

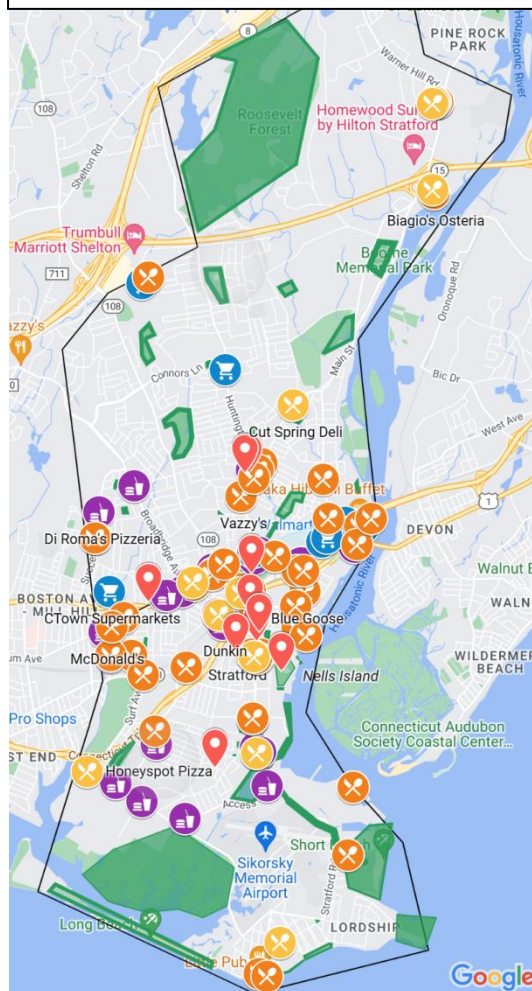
# Mapping Community Food Access in Stratford, CT






## Food access in Stratford

### Intro

Stratford, CT is a town with a population of 52,355. It encompasses a great deal of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity, which has unfortunately led to inequitable access to various necessities for certain populations. The town unemployment rate is 7% (US Census), and those facing impoverished conditions are predominantly minority populations. Throughout the town, 15% of residents living below the poverty level are black, 11% are Latino, and 27% are Asian, while only 5% are white. Additionally, 1,376 households and 4,407 residents participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (CT General Assembly). The town holds many food establishments; however they are often positioned in clusters, not evenly spread throughout the area to ensure equal access for all residents. Because of these conditions, it has become evident that the Town of Stratford must work to improve food access for all residents, providing for the right of all to hold sovereignty over their own food choices. This report has thus been created in order to examine Stratford food access, through mapping food establishments, discovering food desert areas, and offering insight into prospects for community gardens and regulation changes that may help improve the food landscape in the town.

**Map 1: Food Establishments in Stratford**



-  Grocery Stores
-  Restaurants
-  Delis
-  Fast Food
-  Emergency Food Services

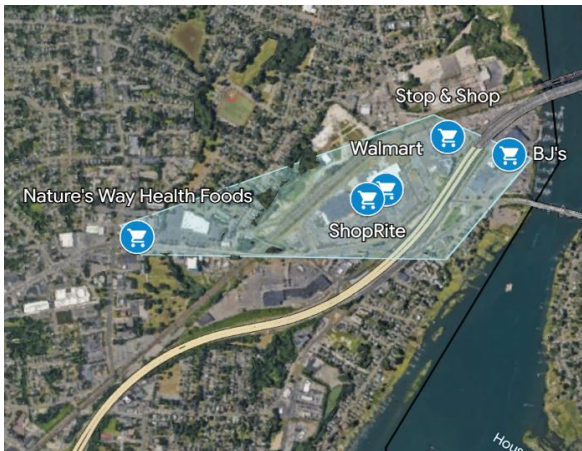
This map identifies all grocery stores (including small markets and supermarkets), restaurants, delis, fast food outlets, & emergency food services (i.e. food pantries) in Stratford, CT. It is evident that various areas exist in Stratford with inequitable and insufficient access to a variety of food options, while other areas possess clusters of food establishments. This has resulted in many food justice issues in Stratford. The map also highlights all of Stratford's greenspace, as access to greenspace is another facet of environmental justice often related to food access.

### Access to Interactive Map:

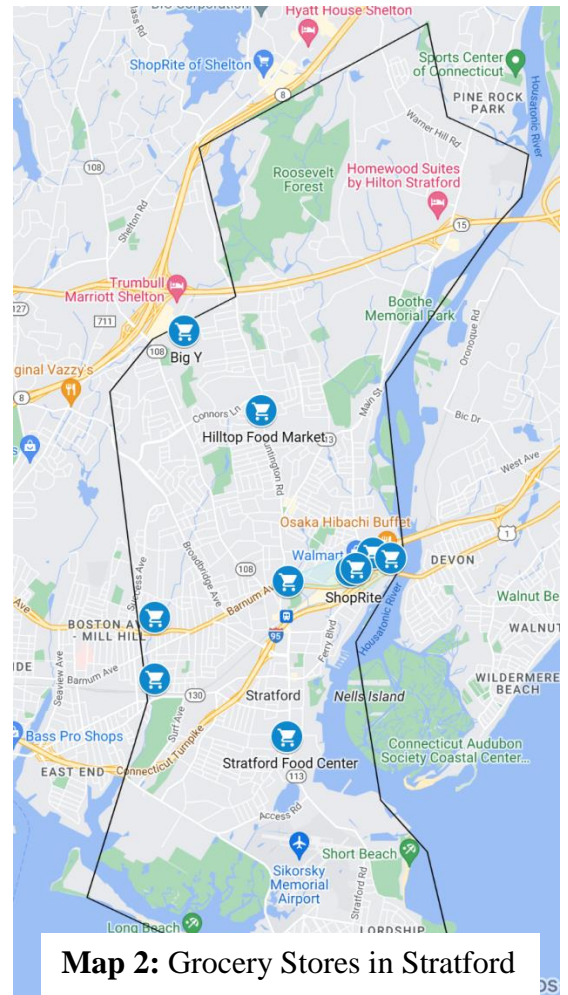
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1ZZIwJgw7EJEhRtfoXDBagS3PWbG5wqU&usp=sharing>

Grocery Stores:

- Stratford has 10 grocery stores - including supermarkets and small local/cultural markets (depicted by blue shopping cart icons in Map 2)
- 5/10 grocery stores are located within a half mile radius (highlighted in light blue in Map 3) on the eastern side of town
  - Includes ShopRite, BJ's, Wal-Mart, Stop & Shop, and Nature's Way Health Foods
  - Western side of town & northern area have less variety & access
- 7/10 offer fresh produce (ShopRite, BJ's, Wal-Mart, Stop & Shop, CTown Supermarket, Stratford Food Center, Big Y)



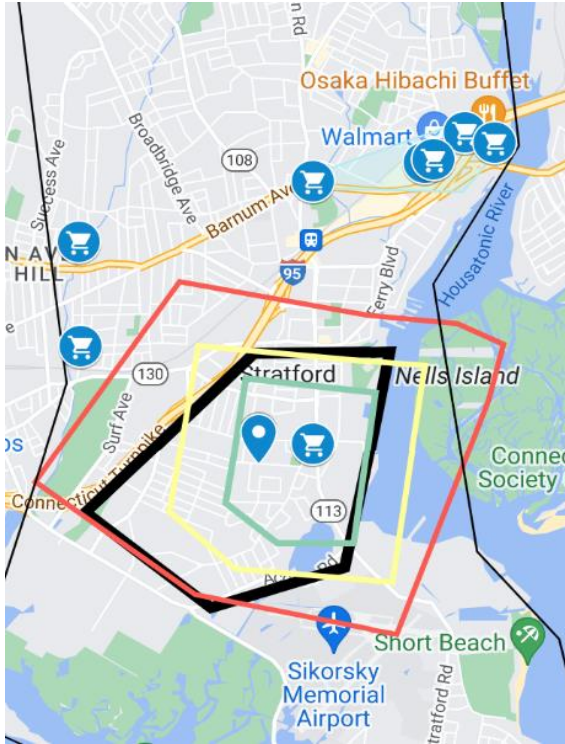
**Map 3:** Cluster of Grocery Stores in Stratford



**Map 2:** Grocery Stores in Stratford

- The South End neighborhood exhibits low access to a variety of healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods
  - One grocery store is located within the South End (highlighted in black in Map 3 on the following page): “Stratford Food Center,” a small market, but it does offer produce, fruits, vegetables, & cold cuts
    - The area ultimately lacks culturally appropriate foods, health food stores, & freedom of choice





**Map 4:** South End Neighborhood & Surrounding Grocery Stores

**Black Circle: South End Neighborhood**

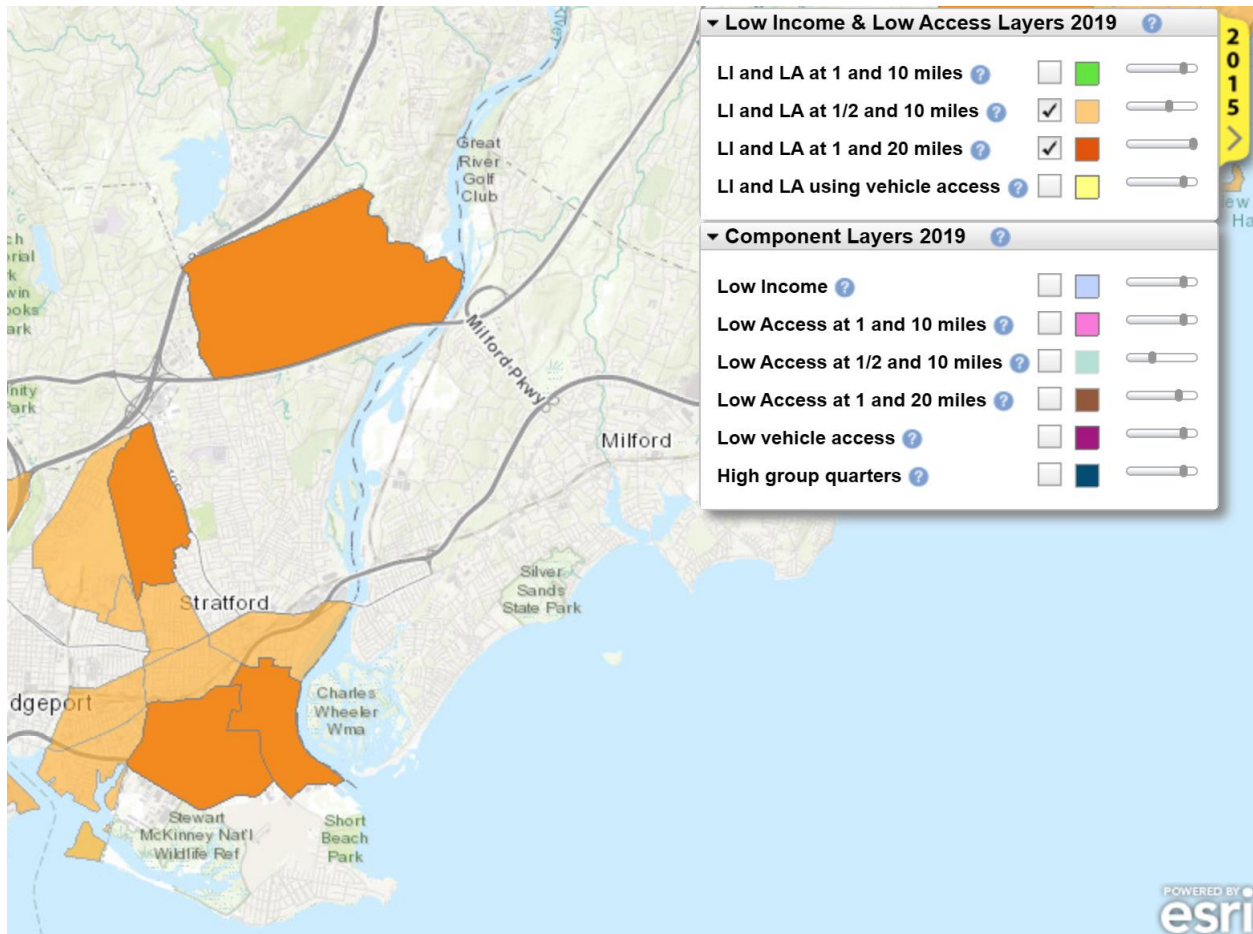
**Green circle:** area encompassing residents that live within 0.5 mi radius from local grocery store

**Yellow circle:** area encompassing residents that live within 0.75 mi radius from local grocery store

**Red circle:** area encompassing residents that live 1+ mi from local grocery store

- Majority of the South End population lives within a 0.5-0.75 mi distance from the store
  - 0.5-0.75 mi equates to about a 30 min walk
  - Most residents are therefore within walking distance, however this mode of transport poses difficulty for many when tasked with carrying groceries
    - This is especially true in areas with health-related challenges
- About 1/3 of the South End population lives 1 mile or more from the store
- Every other grocery store (and every large supermarket) is greater than a 1 mile distance from the South End
  - Distance to the cluster of a variety of large supermarkets, grocery stores, and health food stores is ~1.5-3.5 mi+ depending on location in the South End
- **Food Desert**
  - Definition: “low-income tracts in which a substantial number or proportion of the population has low access to supermarkets or large grocery stores” ([USDA](#))
    - Low-income tract: poverty rate of 20% or greater, or median family income at or below 80% of statewide/metropolitan area median family income
    - Low-access: at least 500 people and/or at least 1/3 of population lives greater than 1 mi (or 10 miles in rural census tracts) from a supermarket or large grocery store

## Stratford Food Access Maps

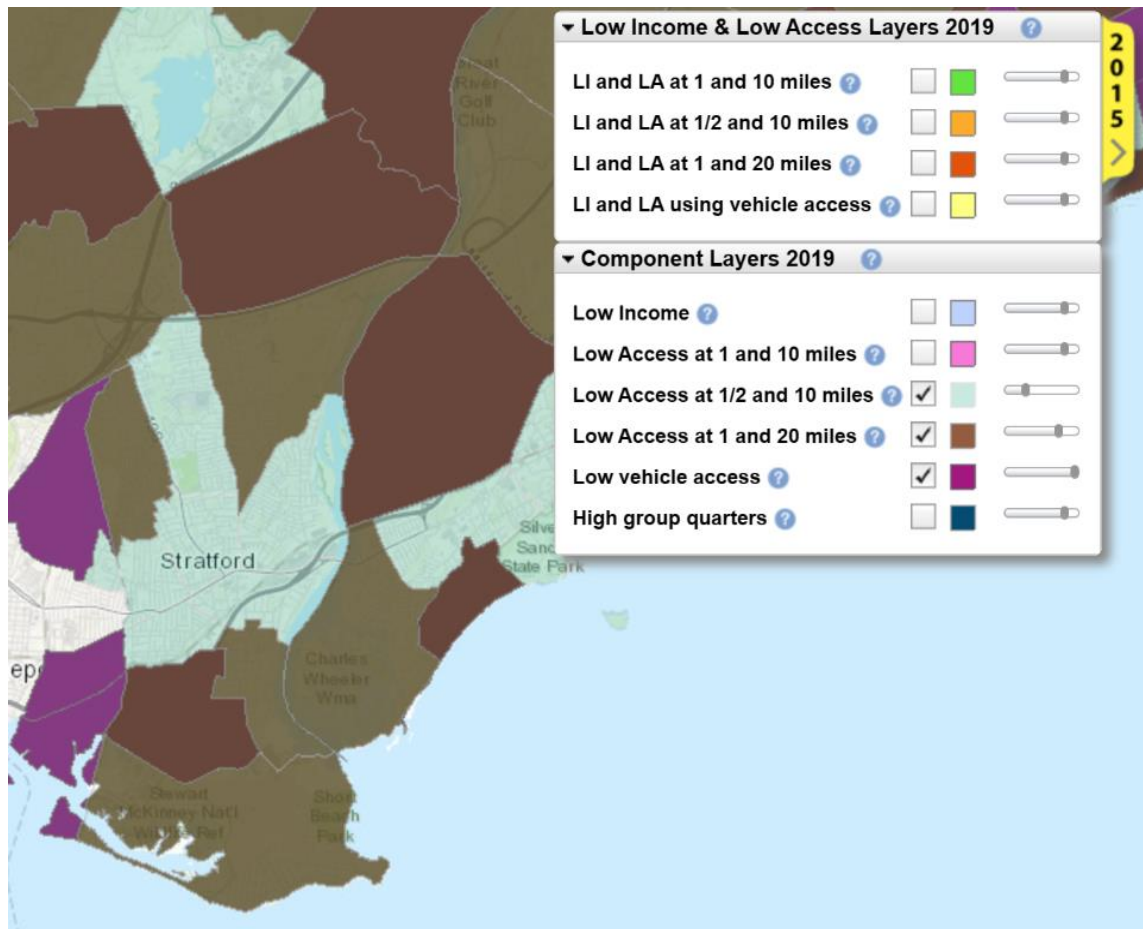


### Map 5: Low Income & Low Access Tracts in Stratford

Light orange: Low-income census tracts where a significant number of residents is  $>1/2$  mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

Dark orange: Low-income census tracts where a significant number of residents is  $>1$  mile (urban) or 20 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket (Food Deserts).

Source: USDA Economic Research Service ([The Food Access Research Atlas guide \(usda.gov\)](https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/the-food-access-research-atlas-guide/))



### Map 6: Low Access Tracts in Stratford

**Blue:** Tracts in which at least 500 people or 33% of the population lives farther than 1/2 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

**Lighter brown:** Tracts in which at least 500 people or 33% of the population lives farther than 1 mile (urban) or 20 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

**Darker brown:** Tracts in which more than 100 households have no access to a vehicle and are more than 1 mile from the nearest supermarket, or a significant number or share of residents are more than 20 miles from the nearest supermarket.

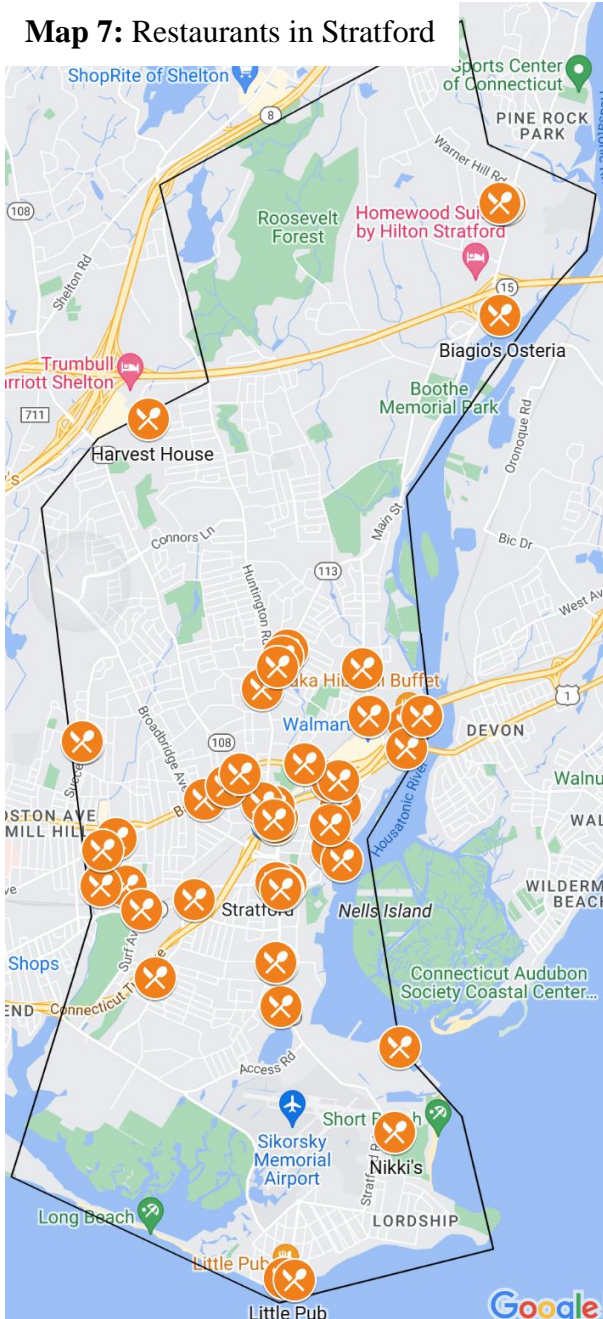
Source: USDA Economic Research Service ([The Food Access Research Atlas guide \(usda.gov\)](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/))

- Conclusions from these maps:
  - A large proportion of Stratford residents live in “food deserts” as defined by the USDA (Map 5)
  - All residents in Stratford have some form of low access to large grocery stores and supermarkets (Map 6) – this is largely a result of grocery store & supermarket locations and challenges associated with many residents receiving lower incomes (i.e. lack of vehicle access)
    - In Stratford, 1,313 households lack private vehicles (U.S. Census), which further diminishes ease of access to food establishments and thus

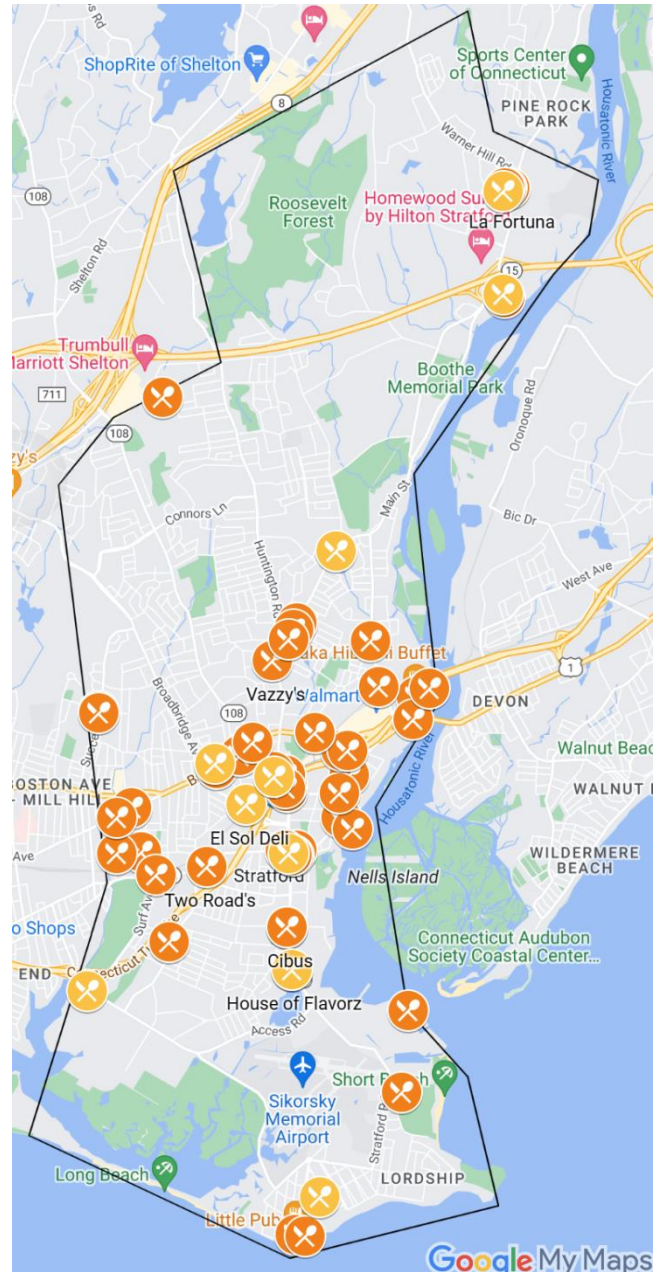
exacerbates food justice issues. Those without private vehicles are forced to locate public transportation, which often requires more walking & carrying of groceries, which can pose difficulties to many members of lower-income communities (i.e. elderly, those with health risks)

Restaurants:

**Map 7: Restaurants in Stratford**



**Map 8: Restaurants & Delis in Stratford**

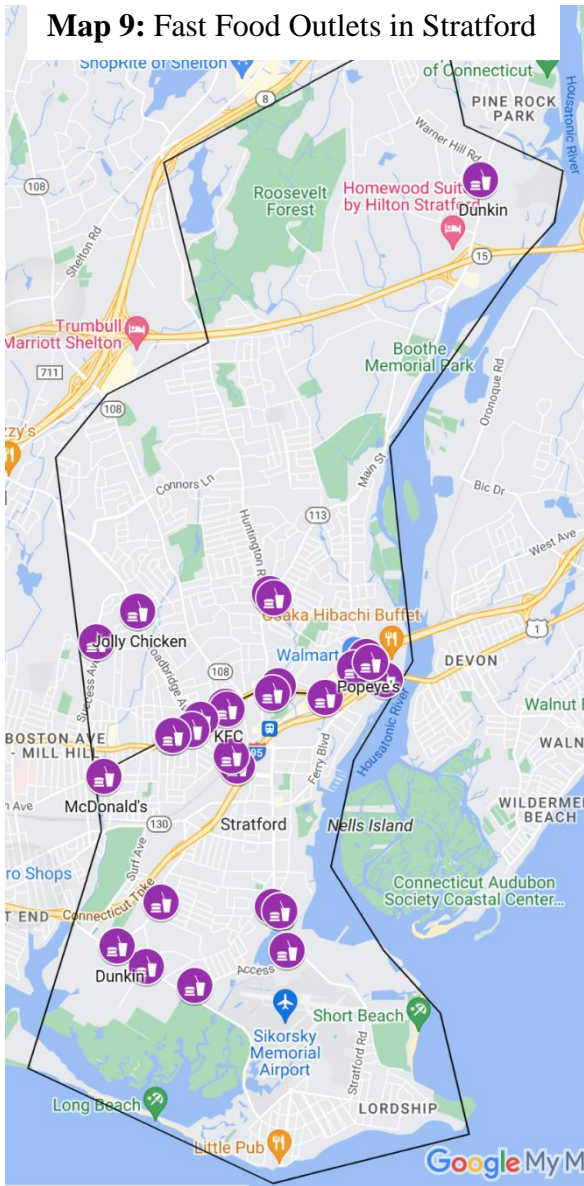


- Stratford has 61+ restaurants - wide variety of prices, food options, cultural foods, styles, etc.
- Restaurants are mostly congregated in the middle of the town - residents on northern and southern edge of town are not in walking distance to most restaurants (>1.5 mi distance)

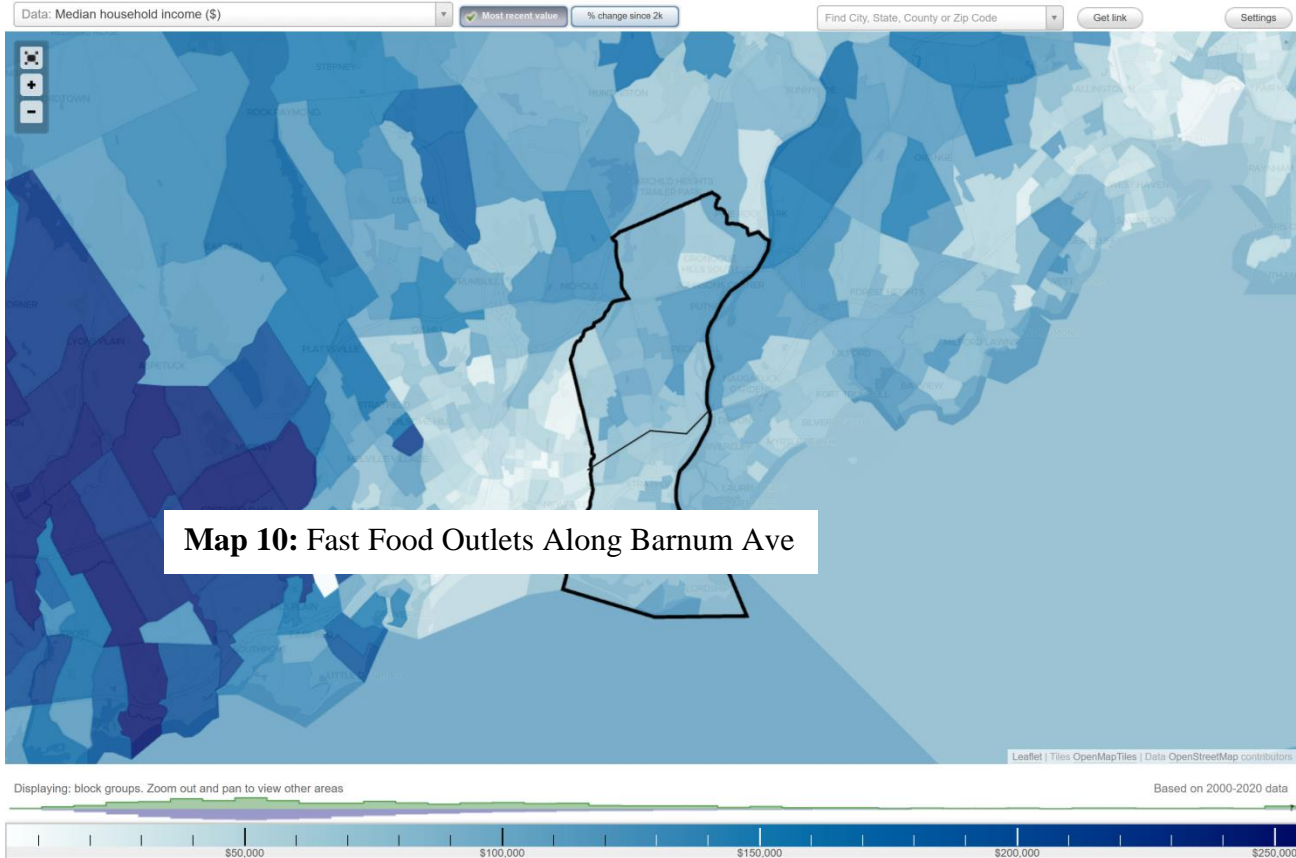
- This would equate to about a 1.5 hr.+ walk or bus ride, or a 10-20 min drive from outer edges of town to central cluster of restaurants

**Fast Food Outlets:**

- Stratford has 30+ fast food outlets (depicted by the purple icons in Map 9)
- There are numerous clusters of fast food outlets:
  - 5 establishments are within the South End (Map 10)
  - About half are along/directly off of Barnum Ave (Map 11)



- Because of these clusters, it is much easier for all residents to access a variety of fast food outlets than grocery stores - especially those located in the South End/central areas
- Lordship & the North End (higher-income areas) have zero fast food outlets (besides one Dunkin Donuts)
- **Income Map:**



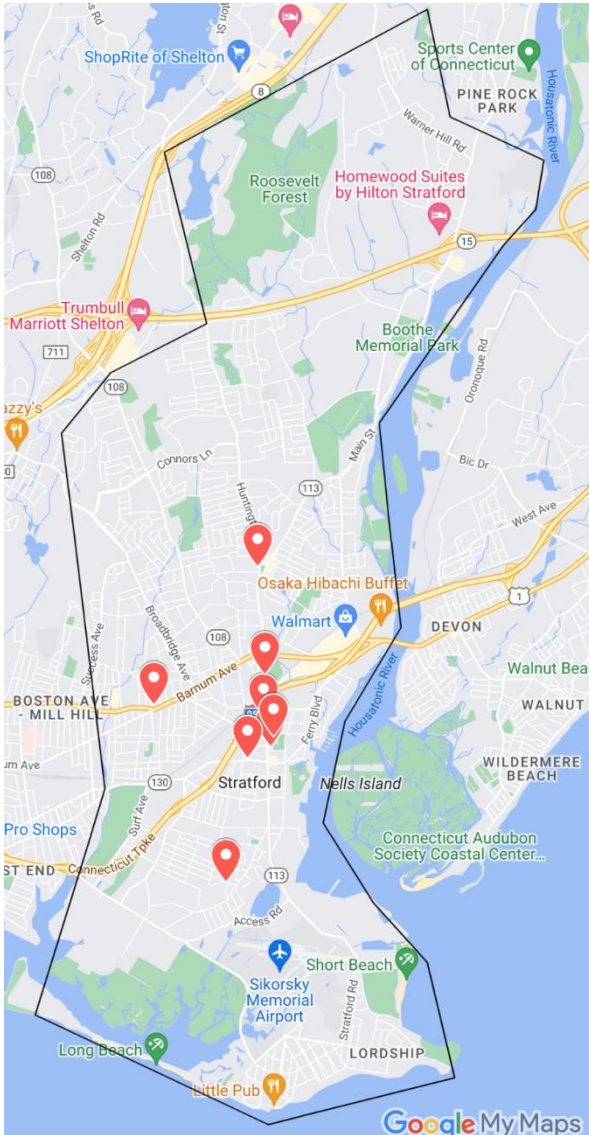
**Map 12: Median Household Income in Stratford (outlined in black)**  
 Range from \$0 (white) - \$250,000 (dark blue). Barnum Avenue highlighted with black line.  
 Source: [Stratford, Connecticut \(CT\) income map, earnings map, and wages data \(city-data.com\)](https://city-data.com)

- Darker areas (higher income) correlate with areas with less fast food outlet density
  - These include the area in the Northeastern part of the town as well as the Southern/Lordship area
- Many of the lighter areas (lower income) correlate with locations holding clusters of fast food outlets
  - These include the area surrounding Barnum Ave, the South End neighborhood, and Midwestern part of town



Fast food is a cheap, accessible food choice – and therefore businesses often look to exploit the needs of low income areas by providing them with food choices that may be easier to obtain than those more nutritional options offered at grocery stores/supermarkets. This trend is clearly depicted in Stratford, where an overabundance of fast food choices exist in low income & low access areas, reinforcing these residents’ lack of access to nutritional, culturally appropriate food choices and their resulting health challenges

### Emergency Food Services



**Map 13:** Emergency Food Services in Stratford  
Map depicting food pantries offered in Stratford.

Stratford has 8 food pantries: 2 are offered in community centers (Sterling House Community Center and South End Community Center), 1 is mobile, and 5 are offered in local churches. There is also gratuitous (although donations are suggested) lunch offered at the Baldwin Center, *Baldwin Café*, however residents must be 60+ years old and reservations are required. Additionally, the town holds 5 summer meal sites, which provide no-cost meals for kids all summer. These are located at the Short Beach Playground, South End Community Center, Victoria Soto Camp, Sterling House Camp, and Longbrook Camp.

These pantries are located in proximity to low-income areas of Stratford, however yet again they are clustered fairly close to each other, and thus, like other food establishments, are not evenly spread throughout Stratford to serve some other food desert areas of the town.

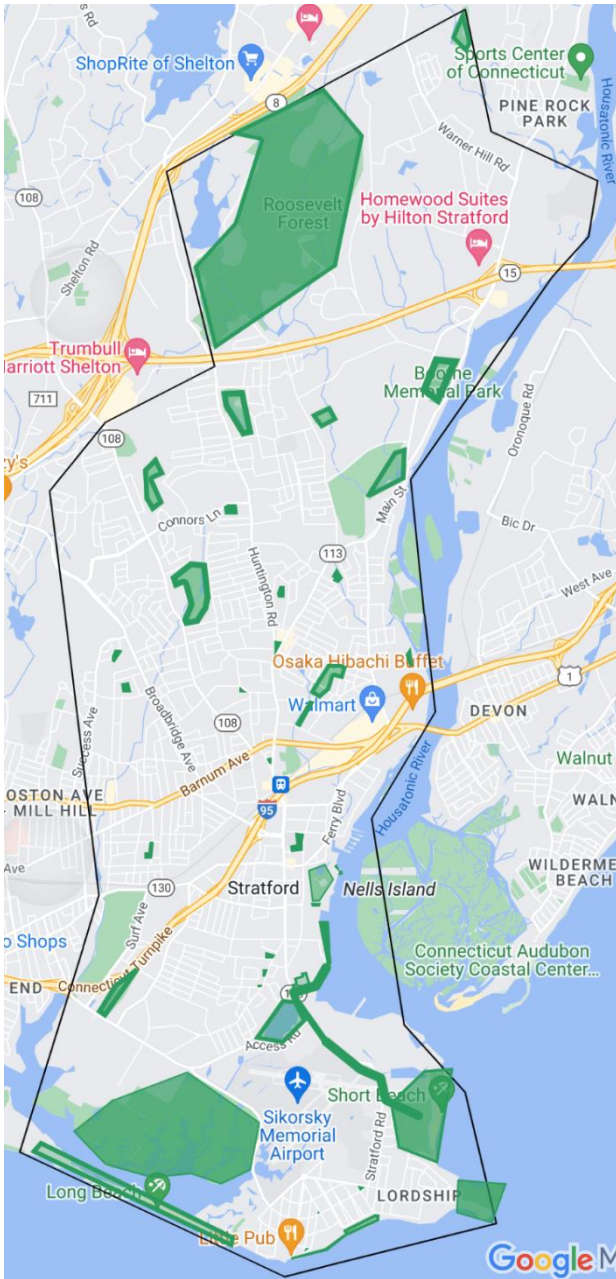
## Community Gardens:

- **Assessment of Town Community Gardening**

- Existing Amount: 1-2
  - Police Activities League Community Garden – grows produce for local food pantries ([Community Garden - STRATFORD PAL](#))
    - Used solely by PAL participants – lack of opportunity for public use/renting plots
  - Second community garden: The Farm at Stratford/Pirhala Farm (on Connors Lane near Bunnell High School) – “temporarily closed” online, but appears to be in use by some (perhaps residents who previously rented plots)
    - This garden was much more accessible to all residents than PAL’s – had an informative website and opportunities to rent plots
    - Making this garden more accessible, spreading information about it to residents & properly advertising & updating it would be valuable to Stratford’s food needs
    - Parcel is owned by the Town of Stratford
- Location of Community Gardens Closest to Stratford: Bridgeport, CT
  - [Community Gardens — Green Village Initiative \(gogvi.org\)](#) – Bridgeport holds ~12 community gardens accessible to the public
  - None are walking distance from Stratford – require about a 10-20 min drive depending on exact location
- Are there food bank plots in the Community Garden?
  - PAL community garden holds Food Bank plots
  - They produce about 500 lbs. of produce that is given to local food pantries (according to PAL website)
- Benefits of Community Gardens: (Source: [Community Garden Statistics in 2023 \(Latest U.S. Data\) | Garden Pals](#))
  - According to USDA research - every dollar invested in a community garden yields approximately \$6 worth of produce
  - Positive impact on neighborhood security: provide safe spaces, valued & invested in by community, better for town safety/security than vacant lots
    - Higher levels of greenspace produce lower crime rates
    - Police incidents have dropped by 30-50% in some areas with community gardens
  - Community gardeners eat 37.5% more fruit & vegetables than non-gardeners (healthier diets, less food insecurity)
- Food justice & sovereignty - EJ, racial/economic disparities
  - Low-income, low-access tracts in Stratford (which have the lowest access to healthy food choices) consist of predominantly minority populations – therefore food insecurity is a form of environmental injustice and reinforces racial disparities

- Providing these communities with accessible community gardens will help them obtain greater sovereignty over their food choices & help improve their equitable access to nutritional & culturally appropriate food
- Lower income and minority areas also often contain less greenspace –
  - Community gardens can thus provide these populations with more outdoor space and the resulting physical, social, and mental benefits that they often are denied

- **Greenspace in Stratford:**

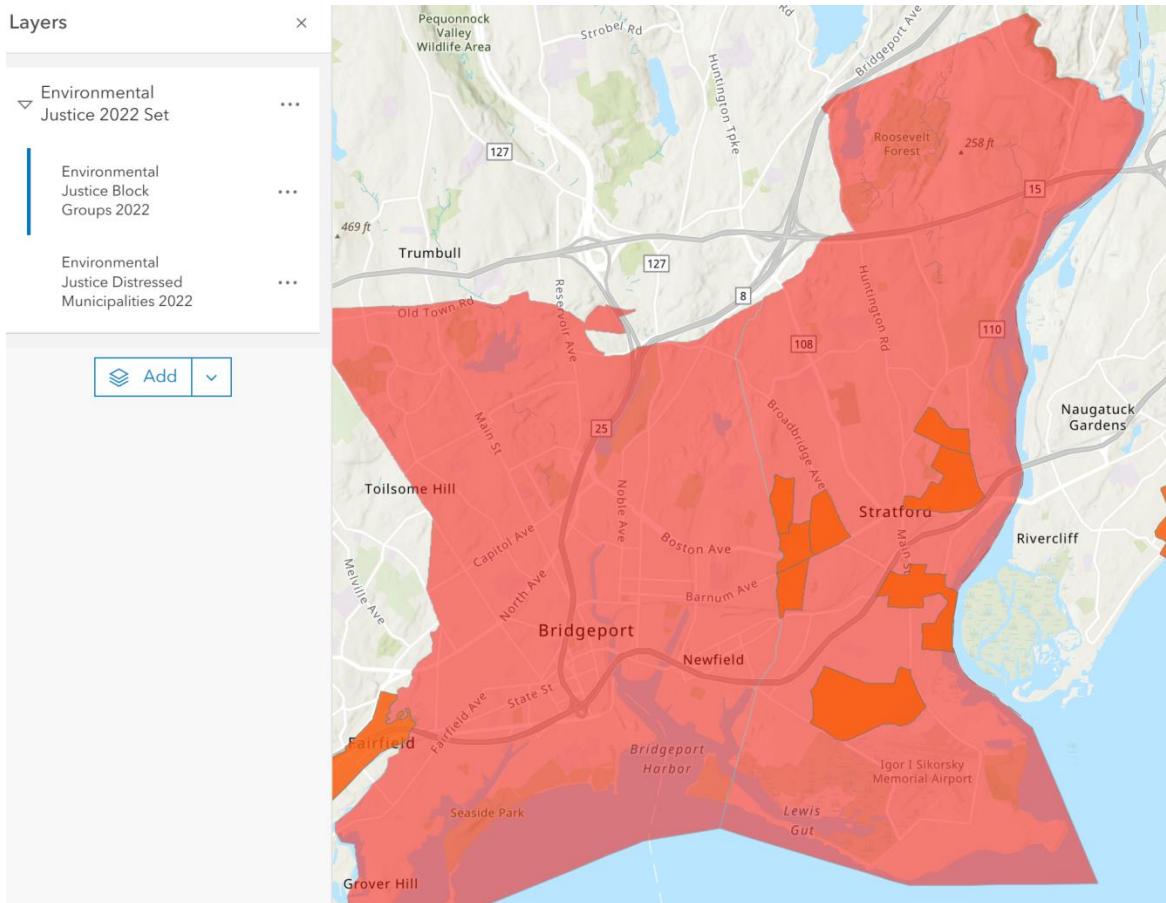


Stratford has over 40 parks & playgrounds, with 12.5% of town area being designated open space ([Stratford POCD](#)).

- Largest greenspace areas are located in the Northern and Southern/Lordship portions of town
- Central Stratford & the area surrounding Barnum Ave does not contain much greenspace
  - This section of town also holds lower income residents (Map 12), as well as a large cluster of fast food outlets (Maps 9, 10, 11)
- Higher income tracts often have the tendency to be located in areas with more greenspace – largely a result of higher prices of property in proximity/with access to greenspace, which is reflected in Stratford’s greenspace distribution as well
  - In Stratford, 15% of residents living below the poverty level are black, 11% are Latino, and 27% are Asian, while only 5% are white (Stratford 2021 Equity Profile – DataHaven)
  - Therefore minority populations are less likely to be located in proximity to sufficient greenspace
  - This discrepancy is an environmental justice issue, as income and race should not dictate access to the mental & physical health benefits of outdoor spaces as appears to be the case in Stratford

**Map 14:** Greenspace in Stratford. Includes forests, parks, playgrounds, beaches, & greenways (does not include cemeteries or private golf course).

- **Opportunities for Community Gardens:**
  - Stratford residents face numerous food access challenges, and therefore community gardens would be an extremely valuable addition to the town in order to assist those lacking food sovereignty
  - US Health Department Grant Application – emphasizes a focus on implementing community gardens in areas of need (neighborhoods identified as CT 2022 Environmental Justice Communities)

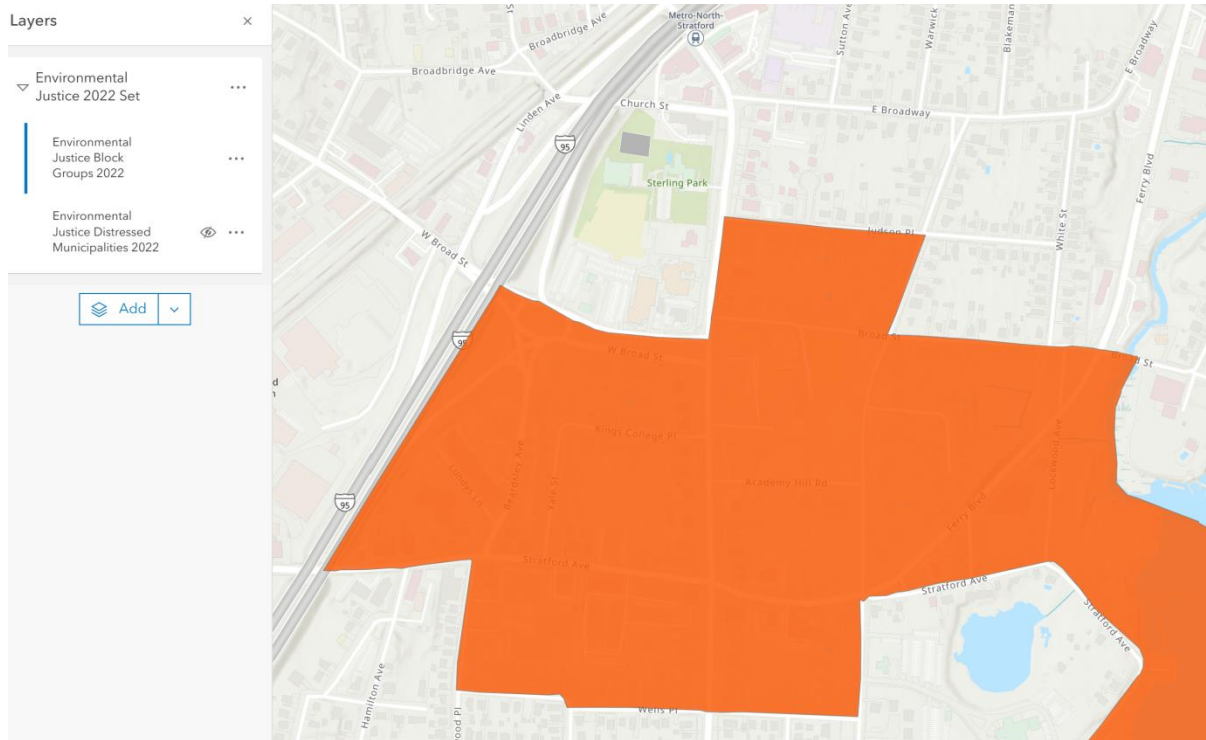


**Map 15: Environmental Justice 2022 Data**

Red area depicts “Environmental Justice Distressed Municipalities,” representing that Stratford is an Environmental Justice Distressed town. Orange areas represent specific environmental justice communities within municipalities.

Source: [Environmental Justice 2022 Set | CT DEEP GIS Open Data Website](#)

- Possible New Location: Sterling House Community Center – field



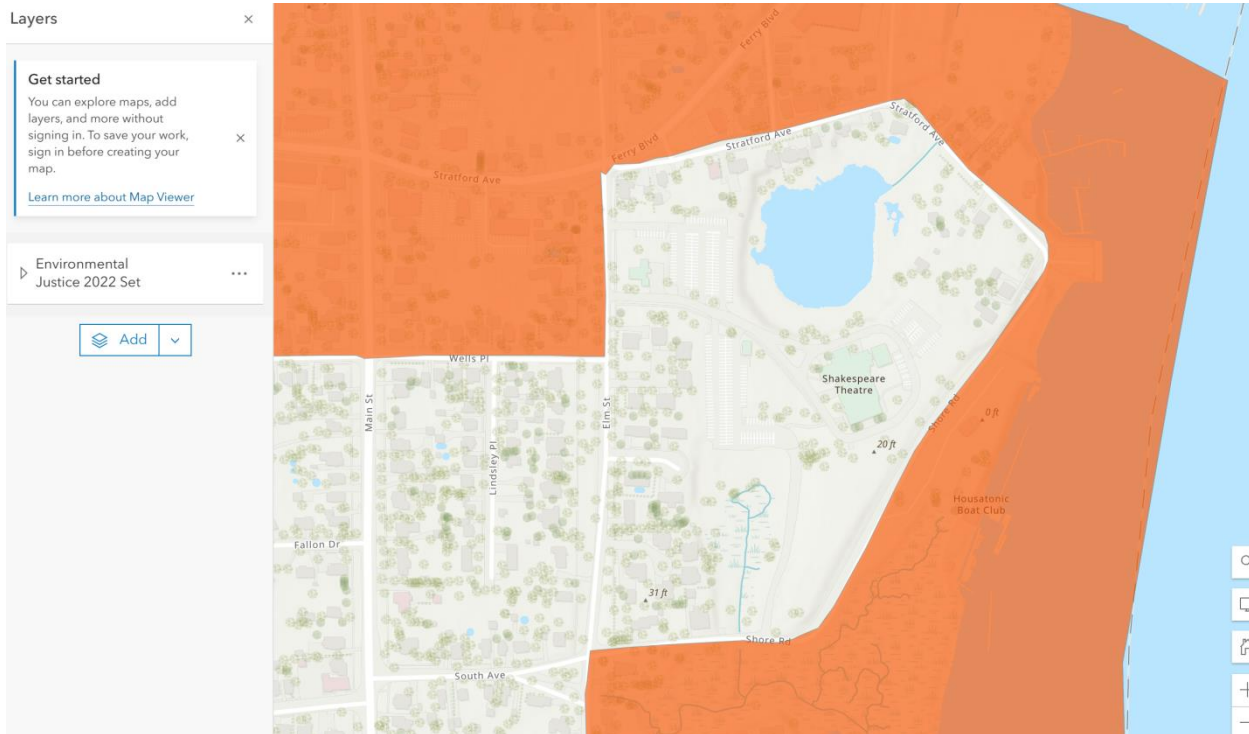
**Map 16:** Sterling House Community Center & Environmental Justice Block.  
Map showing the Sterling House Community Center directly adjacent to a large environmental justice community in Stratford.

Source: [Environmental Justice 2022 Set | CT DEEP GIS Open Data Website](#)

- Benefits of a community garden located here:
  - Volunteers involved with other Sterling House initiatives & activities can participate in the creation, management, upkeep, etc. of the garden
  - The garden can provide produce to the food pantry located at the Sterling House
  - Opportunities for youth involvement & education – SHCC After School Program and Summer Camp could have stations involving the garden, teaching youth about food growth/gardening, nutritious food choices, food justice and sovereignty, urban agriculture, etc.
  - Walking distance from an environmental justice community – improvements to food access, nutritional food options, and health for these residents
  - Town-owned property – beneficial for insurance purposes
- Zoning: One-Family Residential District, Overlay District: Historic District

- Allowable land uses include farming, greenhouse, truck or nursery gardening, vehicles or agricultural machinery used in the operation of a farm
  - No greenhouse over 500 square ft. in the area shall be located on any lot of less than 3 acres

- Shakespeare Grounds



**Map 16:** Shakespeare Grounds & Environmental Justice Block.

Map showing the Shakespeare Theater Grounds almost completely surrounded by a large environmental justice community in Stratford.

Source: [Environmental Justice 2022 Set | CT DEEP GIS Open Data Website](#)

- Benefits of a Community Garden located here:
  - Produce grown could contribute to the Farmers’ Market on Shakespeare Grounds
  - Could potentially attract more residents to Shakespeare & raise awareness to honor its history and/or events
  - Walking distance to an environmental justice community – improvements to food access, nutritional food options, and health for these residents
  - Town-owned property – beneficial for insurance purposes
- Zoning: One-family Residential Districts, Overlay District: Theater District
  - Would require a zoning update – zoning regulations appear to be created for the theater in order to protect the authenticity of the building & land

surrounding it (and therefore don't explicitly allow gardens/agricultural uses)

- Because the theater is no longer there, the grounds could potentially be used for community gardening to continue to enliven and promote the area without the theater

### Regulation Changes

Access to nutritional and culturally appropriate food options is crucial to adequate health and wellbeing. Because of the positive association between fast food outlets, unhealthy diets, and obesity, reducing access and replacing these with healthier alternatives can enable governments to promote healthier eating and greater sovereignty over food choices. Zoning regulations can be extremely effective at accomplishing this transition towards a healthier diversity of food options. There are three types of zoning that can be helpful in altering the makeup of food outlets in Stratford: conditional zoning, incentive zoning, and performance zoning.

1. Conditional zoning: municipalities can designate permissible uses on a site-specific basis
  - i.e. rezone residential site - allow all restaurants except fast food, only allow supermarkets
2. Incentive zoning: allows municipalities to encourage the development of certain amenities that benefit the public
3. Performance zoning: zoning that focuses on effects of land use (not specifically how the land is used) to dictate regulations

Bans/restrictions have been most effective at zoning to avoid the development of fast food outlets. This prevention can provide opportunities for the development of new, healthier food outlets (i.e. large supermarkets, whole food stores) in order to ameliorate food desert problems and promote positive food options. The following include some examples of how municipalities have used these regulations to diminish the impacts of an overabundance of unhealthy food:

- Complete bans on developing & opening new fast food outlets/drive thru restaurants within a town or area
- Bans on “formula” restaurants (defined as those “that have standardized services, décor, methods of operation, and other features that make them virtually identical to businesses elsewhere,” ultimately large chains)
- Restrictions on the number of fast food outlets within a town/area
- Restrictions on density of fast food outlets to avoid clusters in certain areas (i.e. by defining a requirement for space between fast food)
- Restrictions on locating fast food outlets in proximity to certain cites/buildings (i.e. preventing their development within a certain distance from schools, churches, parks, hospitals, etc.)
- Moratoriums on the development of new fast food outlets

*Legality of using zoning to prevent fast food establishments & promote healthier options:*

Municipalities are given “police powers,” which provide them with the authority to create and impose regulations for the goal of protecting or promoting some public good. Two Supreme Court Cases, *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, 1905, and *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty*, 1926, have ultimately held that municipality police powers can be used to zone for public health, as it

is a crucial public good. Because of the proven correlation between food options and health, zoning to avoid the health challenges caused by an abundance of fast food outlets and to promote healthier eating thus qualifies as zoning for public health.

Other additions/improvements to zoning codes/regulations to support food sovereignty & security:

- Permit food production in zoning code by using explicit agricultural terms: define specific terms & regulations as opposed to simply permitting agriculture generally
  - Enables better understanding & implementation of agricultural processes among community members
  - National Healthy Food Project : draft guide about articulating agricultural terms for municipalities ([Michigan State University Extension Land Use Series \(msu.edu\)](http://MichiganStateUniversityExtensionLandUseSeries.msu.edu))
  - Growing Local: A Community Guide to Planning for Agriculture & Food Systems ([AFT GFC Community-Guide lo\\_res\\_04-2017.pdf \(jhsph.edu\)](http://AFT_GFC_Community-Guide_lo_res_04-2017.pdf)): “Creating a Common Language” on pg. 8, outlines common terms used in food systems planning
    - Helpful terms: agriculture & food production, farm, food shed, food system, food security, local food
    - Defining these in zoning codes & applying them to Stratford’s specific circumstances can help “create a common language” & ensure all residents have an equal understanding of key terms
- Allow temporary & small structure buildings for agriculture: provides for efficient use of farming spaces and removes obstacles for farmers who want structures for higher-yielding crops or appropriate livestock
- Clarify zoning codes on food sales to permit sale of produce on-site: improves food access, helps producers partake in the food market (no transportation/“middle men” fees), decreases uncertainty & fear of violations
- Support urban agriculture coalitions: food policy councils that focus on listening to & working with food-vulnerable residents to ensure zoning & regulation processes meet their needs
- Create a healthy food system plan/resolution that creates a local food policy council
  - Model healthy food system resolution: [ModelHealthyFoodSystemResolution\\_FINAL\\_20130226.doc \(live.com\)](http://ModelHealthyFoodSystemResolution_FINAL_20130226.doc): model for how governments can begin to transform their local food systems, includes language for the creation of a food policy council (Section VII pg. 19)
    - Purpose of food policy council in this model: to act as an advisory board to municipal government, to continue discussing, overseeing, & managing policies after resolution is enacted, & to ensure all policies support the creation of a healthier food system for the community
    - Can be customized to fit specific needs of municipality

Source: THE USE OF ZONING TO RESTRICT FAST FOOD OUTLETS: A POTENTIAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT OBESITY ([Microsoft Word - Mair Pierce Teret Zoning Fast Food Outlets Disclaimer.doc \(jhsph.edu\)](http://MicrosoftWord-MairPierceTeretZoningFastFoodOutletsDisclaimer.doc))



#### 4 Zoning Changes that Boost Local Food Security ([4 Zoning Changes That Boost Local Food Security \(planning.org\)](#))

Inspiration: Bridgeport Urban Agriculture Master Plan

##### **Outline/Brief Summary of the Plan:**

- Background:
  - Bridgeport has 20 community gardens, 24 school gardens, & 1 community farm
  - Created Urban Agriculture Master Plan to develop policy recommendations through a shared, community-driven vision
  - Bridgeport's definition of urban agriculture: farms & gardens within city limits for household consumption, commercial venture, or education (includes: urban farms, community gardens, backyard & school gardens, hydroponics, aquaponics, aquaculture, indoor farming, rooftop farming, beekeeping, flowers, livestock, use of accessory structures)
- Needs Assessment: section that describes demographics, geography, economy, & health, includes:
  - Local food system profile (number of hydroponic urban farms, outdoor education farms, community gardens, school gardens, training programs/classes, farmers markets, restaurants, breweries, & distilleries)
  - Community gardens map
  - Community feedback – outlining what community members prioritize for improving their food system
    - Most common answers: improvements in awareness of how to get involved in existing gardens, skills & training on gardening/farming, citywide policies & guidance for gardeners, finance & governmental support, challenges with cleanliness, & quality of produce
- Analysis of Regulatory Framework: section that explores regulatory makeup
  - Zoning: agriculture/farming uses are outlined, permitted in Heavy & Light Industrial Zones & Mixed Use-Light Industrial Zones, special permit required for uses in office-retail zones
    - Not allowed in Planned Development District Zones or Residential Zones
  - Code of Ordinances:
    - Livestock: swine, game birds, & fowl prohibited in certain areas/in proximity to certain establishments
    - Selling live poultry: establishments must be inspected by health officer
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (SWOT) Analysis of Bridgeport Food System
  - Bridgeport's listed strengths that may be goals for Stratford: basic infrastructure for gardening & farming (gardens), school-garden lesson plans, educational

outdoor urban farms, Urban Farmer Training Program offered, 40+ food pantries, partnerships with universities & community organizations, and farm to table connections in restaurants

- Bridgeport's listed weaknesses Stratford may relate to: lack of season-extended infrastructure, lack of land tenure protection for agricultural sites, lack of awareness of how to begin participating in gardens, lack of regulatory framework for enhancing urban agriculture, lack of resources, limited fresh food suppliers, inadequate marketing, permit process challenges, absence of large-scale food waste compost system
- Bridgeport's listed opportunities that may inspire Stratford: economic development through farming, food businesses, & increasing access to fresh food, new business & job opportunities in food growth & distribution, increasing climate resilience, community revitalization, more green space & development of vacant lots & buildings, creating a vibrant city with social capital
- Bridgeport's listed threats Stratford should also consider: development pressure, lack of financing for operation & maintenance, real estate cost instability, pressure on school faculty to maintain gardens, contaminated soils, lack of knowledge of regulatory framework for urban agriculture, liabilities
- Vision statement created by the community - emphasizes on promoting economic development, small business development, & community land ownership
- Recommendations: plan ended with a list of recommended actions & the goals needed to achieve these
  - Create formal structure: designated food policy council as overseers of implementing the plan & creating policies, recommended creating an implementation committee to develop programs & partnerships
  - Improve garden sites (existing & potential): recommended the creation of a community land trust to protect agricultural sites, make agricultural use a part of town land use maps, expand agricultural uses in zoning ordinances, & make potential sites more accessible (researched, simpler to lease)
  - Support agricultural organizations, gardeners & farmers: through outreach & fundraising for agriculture, marketing techniques (website creation), partnerships with educational institutions, & support for entrepreneurial gardeners
  - Increase access to gardens (especially for neighborhoods with most need): create auxiliary gardens (i.e. yard sharing program for residents who lack adequate yard space for gardening, gardens in parks & schools), improve & increase walking & mobility infrastructure
  - Establish uniform standards for agriculture site design & management

Source: Cultivating Community: An Urban Agriculture Master Plan for Bridgeport  
[FINAL+Urban+Ag+Master+Plan+July+2019.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

## Conclusion

Stratford, CT is a town that offers a great deal to its residents. Its vibrant natural resources, diverse business array, and various opportunities for careers, recreation, and overall involvement in the town and local communities make it an extremely enticing municipality to reside in. However, food access in Stratford remains a weakness in the town makeup, as the positioning of grocery stores, restaurants, and fast food outlets has led to the creation of numerous food insecure and food desert neighborhoods in the town. Food sovereignty is a crucial facet of environmental justice, as all people should have the right to make their own food choices based on their own specific tastes and nutritional and cultural needs. By identifying the clusters of food establishments, the areas lacking freedom of choice and healthy food options, and the neighborhoods suffering the health implications of an overabundance of fast food outlets, we can be better equipped to alter municipal regulations in order to create a more effective array of food in Stratford. This can be done through zoning codes, bans and restrictions on unhealthy food choices, the creation of a food policy council, and town regulations oriented towards fostering better opportunities for community gardening and farming. In doing so, all residents will have better opportunities to make their own food choices, and to have access to healthier food that can help ameliorate health challenges.