (2021)



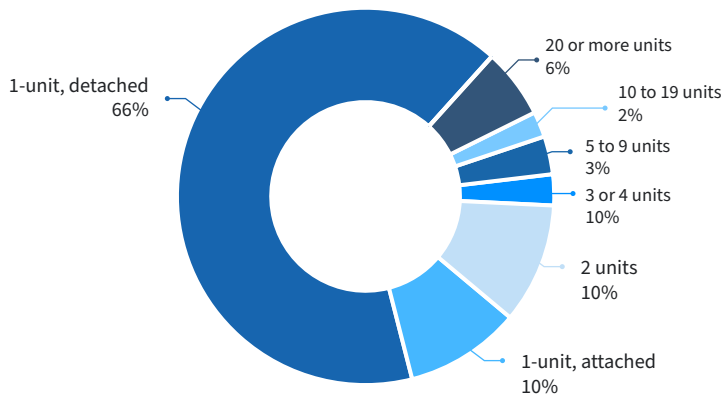
Source: American Community Survey – 2021

Figure 2.8. Educational Attainment



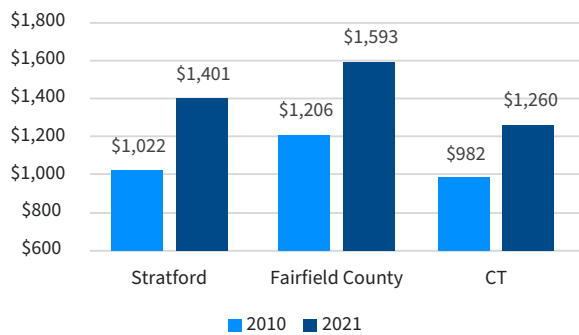
Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 2.9. Stratford Housing Type (2021)



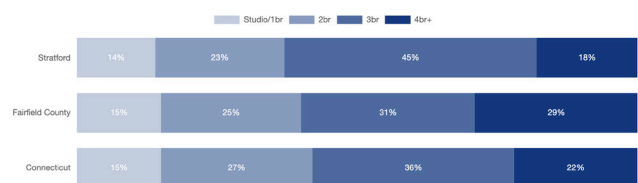
Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 2.10. Median Gross Rent 2010 vs 2021



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 2.11. Percent of housing units by number of bedrooms



Source: American Community Survey 2020, 5-year estimates

Stratford's residents hold proportionately fewer bachelor's and graduate degrees than residents of the Region and State. Many of Stratford's residents are employed in manufacturing industries within the Town, these industries have historically provided well-paying jobs that don't require a college degree. Educational attainment of Stratford's residents is changing as well. It has improved between 2010 and 2021 with more residents holding bachelor's and graduate degrees and fewer residents with less than a bachelor's degree.

Housing Trends

Stratford has a diversity of housing types, although a majority (two-thirds) of housing is single-family (1-unit detached). Duplexes (homes with two units) account for 10% of the Town's multi-family housing. Only 6% of the Town's housing is found in buildings with 20 or more units.

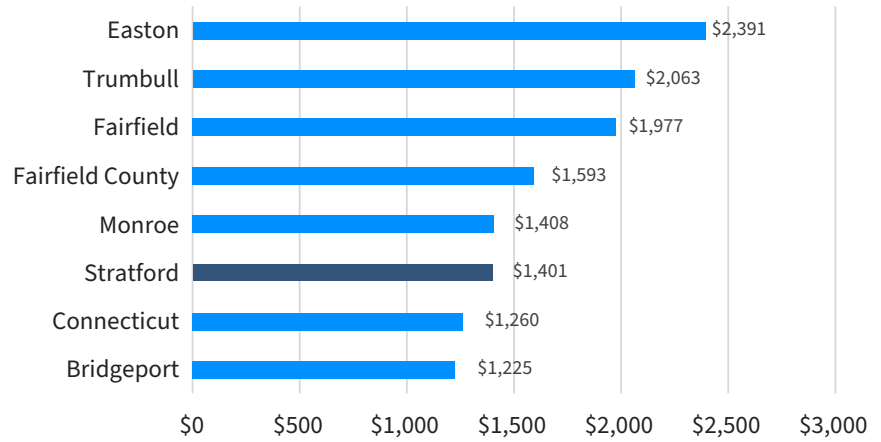
Median gross rent in Stratford rose nearly 40% between 2010 and 2021 to \$1,401. This exceeds median rents for the State. Stratford saw greater rent increases than both Fairfield County and the State over the 2010 to 2021 period.

Compared to neighboring Towns, Stratford has lower rental prices than the other MetroCOG communities with the exception of Bridgeport. A significant share of rental households (nearly 60%) spent more than 30% of their household income on rent, which is considered housing cost burdened.

Residential construction activity has fluctuated in Stratford over the past decade. 2013 experienced the highest number of permits issued, but annual permits issued since then have not exceeded 84 per year. Housing permits issued do not correlate directly with units built as some projects may be in progress, delayed, or abandoned.

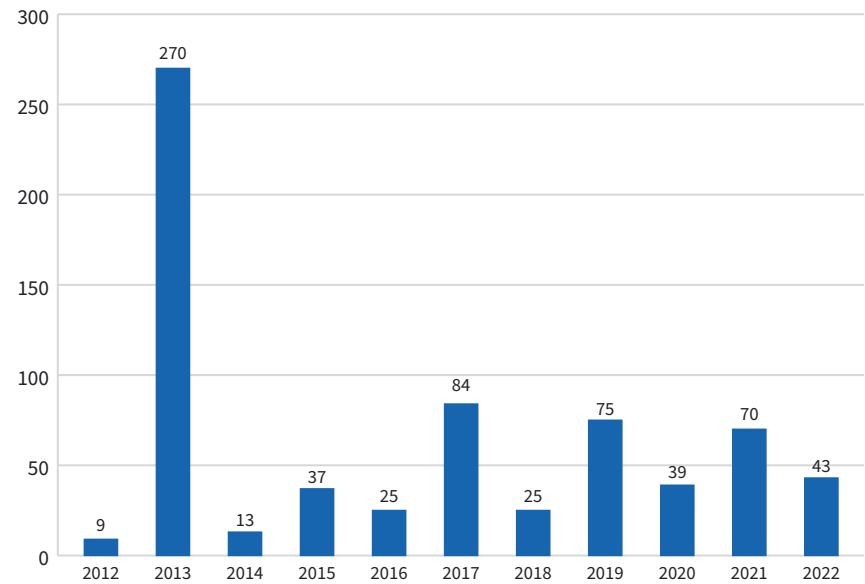
Stratford's population density is significantly higher than both the State and County. Population density in Town is 2,631 residents per square mile compared to 1,143 residents per square mile in Fairfield County and 648 residents per square mile statewide.

Figure 2.12. Median Gross Rent (2021)



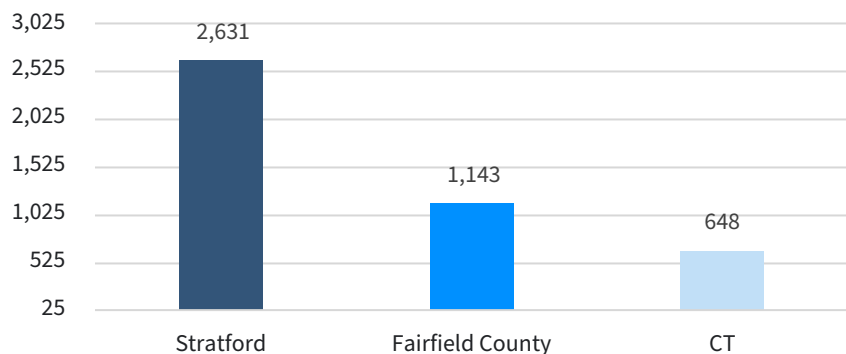
Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Figure 2.13. Stratford Housing Permits (2022)



Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development 2012 - 2022

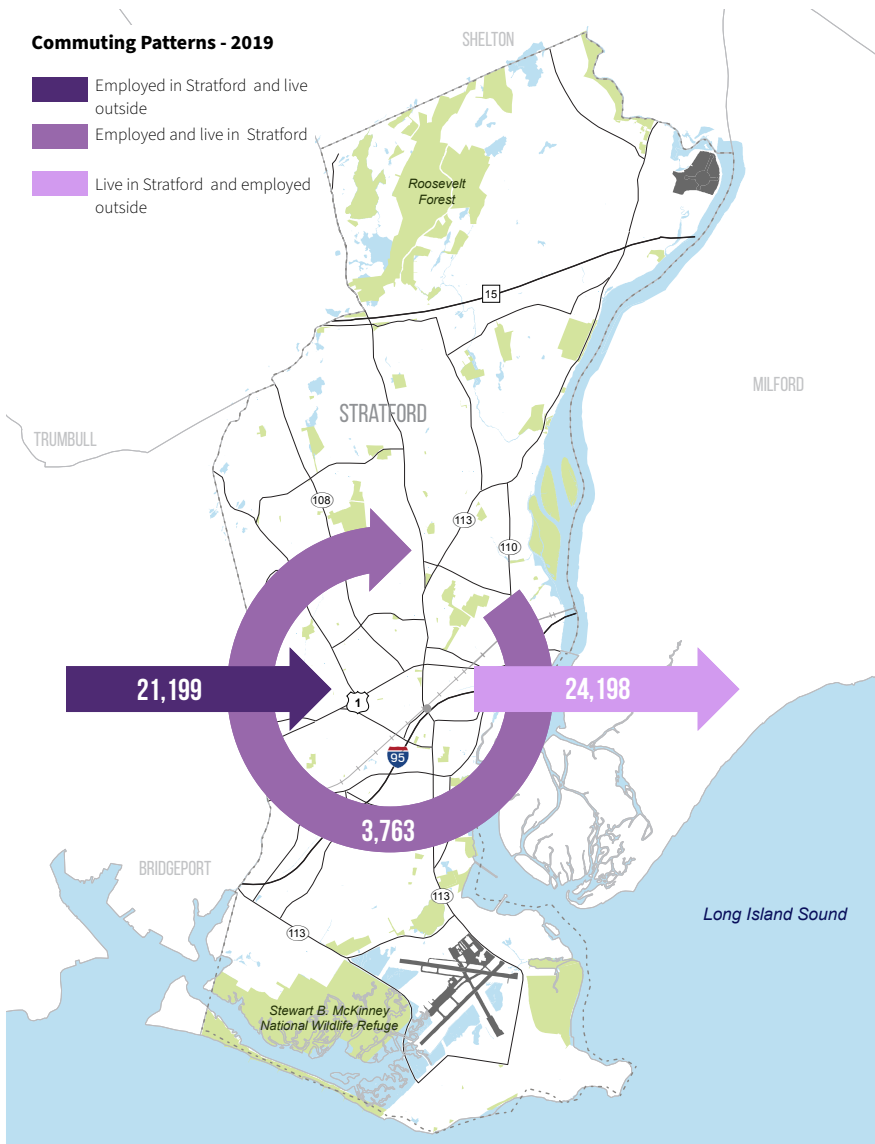
Figure 2.14. Population Density 2021 (residents per square mile)



Source: American Community Survey - 2021

Employment & Industry Trends

Figure 2.15. Commuting Patterns - 2019

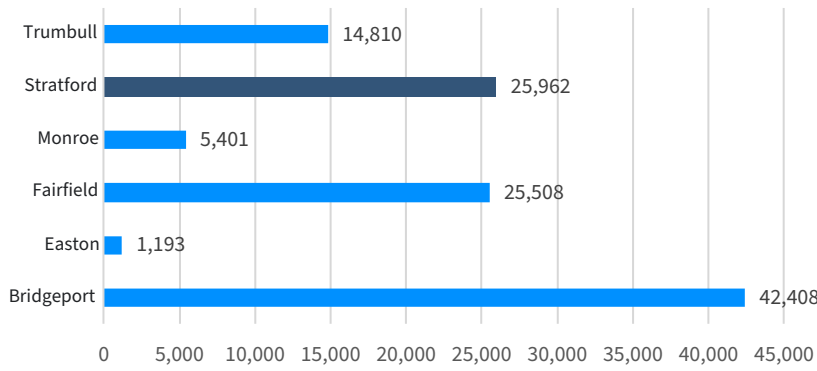


Stratford had a total of 25,962 full and part-time jobs in 2019 (most current data available). Of those jobs, approximately 3,763 (15%) were held by Town residents. Most of Stratford’s residents (24,198) commute to other towns and cities for work. While only 15% of residents work in Stratford, the town is the most common work destination of Stratford’s residents. Other common work locations for Stratford’s residents include Bridgeport, New York City, Stamford, and Milford. The average commute for Stratford’s residents is 30 minutes.

Between 2010 and 2019, Stratford experienced a 3.6% contraction in the number of jobs in town. Both the number of workers commuting into town and the share of residents working in town decreased.

Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2019 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics

Figure 2.16. Jobs in the Region by Town or City (2019)

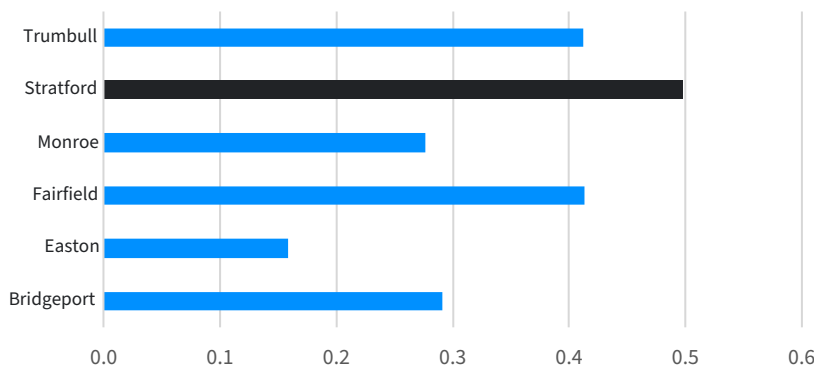


Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development 2012 - 2022

With the exception of Bridgeport (a major employment center), Stratford has a greater number of jobs than surrounding towns and cities, although it has a comparable number of jobs as Fairfield.

When adjusted for residential population, Stratford has more jobs per resident (0.5) than any of the surrounding communities, including Bridgeport.

Figure 2.17. Jobs in the Region by Town or City (2019)



Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development 2012 - 2022

Stratford’s top industry, employing nearly 8,000 workers, is Manufacturing. Manufacturing accounts for over twice the employment amount of the next top industry, which is Health Care and Social Assistance, which has just over 3,000 employees. Retail Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Local Government also made the list of Stratford’s top industries in 2019, according to the CT Department of Labor.

	Employment	Employers	Avg. Wages
1 Manufacturing	7,961	73	\$108,089
2 Health Care & Social Assistance	3,024	153	\$47,793
3 Retail Trade	2,064	146	\$33,444
4 Transportation & Warehousing	1,882	48	\$52,739
5 Local Government	1,658	20	\$72,768
All Industries	24,431	1,428	\$70,373

Source: CT Data Collaborative, 2021 Stratford Town Profile

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