South Central Region, Connecticut
Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends

July 2021

Prepared by the South Central Regional Council of Governments

SCRCOG
SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Introduction

About this Document

This document was compiled by SCRCOG Staff using the best available data as of July 1, 2021. Sources for the data include the U.S. Census Bureau's decennial census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, the Connecticut Department of Labor, and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. Depending on the source, the most current data ranges from 2015 to 2021. Data sources are noted below the respective figure or table.

A Note Regarding the Comparison of Decennial Census Data to American Community Survey Data

The decennial census is based on a single point in time (ex. April 1, 2010) while the American Community Survey (ACS) is a rolling sample survey of the population (provides multi-year estimates). The decennial census is conducted every ten years (years that end in a zero), while the ACS is conducted annually. The ACS is released in 1-year and 5-year estimates. The 1-year estimates are collected for geographic areas with a population of at least 65,000, while the 5-year estimates encompass all geographic areas. The 1-year estimates are based on the smallest sample size, but are the most current, while the 5-year estimates are based on the largest sample size, but are the least current.

As a result of the data collection discrepancies, not all decennial census data can be directly compared to ACS data. The U.S. Census Bureau provides guidance on which variables can be compared. This guidance, as well as more information regarding the differences between the decennial census and ACS, is available at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance.html.

Please be aware that the instances in this document in which decennial census data is compared to ACS data is in an effort to show general trends in the data over time, rather than identify specific numerical changes in the data. For the purposes of this document, the 2015-2019 ACS data is considered 2019 data.

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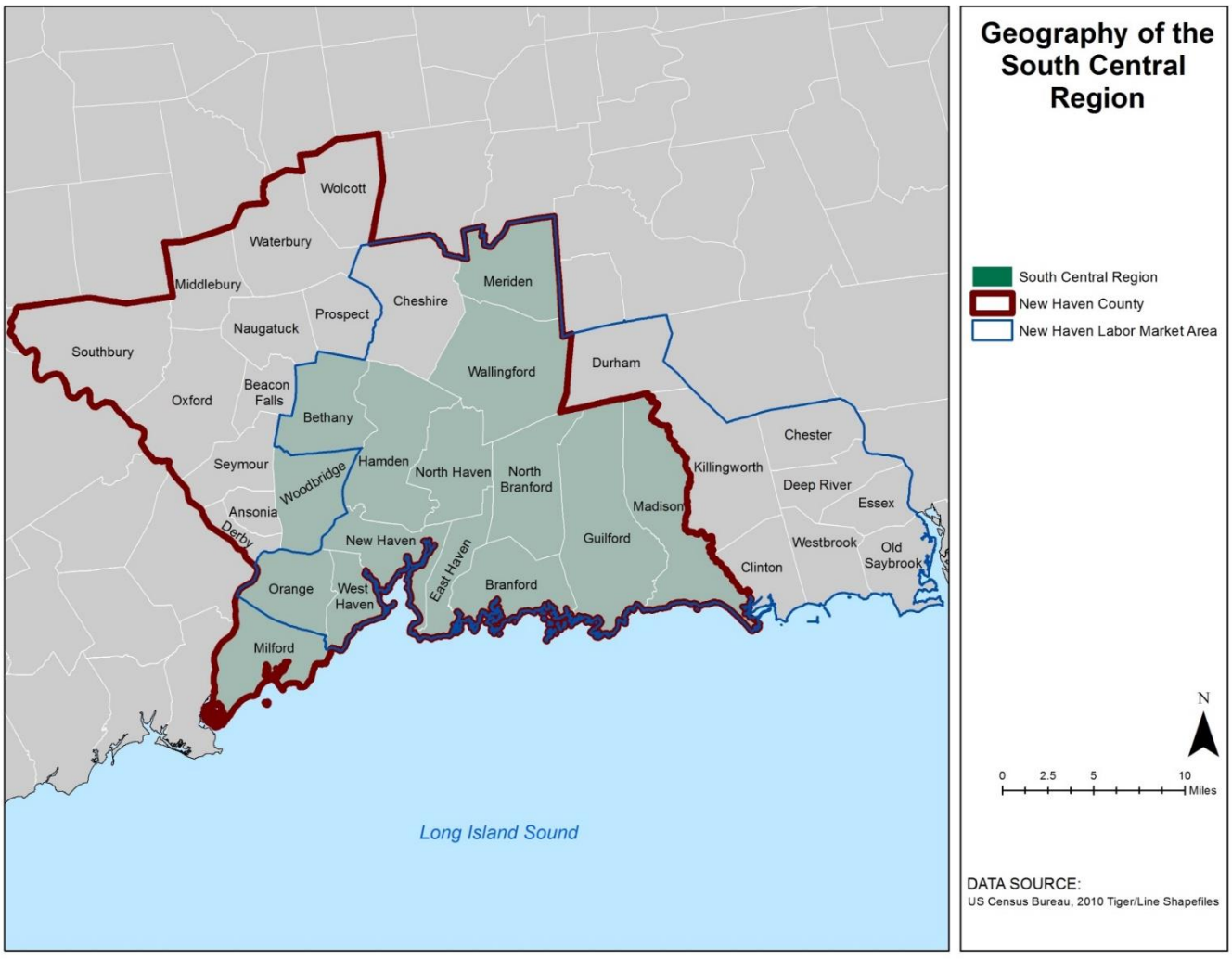
I - Defining the South Central Region

1 - Geography of the Region

The South Central Region is located within New Haven County in Southern Connecticut and is comprised of the following fifteen municipalities: Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge (*Figure 1.1*). New Haven County exists solely as a geographic division for the U.S. Census and does not have any associated government structure or function. All the municipalities in the South Central Region, with the exception of Milford and Woodbridge, are located within the New Haven Labor Market Area. A labor market area is a geographic area, defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "within which individuals can reside and find employment within a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place of residence."[1]

Figure 1.1: Geography of the South Central Region

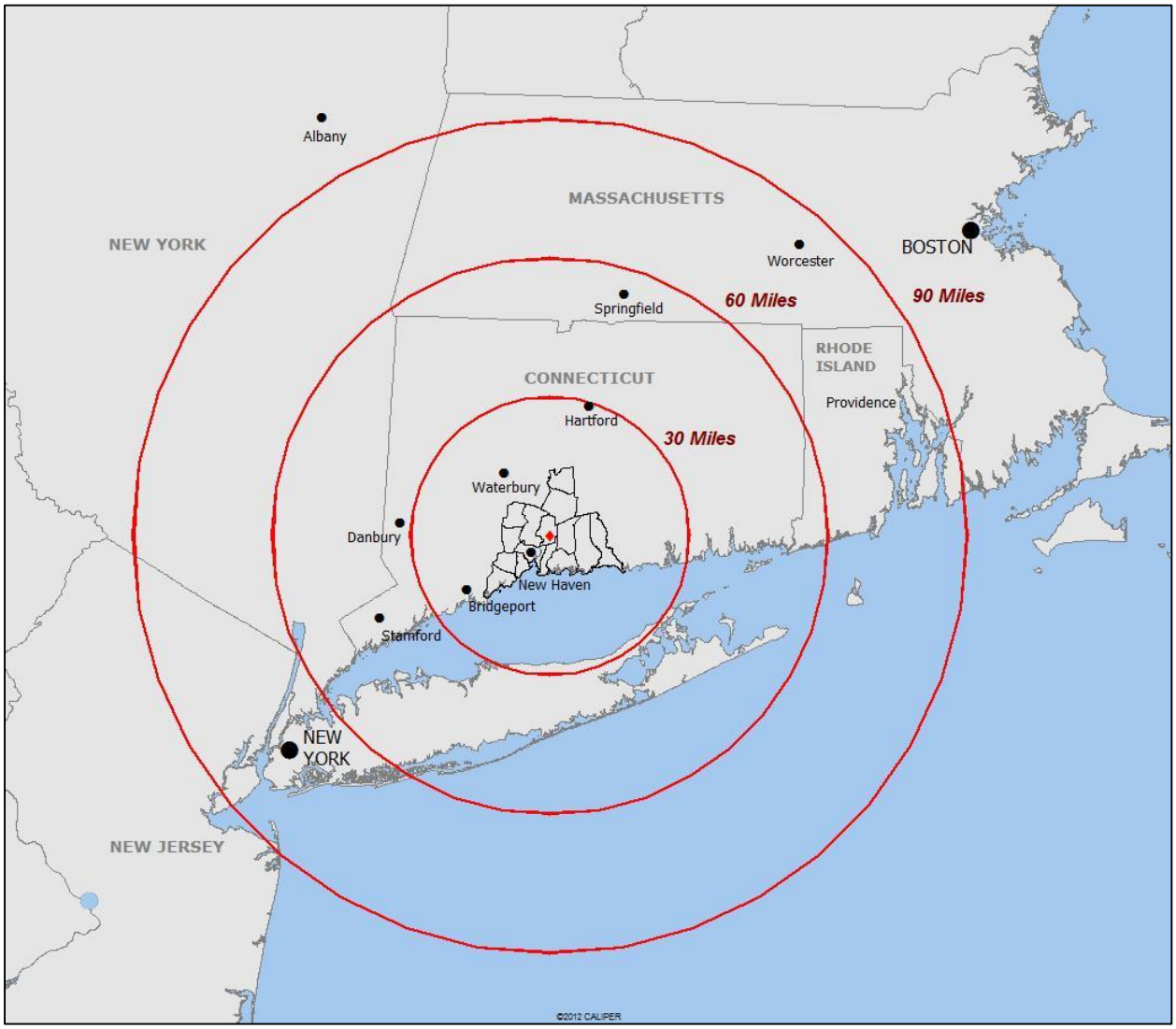


[1] Connecticut Department of Labor. Labor Market Information – Glossary of Terms. Accessed on May 2, 2019 from http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/glossary.asp#L

2 - Proximity of the Region to Major Cities

Figure 1.2 illustrates the South Central Region in relation to the greater geographic area. Specifically, the map depicts 30, 60, and 90 mile radii around the geographic center of the Region. There are four major Connecticut cities located within the 30 mile radius: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury. The 60 mile radius encompasses all but the northeastern edge of Connecticut, Springfield, MA, Providence, RI and Westchester County, NY. The 90 mile radius includes all of Connecticut and Rhode Island, plus Long Island, NY and all five boroughs of New York City.

Figure 1.2: Proximity of the South Central Region to Major Cities



Source: TransCAD, United States Base Layer Maps

3 - Demographic and Socioeconomic Overview

Table 1.1 and *Table 1.2* show changes in five demographic indicators (population, households, median household income, per capita income, and median age) for the South Central Region, New Haven Labor Market Area, and New Haven County. The South Central Region, the New Haven Labor Market, and New Haven County experienced a slight decrease in population from 2010 to 2019. Households also decreased in all three geographies. From 2010 to 2019, the median household income increased by 14.79% in the South Central Region, with slightly less growth happening in the New Haven Labor Market Area and New Haven County. The per capita income increased between 16.5% and 22.5% in the three geographic areas from 2010 to 2019. The median age has been steadily increasing in all three geographies since 2000.

Table 1.1: Regional Demographic and Socioeconomic Summary, 2000, 2010, & 2019

	South Central Region			New Haven Labor Market Area			New Haven County		
	2000	2010	2019	2000	2010	2019	2000	2010	2019
Population	546,799	570,001	567,954	571,310	597,172	592,814	824,008	862,477	857,513
Households	212,894	222,620	221,467	220,781	231,769	230,997	319,040	334,502	330,572
Median Household Income	$49,565	$64,653	$75,875	$52,371	$66,425	$74,598	$48,834	$61,114	$69,905
Per Capita Income	$24,223	$32,849	$42,206	$25,342	$33,027	$42,290	$24,439	$31,720	$38,009
Median Age	36.8	39.0	42.7	36.9	39.4	43.2	37.0	39.3	40.3

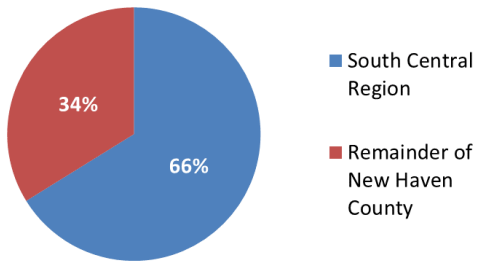
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Tables DP-1 & DP-2), 2010 U.S. Census Demographic Profile Data (Table DP-1), 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Tables B19013 & B19301), and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Tables B01003, DP02, DP05, B19013, B19301)

Table 1.2: Regional Demographic and Socioeconomic Summary, 2000, 2010, & 2019 (percent change)

	South Central Region		New Haven Labor Market Area		New Haven County	
	2000-2010	2010-2019	2000-2010	2010-2019	2000-2010	2010-2019
Population	4.07%	-0.36%	4.33%	-0.74%	4.46%	-0.58%
Households	4.37%	-0.52%	4.74%	-0.33%	4.62%	-1.19%
Median Household Income	23.34%	14.79%	21.16%	10.96%	20.09%	12.58%
Per Capita Income	26.26%	22.17%	23.27%	21.90%	22.95%	16.55%
Median Age	5.73%	8.71%	6.22%	8.91%	5.85%	2.48%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Tables DP-1 & DP-2), 2010 U.S. Census Demographic Profile Data (Table DP-1), 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Tables B19013 & B19301) and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Tables B01003, DP02, DP05, B19013, B19301)

Figure 1.3: South Central Region Population Expressed as a Percentage of New Haven County, 2019



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Tables B01003)

II - Population

1 - Change

Table 2.1 shows that the South Central Region and the State of Connecticut experienced slower population growth than the United States between 1990-2000 and 2000-2010. This trend continues, with both the South Central Region and State of Connecticut experiencing a negligible change in population since 2010. The 1990-2000 and 2000-2010 calculations are based on the population as recorded by the 1990, 2000, and 2010 U.S. decennial census (recorded as of April 1). The 2010-2019 calculations are based on the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2019. *Table 2.2* shows a breakdown of the South Central Region's population by municipality.

Table 2.1: Change in Population Since 1990

	1990 - 2000	2000 - 2010	2010 - 2019
South Central Region	1.85%	4.24%	-0.36%
Connecticut	3.60%	4.95%	0.03%
United States	13.15%	9.71%	5.17%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census Data Profile 1, Census 2000 Data Profile 1, 2010 U.S. Census Demographic Profile Data (Table DP-1), 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B01003)

Table 2.2: Population by Municipality

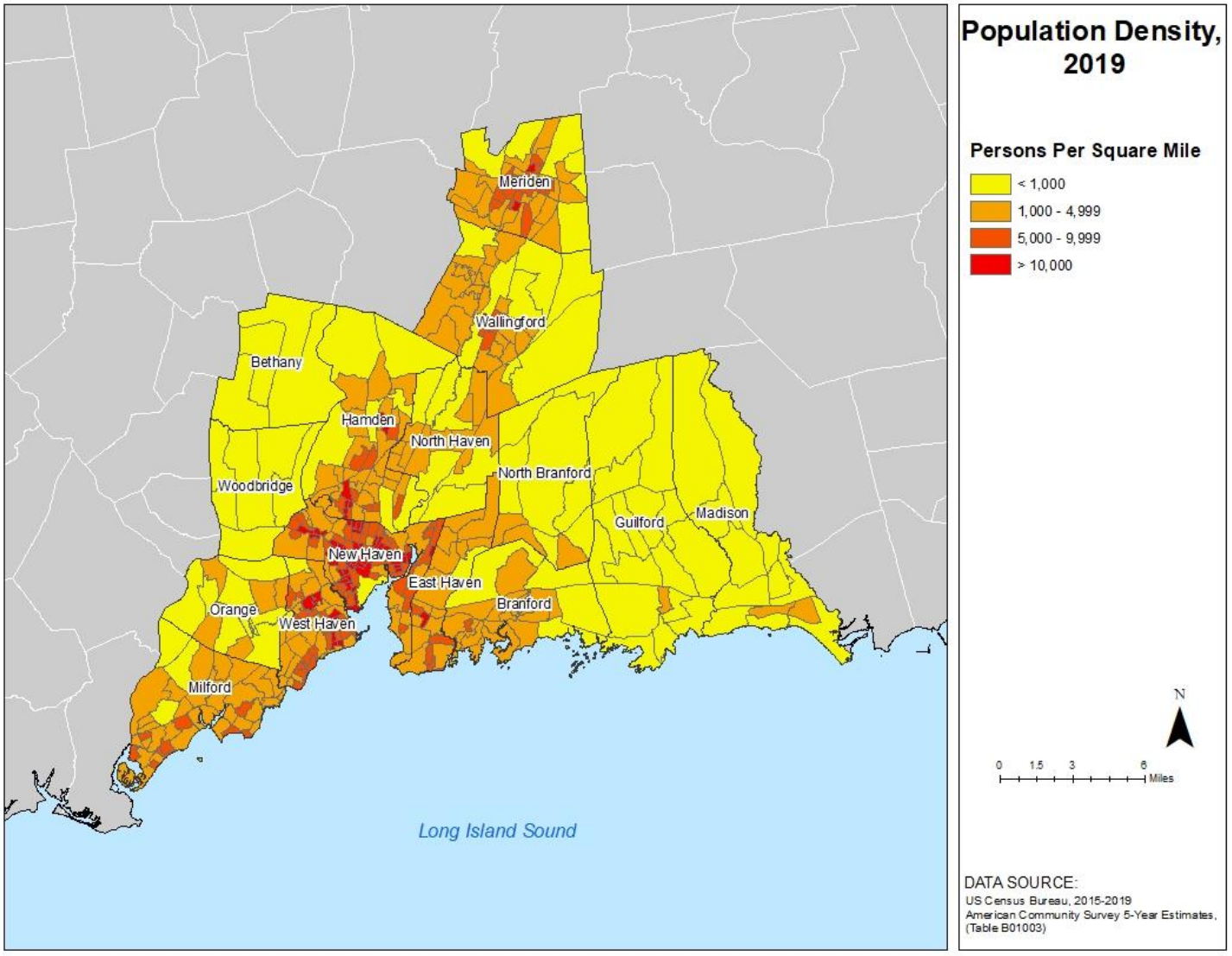
	Population			
Municipality	1990	2000	2010	2019
Bethany	4,608	5,040	5,563	5,513
Branford	27,603	28,683	28,026	28,020
East Haven	26,144	28,189	29,257	28,742
Guilford	19,848	21,398	22,375	22,216
Hamden	52,434	56,913	60,960	60,982
Madison	15,485	17,858	18,269	18,113
Meriden	59,479	58,244	60,868	59,676
Milford	49,938	52,305	52,759	54,328
New Haven	130,474	123,626	129,779	130,331
North Branford	12,996	13,906	14,407	14,191
North Haven	22,247	23,035	24,093	23,722
Orange	12,830	13,233	13,956	13,934
Wallingford	40,822	43,026	45,135	44,596
West Haven	54,021	52,360	55,564	54,763
Woodbridge	7,924	8,983	8,990	8,827
Total	**536,853**	**546,799**	**570,001**	**567,954**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census Data Profile 1, Census 2000 Data Profile 1, 2010 U.S. Census Demographic Profile Data (Table DP-1), 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B01003)

2 - Density

Figure 2.1 shows the population density by census block group within the South Central Region. Areas with the highest concentration of population are found in New Haven, West Haven, and Hamden. The eastern and northwestern areas have the lowest population density.

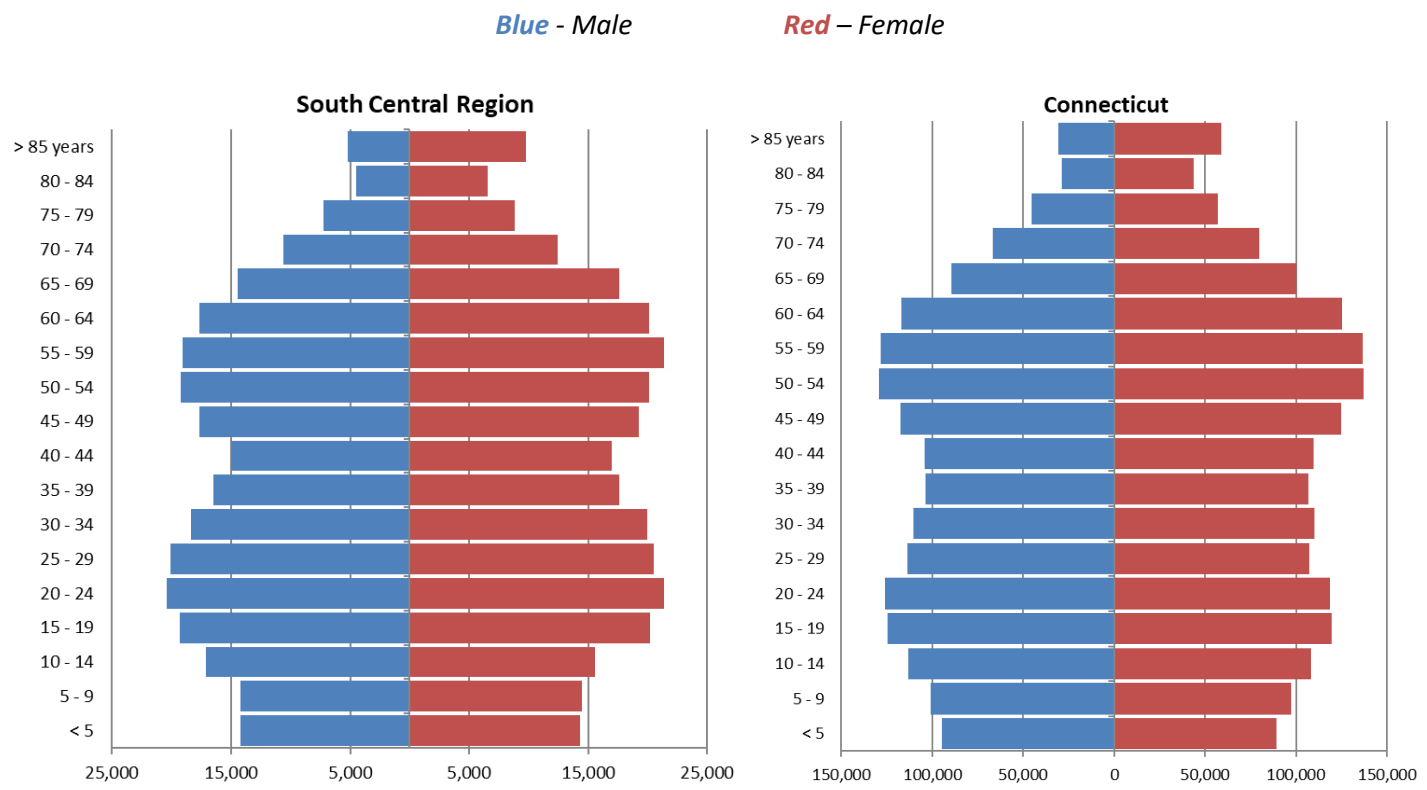
Figure 2.1: Population Density by Census Block Group, 2019



3 - Distribution by Age

The South Central Region and the State of Connecticut have a similar distribution of population by age and sex as shown by the population pyramids in *Figure 2.2*. The 20-24, 25-29, and 55-59 age groups have the largest representation in the South Central Region, and the 50-54 and 55-59 age groups have the largest representation in the State of Connecticut, respectively. The female population in the South Central Region and in the State of Connecticut dominates the 80-84 and 85+ age groups, which supports the historical trend of females having a higher life expectancy than males in the United States.[2]

Figure 2.2: Population Distribution by Age, 2019



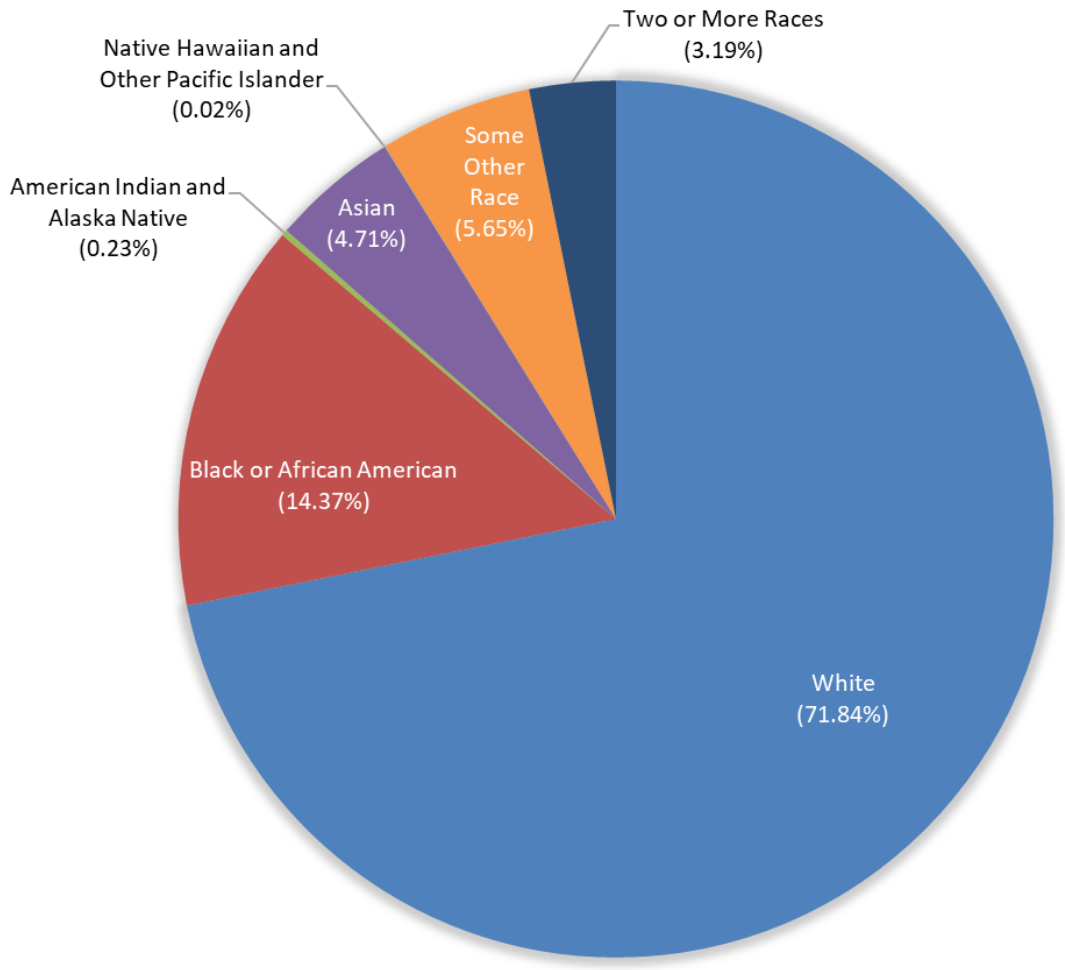
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B01001)

[2] U.S. Census Bureau (2020). *Living Longer: Historical and Projected Life Expectancy in the United States, 1960 to 2060*. Accessed on July 29, 2021 from https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1145.pdf

4 - Race and Ethnicity

In 2019, about 71.8% of the population in the South Central Region identified themselves as white, while about 14.4% identified themselves as black or African American. According to U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, about 17% of the Region's population identifies themselves as Hispanic (taking into account all races).

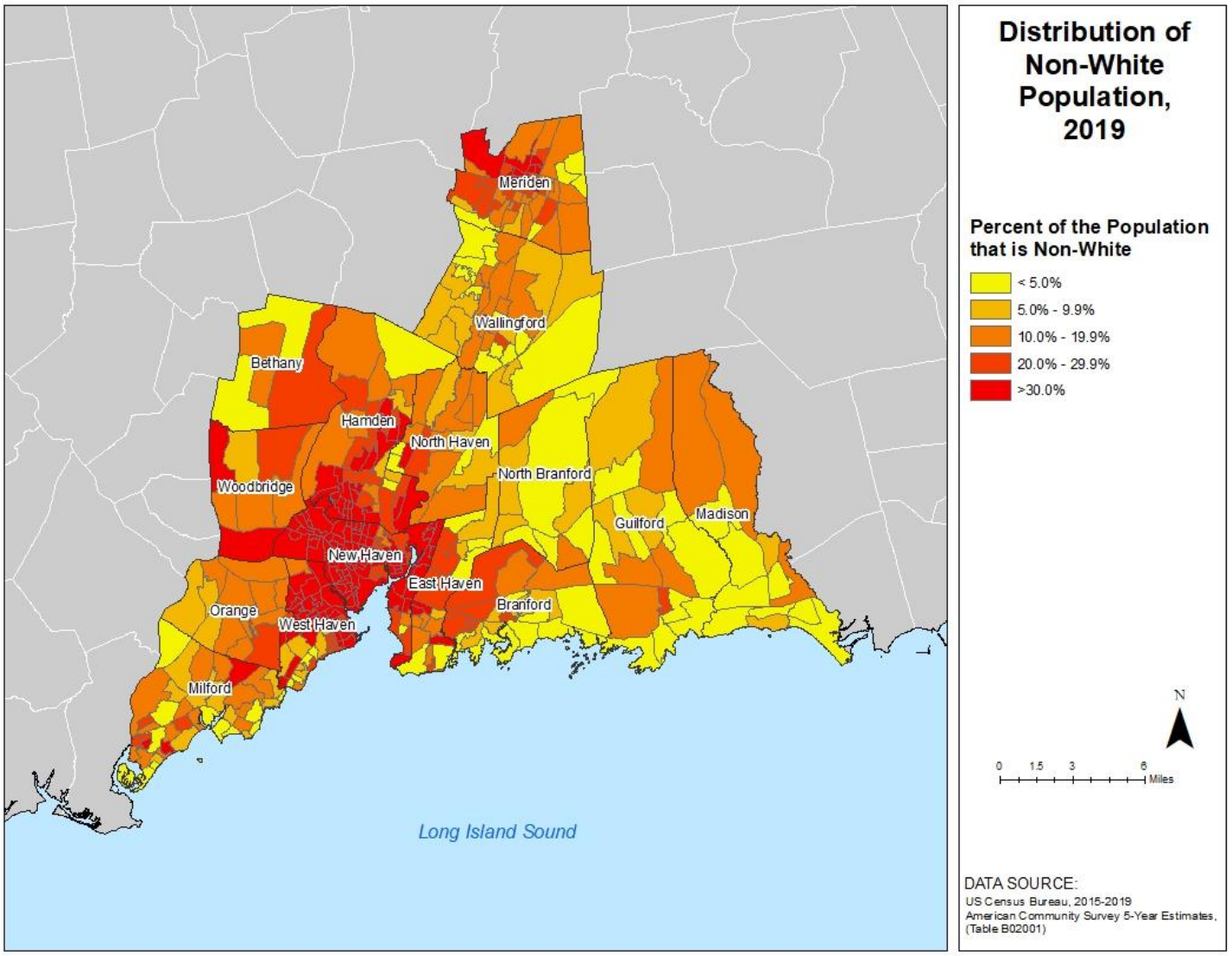
Figure 2.3: Regional Racial Distribution, 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP-05)

The population distribution of the non-white population by U.S. Census Bureau-designated census block group is shown in *Figure 2.4.* The percentage is the highest in New Haven, West Haven, Meriden and Hamden.

Figure 2.4: Distribution of Non-White Population by Block Group, 2019

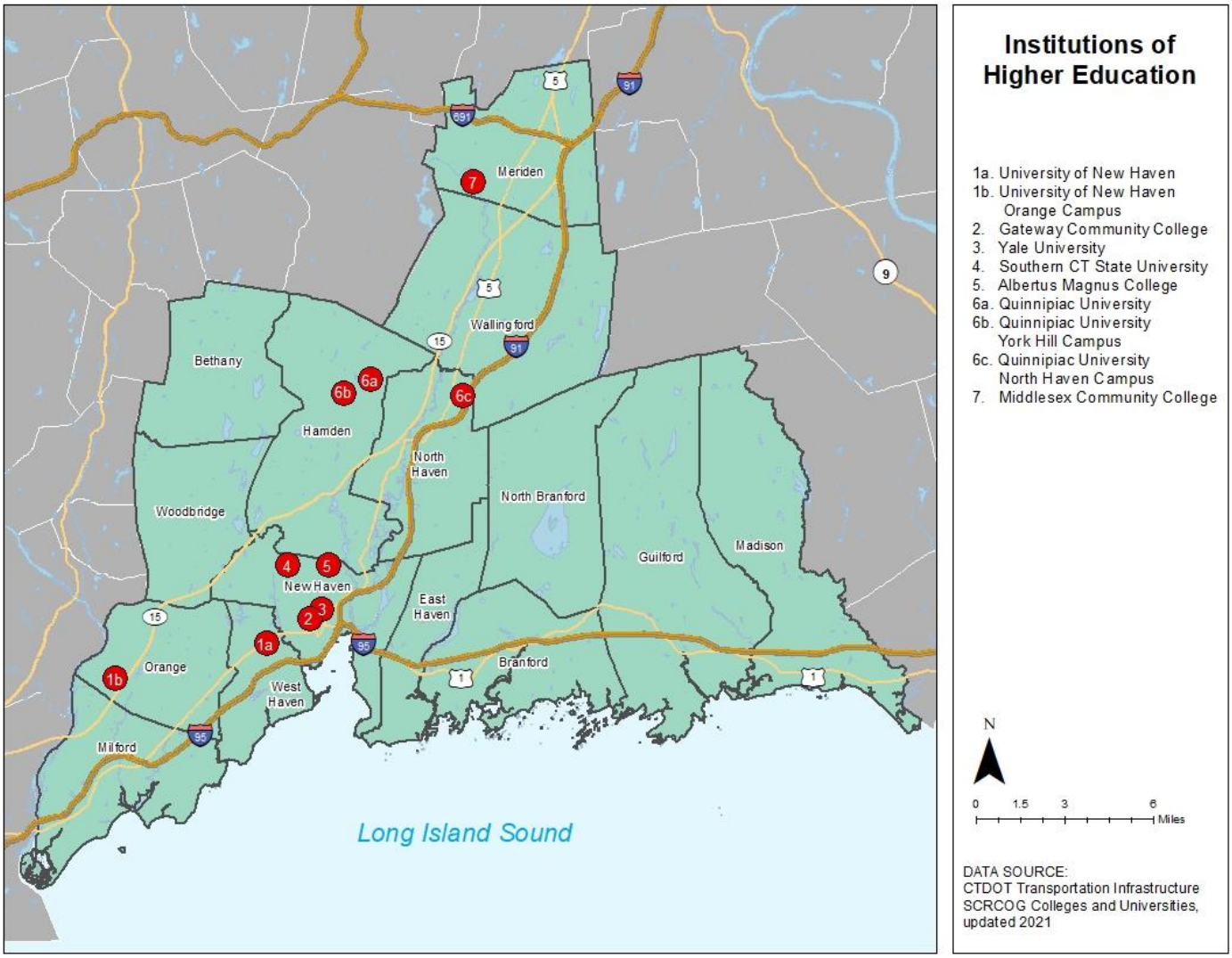


III - Higher Education

1 - Overview

The South Central Region is home to seven colleges and universities: Yale University, Southern Connecticut State University, Quinnipiac University, University of New Haven, Gateway Community College, Albertus Magnus College, and Middlesex Community College. In Fall 2019, there were approximately 48,000 students (undergraduate and graduate students) in the region. Yale University had the highest total enrollment with more than 10,000 students.[3]

Figure 3.1: Institutions of Higher Education, South Central Region



[3] U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2019). *College Navigator*. Accessed on July 29, 2021 from https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/

2 - Educational Attainment

Figure 3.2, Figure 3.3, and *Table 3.1* show the percentage of the population aged 25 years and older with a bachelor's degree or higher. Fourteen out of fifteen municipalities within the South Central Region saw an increase in educational attainment (bachelor's degree or higher) from 2000-2019. The most notable increases occurred within Orange, North Haven, and Milford, which experienced a 10.0% or greater increase. Six municipalities have higher educational attainment rates (bachelor's degree or higher) below both the regional (38.01%) and statewide average (39.28%): Meriden (22.27%), East Haven (23.97%), West Haven (24.26%), North Branford (34.01%), Wallingford (34.74%), and New Haven (34.88%).

Figure 3.2: Distribution of the Population 25 years and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2019

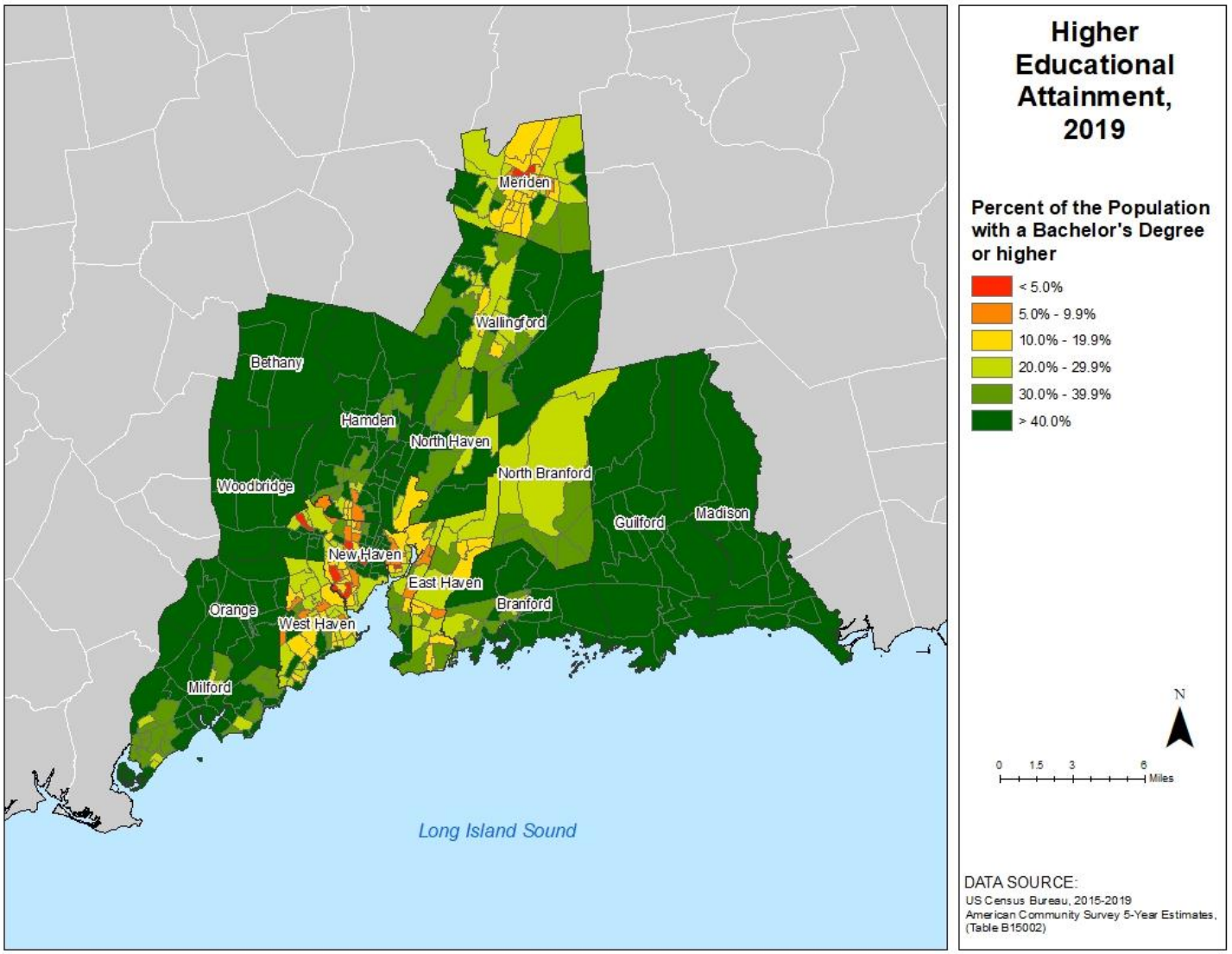
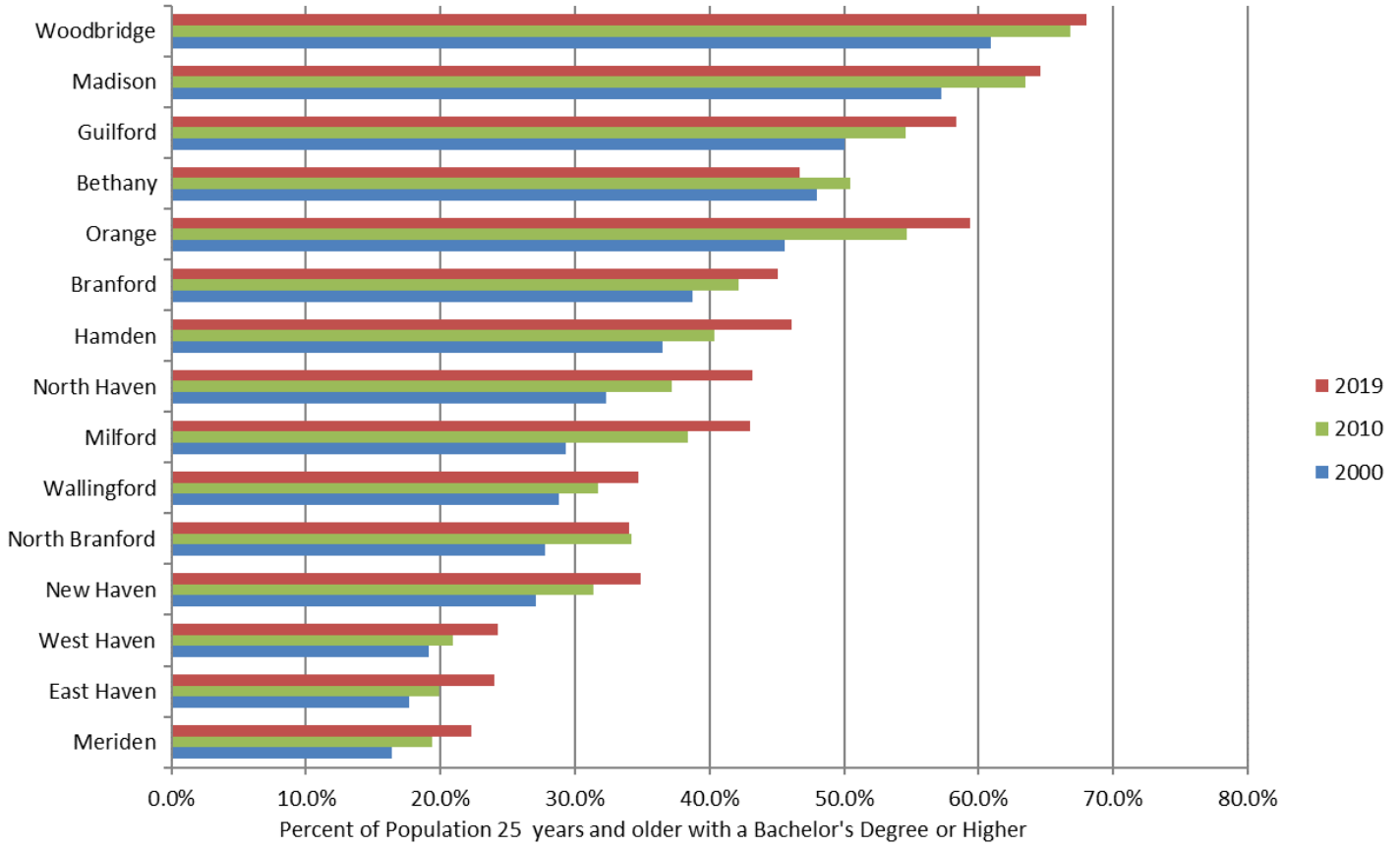


Figure 3.3: Percent of the Population 25 Years and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & 2010 (SF-3) and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B15002)

Table 3.1: Percent of the Population 25 Years and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2019

	Bachelor's Degree or Higher, Population 25 years + (%)			
Municipality	**2000**	**2010**	**2019**	**Percent Change 2000-2019**
Meriden	16.4%	19.4%	22.3%	5.9%
East Haven	17.7%	19.9%	24.0%	6.3%
West Haven	19.1%	20.9%	24.3%	5.2%
New Haven	27.1%	31.4%	34.9%	7.8%
North Branford	27.8%	34.2%	34.0%	6.2%
Wallingford	28.8%	31.7%	34.7%	5.9%
Milford	29.3%	38.4%	43.0%	13.7%
North Haven	32.3%	37.2%	43.2%	10.9%
Hamden	36.5%	40.4%	46.1%	9.6%
Branford	38.7%	42.2%	45.0%	6.3%
Orange	45.6%	54.7%	59.3%	13.7%
Bethany	48.0%	50.5%	46.7%	-1.3%
Guilford	50.0%	54.6%	58.4%	8.4%
Madison	57.2%	63.5%	64.6%	7.4%
Woodbridge	60.9%	66.8%	68.0%	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & 2010 (SF-3) and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B15002)

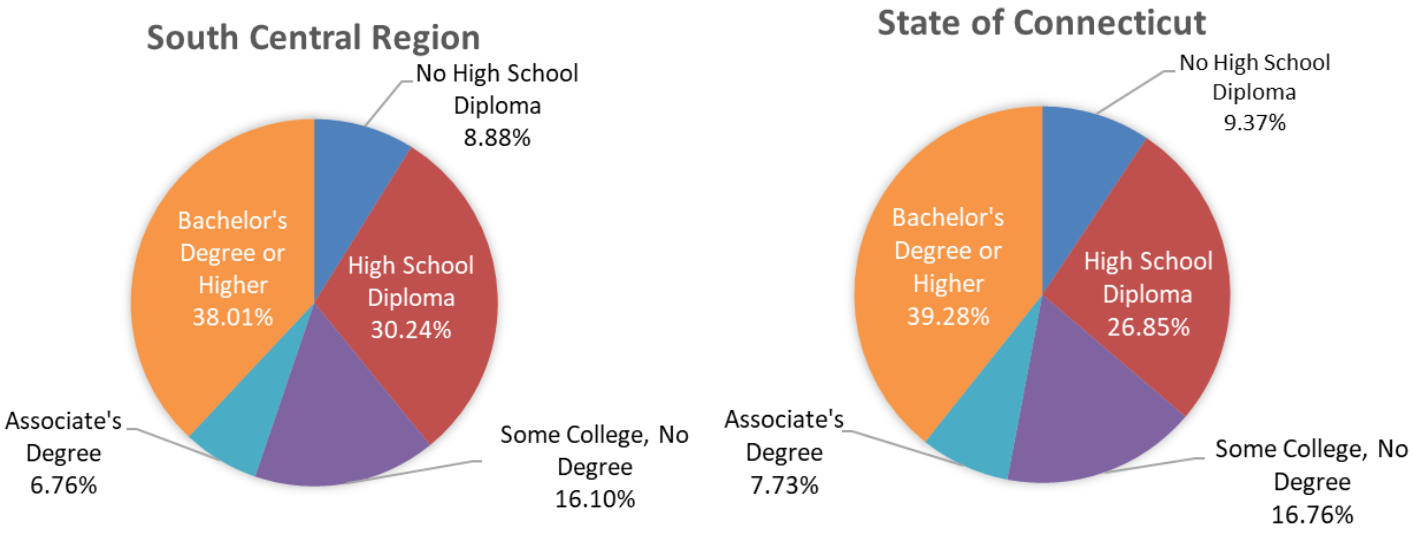
Table 3.2 and *Figure 3.4* show the educational attainment for the population 25 years and older as of 2019. The educational attainment trends in the region largely mirror those of the State of Connecticut.

Table 3.2: Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Older, 2019

Municipality	Population 25 Years and Older	High School/Equivalent		College		
		No High School Diploma	High School Diploma	Some College, No Degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Bethany	4,085	7.39%	21.42%	16.60%	7.88%	46.71%
Branford	21,531	5.02%	27.80%	17.27%	4.88%	45.03%
East Haven	20,785	9.17%	41.29%	17.05%	8.53%	23.97%
Guilford	16,343	3.89%	16.26%	14.12%	7.34%	58.39%
Hamden	40,025	6.32%	25.00%	15.87%	6.69%	46.12%
Madison	12,601	1.83%	13.17%	13.60%	6.79%	64.61%
Meriden	43,323	13.43%	38.55%	17.65%	8.09%	22.27%
Milford	41,546	5.44%	25.29%	18.62%	7.66%	43.00%
New Haven	80,607	14.42%	32.18%	14.02%	4.50%	34.88%
North Branford	10,370	4.81%	34.95%	19.11%	7.12%	34.01%
North Haven	17,828	4.28%	29.30%	16.85%	6.40%	43.17%
Orange	9,938	2.63%	19.70%	11.78%	6.54%	59.35%
Wallingford	34,452	7.47%	32.00%	15.99%	9.80%	34.74%
West Haven	36,724	12.11%	39.30%	17.82%	6.51%	24.26%
Woodbridge	6,494	4.71%	11.73%	10.39%	5.13%	68.03%
Total	**396,652**	**8.88%**	**30.24%**	**16.10%**	**6.76%**	**38.01%**
Connecticut	**2,483,095**	**9.37%**	**26.85%**	**16.76%**	**7.73%**	**39.28%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B15002)

Figure 3.4: Educational Attainment, South Central Region and State of Connecticut, 2019



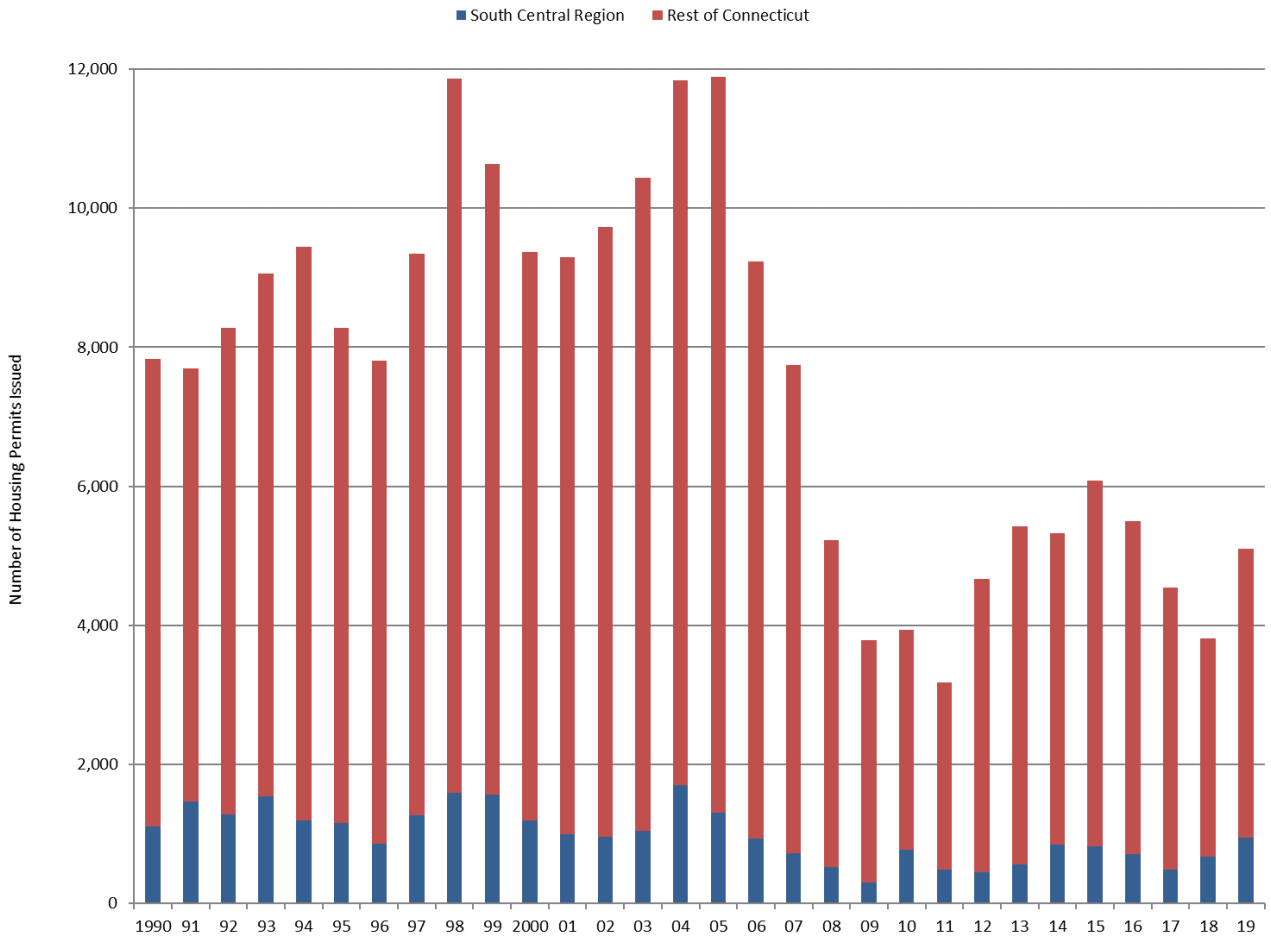
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B15002)

IV - Housing

1 - Housing Permits

Figure 4.1 illustrates the number of housing permits issued for new privately-owned housing units in the South Central Region and the State of Connecticut since 1990. As shown in *Table 4.1*, 2019 data was only available for Branford (38), Milford (10), North Haven (41), and Wallingford (6).

Figure 4.1: Number of Housing Permits Issued in Connecticut, 1990-2019



Source: CT Department of Economic and Community Development, Annual Housing Permit Data by Municipality - 1990 through 2019

Table 4.1: Number of Housing Permits Issued in the South Central Region, by Municipality –
2017: Bethany, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, New Haven, North Branford, Orange, West Haven, and Woodbridge
2019: Branford, Milford, North Haven, and Wallingford

Bethany	Branford	East Haven	Guilford	Hamden	Madison	Meriden	
2*	38	2*	23*	30*	16*	6*	
Milford	New Haven	North Branford	North Haven	Orange	Wallingford	West Haven	Woodbridge
10	24*	13*	41	17*	6	73*	0*

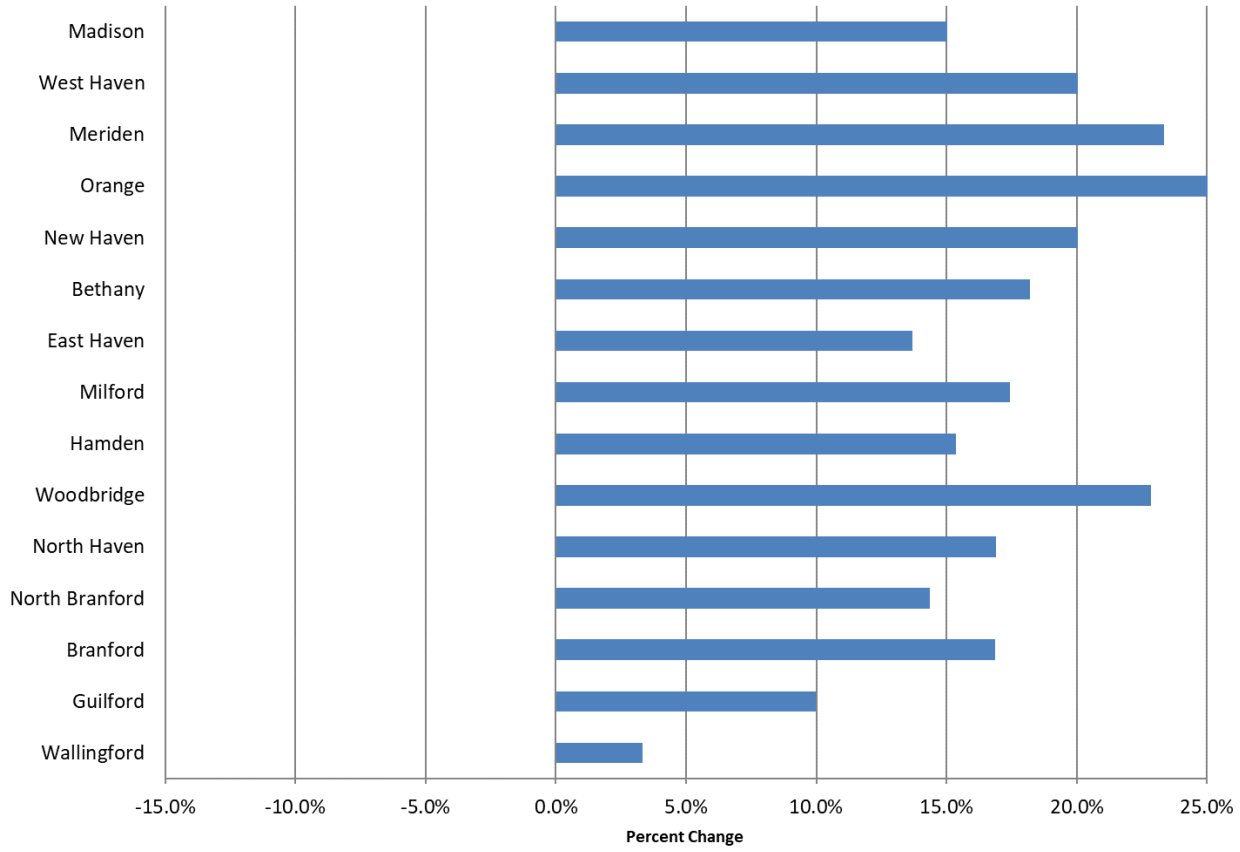
* No new available data since 2017.

Source: CT Department of Economic and Community Development, The Connecticut Economic Digest Monthly Permit by Town 2019; CT Department of Economic and Community Development, Annual Housing Permit Data by Municipality - 1990 through 2017

2 - Median Home Sales Price

As shown in *Figure 4.2 and Table 4.2*, between 2020 and 2021, all fifteen municipalities experienced an increase in median sales price. The largest increase occurred in Orange (72.4%), while the smallest increase occurred in Wallingford (3.4%).

Figure 4.2: Change in Median Sales Price for Single Family Homes, Second Quarter 2020 - Second Quarter 2021



Source: Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, New England Properties Quarter 2 2020 - 2021 Market Report

Table 4.2: Change in Median Sales Price for Single Family Homes, Second Quarter 2020 - Second Quarter 2021

Municipality	2020	2021	Change
Bethany	$ 307,500	$ 375,950	22.3%
Branford	$ 342,500	$ 412,000	20.3%
East Haven	$ 233,900	$ 271,000	15.9%
Guilford	$ 418,550	$ 465,000	11.1%
Hamden	$ 237,000	$ 280,000	18.1%
Madison	$ 480,000	$ 565,000	17.7%
Meriden	$ 180,500	$ 235,500	30.5%

Municipality	2020	2021	Change
Milford	$ 326,500	$ 395,500	21.1%
New Haven	$ 215,000	$ 268,950	25.1%
North Branford	$ 295,000	$ 355,000	20.3%
North Haven	$ 370,000	$ 500,000	35.1%
Orange	$ 290,000	$ 500,000	72.4%
Wallingford	$ 290,000	$ 300,000	3.4%
West Haven	$ 215,000	$ 268,950	25.1%
Woodbridge	$ 423,500	$ 549,000	29.6%

Source: Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, New England Properties Quarter 2 2020 - 2021 Market Report

3 - Occupancy Status

In 2019, the total number of owner-occupied housing units was 134,549 (*Table 4.3*). The number of renter-occupied units has remained relatively stable since 2000. The number of vacant units has increased by about 9,058 since 2000. Overall, there has been about a 3.4% decrease in owner-occupied housing units, a 0.2% decrease in rental-occupied units, and 3.2% increase in vacant units. *Tables 4.3* and *4.4* and *Figure 4.3* detail the status and rates of occupancy by municipality.

Table 4.3: Occupancy Status of the Housing Stock in the South Central Region, 2000, 2010, & 2019

	2000		2010		2019	
Owner-Occupied	132,657	58.3%	142,162	59.3%	134,549	54.9%
Renter-Occupied	80,237	35.2%	78,465	32.7%	86,918	35.4%
Vacant	14,766	6.5%	19,295	8.0%	23,824	9.7%
Total	227,660	100.00%	239,922	100.00%	245,291	100.00%

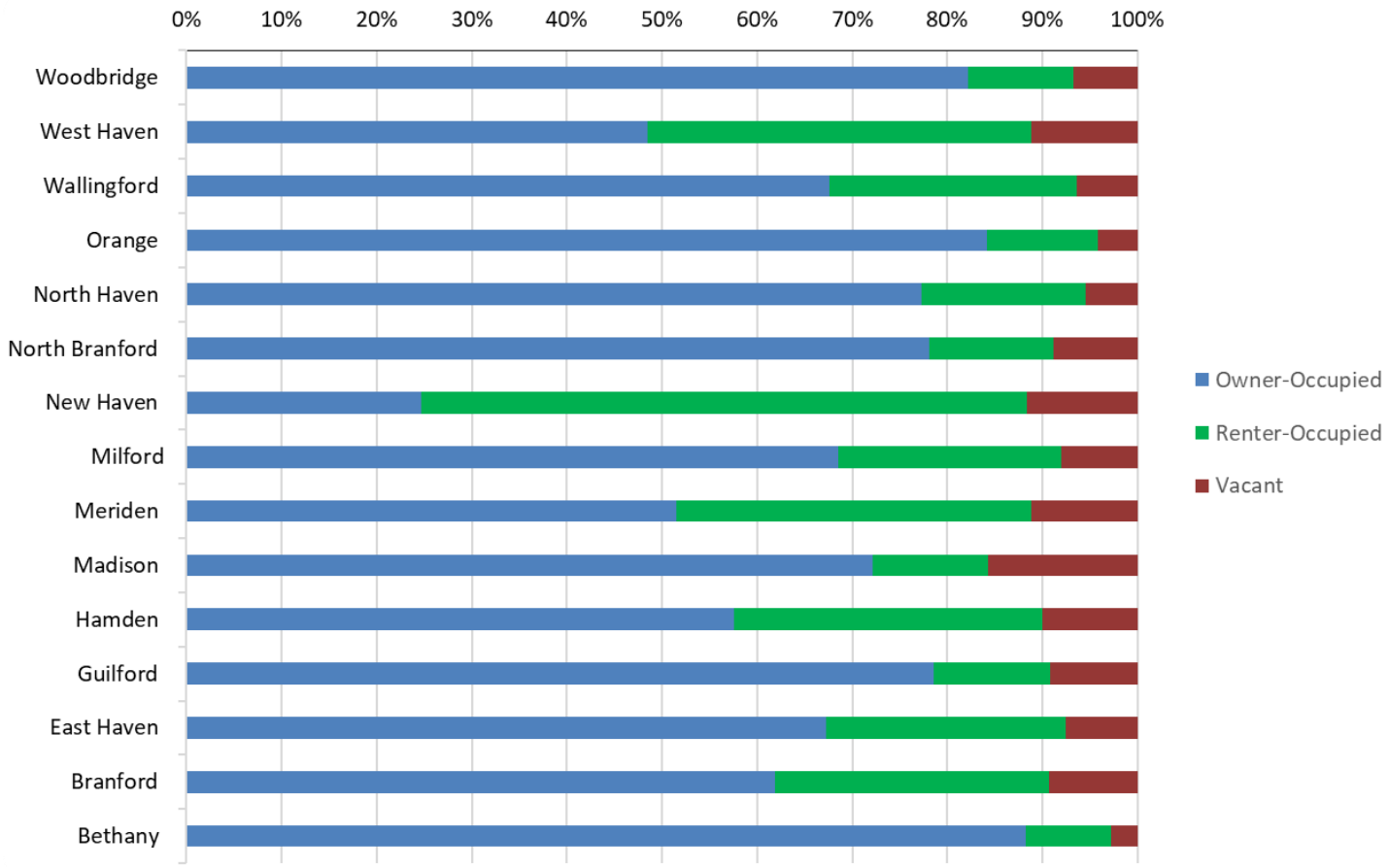
Source: U.S. Census 2000 & 2010, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 & 2010 (DP-1) and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP04)

Table 4.4: Occupancy Status of the Housing Stock in the South Central Region, by Municipality, 2019

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	Total Occupied Units	Vacant
Bethany	2,075	88.3%	9.0%	97.3%	2.7%
Branford	13,632	61.9%	28.9%	90.7%	9.3%
East Haven	12,052	67.2%	25.3%	92.5%	7.5%
Guilford	9,249	78.6%	12.2%	90.8%	9.2%
Hamden	25,084	57.5%	32.5%	90.0%	10.0%
Madison	8,204	72.1%	12.1%	84.3%	15.7%
Meriden	28,826	51.5%	37.3%	88.8%	11.2%
Milford	24,417	68.5%	23.5%	91.9%	8.1%
New Haven	55,682	24.7%	63.6%	88.3%	11.7%
North Branford	5,855	78.1%	13.1%	91.2%	8.8%
North Haven	9,583	77.3%	17.3%	94.6%	5.4%
Orange	5,194	84.2%	11.6%	95.8%	4.2%
Wallingford	19,934	67.6%	26.1%	93.6%	6.4%
West Haven	22,397	48.5%	40.3%	88.8%	11.2%
Woodbridge	3,107	82.1%	11.1%	93.2%	6.8%
Total		**54.9%**	**35.4%**	**90.3%**	**9.7%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP04)

Figure 4.3: Occupancy Status of the Housing Stock in the South Central Region, by Municipality, 2019



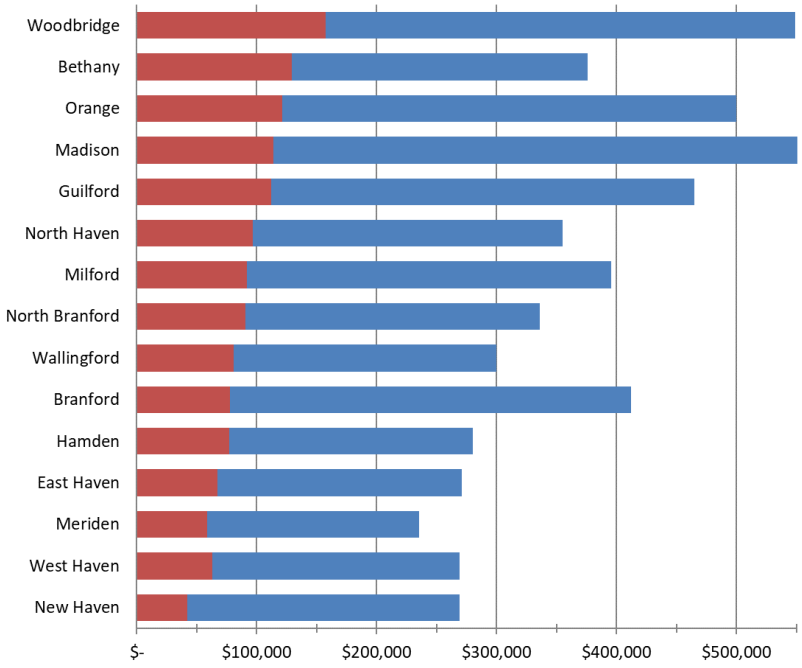
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP04)

4 - Affordability

One measure of housing affordability is the comparison of median household income to median home sales price. *Figure 4.4* compares the median household income to the median sales price by municipality. The red portion of the graph represents the median household income of the municipality. The red and blue portions combined represent the median home sales price.

Figure 4.4 and Table 4.5: Median Household Income (2019) and Median Home Sales Price (2021)

***Red** = Median Household Income*
***Red** + **Blue** = Median Home Sales Price*



Municipality	MHI($)	MSP($)
Woodbridge	157,610	549,000
Bethany	129,133	375,950
Orange	121,308	500,000
Madison	113,798	565,000
Guilford	111,870	465,000
North Haven	96,598	355,000
Milford	91,799	395,500
North Branford	90,461	336,000
Wallingford	80,793	300,000
Branford	77,640	412,000
Hamden	77,274	280,000
East Haven	67,390	271,000
West Haven	62,985	268,950
Meriden	58,843	235,500
New Haven	42,222	268,950

Source: U.S Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B19013) and Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, New England Properties Second Quarter 2021 Market Report

Table 4.6: Ratio of Median Household Income (MHI, 2019) to Median Home Sales Price (MSP, 2021)

Bethany	Branford	East Haven	Guilford	Hamden
3.6	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.6
Madison	Meriden	Milford	New Haven	North Branford
4.4	3.5	3.5	5.5	3.8
North Haven	Orange	Wallingford	West Haven	Woodbridge
3.4	2.9	3.3	4.0	3.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B19013) and Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, New England Properties Second Quarter 2021 Market Report

Table 4.7 further examines housing affordability using data sources other than the US Census Bureau. Therefore, this table may contain data that differs from data presented elsewhere in this document. *Table 4.7* lists the number of existing assisted units in each town and the overall percentage of affordable housing stock, using data from the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Assisted Units includes all units that are governmentally assisted, tenant rental assisted, have Single Family CHFA/USDA Mortgages, or are deed restricted. Deed restricted housing, as calculated by DECD, is based on households earning 80% of the area's median household income and spending no more than 30% of income on housing. Only three towns (Meriden, New Haven, and West Haven) are exempt from Connecticut General Statute 8-30g: Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals, by having greater than 10% of their housing stock designated affordable.

Table 4.7: Existing Affordable Housing Units per the State Definition, 2019

Town	Total Housing Units (2010 Census)	Total Assisted Units (2019 Census)	% of Housing Stock
Bethany	2,044	14	0.68%
Branford	13,972	469	3.36%
East Haven	12,533	1,007	8.03%
Guilford	9,596	231	2.41%
Hamden	25,114	2,178	8.67%
Madison	8,049	136	1.69%
Meriden	25,892	4,260	16.45%
Milford	23,074	1,226	5.31%
New Haven	54,967	17,615	32.05%
North Branford	5,629	125	2.22%
North Haven	9,491	516	5.44%
Orange	5,345	73	1.37%
Wallingford	18,945	821	4.33%
West Haven	22,446	3,236	14.42%
Woodbridge	3,478	43	1.24%
Total	**240,575**	**31,950**	**13.28%**

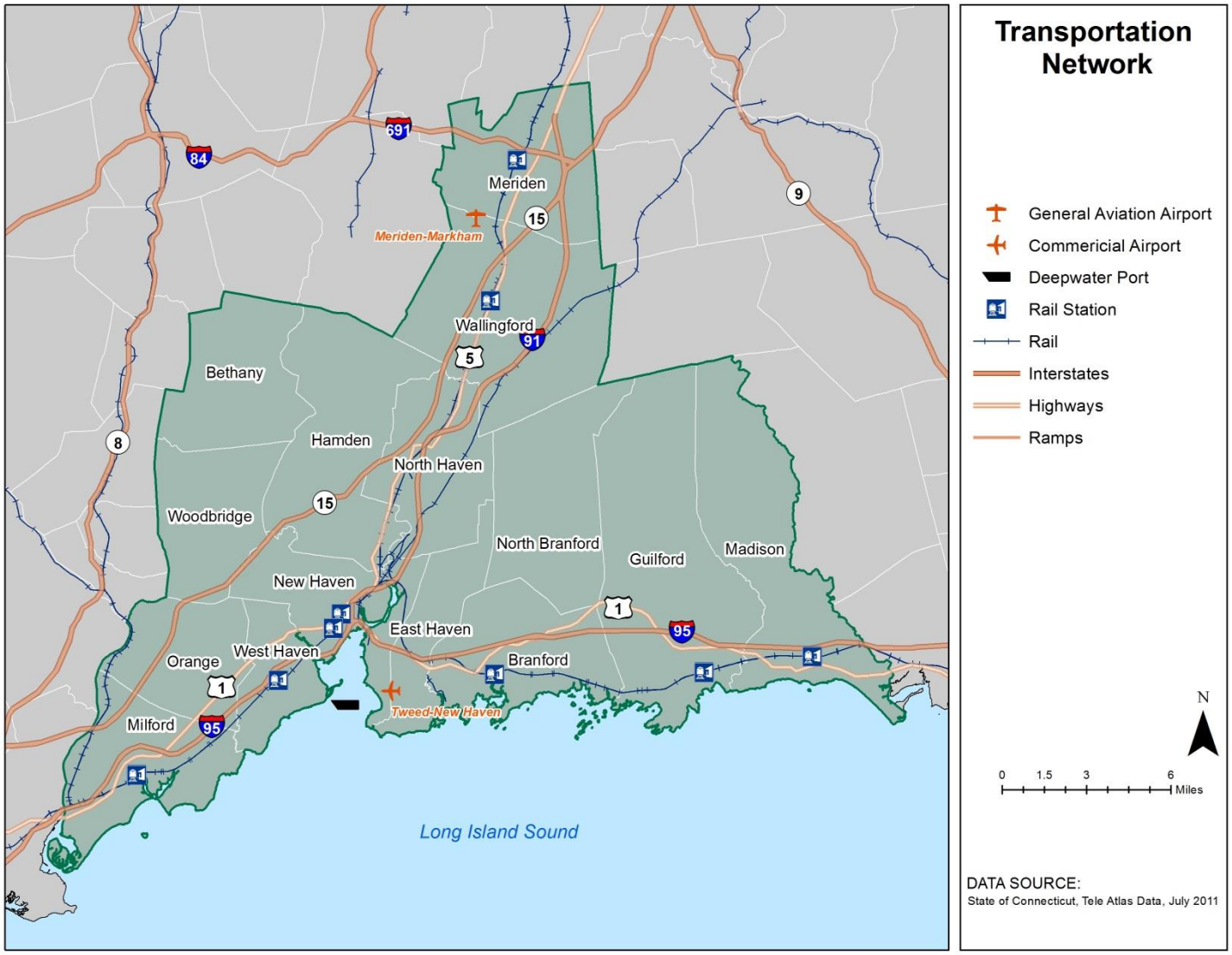
Source: CT Department of Economic and Community Development: 2019 Affordable Housing Appeals List

V - Transportation

1 - Regional Transportation Network

The South Central Region has a robust transportation network that accommodates diverse modes of travel (*Figure 5.1*). The Region is home to two interstate highways: I-91, which runs north-south, and I-95, which runs east-west. Other important highways are State Routes 1, 5, and 15 (north-south) and Interstate 691 (east-west). Metro-North, Shore Line East, and Amtrak commuter rail service routes run parallel to Interstate 95 and Route 1. The Hartford Line rail service will runs parallel to Interstate 91 along the north-south rail corridor. Several of the Region's municipal plans of conservation and development have policies that recognize rail stations and major transportation corridors as areas of sustainable future growth.

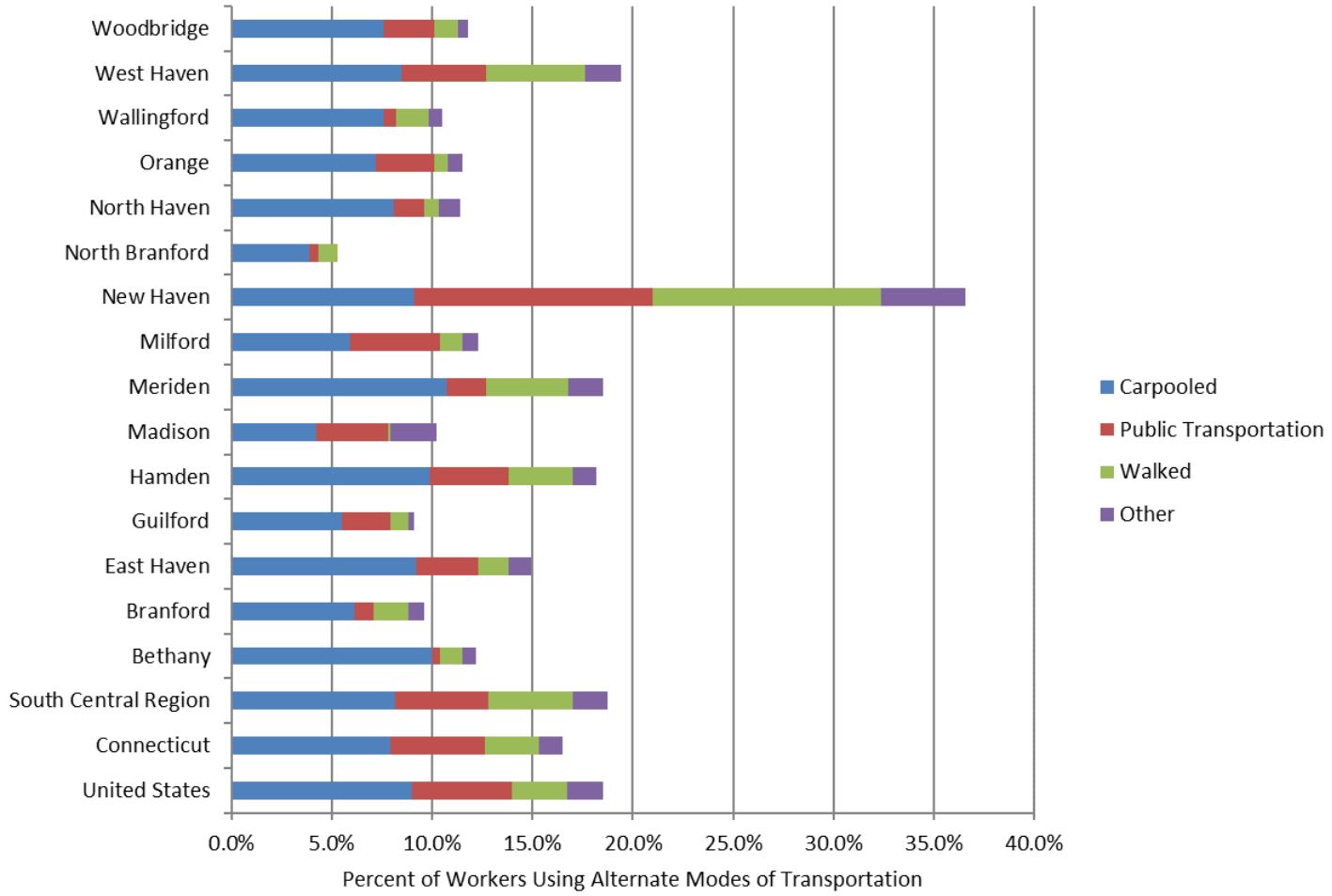
Figure 5.1: Transportation Network, South Central Region



2 - Commuting Patterns

In 2019, 76.4% of workers in the South Central Region drove to work alone.[4] The commuting characteristics of the Region are comparable to those of the State of Connecticut, where 78.2% of workers drove alone. Both the South Central Region's share of workers carpooling (8.2%) and Connecticut's share (87.9%) are lower in comparison to the United States usage, which is 9.0%. Bethany, East Haven, Hamden, Meriden, and New Haven have 9% or more of their populations carpooling to work. Additionally, 11.9% of New Haven's workforce utilizes public transportation, which is far greater than the United States (5.0%) or Connecticut (4.7%). In contrast, the municipalities in the Region with the most reliance on the automobile are North Branford (91.0%), North Haven (85.4%) and Branford (85.0%). All of the municipalities, except for New Haven (58.7%), exceed the United States' average of 76.3% of workers driving alone.

Figure 5.2: Percent of Workers Using Alternative Modes of Transportation, 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table S0801)

[4] Workers are defined as the population aged 16 and older.

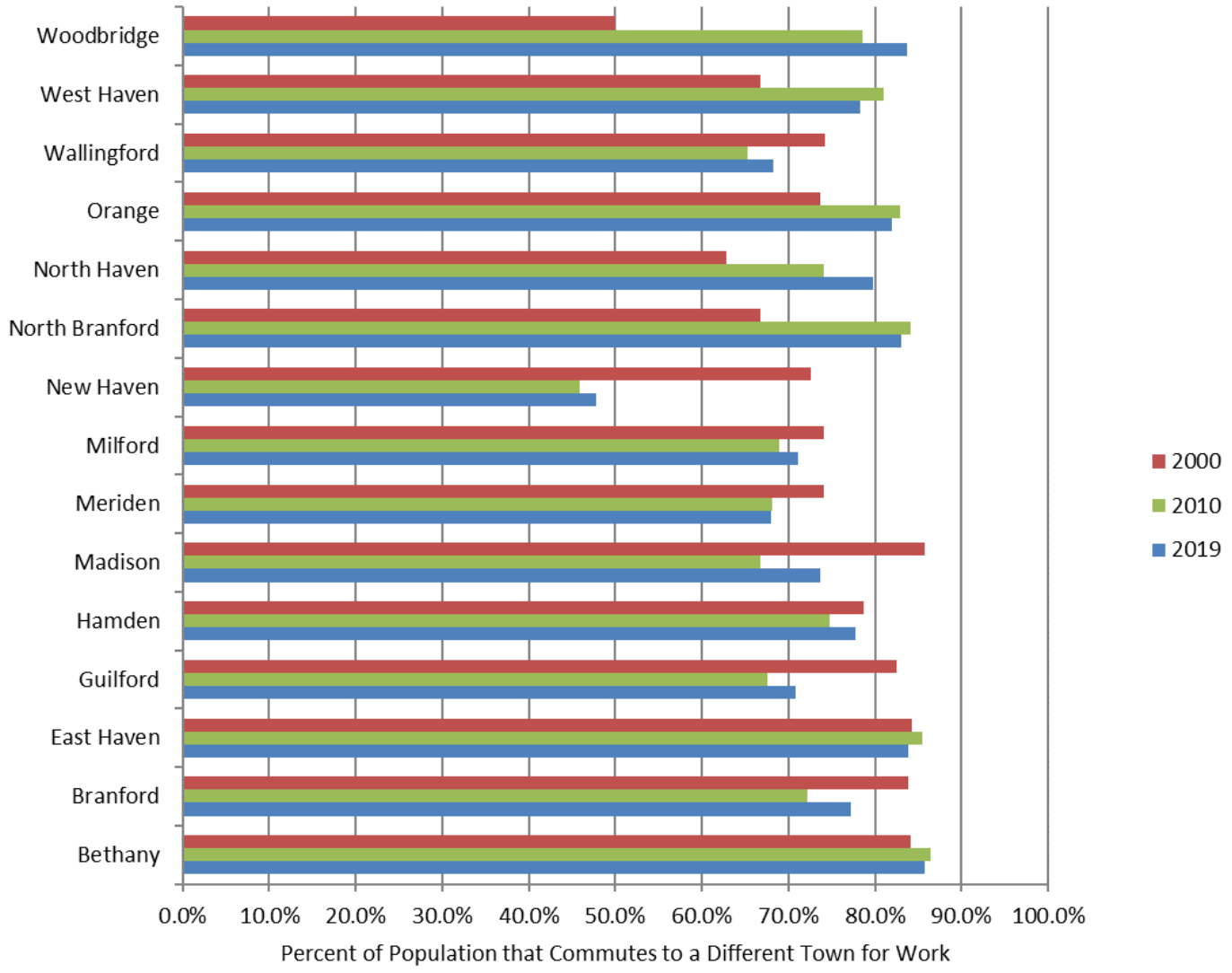
Table 5.1: Means of Transportation to Work, 2019

	Means of Transportation to Work, 2019 (%)				
Geography	**Carpooled**	**Public Transportation**	**Walked**	**Other**	**Drove Alone**
United States	9.0%	5.0%	2.7%	1.8%	76.3%
Connecticut	7.9%	4.7%	2.7%	1.2%	78.2%
South Central Region	8.2%	4.6%	4.2%	1.8%	76.4%
Bethany	10.0%	0.4%	1.1%	0.7%	82.9%
Branford	6.1%	1.0%	1.7%	0.8%	85.0%
East Haven	9.2%	3.1%	1.5%	1.1%	80.9%
Guilford	5.5%	2.4%	0.9%	0.3%	82.8%
Hamden	9.9%	3.9%	3.2%	1.2%	77.3%
Madison	4.2%	3.6%	0.1%	2.3%	80.6%
Meriden	10.7%	2.0%	4.1%	1.7%	77.4%
Milford	5.9%	4.5%	1.1%	0.8%	82.4%
New Haven	9.1%	11.9%	11.4%	4.2%	58.7%
North Branford	3.9%	0.4%	1.0%	0.0%	91.0%
North Haven	8.1%	1.5%	0.7%	1.1%	85.4%
Orange	7.2%	2.9%	0.7%	0.7%	83.0%
Wallingford	7.6%	0.6%	1.6%	0.7%	84.4%
West Haven	8.5%	4.2%	4.9%	1.8%	77.0%
Woodbridge	7.6%	2.5%	1.2%	0.5%	80.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table S0801)

In 2019, the municipalities with greater than 80% of residents commuting outside of their hometown for work were Bethany (85.8%), East Haven (83.9%), Woodbridge (83.7), North Branford (83.0%), and Orange (82.0%). Woodbridge experienced a 33.7% increase in the number of workers commuting outside the Town since 2000, the highest in the South Central Region. Conversely, New Haven saw the largest decrease, with 24.8% fewer workers leaving the City for work. The second largest decrease was in Madison with 11.9% fewer people leaving the Town for work. New Haven (47.8%) has the lowest percentage of workers commuting to a different municipality. *Table 5.2* lists the details for each municipality.

Figure 5.3: Percent of Population that Commutes to a Different Municipality for Work, 2000, 2010, and 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & 2010 Summary File 3 (Table P029) and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B08009)

Table 5.2: Percent of Population that Commutes to a Different Municipality for Work, 2000, 2010, and 2019

	Population that Commutes to a Different Municipality for Work (%)		
Municipality	**2000**	**2010**	**2019**
Bethany	84.1%	86.4%	85.8%
Branford	83.9%	72.2%	77.3%
East Haven	84.2%	85.5%	83.9%
Guilford	82.5%	67.6%	70.9%
Hamden	78.8%	74.7%	77.8%
Madison	85.7%	66.7%	73.8%
Meriden	74.1%	68.1%	68.0%
Milford	74.1%	69.0%	71.1%
New Haven	72.6%	45.8%	47.8%
North Branford	66.8%	84.2%	83.0%
North Haven	62.9%	74.2%	79.8%
Orange	73.7%	82.9%	82.0%
Wallingford	74.3%	65.3%	68.3%
West Haven	66.8%	80.9%	78.3%
Woodbridge	50.0%	78.5%	83.7%

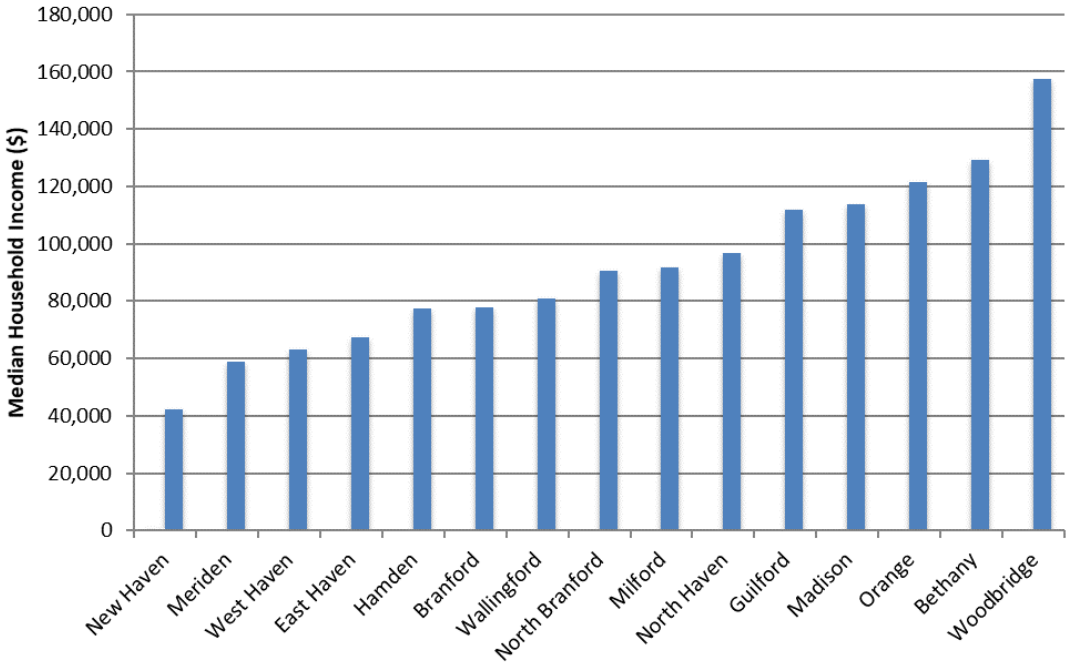
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & 2010 Summary File 3 (Table P029) and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B08009)

VI - Economic Vitality & Labor Force

1 - Median Household Income

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, income is defined as income received on a regular basis, excluding capital gains and before payments such as taxes, union dues, and social security.[5] In 2019, the municipality in the South Central Region with the highest median household income was Woodbridge at $157,610. New Haven has the lowest median household income at $42,222. The national median household income was $62,843. Two municipalities, New Haven and West Haven, fell below this threshold. Six towns fell below the statewide median household income of $78,444: Branford, East Haven, Hamden, Meriden, New Haven, and West Haven.

Figure 6.1: Median Household Income by Municipality, 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015- 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B19013)

Table 6.1: Median Household Income by Municipality, 2019

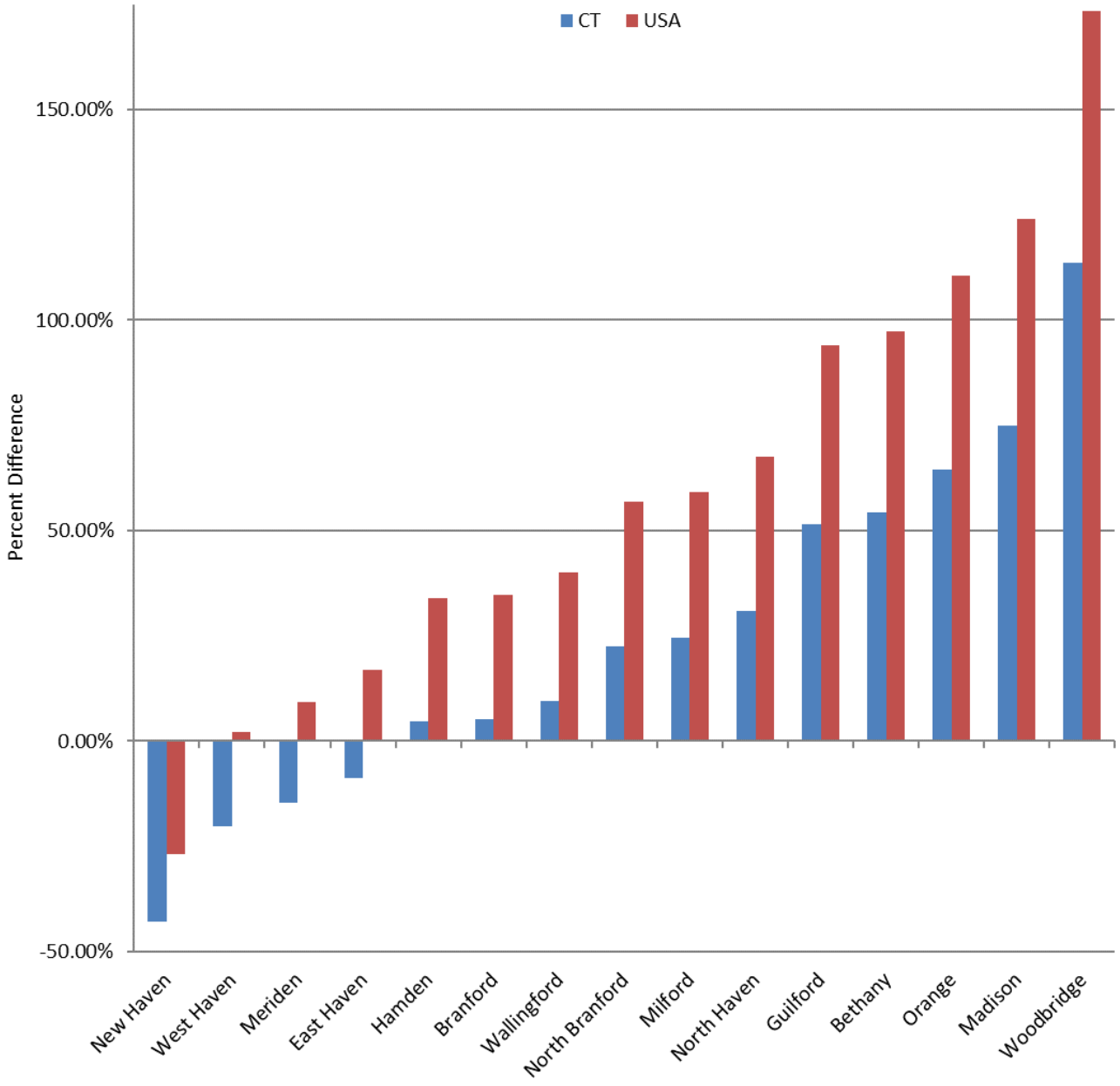
Bethany	Branford	East Haven	Guilford	Hamden
$ 129,133	$ 77,640	$ 67,390	$ 111,870	$ 77,274
Madison	Meriden	Milford	New Haven	North Branford
$ 113,798	$ 62,985	$ 91,799	$ 42,222	$ 90,461
North Haven	Orange	Wallingford	West Haven	Woodbridge
$ 96,598	$ 121,308	$ 80,793	$ 58,843	$ 157,610

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015- 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B19013)

[5] U.S. Census Bureau. Income - About Income. Accessed on July 29, 2021 from http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income/about.html

In 2019, the median household income of Woodbridge was 113.62% higher than the State of Connecticut and 173.38% higher than the United States. The median household income of New Haven was 42.77% less than that of the State of Connecticut and 26.76% less than that of the United States.

Figure 6.2: Median Household Income, by Municipality, Compared to State and National Averages, 2019

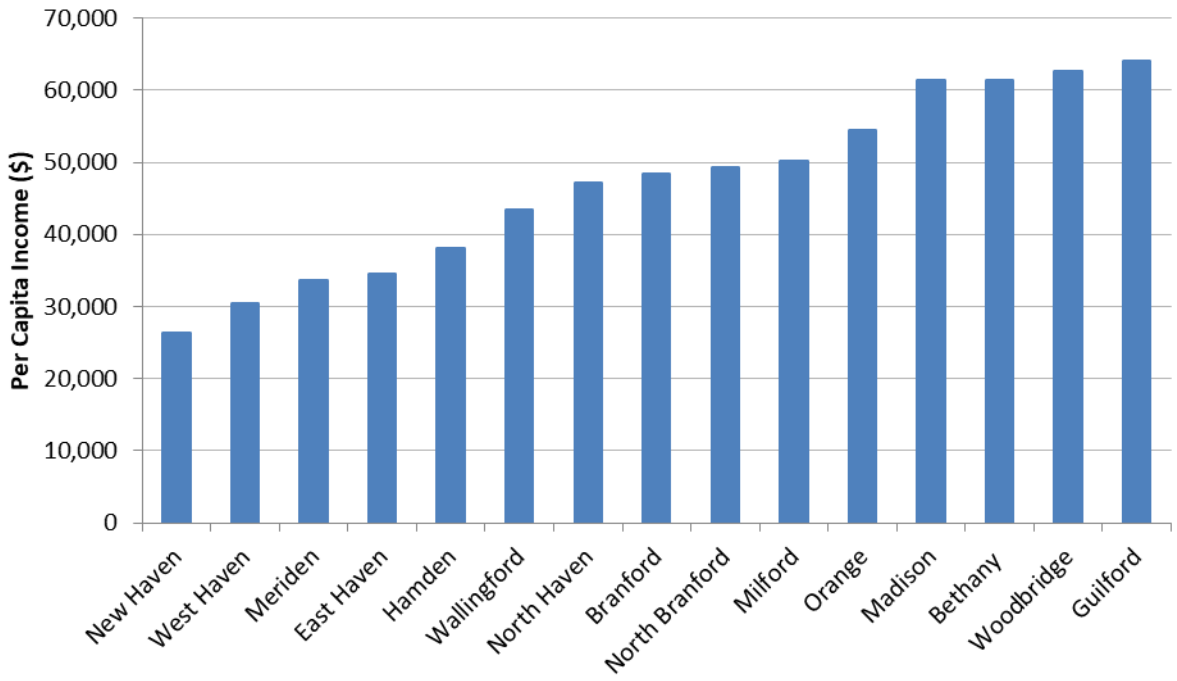


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015- 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B19013)

2 - Per Capita Income

Per capita income, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, is the mean income received in the past 12 months computed for every person (at least 15 years old) in a geographic area.[6] It is derived by dividing the total income of all people 15 years old and over in a geographic area by the total population in that area. Guilford has the highest per capita income in the region at $62,686. New Haven has the lowest per capita income in the region at $26,429. East Haven, Hamden, Meriden, New Haven, Wallingford, and West Haven have per capita income levels below the statewide average of $44,496. East Haven, Meriden, New Haven, and West Haven have per capita income levels below the national average of $35,672. *Figure 6.4* shows the per capita income by U.S. Census Bureau-designated census block group.

Figure 6.3: Per Capita Income by Municipality, 2019



Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP03)

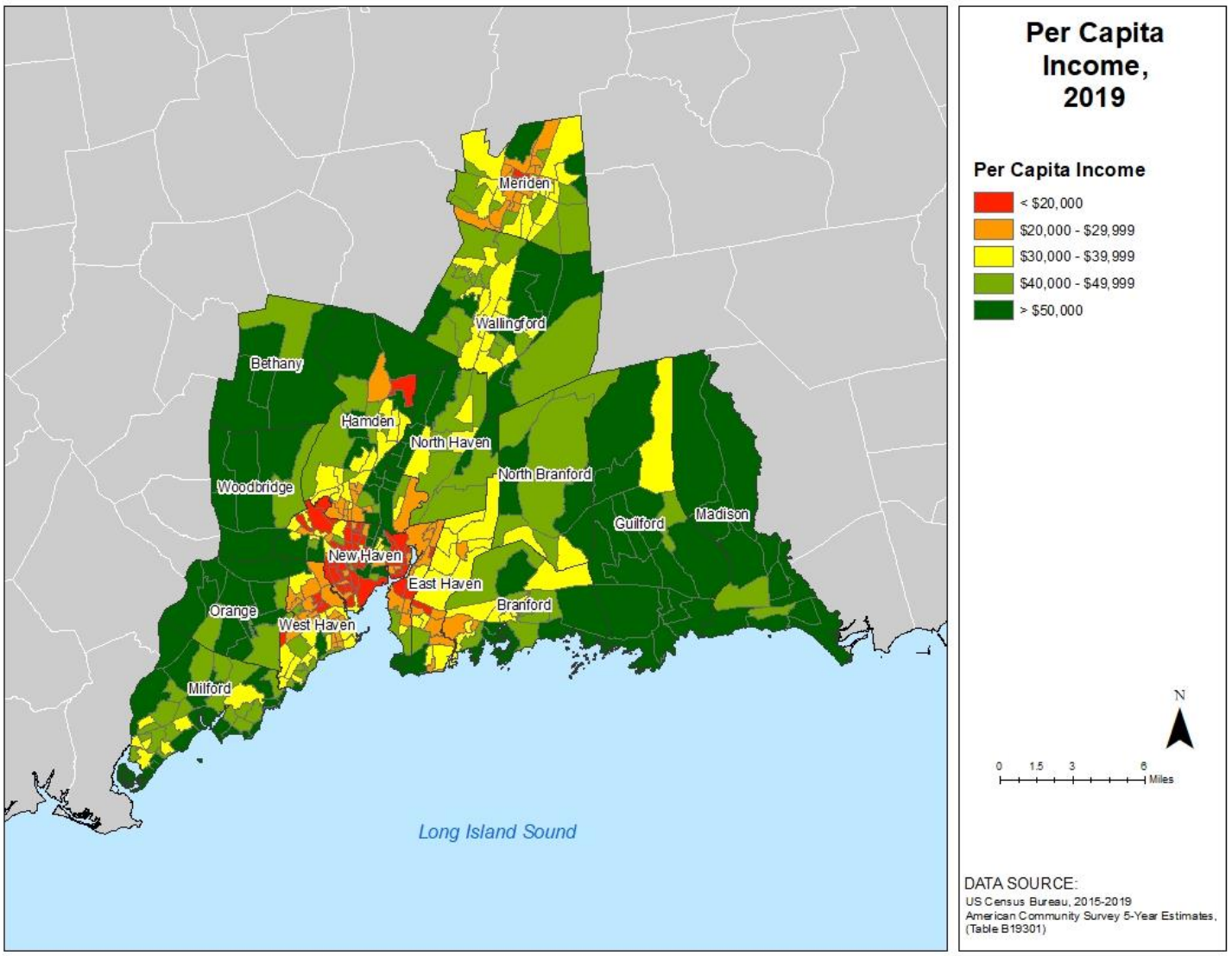
Table 6.2: Per Capita Income by Municipality, 2019

Bethany	Branford	East Haven	Guilford	Hamden
$ 61,469	$ 48,471	$ 34,607	$ 62,686	$ 38,184
Madison	Meriden	Milford	New Haven	North Branford
$ 64,041	$ 33,687	$ 50,164	$ 26,429	$ 49,263
North Haven	Orange	Wallingford	West Haven	Woodbridge
$ 47,106	$ 54,435	$ 43,407	$ 34,607	$ 61,394

Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP03)

[6] U.S. Census Bureau. State and County Quickfacts - Per Capita Income. Accessed on July 29, 2021 from http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/meta/long_INC910214.htm

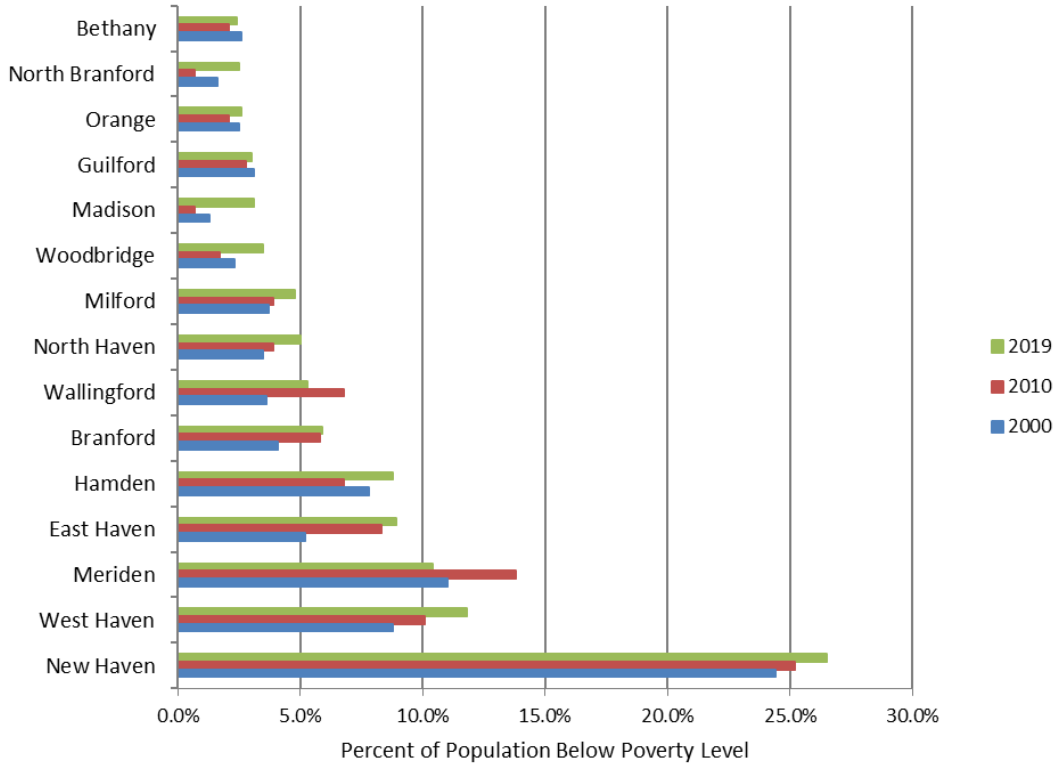
Figure 6.4: Per Capita Income by Census Block Group, 2019



3 - Poverty

Poverty level is determined by income thresholds set by the federal government based on factors including family size and ages of the members. Those families whose income is less than the determined thresholds are considered to be living below the poverty level. Individuals living below the poverty level in the South Central Region generally increased since 2010. Only Branford, Meriden, North Haven and Wallingford experienced a marginal decrease in poverty. As of 2019, New Haven had the highest poverty rate at 26.5%. Bethany and North Branford had the lowest poverty rates in the Region at 2.4% and 2.5%, respectively. The largest percent increase occurred in Madison, which had a 2.4% increase in the population living in poverty since 2010. The largest decrease occurred in Meriden, which had 3.4% decrease in the population living in poverty since 2010.

Figure 6.5: Percent of Population below Poverty Level, 2000, 2010, and 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Census 2010 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table S1701)

Table 6.3: Percent of Population below Poverty Level, 2000, 2010, and 2019

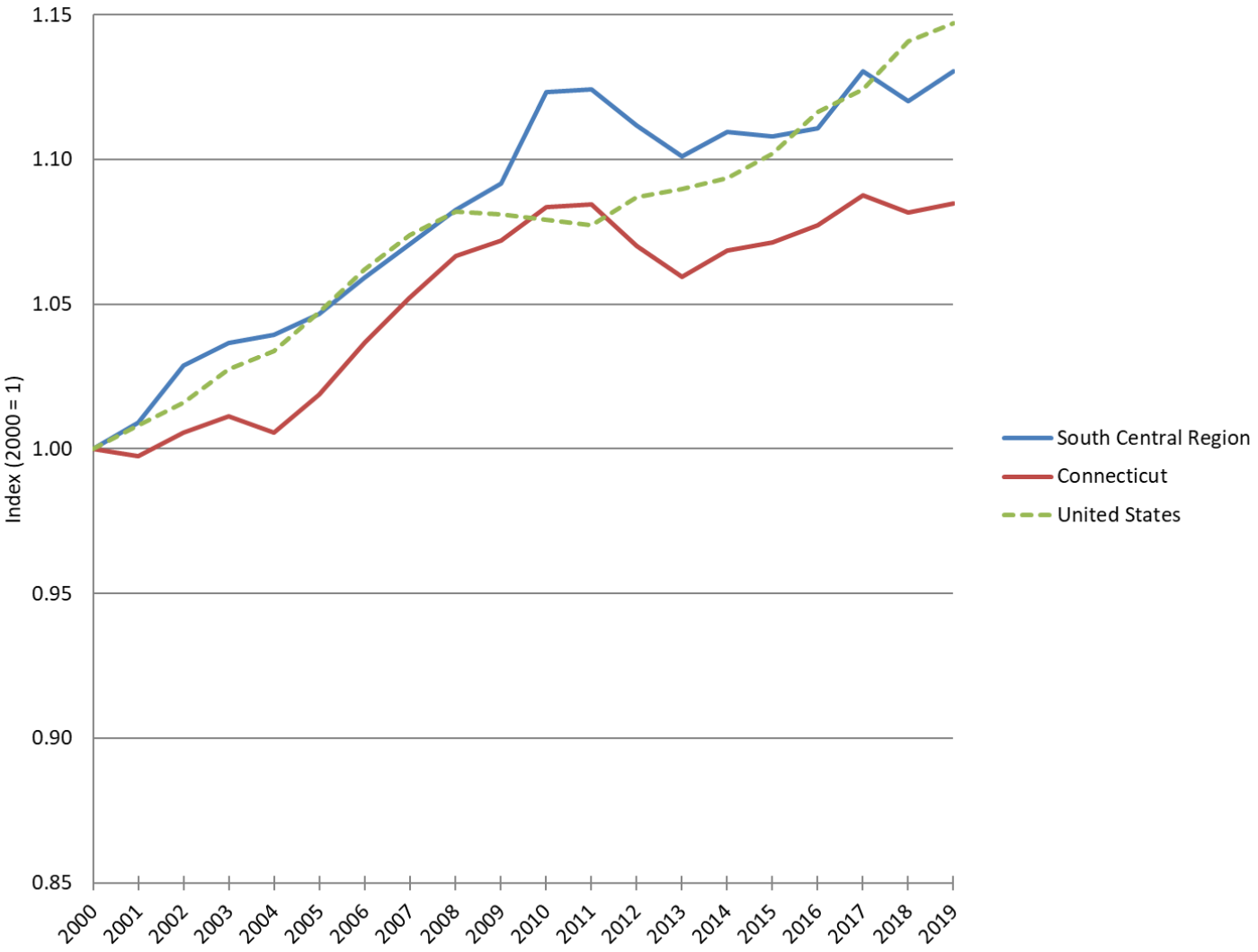
Municipality	2000	2010	2019	Municipality	2000	2010	2019
Bethany	2.6%	2.1%	2.4%	Milford	3.7%	3.9%	4.8%
Branford	4.1%	5.8%	5.9%	New Haven	24.4%	25.2%	26.5%
East Haven	5.2%	8.3%	8.9%	North Branford	1.6%	0.7%	2.5%
Guilford	3.1%	2.8%	3.0%	North Haven	3.5%	3.9%	5.0%
Hamden	7.8%	6.8%	8.8%	Orange	2.5%	2.1%	2.6%
Madison	1.3%	0.7%	3.1%	Wallingford	3.6%	6.8%	5.3%
Meriden	11.0%	13.8%	10.4%	West Haven	8.8%	10.1%	11.8%
				Woodbridge	2.3%	1.7%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Census 2010 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table S1701)

4 - Labor Force

The labor force[7] in the South Central Region has remained fairly stable with only a slight increase since 2010 (*Figure 6.6*). The South Central Region, State of Connecticut, and the United States all experienced an increase in labor force since 2013. Between 2010 and 2019, four municipalities in the South Central Region experienced a decrease in the labor force: East Haven, Meriden, West Haven and Woodbridge (*Figure 6.7* and *Table 6.4*).

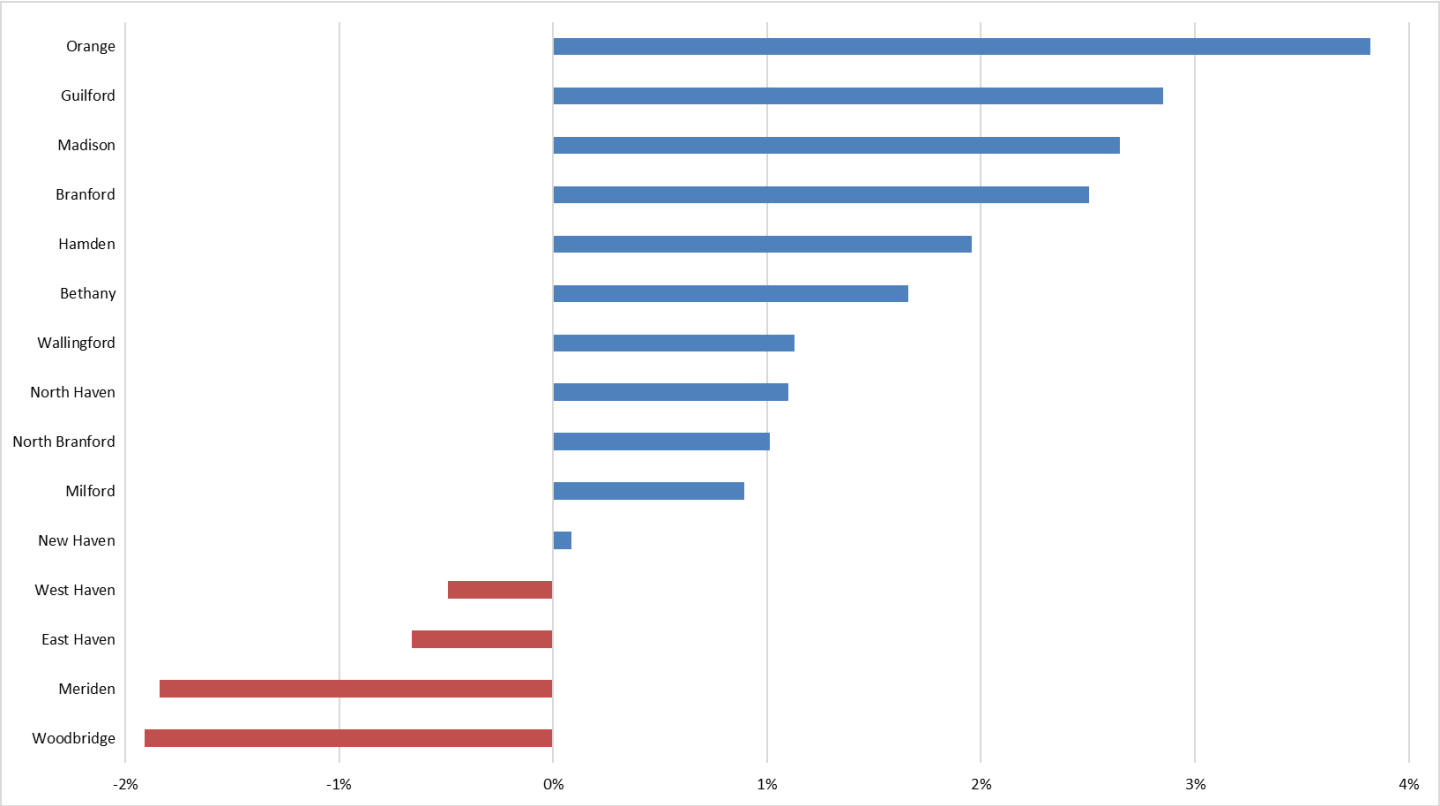
Figure 6.6: Labor Force, 2000-2019



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Labor Force Monthly Data w/Annual Averages by Town 2000-2019 and Connecticut/United States Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Benchmarked Estimates 2000-2019

[7] The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed residents.

Figure 6.7: Percent Change in Average Annual Labor Force by Municipality, 2010-2019



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Labor Force Monthly Data w/Annual Averages by Town (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, & 2019)

Table 6.4: Nine-year Average Annual Labor Force by Municipality, 2010-2019

	Average Annual Labor Force									
Municipality	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Bethany	3,108	3,093	3,054	3,027	3,083	3,085	3,098	3,160	3,126	3,160
Branford	15,915	15,890	15,745	15,576	15,739	15,930	15,990	16,296	16,129	16,324
East Haven	16,074	16,037	15,861	15,689	15,784	15,738	15,786	16,032	15,813	15,968
Guilford	12,743	12,693	12,602	12,534	12,703	12,760	12,855	13,086	12,963	13,117
Hamden	35,104	35,186	35,005	34,702	35,015	34,965	35,084	35,856	35,506	35,805
Madison	8,977	8,944	8,913	8,848	8,955	8,966	9,029	9,211	9,127	9,221
Meriden	32,993	32,850	32,438	32,155	32,352	32,161	32,134	32,469	32,135	32,397
Milford	30,441	30,176	29,588	29,278	29,616	29,771	29,963	30,633	30,459	30,716
New Haven	65,134	65,971	65,233	64,612	64,702	64,181	64,101	65,324	64,773	65,190
North Branford	8,236	8,210	8,118	7,999	8,100	8,133	8,188	8,317	8,228	8,320
North Haven	13,446	13,425	13,246	13,091	13,241	13,259	13,339	13,573	13,433	13,596
Orange	7,147	7,137	7,093	7,058	7,145	7,168	7,218	7,367	7,348	7,431
Wallingford	26,296	26,243	25,982	25,807	26,108	26,098	26,187	26,646	26,341	26,596
West Haven	30,712	30,786	30,322	29,978	30,117	29,975	29,955	30,448	30,195	30,562
Woodbridge	4,951	4,912	4,843	4,789	4,789	4,873	4,922	4,896	4,859	4,858

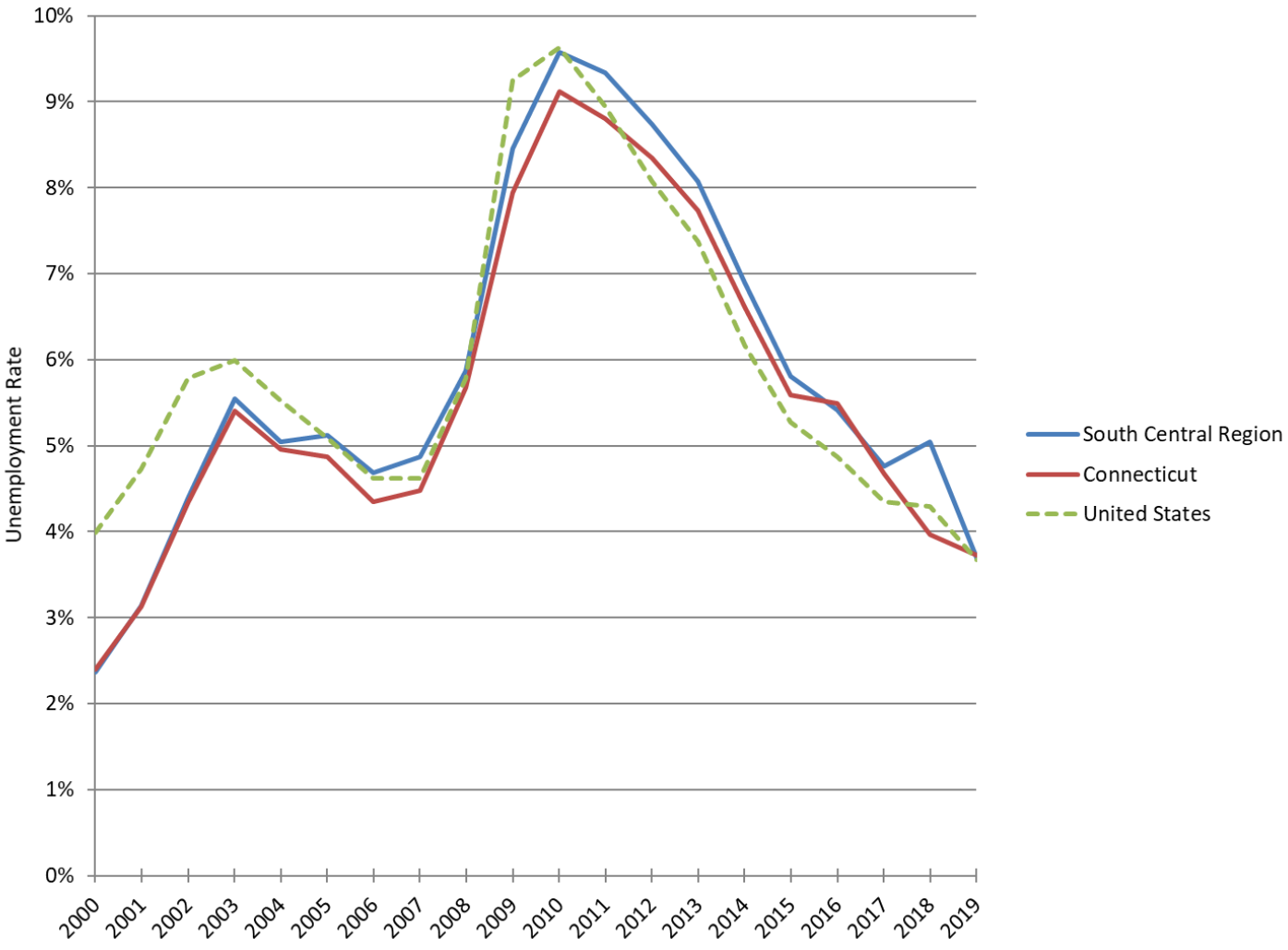
Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Labor Force Monthly Data w/Annual Averages by Town (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, & 2019)

5 - Unemployment

In 2019, the South Central Region, State of Connecticut and the United States had unemployment rates between 3.6% and 4.0%. The Region's unemployment rate decreased from 5.05% in 2018 to 3.69% in 2019. The unemployment rate in Connecticut remained the same at 4.0% between 2018 and 2019, while the unemployment rate in the United States declined by 0.62% between 2018 and 2019. The highest unemployment rates were experienced in 2010, with the Region, Connecticut and United States having rates over 9.0% (*Figure 6.8*). The economic recession that occurred from 2007 to 2009 is largely responsible for the increase in unemployment during 2010. In 2019, four municipalities, East Haven, Meriden, New Haven, and West Haven had unemployment rates higher than the state average of 4.0%.

Table 6.5 displays the year-to-year changes in unemployment from 2010 to 2019.

Figure 6.8: Unemployment Rate, 2000-2019



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Labor Force Monty Data w/Annual Averages by Town 2000-2019 and Connecticut and United States Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Benchmarked Estimates 2000-2019

Table 6.5: Nine-year Average Annual Unemployment Rate by Municipality, 2010-2019

	Average Annual Unemployment (%)									
Municipality	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Bethany	7.4	6.8	6.1	5.6	5.3	4.3	4.0	3.8	3.3	2.9
Branford	8.3	8.0	7.5	6.6	5.7	5.0	4.7	4.2	3.6	3.4
East Haven	10.4	10.1	9.4	8.7	7.4	6.3	5.9	5.2	4.4	4.1
Guilford	6.5	6.0	5.5	5.3	4.6	3.8	3.6	3.1	2.9	2.5
Hamden	7.9	7.9	7.5	6.9	5.9	5.0	4.8	4.3	3.8	3.4
Madison	6.7	6.3	6.1	5.6	4.8	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.0	2.7
Meriden	11.4	11.0	10.3	9.8	8.5	7.1	6.5	5.6	4.8	4.4
Milford	9.2	8.3	7.3	6.6	5.7	4.9	4.7	4.2	3.8	3.4
New Haven	12.1	12.2	11.6	10.8	9.0	7.5	6.9	6.0	5.1	4.4
North Branford	8.0	7.6	6.9	6.0	5.2	4.6	4.4	3.9	3.5	3.2
North Haven	8.0	7.8	7.2	6.4	5.5	4.7	4.5	4.0	3.6	3.2
Orange	6.6	6.3	6.1	5.7	5.0	4.1	4.0	3.4	3.2	2.9
Wallingford	8.3	7.8	7.2	6.6	5.8	4.8	4.5	4.1	3.5	3.1
West Haven	10.7	10.8	10.2	9.4	8.0	6.8	6.2	5.4	4.7	4.1
Woodbridge	5.7	5.3	4.9	4.9	4.2	3.8	3.6	3.0	3.1	2.7

Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Labor Force Monthly Data w/ Annual Averages by Town (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, & 2019)