Regional Profile: Executive Summary

To better understand the economic strengths and weaknesses, as well as the threats and opportunities that are presented by external forces, it is important to understand the demographic, economic, and physical make-up of the region. The main findings of an analysis of recent demographic and economic data are presented below. To further understand the context of this data, the Central Connecticut region will be compared to the State of Connecticut and the country as a whole.

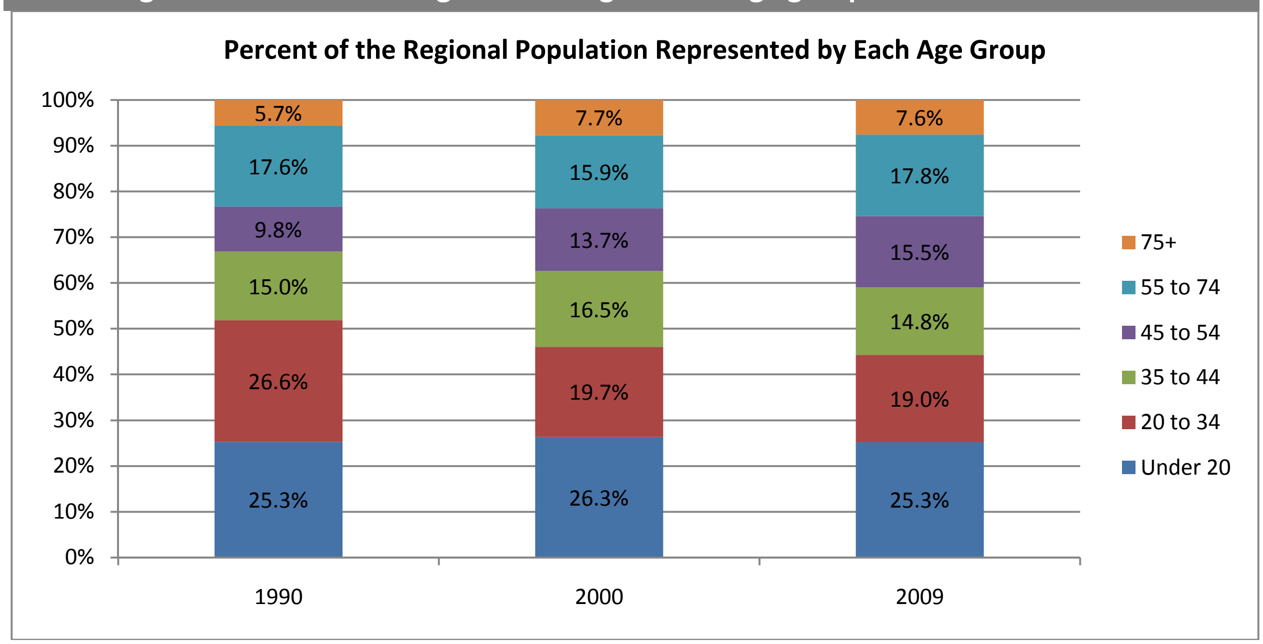
The data collection and analysis for this report were informed by previous regional planning efforts and studies. Plans of conservation and development were reviewed for each town (and the region), as well as other studies on transportation, housing, and economics. Major concerns included: the declining manufacturing sector; the desirability of the housing stock (in some towns affordability was the concern, in others it was the age of housing); open space preservation; redevelopment of downtowns/town centers; historic preservation; the aging population; and transportation (the need for more public transportation, safety issues, and connectivity issues).

The Population of Central Connecticut

➢ The population has grown to 231,891, but at a slower rate than the national average.

- Growth between 1990 and 2009 was 1.9%, but the national average was 16.5%.
- Between 2000 and 2009 the region experienced a reversal of the trends seen between 1990 and 2000, when the population contracted.
- The highest growth areas were Berlin, Burlington, and Southington.

➢ The region's distribution of ages is shifting to older age groups.



- Since 1990, the share of young and middle adult cohorts (20 to 34 and 35 to 44) has steadily declined while the share of older residents (45 to 54 and 55 to 74) has increased.

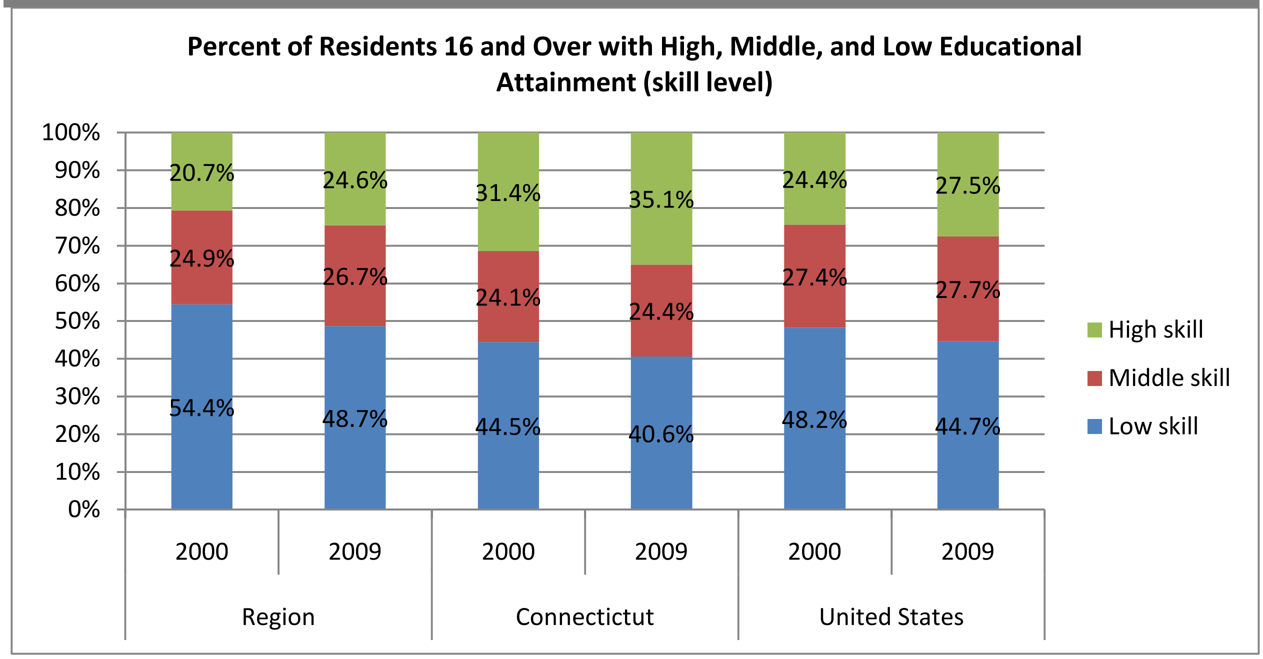
➢ The region has aged at a faster rate than both the nation and the state.

- Region-wide, the average growth in median ages was 15.3%; statewide it was 13.4% and nationally it was 11.3%.

➢ The region is less racially diverse than the nation, or state, but has a greater percentage of Hispanic/Latinos than the state.

- The Hispanic/Latino population has grown, from 10.8% to 13% of the region.

➢ Educational attainment has improved but still lags the rest of the county and the state.

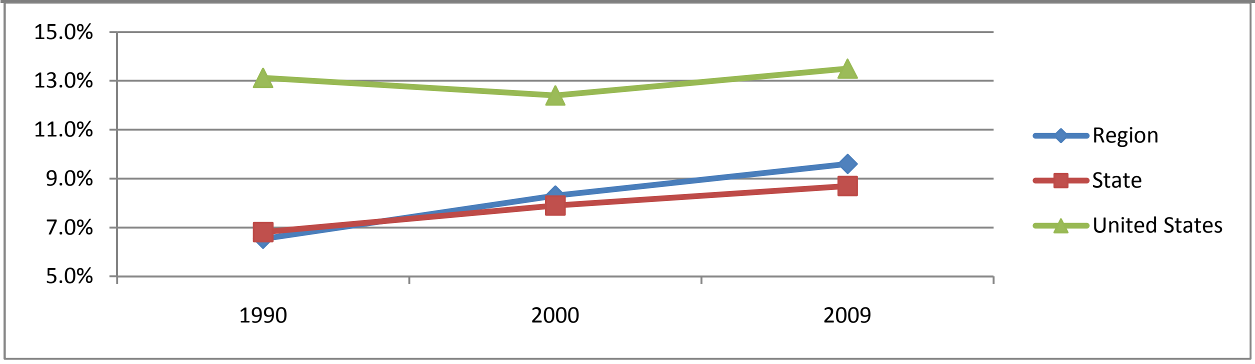


- Central Connecticut has a relatively high percentage of residents with low educational attainment: 48.7% versus 40.6% statewide and 44.7% nationwide.
- The percentage of people with a bachelor's degree or above (high skilled workers) is just 24.6%, versus 27.5% nationally and 35.1% statewide.
- The percentage of middle-skill workers (some college or an associate's) was 26.7%, which is higher than the state's rate of 24.4%, but lower than the nation's: 27.7%.

➢ Household incomes have grown at a faster rate than the national average, but some municipalities still lag behind.

- From 2000 to 2009, median incomes grew at a faster rate than the nation for all but two municipalities (Bristol and New Britain).
- Inflation adjusted incomes grew much more modestly, except Burlington which experienced 14.1% real growth.

➢ The poverty rate has grown but remained below the national average.

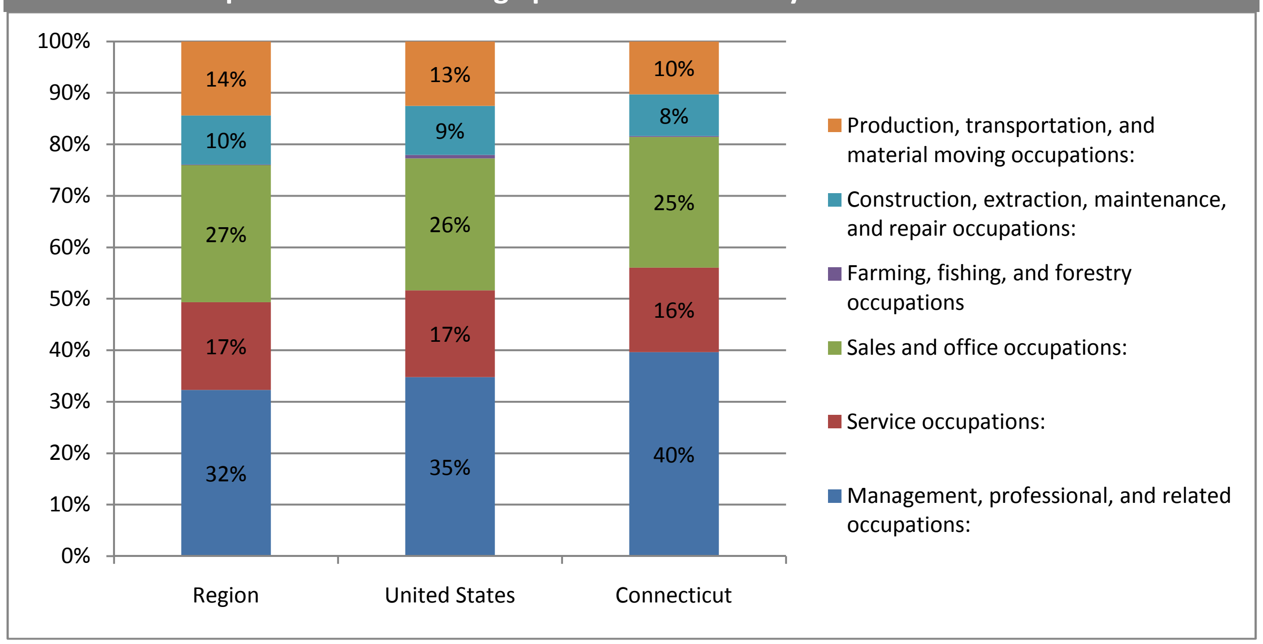


- The poverty rate increased from 8.3% in 2000 to 9.6% in 2009.
- All but one municipality (Plainville) experienced an increase in poverty.

➢ Homeownership rates have climbed, vacancies remain lower than the national average, and, relative to the state, housing is remains affordable.

- The homeownership rate (65.9%) was the same as the national average, but lagged the State (68.8%).
- The region's housing is relatively affordable (compared to the state), but all but two municipalities (Bristol and New Britain) are more expensive than the national average.
- Residential vacancy rates (2.91%) are lower than the national average (3.66%), but have increased dramatically since 2007 (2.57%).
- A smaller percentage of Central Connecticut residents pay more than 30% of their incomes for housing (35.1%) than the national average (36.7%).

➢ A growing percentage of residents are employed in professional occupations, though production occupations are still a large part of the economy.



- A smaller percentage of regional residents, compared to the national average, are *in Management, professional, and related occupations*.
- The region has a much higher percentage of production occupations than the state.

➢ The region has a higher labor participation rate and a lower unemployment rate than the national average.

- The participation rate now stands at 70%; higher than the national average (65.4%).
- Unemployment grew from 6.3% in 2003 to 9.3% in October (the national rate was 9.6%).

The Economy of Central Connecticut

➢ Most indicators show the business climate cooling.

- Business vacancies have increased since 2007, but only modestly (10.7% to 10.8%)
  - The regional rate is below the state (11.6%) and the nation (11%).
- Retail sales have decreased since 2004:
  - Retail sales dropped 6%.
  - The number of establishments declined by 10.4%.
- Initial numbers show that the volume of trade name filings has declined significantly.
- The number of private sector establishments grew by 2.9% between 2004 and 2009; nationally it grew by 7.1% and statewide it grew by just 2.5%.

Table 1. Employment change by industry (2004-2009)

Total - All Industries	Jobs lost/gained 1,141	% change 1.4%
Construction	-674	-13.9%
Manufacturing	-2,268	-15.2%
Wholesale Trade	-86	-3.1%
Retail Trade	-587	-5.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	-335	-25.0%
Information	1,155	42.4%
Finance and Insurance	747	49.2%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	82	16.7%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	-302	-12.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-161	-36.6%
Administrative and Waste Management	-204	-6.2%
Educational Services	-23	-7.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,251	9.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	28	5.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	260	5.3%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	132	4.7%

➢ Regional private sector employment continues to shift from production to services, though large concentrations of the former remain.

- Regional employment is concentrated in six broad sectors**: Construction** (6%), **Manufacturing** (19**%), Retail Trade** (14%), **Information** (6%), **Health Care and Social Assistance** (22%), and **Accommodations and Food Services** (8%).

- **Between 2004 and 2009 the region gained 1.4% more jobs (1,141 jobs), largely due to growth in service sector jobs.**
  - The nation lost 0.5% of its jobs.
  - **Finance and Insurance** grew by 49.2% (747 jobs).
  - **Health care and social assistance** grew by 9.4% (1,251 jobs).
  - **Accommodation and food services** grew by 5.3% (260 jobs).

- **Many sectors that were traditional strengths for the region experienced decline.**
  - 13.9% decline in **Construction** jobs (674 jobs).
  - 15.2% decline in **Manufacturing** jobs (2,268 jobs).
  - 25% decline in **Transportation and warehousing** jobs (335 jobs).
  - 5.9% decline in **Retail trade** jobs (587 jobs).
  - **Management of Companies and Enterprises** declined by 36.6% (161 jobs).

Resources and Infrastructure

- **K-12 school enrollment is down but higher education enrollment is up.**
  - K-12 public school enrollment dropped 2.9% from 2004 to 2008 while higher education enrollment increased by 8.6%.

- **Central Connecticut is car dependent and facing increased congestion problems.**
  - A disproportionate amount of freight is moved by truck in Connecticut (98% versus 79% nationally).
  - A higher percentage of regional residents drive alone to work (85.4%) than either the nation (75.9%) or the state (79.4%).

- **27% of workers in the region live in the town they work in.**
  - 32% of state residents live in the town they work in.

- **The regional tax base is smaller than average.**
  - The region's average equalized net grand list is roughly 2/3rds of the state average.
    - From 2005 to 2009 growth was 18.8% versus 20.2% statewide.
  - Small grand lists are also associated with greater tax burdens.

- **Compared to the nation, the region is a relatively expensive place to live.**
  - All but one municipality has a higher cost of living than the national average, though three are within 5%.
  - The state of Connecticut is one of the most expensive energy markets in the country.

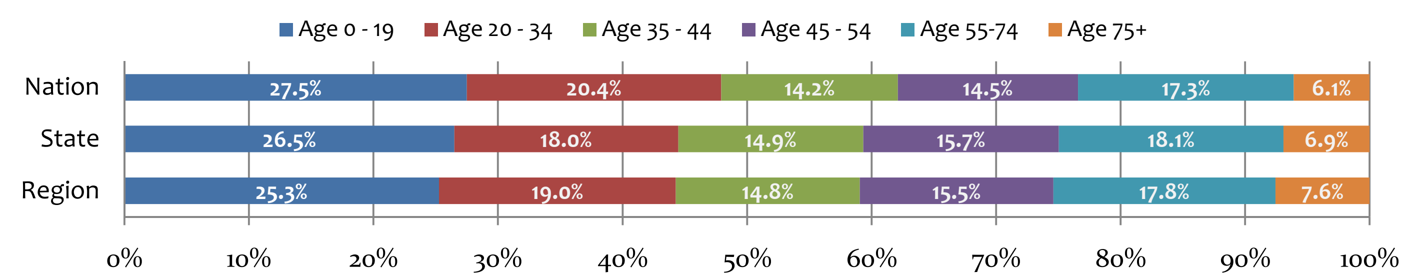
Data Tables

Demographics

Population	1990	2000	2009
Region	227,665	226,695	231,891
Population Growth	**Region**	**State**	**Nation**
1990-2000	-0.4%	3.6%	12.6%
20000-2009	2.3%	2.6%	3.4%
1990-2009	1.9%	6.3%	16.5%
2014 projected	-1.5%	-0.3%	7.0%
Pop/Sq. Mile (2009)	1394	698	85
Per Capita Income (2009)	$32,745	$36,468	$27,041
Median Age (2009)	N/A	39	37

Race/Ethnicity	Region	State	Nation
% White alone	79.2%	74.0%	65.8%
% Black alone	4.3%	9.1%	12.1%
% Asian alone	1.8%	3.3%	4.3%
% Hispanic (any race)	13.0%	11.6%	15.1%
Poverty Rate (2009)	9.6%	8.7%	13.5%
Educational Attainment (2009)			
Less than high school	14.6%	11.8%	15.4%
High school degree	34.1%	28.8%	29.3%
Some college/ Associates	26.7%	24.4%	27.7%
Bachelors or more	24.6%	35.1%	27.5%

Age Distribution (2009)



Economics

% of Total Employment in Each Sector	Region	State	Nation
Construction	4.9%	4.8%	4.0%
Manufacturing	14.9%	9.2%	12.5%
Wholesale Trade	3.2%	4.3%	4.7%
Retail Trade	11.1%	11.4%	13.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	1.2%	3.9%	2.9%
Information	4.6%	2.3%	2.6%
Finance and Insurance	2.7%	4.4%	8.6%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.7%	1.6%	1.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2.5%	5.9%	6.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.3%	1.4%	2.0%
Administrative and Waste Management	3.7%	5.6%	5.5%
Educational Services	0.4%	9.5%	3.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	17.2%	13.8%	17.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0.6%	1.8%	1.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	6.1%	8.7%	8.0%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3.5%	3.4%	4.1%

Labor Force	Region	State	Nation
Unemployment (2010)	9.3%	9.1%	9.6%
Labor Force Participation (2009)	70.0%	68.2%	65.4%
Housing			
% Home Owners (2009)	65.9%	68.8%	65.9%
% of Homeowners Cost Burdened (2009)	35.1%	39.1%	36.7%
% of Renters Cost Burdened (2009)	43.2%	47.7%	46.2%
Vacancy Rate (2010)[1]	2.9%	3.3%	3.7%
Businesses			
Vacancy Rate (2010)	10.8%	11.6%	11.0%
% Change in number of private employers (2004-2009)	2.9%	7.1%	2.5%
% Change in number of employees (2004-2009)	1.4%	-2.1%	-0.5%

Education

% Change in Public School Enrollment (2004-2008	-2.9%
… in Private schools (2004-2007)	-17.8%

[1] From USPS data, which differs from official Census estimates