

### Introduction (Final: 8/29/13)

The Community Profile section of the Plan of Conservation and Development is intended to provide a description of the Town and its past growth, and then utilize this information to project future trends. As the character of this Town is different from all other towns, so too is its history and growth patterns unique. It is an important function of the Plan of Conservation and Development to see how the Town has developed; why it has developed the way it did and understand the rate and type of past growth. Only with this understanding can we properly plan for and guide future growth. This 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development will also document the changes that have occurred in the Community since the adoption of the 2004 Plan and will identify the accomplishments that were made by the Town in achieving numerous Goals and Objective identified in that last Plan.



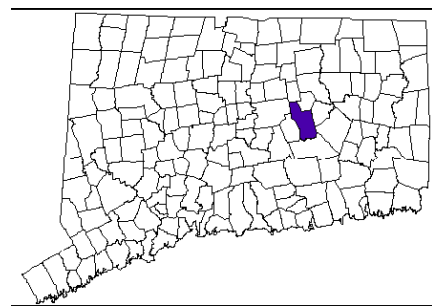
The experience of past growth and development in the community raises unique issues, which should be addressed in future planning. This understanding of the past and a look to the future is the purpose of the Community Profile section of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Community Profile section of the Plan is divided into four parts. **Subsection A** provides a brief introduction and summary of the Town of Hebron's geography, size and character. **Subsection B** documents and describes the existing land use make-up of the community. **Subsections C and D** contain a current description of the Town's housing stock and population. These two sections will also include analysis of recent growth during the last planning period and include a comparison to surrounding towns and the region.

This analysis of land use, population growth and housing growth will serve as a foundation for all subsequent sections of the Plan.

## A. Community Description

The Town of Hebron, incorporated in 1708, is located in central Connecticut, approximately 20 miles southeast of Hartford. The Town is bisected by Route 66, which runs east-west through the Town, and by Route 85, which runs north-south.

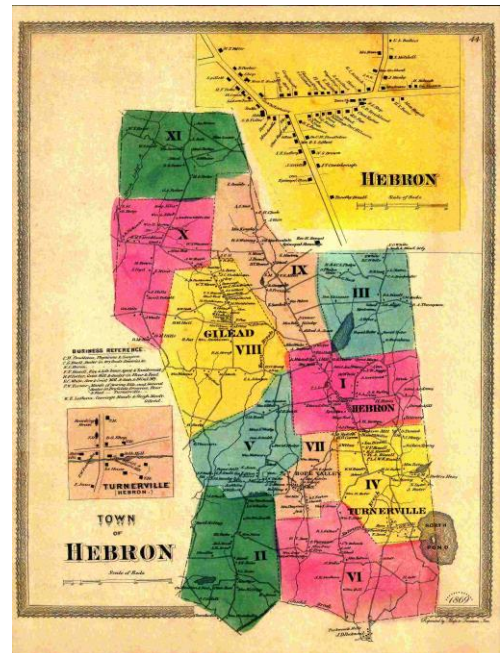


the Town of Hebron.

The Town contains 37.5 square miles (24,000 acres of land). It has a population density of approximately 258 persons per square mile. The topography within Town is primarily rolling hills, typical of the eastern uplands of Connecticut. The Town's landscape remains traversed with numerous stone walls as a tribute to its proud agricultural heritage, with several farms still in operation, and over 900 acres of land permanently preserved as agricultural land by farmland preservation programs. Many historically significant homes and buildings line the roads throughout

The landscape of the Hebron is diverse, ranging from woodlands to open fields and marshlands, with many areas preserved in their natural state. Many indigenous species of vegetation and wildlife can be found throughout the Town. The terrain in Hebron ranges in elevation from 204 feet above sea level in the southwest corner of Town to 772 feet above sea level in the northeast corner. The landscape of the Town contains numerous streams within the Salmon River basin, all having high water quality.

As of the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town had a population of 9,686 people. Although still a largely rural town, Hebron has experienced significant residential growth in the past five decades once it was discovered as a highly desirable and convenient housing location. Due to these factors it is expected that Hebron's residential growth will continue to outpace general population growth of the region and the State.



---

## B. Land Use

The land use of the community is the focus of a significant amount of local planning efforts and subsequent public policy discussions and zoning and subdivision regulations. The perceived character of a town, its quality of life, as well as its economic health is, in large part, a reflection of its land use make-up. It is therefore important to know and understand the Town's land use fabric as background for establishing policies intended to regulate future land use changes.

### Methodology

Prior to the 2004 Plan, there were few comprehensive land use calculations and analysis from earlier plans of development. For the 2004 Plan, prior to the Town having a Geographic Information System (GIS), the land use calculations were derived manually from Planning and Zoning Commission files (including approved subdivision plans and site plans), the Town Assessor's records, building department records and field visits. These were all used to determine the correct land use. For the 2014 Plan update, the Town's GIS system is the primary source for land use calculations. This should provide an accurate record of existing land use tabulations and changes over time.

The following assumptions were made in determining Land use area calculations:

- If a parcel of land is occupied by some land use, but the majority of land is vacant, only the used portion of land is calculated as developed, and the remainder of the parcel is shown to be vacant.
- Privately owned open space, as shown in the Open Space Plan, is calculated as vacant land, as that land is not permanently committed to open space.
- Farmland not permanently protected under a farmland preservation program is calculated as vacant, because it still can be developed.
- Permanently protected farmland, where development rights were purchased by the State of CT, is considered as permanent open space.

### Residential Land Use

Residential land use is the largest single land use category in Hebron. About thirty-one percent (31%) of the overall land in Town is used for residential purposes. Single family development accounts for 30% of the Town's land whereas multi-family land use accounts for about 0.8% of Hebron's land area. Of all the developed land in Town, or land that is committed to some type of land use, approximately 56% of it is used for residential purposes.

## Land Uses in Hebron

**May 30, 2013**

<b>Developed / Committed Land</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Town</b>
Single Family	7,201	30.0 %
Multi-Family	185	0.8%
Institutional	212	0.9%
Commercial	94	0.4%
Industrial	23	0.1%
Roads	714	3.0%
<b>Sub-total: Developed Land</b>	<b>8,429</b>	<b>35.1%</b>
Town Open Space	1,559	6.5%
State Open Space	2,991	12.5%
<b>Sub-total: Public Open Space</b>	<b>4,550</b>	<b>19.0%</b>
Preserved Agriculture	918	3.8%
<b>Sub-Total: Open Space / Preserved Agricultural Land</b>	<b>5,468</b>	<b>22.8%</b>
<b>Total Developed / Committed Land Use</b>	<b>13,897</b>	<b>57.9%</b>
<b>Vacant Land</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Town</b>
Private Open Space	1,117	4.7%
Agricultural Use	1,410	5.9%
Vacant	7,576	31.6%
<b>Total Vacant Land</b>	<b>10,103</b>	<b>42.1%</b>
<b>Total</b>		
<b>Total Hebron Land Area</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Business & Industrial Land Use**

As primarily a rural town, Hebron's business and industrial sectors are still emerging and this land use category is likely to remain a relatively small segment of the overall Town.

Business use occupies 94 acres in Hebron and is primarily located in the General Business District along Route 66, although there are other commercial areas along Church Street (RT 85). While there are other smaller business districts, the Route 66 corridor is seen as the most likely location for future growth. This is particularly true due to the existing concentration of businesses in this area, the existence of the new Village Green District for future expansion of the business district on the south side of Rt. 66, and with the availability of public sewers and public water in this area.

Land devoted to industrial uses is limited to approximately 23 acres. These sites are generally located in the older industrial areas, particularly in the Amston Village District located on Church Street. The total amount of land in Hebron developed to date with business and industry amounts to one-half of a percent of the Town's land area.

## **Agriculture Land Use**

Approximately 2,328 acres within the Town is presently being farmed, accounting for about 10% of the total land area of the community. This tremendously affects the positive impression many people have of the Town, retains a land use that is an important historic aspect of the community that dates back to its origins, and maintains a vibrant economic activity in the Community.

Of the total land area devoted to agriculture, 918 acres (3.8% of the Town) is permanently preserved agricultural land through the State's Farmland Preservation program. These areas are shown on the Open Space Map in this Plan. Approximately 400 acres of land was added to this land use category through this highly successful State farmland preservation program since the last Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted in 2004. As permanently preserved open land, these 918 acres are shown under the permanent "open space" land use category in various sections of the plan. The remaining 1,410 acres of agricultural land is not permanently preserved. These areas are shown within the vacant land category as they are subject to future development.

## **Institutional Land Use**

Land devoted to institutional uses (churches, cemeteries, schools, firehouses, etc.) accounts for about 212 acres of land in Town or 0.9% of the Town's land area. These uses are routinely found throughout residential neighborhoods of the Town as they generally serve residential land uses.

## **Developed and Committed Land**

A total of 13,183 acres of land are now considered to be either developed or committed to permanent open space. This land area represents approximately 54.9% of the total land area in Hebron. This area is comprised of 4,550 acres of permanent open space, 918 acres of preserved agricultural lands, and 7,715 acres developed as houses, stores, offices, etc. There is another 714 acres devoted to roadway rights-of-ways including State, Town and private roads as well as unused rights-of-ways.

## **Vacant Land**

This leaves 10,103 acres of land in Hebron, which are considered vacant, representing approximately 42.1% of the Town's land area. This acreage is comprised of non-protected farmland, privately owned open space, and other vacant properties. Private open space is included in this category as those properties are generally larger parcels of land, presently being used for very low intensity uses, and potentially could be developed in the future for higher density uses.

A 1987 land use analysis of the Town, conducted by RPPW, Inc., a planning consulting firm, determined that as of 1987 approximately 17,430 acres were vacant. This represented 73% of the Town's land area.

In the intervening 26 years (1987 - 2013) over 7,327 acres were converted from the vacant land use category to a developed / committed land use category. This acreage represents 30.5% of the entire Town. The majority of this acreage was converted to single-family development. Other lands were developed with business uses, became open space through either the subdivision process or through outright purchases, or became protected farmland via the purchase of development rights. The remaining acreage was developed for institutional uses or other types of land use changes.

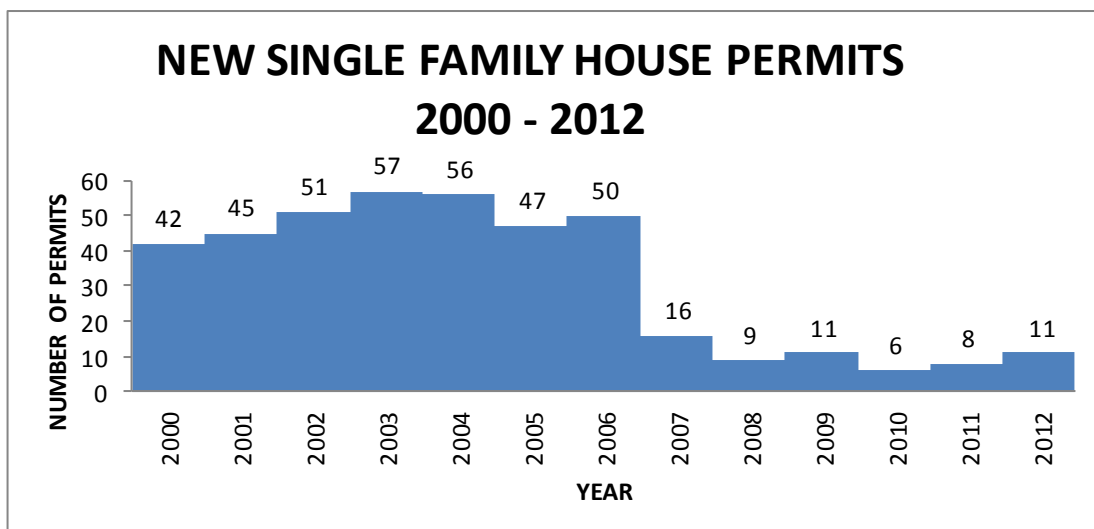
Of the 10,103 acres of land now vacant, approximately 245 acres are located within the Town's business districts, and approximately 9,858 acres are residentially zoned. An analysis of this vacant residentially zoned land, and the potential that this land holds for future population growth, is contained later in this Plan.

## C. Housing

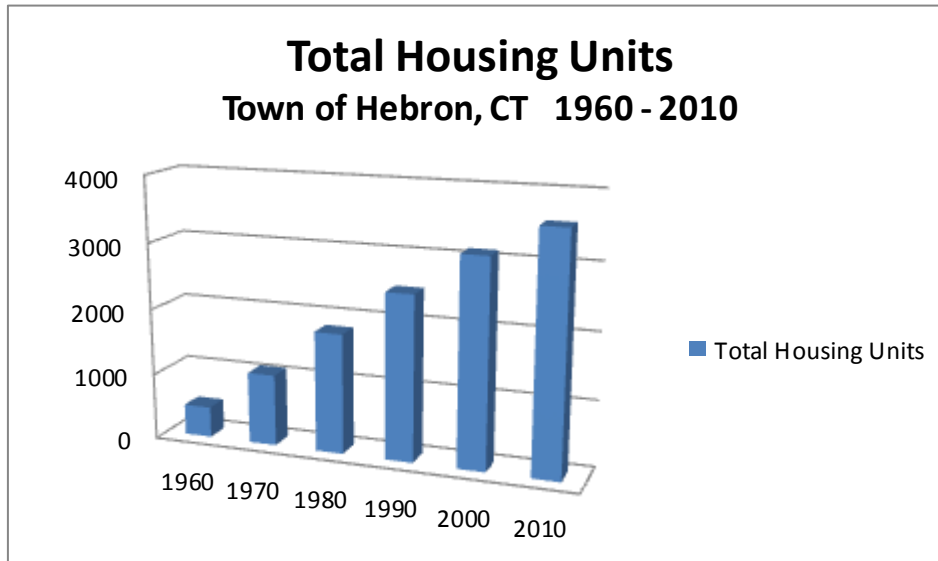
### Number of Housing Units

Hebron's housing stock is primarily single-family housing, although, there exists some small older apartment buildings and duplex units constructed around Hebron Center in the 1970s and 1980s. With the introduction of sewers around 1990, some additional diversity in the housing stock began to appear. A private housing development for the Town senior population was constructed within the sewer service district in the 1990's. At the same time a Town senior housing development was constructed along with a senior center next to the Town center. In the past decade, another 55-and-old community was constructed in the Town center on Loveland Road; and, a cluster single-family non-age restricted development began construction in the same area.

**Single – Family Housing:** Hebron has experienced a significant growth in the number of new single family housing units each decade since 1960 through the mid-2000's. From 1960 through 2000, the Town averaged over 650 permits for new single family dwellings each ten years. The last 10 years began with a similar strong construction market with the years 2000 through 2006 experiencing an average of 50 new single family housing units per year. However, the dramatic national economic downturn beginning in 2007, that is still persistent, had a dramatic effect nationwide on the construction industry in general and the single family housing market in particular. In Hebron the number of new single family home permits averaged only 10 per year from 2007 through 2012.



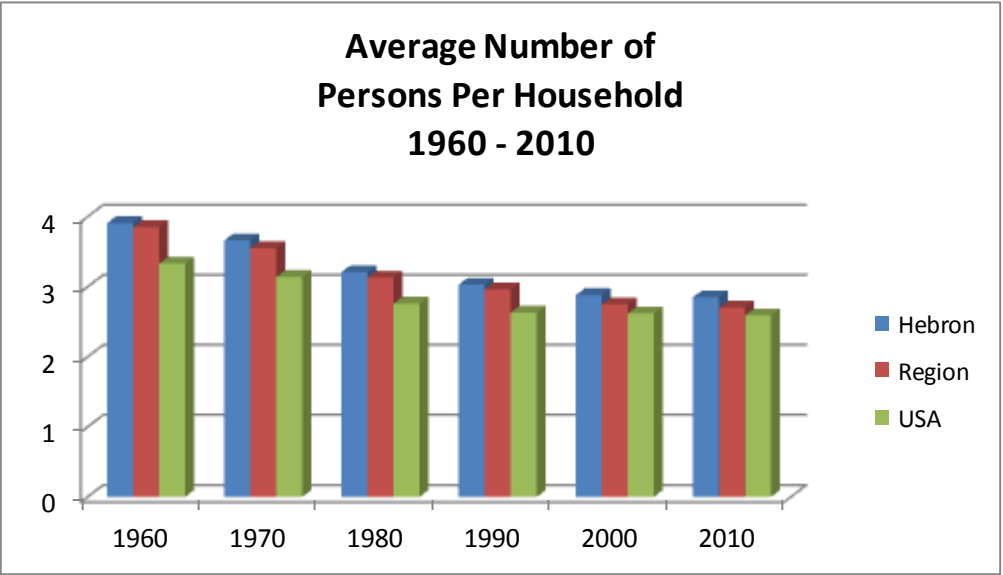
**Overall Residential Growth:** In reviewing all housing unit growth, during the 1960 - 2000 period, the rate of growth in the number of housing units in Hebron has been near the highest rate of growth in any single town in the region. The overall number of housing units in Hebron at the time of the 1980 census was 1,811. This grew to 2,489 units in 1990, a 37.4% increase. In 2000, the US Census reported 3,110 housing units. In both the 1980's and 1990's, Hebron had the highest or second highest percentage increase in housing units for any town in the Hartford Capitol Region.



Since 2000 to the 2010 US Census, the Town has added another 457 housing units, a 14.69% increase over the past ten years. The total number of housing units according to the 2010 census was 3,567. Although the rate of increase was less than the rate experienced during past decades, this still represented the 7<sup>th</sup> highest rate of growth among the 30 towns in the Hartford Capitol Region since 2000.

### Household Size

The continuing decrease in the average household size has been a significant national trend since the post-World War II period. Hebron's average number of persons per household has dropped from 3.91 in 1960, to 3.66 in 1970, to 3.21 in 1980, 3.03 in 1990, and 2.88 in 2000. The 2010 census reported the current persons per household size to be 2.85. This represents a 27% decrease over this 50-year period.



This drop in the average size of households is a national and state demographic trend and is attributed to a number of factors including lower birth rates, high divorce rates, later marriages, increased longevity and a generally higher number of single person households. This is a significant factor for forecasting future populations based upon growth in the Town's housing inventory. However, it is interesting to note that the decline in the persons per household rate is leveling off, and in fact has started to rise in some States during this past decade. The economic slow-down during this decade has slowed new housing starts, has prompted some people to seek housing together, and has forced many college students and other young people to return to their parents' home due to a limited housing supply and depressed employment opportunities.

It is worth noting a comparison of Hebron's average persons per household with those of other area towns. Although the average is significantly declining, Hebron's average persons per household have been consistently higher than those of surrounding towns.

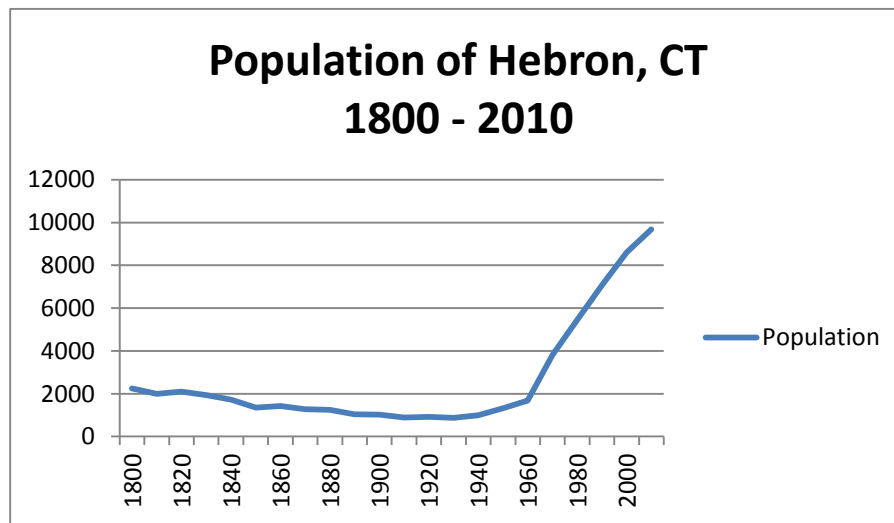
From 1990 through 2010, Hebron had the highest average number of persons per household in the Capitol Region. Also, of those households in Hebron with families, the average size is 3.19 persons. This is the second highest average size for family households for any town in the region.

This can be seen simply as a reflection of a generally younger town, somewhat typical of eastern Connecticut towns, which have attracted younger families for a number of reasons including comparatively attractive real estate values, a higher level of municipal services, excellent educational opportunities and an attraction to the rural character of the community.

## D. Population

### Historic Growth

Hebron's population, like many rural, outlying Connecticut towns remained relatively stable until the post-World War II period. This is when the population experienced a modest upswing. However, it was not until the 1960's that Hebron was discovered as a convenient place to live and commute to work.

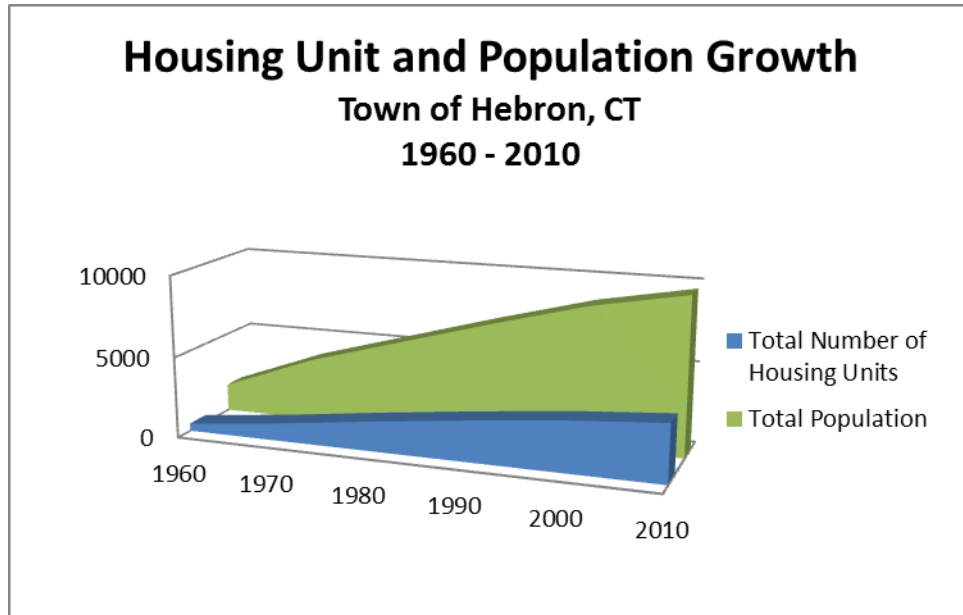


The decades of the 1960's through the 1990's saw significant growth in terms of new population, which outpaced many, and at times all, of its surrounding neighbors. This rate of growth is particularly significant when compared to the regional and State populations that have remained relatively stable during the past two decades.

Population growth during the most recent decades is particularly important to review because they are the most recent trends that would suggest what future growth is likely for the town.

Hebron's population in 1960 was 1,819. This grew by 109.7% to 3,815 by 1970. The 1970's saw Hebron's population grow to 5,453 by 1980, a 42.9% increase. This rate of growth was unabated during the 1980's which saw a 29.8% increase in population to 7,079 by the 1990 U.S. Census. The 2000 Census determined that the town population grew to 8,610, a 21.6% rate of growth. Finally the 2010 US Census population figure is reported at 9,686, a 12.5% increase during the last decade.

Although these statistics show a significant increase population growth during the past few decades, the rate of housing growth has consistently been at an even greater rate. As noted in the earlier Section, Housing growth over the last 10 years grew at a rate of 14.7% compared to the 12.5% population growth. In fact over the past 50 years the number of housing units in Town grew by 667% compared to the population increase of 475%. The following chart demonstrates growth in both of these categories over the past 50 years.



### Age Changes Within the Population

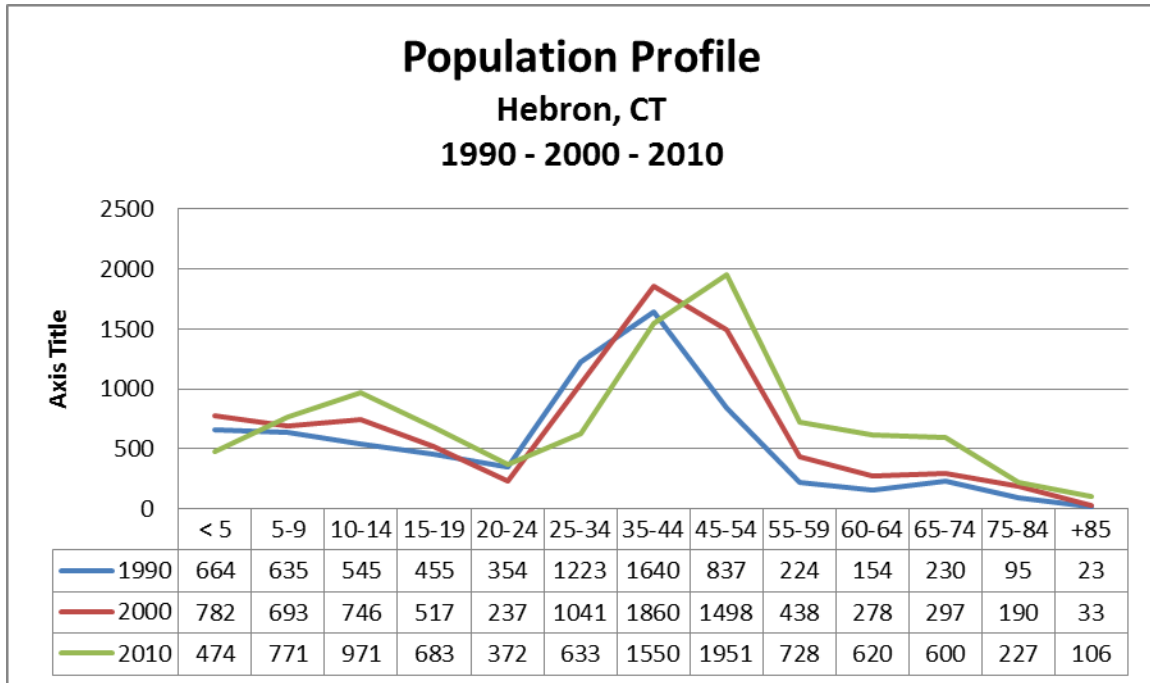
While overall growth changes to the Town's population are important to document, age changes within the Town's population are equally significant to understand. The 2010 Census data has shown significant developments within two specific age groups that have impacts on the character of the community as well as on public policy and community services.

Between 2000 and 2010, Hebron's school age population (between ages 5 and 19) grew by 24%. However, the under-5 population decreased by 39%. At the other end of the age spectrum, the Town's elderly population is another age group growing more rapidly than the population as a whole. The age group 65 years old and older increased by 79%; and the over 85 population increased by 221%. Increased demands for services for the elderly are likely and planning for housing for this segment of the population is also warranted.

Also of interest is the continuing decline of the 25 – 34 year old age group. This mobile young population, just beginning their careers, continue to decline not only in Hebron, 39% decline since 2000, but also Statewide. The cost and supply of attractive housing choices for this age group, career opportunities, and lifestyle choices are common reasons for this age group leaving the area. This loss of this key age group is a concern to the future

economic growth and vitality of the State and has started to receive attention by policy makers looking for ways to address this problem.

These changes to the population profile in Hebron over the past two decades can be best seen graphically in the following chart "Population Profile; Hebron, CT; 1990 – 2000 – 2010".



**Comparison with Neighboring Towns**

Of interest to Hebron is the comparison of its population growth with the growth experienced in neighboring towns and in the region. By doing this exercise it is possible to evaluate whether Hebron is experiencing a nominal or unusually high growth rate.

During the decade of the 1970's when Hebron's population grew by about 43%, the population of the Capitol Region as a whole declined by 0.2%. The following decade of the 1980's saw a still impressive growth of almost 30% in local population and a relatively strong regional growth of 6%. During the 1980's the State and the region experienced one of the most aggressive housing booms in history. In the 1990's, when Hebron's population growth was nearly 22%, the region's population growth was only 1.7%. During the past ten years the Town's population grew by a more modest 12.5% but still outpaced the Hartford Region's population growth of 5%.

A comparison of Hebron's population growth with other Capitol Region towns provides a good comparison of the Town's growth. Historically, Hebron's population growth rates consistently were at or near the top of other towns in the Capitol Region. For example, the 21.6% growth during the 1990's was the highest population growth rate of any individual town in the Capitol Region. During the 2000 – 2010 decade, Hebron's population rose 12.5% which was the fifth highest growth rate of all 30 Capitol Region communities. The most significant factors to such growth patterns appear to be the availability of developable land and the desirable quality of life in eastern Connecticut.