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SOUTH WINDSOR, CT Strategic Plan

July 2023

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Table of Contents

■ The Town Council	4
■ The Strategic Planning Committee	5
■ Data View	6
■ Planning Process	7
■ Plan Elements	8
■ Values	9
■ Vision, Mission and Priorities	10
■ Priority 1: Quality of Life Residents	11
Objective A: Provide recreational options that support active lifestyles for all residents	11
Objective B: Provide access for safe modes of transportation that meet the needs of residents and workers	11
Objective C: Identify a plan for vibrant, affordable, business-friendly gathering places for all residents	12
Objective D: Create more Age in Place Strategies	12
■ Priority 2: Growth Management	13
Objective A: Preserve and protect strategic/targeted tracts of land	13
Objective B: Support sustainable growth that balances residents' desires with community needs	14
Objective C: Explore shared services with neighboring municipalities	14
Priority 3: Inclusivity	15
Objective A: Develop increased representative leadership opportunities, focusing on mentoring young leaders in town, volunteer organizations, and businesses	15
Objective B: Support Economic Prosperity and Affordability	16
■ Priority 4: Education	17
■ Implementation Timeline	18
Action and Reporting Responsibilities	22
■ Data View – Continued	26

Town Council



Mayor Elizabeth Pendleton



Deputy Mayor Steven King Jr



Councilor Erica Evans



Councilor Jamie Gamble



Councilor Phillip Koboski



Councilor Marek Kozilkowski



Councilor Cesar Lopez



Councilor Karen Lydecker



Councilor Andrew Paterna

Strategic Planning Committee

Janice Snyder

Strategic Planning Committee Chairperson Resident, Town of South Windsor

Tiernan Cabot

South Windsor High School Student Founder of Hartford Bags of Love Resident, Town of South Windsor

William Myers

Retired South Windsor School Teacher Resident, Town of South Windsor

Philip T. Richards

Resident, Town of South Windsor

Karen Wagner

Resident, Town of South Windsor

Michael Maniscalco, MPA

Town Manager

Marek Kozikowski, AICP, MPA

Councilor
Town of South Windsor Council

Abigail Blanchfield

South Windsor High School Student Resident, Town of South Windsor

Mindy Lewis

Resident, Town of South Windsor

Miguel Proano

Small Business Owner Resident, Town of South Windsor

Lindsay Ruszczyk

Resident, Town of South Windsor

Michele Lipe, AICP

Director of Planning

Steven King Jr., MBA

Deputy Mayor
Tow of South Windsor Council



TOTAL RESIDENTS

26,918

4.7% SINCE 2010

33%

PEOPLE OF COLOR



88%

Registered Voters

VOTED IN 2020
PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION



Households

9,783

84% Occupied

27%

Cost Burdened +30%
Housing
Costs



AGE

81.2

LIFE EXPECTANCY



14,212

TOTAL JOBS

(Largest Share of Jobs are in Manufacturing)



92%

Public High School Seniors

GRADUATED IN 2019

49%

Adults Aged 25+

EARNED BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

Planning Process

On June 21, 2021, the Town of South Windsor Council approved a resolution to create the Strategic Planning Committee with the intent to: (1) develop a vision statement for what the community would like to become, (2) develop goals that will accomplish the vision, and (3) create specific measurable objectives that will accomplish the identified goals. The Council appointed to the committee residents who were willing to offer their time, expertise and experiences for the purpose of the betterment of the community.

On March 29, 2022, the Strategic Committee held its first meeting and initiated the effort to pursue the charge laid out by the Town Council.

In November 2022, the Strategic Planning Committee started the process of planning resident feedback and engagement strategies to inform the strategic planning process. A resident survey was designed with the assistance of a consultant, and the Strategic Planning Committee planned three sets of listening sessions as a follow-up to the findings of the resident survey.

The resident survey collection began in January 2023 and continued until March 1, 2023. A total of 2,600 residents responded to the survey and the findings of the survey were presented to the Strategic Planning Committee at their March meeting.

The strategic planning committee decided to hold five sets of listening sessions:

- Town administrative leadership team
- Town elected officials (quad meeting)
- New homeowners
- Business owners
- Town civic leaders

The first three sessions were held in April 2023, and the Committee's attempts to hold listening sessions with business owners and civic leaders did not materialize due to lack of enrollment in these sessions.

On May 6, 2023, the Strategic Planning Committee held a strategic planning retreat to draft the different components of the strategic plan.

On May 23, 2023, and after a week of review, the Strategic Planning Committee agreed on a plan to present to the Town Council. The plan was presented to the Council at their June 5, 2023 meeting. Opportunity for public comment was provided on June 20 and July 3, 2023. The plan was adopted by the Council on July 17, 2023.



Plan Elements



VALUES are what we identify as important qualities that contribute to the character of our town and make South Windsor a good place to live and work. Our values serve as a guide for strategic planning initiatives.



Our **VISION** is our aspirational statement about how we want our community to look and operate. It is our hope for the future of South Windsor and is created with our identified values in mind.



Our **MISSION** statement describes the role of the strategic plan, and those involved with creating and implementing it, in achieving our vision.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES are the high-level areas of focus through which we organize our work.



PLAN OUTCOMES are how we identify and measure success for each of the strategic priorities, objectives, and action plans.



OBJECTIVES are how we organize our strategic priorities so that we can identify the actions we need to take in order to achieve our identified outcomes. There are multiple objectives within each strategic priority.



ACTION PLANS identify the specific steps we will take to achieve our objectives and desired outcomes. Action plans usually have multiple actions; and there are multiple actions plans within each objective.



MEASURES (Including Continuous Improvement and Benchmark Approaches) allow us to understand how well we are achieving our objectives and desired outcomes. We use measures (sometimes call performance measures or metrics) to assess whether and to what extent we have achieved the outcomes identified in our plan.

- Benchmarks (benchmarking) identify specific outcome goals (ex. 20% increase in Park and Rec programs) to define success.
- A continuous improvement approach measures the amount of progress toward outcomes that has occurred as part of a strategic effort (the number of residents who benefit from age-in-place strategies)



USING THE PLAN

We will use this plan to guide and measure progress toward our identified strategic priorities and related outcomes. As we work together to implement our action plans, we anticipate identifying and creating additional opportunities to achieve those priorities and outcomes. This plan is intended to be a living breathing document; and we recognize that updates will need to be made, and we modify and update the plan as necessary and appropriate.



Our values are how we make decisions. They are embedded throughout the entire plan and drive all City work.

The Town of South Windsor:



Education and Family

Supports excellence in the education system and the quality of life for all residents;



Empathy and Inclusiveness

Respects the diversity of our community by providing quality services to all residents regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, national background, age, gender, or sexual orientation:





Integrity and Excellence

Maintains a local government that is responsive, competent, ethical, and transparent;



Optimism and Adaptability

Embraces present and future opportunities, while honoring our agricultural heritage;



Public Safety

Provides the resources and adequate support to sustain a safe community;



Sustainable Growth

Makes decisions that produce a financial, environmental and economically sustainable future for residents and businesses.

Vision, Mission and Priorities















Vision

The South Windsor community is a vibrant, inclusive place to live, work and thrive; a welcoming and engaged community that provides quality opportunities and lifestyles for all stages of life; a destination for quality education; a place that supports healthy lifestyles and a sound commitment to environmental protection and sustainable growth.

Mission

Foster a community where everyone can thrive.

Priorities



Bring people together through infrastructure enhancements and lifestyle opportunities.

Manage growth in a sustainable manner that enhances the quality of life for all residents.

Build an informed, connected and engaged community that embraces diversity and provides for economic prosperity and affordability for all residents.

Continue to advance excellence in the school system through infrastructure, personnel and operational investments as needed.

^{*}Education is addressed as a priority in this strategic plan to the extent that the Town Council provides resources to support the South Windsor Public Schools 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

Bring people together through infrastructure enhancements and lifestyle opportunities.

Objective A: Provide recreational options that support active lifestyles for all residents.

Action Plan:

- Expand participation and programming in Parks & Recreation Department programs by 20% by the end of the next five years (e.g. Evergreen Walk concerts, farmers' market, community garden, and recreation programs)
 - Measure:
 - Increase total participation by 20%
 - > Increase number of programs by 20%
- Develop a plan to provide the Parks & Recreation Department with a permanent home
 - Measure:
 - Committee formed by November 2023
 - Committee report to council by July 2025
- Pursue grants, public private partnerships and other funding mechanisms for large scale projects (e.g. pool, lighted field, pocket parks, trails)
 - Measure:
 - Number of large-scale projects completed
 - > Add 2-3 large scale projects through alternative funding mechanisms within five years
- Increase participation in resident engagement in open spaces in their neighborhoods
 - Measure:
 - > Three pocket parks planned or built within five years
 - > Three miles of trails planned or built within five years

Objective B: Provide access to safe modes of transportation that meet the needs of residents and workers.

Action Plan:

- Add a minimum of one mile of sidewalks per year, connecting schools to neighborhoods, through general funds
 - Measure:
 - > General fund investment to pave one mile of sidewalks per year
 - > At least one mile of sidewalks added per year
- Ensure that the feasibility of bike paths/roadways is included in any major road construction or reconstruction/paving consistent with the Town's Complete Streets Policy
 - Measure:
 - > Number of miles of bike paths built each year+
 - > Number of feasibility studies conducted each year †

†Continuous Improvement Measure

Priority 1: Quality of Life Residents

Objective C: Identify a plan for a vibrant, affordable, business-friendly gathering places for all residents.

Action Plan:

- Identify and/or enhance areas for community gathering
 - Measure:
 - Report to Town Council by July 2024 with a plan for developing or enhancing one or more areas to be community gathering places

Objective D: Create more Age-in-Place Strategies

Action Plan: Create incentives to keep people in home

- Help with senior home maintenance by recruiting volunteers and providing direct services through the volunteer bank proposed as part of Priority 3.
- Partner with South Windsor Senior Services and South Windsor Police Department to ensure the Special Needs Registry Program can be accessed by senior citizens who could benefit from safety checks, and notifications as outlined in the Special Needs Registry Program
- Partner with South Windsor Senior services to engage existing resources, like AARP to provide guidance (including information about potential funding options) to homeowners regarding adjustments that can be made to their homes to facilitate aging in place
 - Measure:
 - Number of Residents Benefiting from age-in-place strategies+
 - Number of single housing unit owners 65 or older (based on the annual American Community Survey) †
- †Continuous Improvement Measure

Priority 2: Growth Management

Manage growth in a manner that is sustainable and that enhances the quality of life for residents

Objective A: Preserve and protect strategic/targeted tracts of land

Action Plan:

- Allocate public funds for space acquisition and management and purchases of development rights
 - Measure:
 - > Acres of preserved land from 2023 through 2028†
 - > Acres of development rights purchased from 2023 through 2028†
- Assist, through the State Assessment Program (e.g. PA 490), owners of undeveloped open space
 - Measure:
 - > Dollars spent on land preservation and purchase of development rights
 - Amount of increase in the number of eligible landowners participating in the PA490 program
- Proactively identify and prioritize open spaces that the town would benefit from acquiring, and create an action plan for acquisition of prioritized properties
 - Measure:
 - Open space properties acquired
 - Acres of open space acquired
- Negotiate with targeted property owners by reaching out to owners of properties the town would like to acquire, and engaging in conversation/negotiations for purchase of rights of first refusal
- Implement methods to enhance market competitiveness when negotiating open space or other property acquisition
 - Measure:
 - Properties with first refusal rights secured
 - > Acres with first refusal rights secured

Priority 2: Growth Management

Objective B: Support sustainable growth that balances residents' desires with community needs

Action Plan:

- Conduct market analysis to determine the right mix of residential, commercial and industrial properties and their subcategories
 - Measure:
 - Completion of market analysis by September 2024
- Pursue Private/public partnerships to purchase and develop property to be used for projects identified by residents as important or desirable, and which may not be appropriate/possible for the town to purchase and develop.
 - Measure:
 - > One to two private/public partnerships on major projects within five years
- Encourage, through incentives and dis-incentives, the reuse of vacant buildings, and infill development, instead of developing open spaces for business/industrial uses
 - Measure:
 - > Number of vacant buildings re-purposed annually for new development+
 - > Number of new infill development projects planned or implemented annually†
- Pursue grants for environmental studies and remediation of brownfields sites
 - Measure:
 - > Secure two to three grants to remediate brownfields sites by July 2025
 - > Year-to-Year increase in EV Charging stations installed on town properties†
- Better coordinate review of development projects across Town and State agencies (certain value and impact)
 - Measure:
 - Percentage of major development projects subjected to multi-agency review boards annually†

Objective C: Explore shared services with neighboring municipalities

Action Plan:

- Explore through the Town Manager sharing services with adjacent towns
 - Measure:
 - > Number of shared services agreements with neighboring communities +

†Continuous Improvement Measure



Build an informed, connected and engaged community that embraces diversity and provides for economic prosperity and affordability for all residents

Objective A: Develop increased representative leadership opportunities, focusing on mentoring young leaders in town, volunteer organizations, and businesses

Action Plan:

- Deliver training to town staff on working with and mentoring diverse populations, including volunteer engagement by May 2024
 - Measure:
 - Report the number of trainings delivered to town staff by May 2024 and annually thereafter†
- Deliver training for volunteer organizations on engaging a diverse group of volunteers, including mentoring and leadership development/coaching by May 2024
 - Measure:
 - Report the number of trainings delivered to volunteer groups by May 2024 and annually thereafter†
 - > Report the number of participants engaged in mentoring/coaching (town leaders business) by June 2024†
- Create connections between student community and town leadership through mentorships at town offices and local businesses (utilize Chamber of Commerce for business outreach and summer internships at town offices, parks and rec, etc.) commencing June 2024
 - Measure:
 - Report the number of connections between students/aspiring leaders and town/business leaders created by June 2024†
 - Report the number of participants engaged in leadership opportunities (students/aspiring leaders) by December 2024†
- Identify and recruit middle school, high school, and college/university students to serve on local volunteer groups include opportunities for leadership that includes decision-making authority within the service opportunity commencing September 2024
 - Measure:
 - Report the number and percent of town and volunteer groups reporting increased leadership participation that is representative of the diverse South Windsor population by January 2025†
 - Number of funded interns engaged annually in town management/government



Objective B: Support Economic Prosperity and Affordability

Action Plan:

- Create more affordable housing refer to town operations
 - Measure:
 - Develop an affordable housing plan by December 2024†
- Enhance transit opportunities existing group to engage town operations, CT Transit and State DOT
 - Evaluate opportunities for development of increased local transit service
 - Explore available grant funding for enhancement of local transit services
 - > Work with town, CT Transit and DOT to submit a plan for increased local transit services
 - Measure:
 - Develop an enhanced local transit plan by December 2024
 - Report percent increase in public transit opportunities by July 2025†
- Streamline the government process to create a better environment for business development and support. Maintain competitive economic development tools to attract and keep desirable businesses and industries
 - > Annual growth in the number of registered businesses †
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to encourage local businesses to hire residents
 - Measure:
 - Engage Chamber of Commerce in two strategic planning efforts by December 2023
 - Report the number and percent of local businesses hiring residents measured by survey to local businesses January 2024†
- Create a "Volunteer Bank" to provide repair etc. services for residents in need
 - Determine eligibility criteria to receive services
 - Use local volunteers' expertise/job skills to provide volunteer services
 - Create a process to vet volunteers re: skills and safety issues
 - > Solicit donations from local businesses and
 - Promote those businesses for their donations
 - Measure:
 - Create "volunteer bank" by June 2024
 - Report the number and types of residents using volunteer service bank commencing December 2024†
 - Report the number and type of residents providing volunteer services commencing December 2024+
 - > Report the number of businesses engaged in volunteer efforts by June 2025†

†Continuous Improvement Measure



Ensure that the education system is funded enough to maintain quality and excellence

Action Plan:

- Work closely with the School Board to determine needs and create an action plan to address these needs in the 5-year strategic plan implementation period
 - Measure:
 - > Maintain and enhance school system rankings in relation to neighboring school systems
 - > Percent of identified needs addressed



Priority 1: Quality of Life of Residents

Objective	Action	Measure		Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
	Expand participation in Parks & Rec activities	Increase total participation by 20%Increase number of programs by 20%					
la. Provide recreational options	Develop a plan for Parks & Rec permanent home	 Committee formed by November 2023 Committee report to council by July 2024 					
that support active lifestyles for all residents	Pursue alternative funding sources for large scale projects	Projects CompletedAdd two-to-three large scale projects					
	Increase resident engagement in open spaces in neighborhoods	 Three pocket parks built in 5 years Three miles of trails planned or built within five years 					
1b. Provide access to safe modes of transportation that	Add a minimum of 1 mile of sidewalks per year through general funds	 General fund investment to build new sidewalks At least one mile of sidewalks added per year 					
meet the needs of residents and workers.	Ensure that the feasibility of bike paths/roadways is included in any major road construction	 # miles of bike paths built each year† # feasibility studies conducted each year† 					
Ic. Identify gathering places for all residents	Identify areas for community gathering	Plan to Town Council by July 2024					
ld. Create more Age- in-Place Strategies	Create incentives to keep people in home	# Benefiting from age-in-place strategies†# single housing unit owners 65 or older†					

[†]Continuous Improvement Measure



Priority 2: Growth Management

Objective	Action	Measure	ΥΊ	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
	Allocate funds for space acquisition/development rights	Acres of preserved land Acres of development rights purchased					
2a. Preserve and protect strategic/targeted tracts of land	Assist owners of undeveloped open space	 Dollars spent on land preservation/development rights Amount of increase in the number of eligible landowners participating in the PA490 program 					
	Proactively identify and prioritize open spaces	Open space properties acquiredAcres of open space acquired					
	Negotiate for purchase of rights of first refusal	Properties with first refusal rights securedAcres with first refusal rights secured					
	Conduct market analysis for mix of development	Completion of market analysis by September 2024					
	Pursue Private/public partnerships to reduce impact of development on Town funds	• 1-2 partnerships on major projects in 5 years					
2b. Support sustainable growth that balances residents' desires	Incentivize reuse of vacant spaces/dis-incentivize development	# vacant buildings re-purposed†# new infill projects planned or implemented†					
with community needs	Pursue grants for environmental studies and remediation of brownfields sites	 2-3 grants to remediate brownfields sites EV stations installed on town properties 					
	Coordinate review of projects across Town and State agencies	% major development projects subjected to multi-agency review boards annually					
2c. Explore Shared Services with other communities	Explore through the Town Manager sharing services with neighboring towns	# shared services agreements					



Priority 3: Inclusivity

Objective	Action	Measure	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
	Staff diversity training	Number of trainings delivered to staff					
3a. Increased	Volunteer organization training	 Number of trainings delivered to volunteer groups Number of participants engaged in mentoring/coaching 					
leadership opportunities focusing on mentoring young leaders	Connect students to town leaders	 Number of connections between students/aspiring leaders and town/business leaders created Number of leader participants in leadership effort Number of Interns engaged in Town management 					
	Increase participation of diverse students in local volunteer groups	# & % town and volunteer groups reporting increased leadership participation that is representative by January 2025†					
	Create more affordable housing	Develop an affordable housing plan by Dec 2024					
	Enhance transit opportunities	 Develop an enhanced local transit plan by December 2024 % increase in public transit opportunities by July 2025† 					
3b. Economic	Encourage local businesses to hire residents	 Engage Chamber of Commerce in two strategic planning efforts by December 2023 Report the number and percent of local businesses hiring residents measured by survey to local businesses January 2024† 					
Prosperity and Affordability	Encourage volunteer engagement	 Create "volunteer bank" by June 2024 Report the number and types of residents using volunteer service bank commencing December 2024† Report the number and type of residents providing volunteer services commencing December 2024† Report the number of businesses engaged in volunteer efforts by June 2025† 					
	Streamline government process to create a better environment for business development and support	Annual growth in the number of registered businesses in South Windsor					



Priority 4: Education

Objective	Action	Measure	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
4a. Ensure that the School System is funded enough to maintain quality and excellence	Ask school board to create a plan to address needs in the next 5 years	 Maintain and enhance school system rankings in relation to neighboring school systems Percent of identified needs addressed 					



Priority 1: Quality of Life of Residents

Objective	Action	Reporting Responsibility
	Expand participation in Parks & Recactivities	
la. Provide recreational	Develop a plan for Parks & Rec permanent home	
options that support active lifestyles for all residents	Pursue alternative funding sources for large scale projects	Parks and Recreation Director
	Increase resident engagement in open spaces in neighborhoods	
1b. Provide access to safe	Add a minimum of 1 mile of sidewalks per year through general funds	
modes of transportation that meet the needs of residents and workers.	Ensure that the feasibility of bike paths/roadways is included in any major road construction	Public Works Director & Planning and Zoning Director
1c. Identify gathering places for all residents	Identify an area for community gathering	Planning and Zoning Director
1d. Create more Age-in- Place Strategies	Create incentives to keep people in home	Department of Human Services



Priority 2: Growth Management

Objective	Action	Reporting Responsibility
	Allocate funds for space acquisition/development rights	
2a. Preserve and protect strategic/targeted tracts	Assist owners of undeveloped open space	Planning and Zoning Director
of land	Proactively identify and prioritize open spaces	Director
	Negotiate for purchase of rights of first refusal	
	Conduct market analysis for mix of development	
	Pursue Private/public partnerships to reduce impact of development on Town funds	
2b. Support sustainable growth that balances residents' desires with	Incentivize reuse of vacant spaces/dis-incentivize development	Planning and Zoning Department
community needs	Pursue grants for environmental studies and remediation of brownfields sites	
	Coordinate review of projects across Town and State agencies	
2c. Explore Shared Services with other communities	Explore through the Town Manager sharing services with neighboring towns	Town Manager



Priority 3: Inclusivity

Objective	Action	Reporting Responsibility
-	Staff diversity training	
	Volunteer organization training	
3a. Leadership that represents the Town's diversity	Connect students to town leaders	Town Manager
	Increase participation of diverse students in local volunteer groups	
	Create more affordable housing	
71. 5	Enhance transit opportunities	
3b. Economic Prosperity and Affordability	Encourage local businesses to hire residents	Town Manager
	Encourage volunteer engagement	



Priority 4: Education

Objective	Action	Reporting Responsibility
4a. Ensure that the School System is funded enough to maintain quality and excellence	Ask school board to create a plan to address needs in the next 5 years	Mayor & School Board



Table 1. 2021 Demographic Snapshot: town of South Windsor

	Connecticut	South Windsor
Total Population	3,605,944	26,918
Total Households	1,370,746	9,783
Home Ownership Rate	66%	84%
Housing Cost Burden Rate	36%	27%
Adults with less than a High School Diploma	9%	3%
Median Household Income	\$78,444	\$107,374
Poverty Rate	10%	4%
Life Expectancy (Years)	80.3	81.2

Table 2. 2021 Population by Race and Age

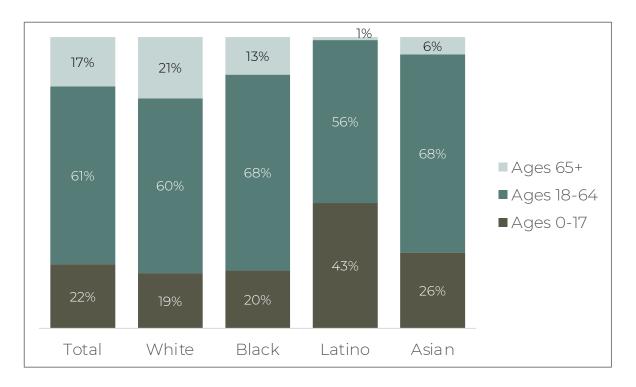


Table 3. Race and Ethnic Composition of Population 2010 to 2020

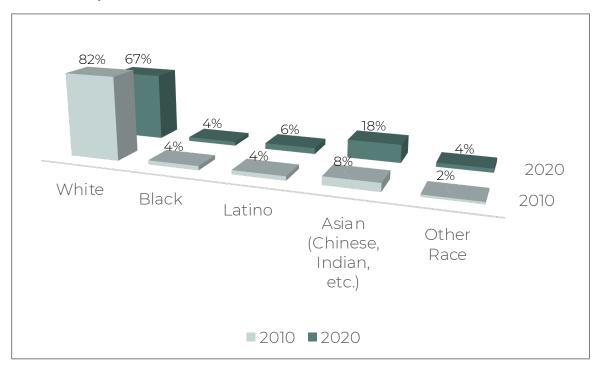


Table 4. Participation in Different Industry Sectors In Connecticut and South Windsor

	Conne	ecticut	South V	Vindsor
SECTOR	Total Jobs	Avg. Annual Pay	Total Jobs	Avg. Annual pay
All Sectors	1,670, 354	\$69,806	14,212	\$55,944
Manufacturing	161,893	\$85,031	2,911	\$67,586
Retail Trade	175,532	\$35,833	1,497	\$34,132
Wholesale Trade	59,702	\$97,720	1,234	\$80,759
Health Care and Social Assistance	271,014	\$54,858	1,059	\$41,051
Transportation and Warehousing	51,451	\$48,803	1,032	\$41,504