

# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW



**City of New Haven**  
John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor

## Community Overview

### REGIONAL SETTING

The City of New Haven is located in south central Connecticut at the confluence of Quinnipiac and Mill Rivers. The city is bounded to the south by Long Island Sound; to the west by the City of West Haven and the Town of Orange; to the north by the Towns of Woodbridge, Hamden and North Haven; and to the east by the Town of East Haven. The West River forms much of the southwest border with West Haven.

New Haven, due to its unique geographic location, is a transportation center. The north / south rail line to Hartford and the east / west rail line between New York and Boston converge in New Haven. The interstate highway system follows the same pattern, with Interstate 91 (north / south inland to Hartford) and Interstate 95 (north / south shoreline) converging in New Haven.

New Haven is the seat of New Haven County, one of eight counties in the State of Connecticut. In addition, New Haven is the central city for the Greater New Haven Transit District, the New Haven Labor Market Area, the New Haven Workforce Investment Area, the New Haven Tourism District and the South Central Regional Council of Governments.



Figure 3.1: Location Map

### HISTORICAL SETTING

The City of New Haven has a long and rich history, both as a colonial capital and as an economic and social center of Connecticut. In 1638, the first European settlers, consisting of approximately 500 English Puritans, settled at the present-day New Haven Harbor. Led by the Reverend John Davenport and by merchant Theopolis Eaton, the new settlers purchased land from the *Quinnipiack*, a small tribe of Algonquians located over 300 square miles in south central Connecticut. Appropriate to their location, the name *Quinnipiack* means long water land or long water country. Of the four distinct groups of *Quinnipiack*, the Momauguin and Montowese bands were located in and around present-day New Haven.

Surveyor John Brockett laid out the new settlement as a grid of nine squares. In accordance with English custom, the central square was held in common. To this day, the New Haven Green continues as a public open space, recognized both as a national historic landmark and as a model for quality urban planning.



**Figure 3.2: New Haven Green**

By 1640, a new government had been established and the Quinnipiac settlement was renamed Newhaven. The settlement grew slowly, often overshadowed by larger colonial settlements in Massachusetts and New York. In 1664, the New Haven Colony united with the Connecticut

## Community Overview

Colony. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, New Haven grew to be the village center of the region and became, with Hartford, a co-capital of the Colony. From 1703 to 1875, the General Assembly met alternately in Hartford and New Haven. It was also at this time that the Collegiate School of Old Saybrook relocated to New Haven and changed its name to Yale College.

By the time of the Revolutionary War, New Haven was a significant colonial city and, as such, played a major role in America's independence. General George Washington considered Connecticut to be the provision state, providing the revolutionary army with a broad array of wartime supplies. Fortunately for New Haveners, the invading British Army did not burn the city as it did Norwalk and Fairfield earlier in the war.

## PHYSICAL SETTING

The City of New Haven is located at 41° 18' north latitude and 72° 54' west longitude. The city consists of 18.9 square miles, representing approximately 2.2% of the area of New Haven County and .3% of the area of the State of Connecticut.

The land mass is bisected by New Haven Harbor, a long and protected harbor which is approximately four miles long. The width of the Harbor is 1.25 miles at a point between City Point and the East Shore. Water depth varies from very shallow tidal flats, generally along the west side, to the deepwater 35-foot Federal Navigation Channel, which runs north-south through the harbor. The Quinnipiac River, the West River and the Mill River all empty at New Haven Harbor.

### *Geology*

Of North America's major geologic divisions, New Haven is located in the outer section of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. The Atlantic Coastal Plain is a broad belt along the Eastern Seaboard of the United States and the Gulf of Mexico, extending from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Cape Cod. The region is characterized by its sedimentary rock formations, which gradually decline from sea level to the continental shelf.

In New Haven, these influences are evident in low, generally level plains found across the city. The elevation at Downtown is just 25 feet. The city falls mainly within the Penwood-Manchester-Deerfield soil group, which is

## Community Overview

known for its level to gentle slopes, well-drained and sandy soils, reddish brown subsoils and broad outwashes. There are three smaller areas, near the East Haven line, in Westville and East Rock, within the Cheshire-Holyoke soil group. In these areas, the slopes increase and the soil is more loamy. In the Quinnipiac Meadows, on the east side of the river, Westbrook mucky peat soils are found. These areas are examples of low salt soils that are affected by tidal conditions.

Significant elevations are found only in association with large traprock outcroppings and with elevated glacial outwashes. “Traprock”, a term for cooled volcanic lava and basalt, is a significant landscape feature in New Haven. Of note are (a) West Rock, which is located in the northwest corner of the city and rises 405 feet on its southerly elevation; (b) East Rock, which is located in the north central section of the city and in Hamden, rises to approximately 359 feet; and (c) Forbes Bluff, which is located in the East Shore neighborhood and rises approximately 70 feet.

### *Climate*

New Haven and Connecticut in general are well known for an agreeable climate, characterized by moderate but distinct seasons. The average mean temperature is approximately 52 degrees, with summer temperatures in the mid-70s (daily average) and winter temperatures in the mid-30’s. Extreme conditions raise summer temperatures to near 100 degrees and winter temperatures to below zero. On average, 5,400 heating degree days and 800 cooling degree days are realized in the city. Mean snowfall is approximately 25” / year, considerably lower than inland Connecticut locations. Mean precipitation is 44”, which is spread evenly over the course of a year.

As with the rest of the world, climate change is impacting Connecticut. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that average temperatures in the state have increased 2.4 degrees in the last thirty years, with another 2 – 8 degree increase over the next century. Among the direct impacts to New Haven are likely increases in precipitation and in sea levels, which now rise 8” per century and will likely rise to 22” in this century.

### DEMOGRAPHIC SETTING

Since its incorporation as a City in 1784 and throughout the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New Haven experienced a strong and steady growth similar to that in emerging American cities. With its fertile lands perfect for agricultural use, and its strategic location at the mouth of three rivers and the Long Island Sound, New Haven was positioned perfectly to become the regional commercial and residential center of Southern Connecticut. Beginning around 1850, New Haven's economic and employment opportunities expanded as the city's manufacturing industries began to flourish. During this era, the city became a national leader in carriage manufacturing and a home to large-scale producers of rubber goods, clocks, pianos, beer, guns and military equipment, and a wide range of other products.

Likewise, the city experienced its greatest growth in population between 1890 and 1920 as a result of the expansion of these industries and added government demand for equipment needed for the Spanish-American War and World War I. During this time, employment opportunities in transportation, electrical power generation, and government and service industries multiplied. Yale University and the businesses that served the education community continued to grow.



**Figure 3.3: Immigration in New Haven**

New economic activity led to dramatic population increases. From 1880 to 1920, New Haven's population jumped from 62,882 to 162,655. Most of this population growth was comprised of immigrants from Ireland, Southern Italy and Eastern Europe, as well as African-Americans migrating from the South.

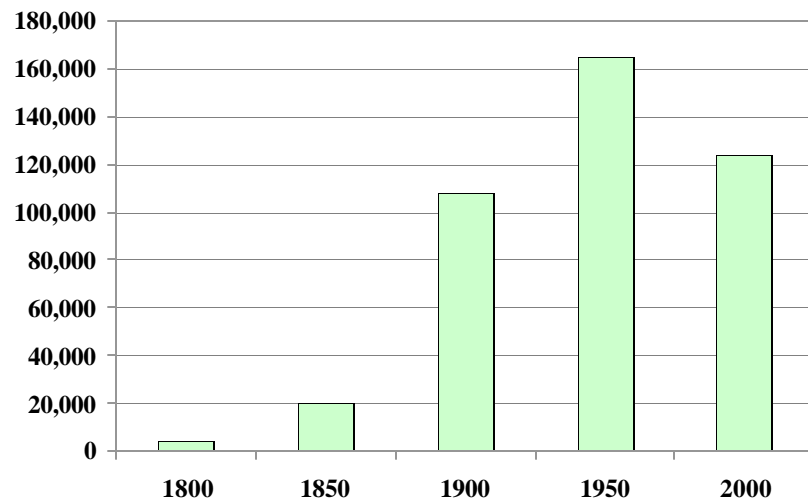
After World War I, new, more restrictive federal immigration policies drastically reduced the flow of European immigrants into New Haven. Instead, immigration came from the south, as African-Americans from

## Community Overview

southern states and Hispanics from Puerto Rico became the largest sources of post-war immigration into New Haven. Still, New Haven's population remained relatively stable through the Great Depression to the end of World War II.

Following the end of World War II, with the construction of new roads and highways, the enhanced availability of the automobile and federally funded housing programs, thousands of the city's middle class citizens migrated to the surrounding suburbs. Similar to most major cities in the Northeast and Midwest, this out-migration occurred from the late 1940's through the 1970's and into the 1980's. According to the 2000 US Census, there are now 123,626 residents in New Haven, making it the third largest city in Connecticut.

**Figure 3.4: Population of New Haven, 1800 - 2000**



### *Population in the South Central Region of Connecticut, 1960-2000*

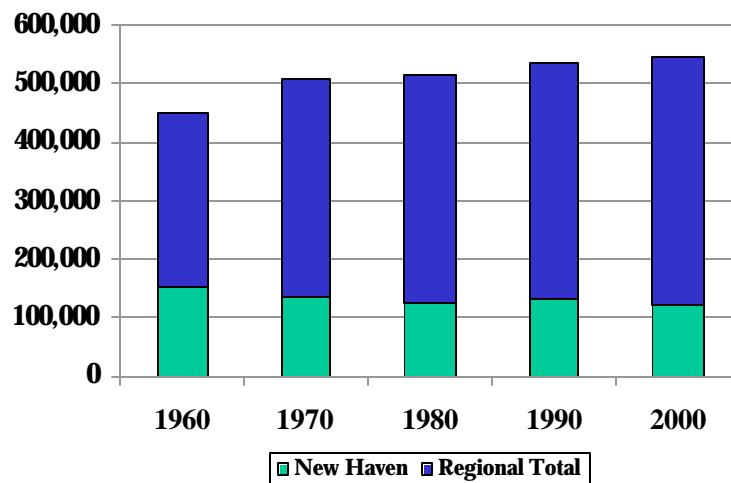
Over the past forty years, while New Haven's population has seen a steady decline, every other town in the region has experienced dramatic growth. Towns such as Madison, Guilford, Bethany and North Branford have seen triple digit population growth over this time. Madison alone grew nearly 300%, from 4,567 people in 1960 to 17,858 people in 2000. Taken as a whole, the region has grown from 448,835 people in 1960 to 546,796

## Community Overview

people in 2000. This represents a 22% growth. These changing dynamics are similar to what has happened across the state, with central cities losing their population base to the surrounding towns. As the region grows, New Haven's overall share of the regional population has declined, from 24.5% in 1980 to 22.6% today.

With population growth comes a correlating change in population density. In New Haven, population density has seen a 19% decrease since 1960. In 1960, there were over 8,000 people per square mile living in New Haven; by 2000, that number has been reduced to around 6,500. However, at 6,500 and 4,830 respectively, New Haven and West Haven remain well ahead of the regional and town averages in South Central Connecticut.

**Figure 3.5: Population of New Haven relative to South Central Connecticut, 1960 - 2000**



### *Population and Density by Neighborhood*

New Haven is home to a variety of historic and diverse neighborhoods that provide a multitude of living environments for residents. The housing options of each area contribute to the size and density of the neighborhoods, and a look at the population breakdown within each neighborhood properly reflects those characteristics.



## Community Overview

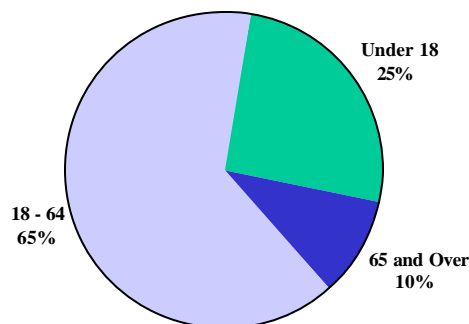
The Hill and Fair Haven neighborhoods are home to more residents than any other areas in the city. With 15,682 residents in the Hill and 13,683 residents in Fair Haven, these two neighborhoods alone account for almost 25% of the city's total population. The next most populous neighborhoods, East Rock, Westville and Downtown, account for slightly less than 20% of the city's population. Among the neighborhoods with a residential population base, Wooster Square is the smallest (2,008). The next least populous neighborhoods are the West Rock, West River and Prospect Hill neighborhoods.

In terms of residential density, Dwight is the most densely populated neighborhood in the city, followed by Downtown. The least densely populated neighborhoods are Westville and the East Shore.

### *Population by Age and Gender*

Although the city's population dropped by over 6% from 1990 – 2000, the number of children under the age of 18 actually grew, both in percentage of the total population, and in total number. Another notable difference between 1990 and 2000 is in the number of elderly who reside in the city. In 1990, over 16,000 people 65 and over lived in New Haven. In 2000, only 12,671 people in that age group called New Haven home, nearly a 22% decline.

**Figure: 3.6: Population of New Haven by age, 2000**



## Community Overview

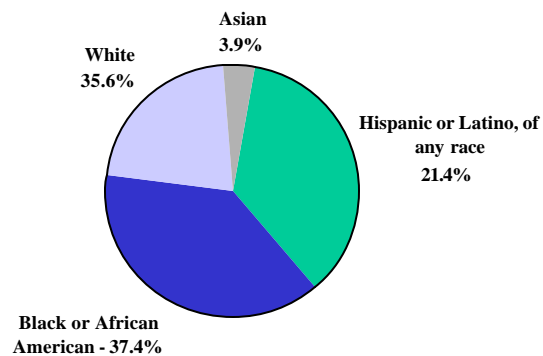
### *Population by Race and Ethnicity*

As New Haven's population increased in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (mainly through immigration), it became home to a large population of Irish descent. Italian and Eastern European Jewish populations arrived generally between 1890 and 1920. Subsequent immigration from the American South and from other parts of Europe characterized the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (1920 – 1980).

Over the last 30 years, the racial composition of New Haven has evolved into a truly diverse population. In 1970, minorities comprised approximately 30% of the population; by 2000, the city's minority population had increased to over 60%. Between 1970 and 2000, the city's African-American population increased by over 10,000 people, and the Asian population has grown to almost 5,000 people over the same time.

The growth in New Haven's minority population is best illustrated by the exceptional population increase in the Hispanic population. The Hispanic population in New Haven more than doubled between 1970 (4,916) and 1980 (10,042). Between 1980 and 1990, the city's Hispanic population continued to grow by an additional 72% to 17,243 persons, and between 1990 and 2000 grew another 52% to 26,443 persons.

**Figure 3.7: Population of New Haven by race and ethnicity, 2000**



Racial and ethnic diversity is seen across the city's neighborhoods with strong, historical concentrations in certain sections of New Haven. For example, there is large African-American community in Newhallville

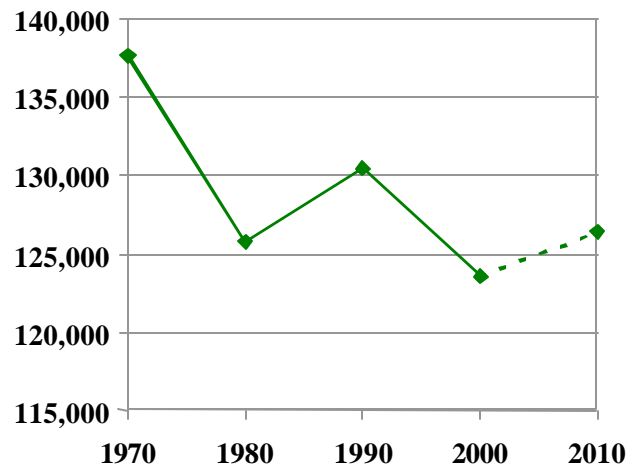
## Community Overview

(90.7% of the total neighborhood population) and a large and rising Hispanic population in Fair Haven (52.5% of the total neighborhood population). Among the most racially and ethnically balanced neighborhoods are Dwight and Quinnipiac Meadows. In both neighborhoods, no racial or ethnic group exceeds 39% of the total neighborhood population.

### *Population Projection for 2010*

The estimated municipal population in 2010 is 126,432, a 2.3% increase over the 2000 population and regaining approximately 70% of the municipal population lost during the 1990s. While the estimate is based on an average of various time-established formulas, projections for fully developed cities are complicated by a number of variables. The extent of basic economic development, neighborhood revitalization and regional “smart growth” housing strategies all will contribute to population change in the city and in the surrounding area.

**Figure 3.8: Projected Population of New Haven, 2010**



By neighborhood, population change is further defined by plan recommendations. These recommendations suggest that population growth will be disproportionately centered in Downtown and in the harbor area. These areas are the focus of larger scale housing initiatives. Similar increases are anticipated in West Rock and Dixwell, as Housing Authority of New Haven initiatives move toward completion.

### EXISTING LAND USE

The City of New Haven encompasses 18.9 square miles. Public and private property (less streets, roads and waterways) is approximately 15.5 square miles.

Over 70% of all public and private property is used for institutional and / or residential purposes. Of these uses, single-family homes – largely found in the city’s western neighborhoods and East Shore, total 1,764 acres (17.9% of the city as a whole). Parks and open spaces account for 1,520 acres, or 15.4% of the city.

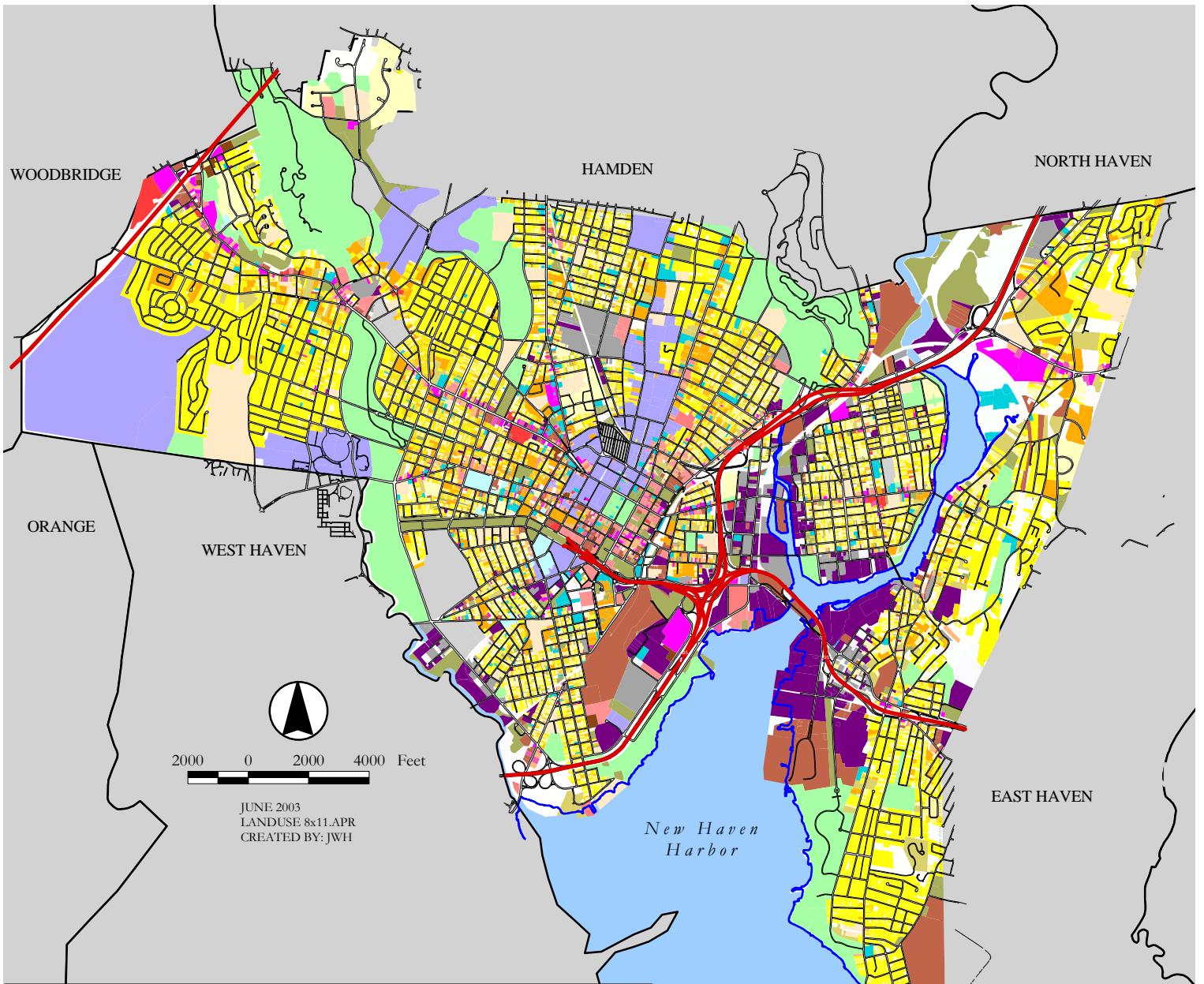
College and university properties, which include the large holdings of Yale University and Southern Connecticut State University, account for 965 acres, or 9.8% of the city. The large amount of college and university property, as well as the presence of major regional facilities (hospitals, government offices, etc.) contributes the extremely high amount of tax exempt property in New Haven. Approximately 3,609 acres of land in New Haven is exempt from municipal taxation.

Commercial and industrial uses occupy a small percentage of all land in the city, but are concentrated in certain neighborhoods. Industrial uses are largely located along Long Wharf, the east shore neighborhoods and Mill River. This category generally includes the port district along Waterfront Street and north of Forbes Avenue. The new Port Authority includes 360 acres in this area.

The dearth of vacant land in New Haven is well-documented. There are only 633 acres of vacant land, 182 of which are considered undevelopable. Many of the remaining vacant parcels are on small, scattered lots while others are best suited for conservation.






























Vacant industrial land includes a number of side lots, parking areas and environmentally-sensitive locations. Brownfields, a term to describe vacant, potentially-contaminated industrial space, is generally not considered vacant but is often underused. A list of significant vacant and/or underused industrial sites can be found in Figure 5.7.

The existing land use map is shown in Figure 3.9 and a table of existing land use is shown in Figure 3.10.



JUNE 2003  
 LANDUSE 8x11.APR  
 CREATED BY: JWH

**EXISTING LAND USE**

- |  |   |   |                              |
|--|---|---|------------------------------|
|  | Automotive Sales and Service                |  | Restaurants/Clubs/Taverns    |
|  | Bank/Professional/Business Office           |  | Schools                      |
|  | Cemetery                                    |  | Single Family                |
|  | College/University                          |  | Small Apartment Building     |
|  | Commercial Recreation                       |  | Special Needs Housing        |
|  | Condos                                      |  | Specialty Commercial         |
|  | Cultural/Religious/Charitable/Non-Profit    |  | Storage and Warehousing      |
|  | General Retail                              |  | Three Family                 |
|  | Government Offices, Facilities, Real Estate |  | Transportation and Utilities |
|  | Hospitals/Health Care Facility              |  | Two Family                   |
|  | Hotels/Motels/Inns                          |  | Vacant Commercial            |
|  | Large Apartment Building                    |  | Vacant Industrial            |
|  | Manufacturing and Production                |  | Vacant Residential           |
|  | Mixed Use                                   |  | Vacant Undevelopable         |
|  | Parks and Open Space                        |   |                              |

*Existing Land Use*



## Community Overview

**Figure 3.10: Table of Existing Land Use in New Haven (less streets and waterways)**

<b>Residential</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Sq. Miles</b>	<b>%</b>
Single Family	1764	2.75	17.9%
Two Family	670	1.05	6.8%
Three Family	396	0.62	4.0%
Small Apartment Building	179	0.28	1.8%
Large Apartment Building	260	0.41	2.6%
Special Needs Housing	234	0.36	2.4%
Condos	192	0.30	1.9%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>3694</b>	<b>5.77</b>	<b>37.4%</b>

<b>Commercial and Mixed Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Sq. Miles</b>	<b>%</b>
Specialty Commercial	142	0.22	1.4%
Restaurants/Clubs/Taverns	26	0.04	0.3%
Hotels/Motels/Inns	17	0.03	0.2%
General Retail	46	0.07	0.5%
Automotive Sales and Service	59	0.09	0.6%
Bank/Professional/Business Office	135	0.21	1.4%
Mixed Use	119	0.19	1.2%
Commercial Recreation	26	0.04	0.3%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

<b>Institutional</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Sq. Miles</b>	<b>%</b>
Cemetery	210	0.33	2.1%
Cultural/Religious/Charitable/Non-Profit	178	0.28	1.8%
Government Offices and Facilities	491	0.77	5.0%
Parks and Open Space	1520	2.37	15.4%
College/University	965	1.51	9.8%
Hospitals/Health Care Facility	34	0.05	0.3%
Schools	330	0.52	3.3%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>3730</b>	<b>5.83</b>	<b>37.8%</b>

<b>Industrial and Transportation</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Sq. Miles</b>	<b>%</b>
Manufacturing and Production	244	0.38	2.5%
Storage and Warehousing	516	0.81	5.2%
Transportation and Utilities	493	0.77	5.0%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1253</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>12.7%</b>

<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Sq. Miles</b>	<b>%</b>
Vacant Commercial	98	0.15	1.0%
Vacant Industrial	61	0.10	0.6%
Vacant Residential	292	0.46	3.0%
Vacant Undevelopable	182	0.28	1.8%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

<b>Total</b>	<b>9879</b>	<b>15.43</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
--------------	-------------	--------------	---------------