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Chapter 1

GROWTH, CHANGE, & DEMOGRAPHICS

(12/29/2022 DRAFT)

THE PEOPLE OF SHELTER ISLAND: WHO ARE WE?

Understanding Population Dynamics on Shelter Island Today:

Shelter Island today has complex population dynamics. The homeowner population consists of year-round residents and part-time residents. Year-round residents can include working-age people with families, who may have generational roots on the island and who may work on-island or off-island. Other year-round residents are retirees who either worked here and retired here or visited the island for years before settling here full time, or people who can work remotely. Some part-time resident owners spend a month or more on the Island during the summer, while others may spend many months and weekends throughout the year, while “snowbirds” live in warm regions such as Florida or Arizona during the winters, but summer on the island. Many “summer people” are families with multi-generational ownership and it is not uncommon for summer residents to become year-round residents later in life.

The population also includes renters by the year, month or season and visitors who come for shorter periods, staying in hotels, inns, B & B’s, and short-term rentals. This non-resident, seasonal and visitor population is typically much larger than the year-round population.

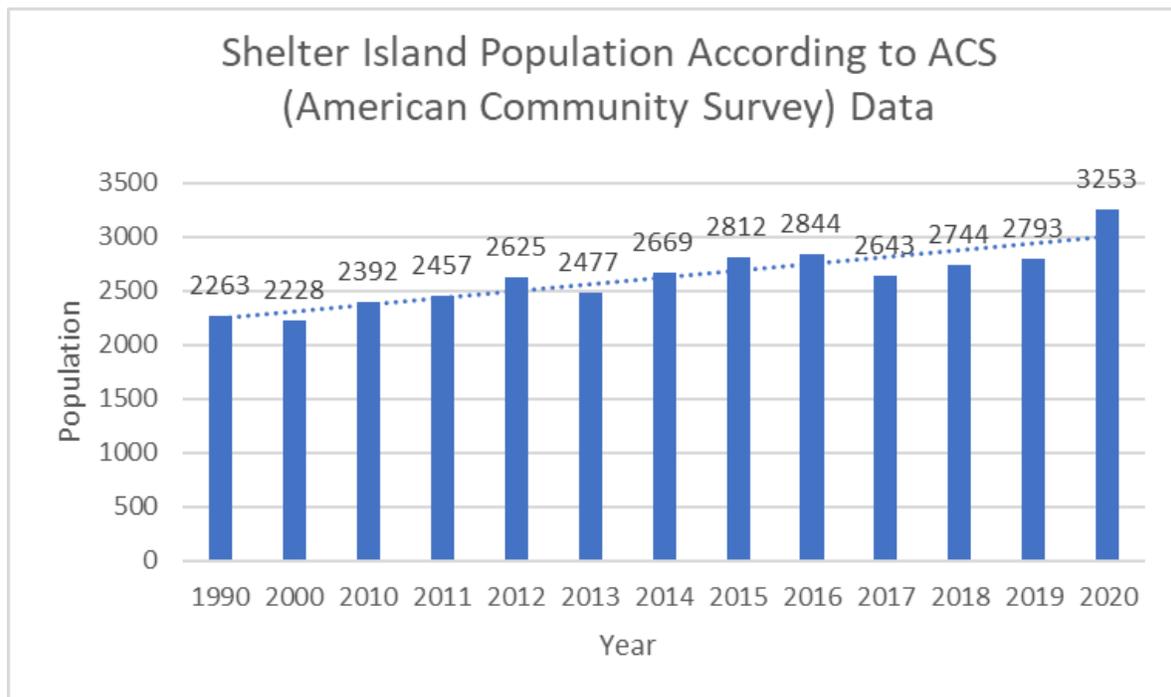
In 2020, the complexity of this demographic picture increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with more people spending the winter on Shelter Island, while pandemic restrictions may have reduced the number of visitors during the summer. In addition, the 2020 census was skewed by the temporary increase in year-round residency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic population shifts.

Overall, this demographic picture results in a small year-round population counted in the Census but which alone presents an incomplete population picture of Island life. It is difficult to identify precise demographic characteristics outside of the small set that are directly collected in the census years.

Best Estimates for Shelter Island:

The 2010 and 2020 census counts asked only a few questions: name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship, housing tenure (own or rent), and, in the case of the 2020 census whether a person in the household “usually lives” somewhere else (including a seasonal or second home). All other types of census data, such as income, housing characteristics, jobs, and so on, have been collected since 2005 through annual surveys called the American Community Survey (ACS) which are then consolidated into five-year ACS estimates. This means that the only data for Shelter Island that come from a census count (not an estimate) are in the answers to the decennial census questions. Because Shelter Island’s year-round population is well under 5,000 persons, the ACS data is not very reliable. Providing context through using other data, such as school enrollments, voter registration, and assessor’s data indicates that the 2015-2019 ACS may be especially unreliable.

What’s Our Year-Round Population?



*1990, 2000, 2010 and 2020 are US Census years

The 2020 pandemic year population, according to the Census data, was 3,253 people. Because of the pandemic, this was an above-trend increase in the number of people and households living year-round on Shelter Island. This increase was

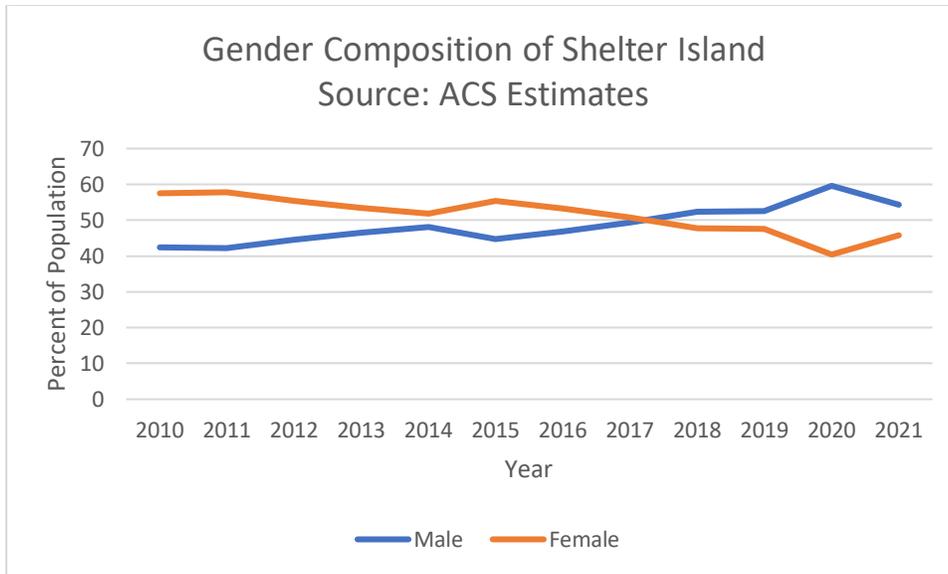
further reflected in an additional 24 students (Pre-K to 12) in the school district from the 2019/2020 school year to the 2020/2021 resulting in an overall enrollment of 226 students. However, from the 2020/2021 school year to the 2021/2022 school year, the school population dropped by 43 students to an enrollment of 183 students in Pre-K-12. The increase in school population represented a 20% one-year jump in 2020 due to the pandemic. If 20% is then used to “normalize” the 2020 Census by backing out approximately 600 pandemic residents, the resulting year-round population estimate is 2600.

Confirming that 2,600 is the best estimate for the year-round 2020 population absent the pandemic is the fact that this estimate assumes a growth rate of 8% between 2010 and 2020. This growth rate is in-line with earlier decennial growth of 6% between 1990 and 2000 and 7% between 2000 and 2010.

By using these two vectors, the estimate of 2,600 year-round residents is defensible.

What’s the Gender Composition of Our Population?

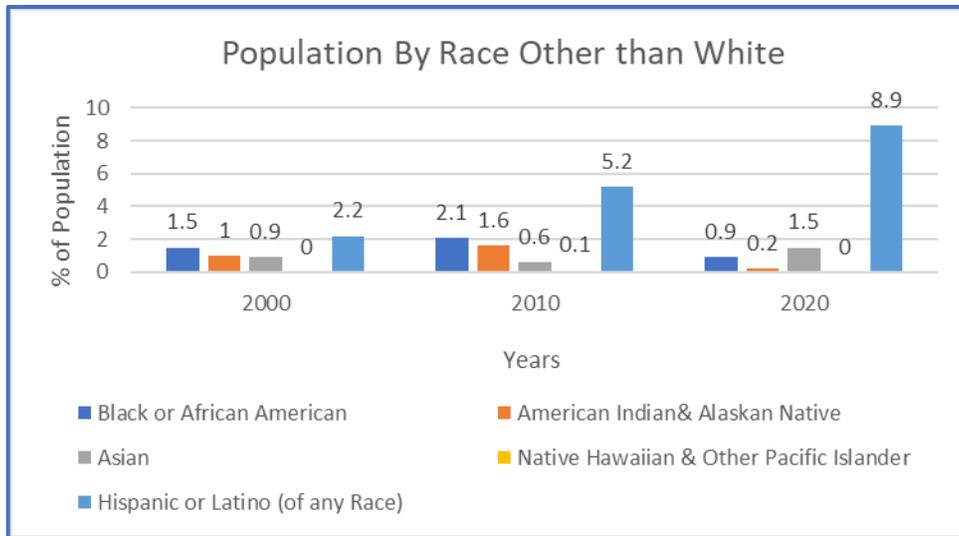
Older populations tend to have a somewhat higher number of women compared to men because, statistically, men live shorter lives. The gender composition can be important when planning for services in a community. Census counts from 2000 and 2010, and the 2010–2021 ACS data all show a slight majority of females until 2017 when the population was approximately 50/50 with a more recent trend showing an increase in males. The 2015–2021 ACS data, shows 53% male to 48% female which is not overly reliable given other characteristics of the population.



Race and Ethnicity- How Diverse are We?

86% of Shelter Island’s population is White. The percent of the Black people in the population grew between the 2000 and 2010 census counts and then declined between the 2010 and 2020 census count. The Hispanic population (who can be of any race) more than doubled between the census counts of 2000 (40 persons and 2.2% of total population) and 2010 (127 persons and 5.2% of total population) and continued to increase from 2010-2020 (289 persons and 8.9% of total population).

Since school year 2009-2010, the school population has become more diverse. The number and percent of students identifying as Hispanic grew consistently between 2009-2010, when there were 11 students (4% of the total enrollment) to 2018-2019 with 40 Hispanic students representing 20% of the total. In addition to the Hispanic enrollment, the 2018-19 data identified 5 students (3%) as Black, 3 students (2%) as Asian/Pacific Islander, 5 students (3%) as multiracial, and 145 Students (73%) as White. Eighteen students (9%) were identified as English language learners.



Source: US Census 2020

Racial and Ethnic Composition, 2000, 2010, 2020			
Population (One race or in combination)	2000 Census % of Total	2010 Census % of Total	2020 Census % of Total
White	95.6	94.0	87.0
Black or African American	1.5	2.1	0.9
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.0	1.6	0.2
Asian	0.9	0.6	1.5
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1	0.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2.2	5.2	8.9
Some other race	1.0	1.5	2.6

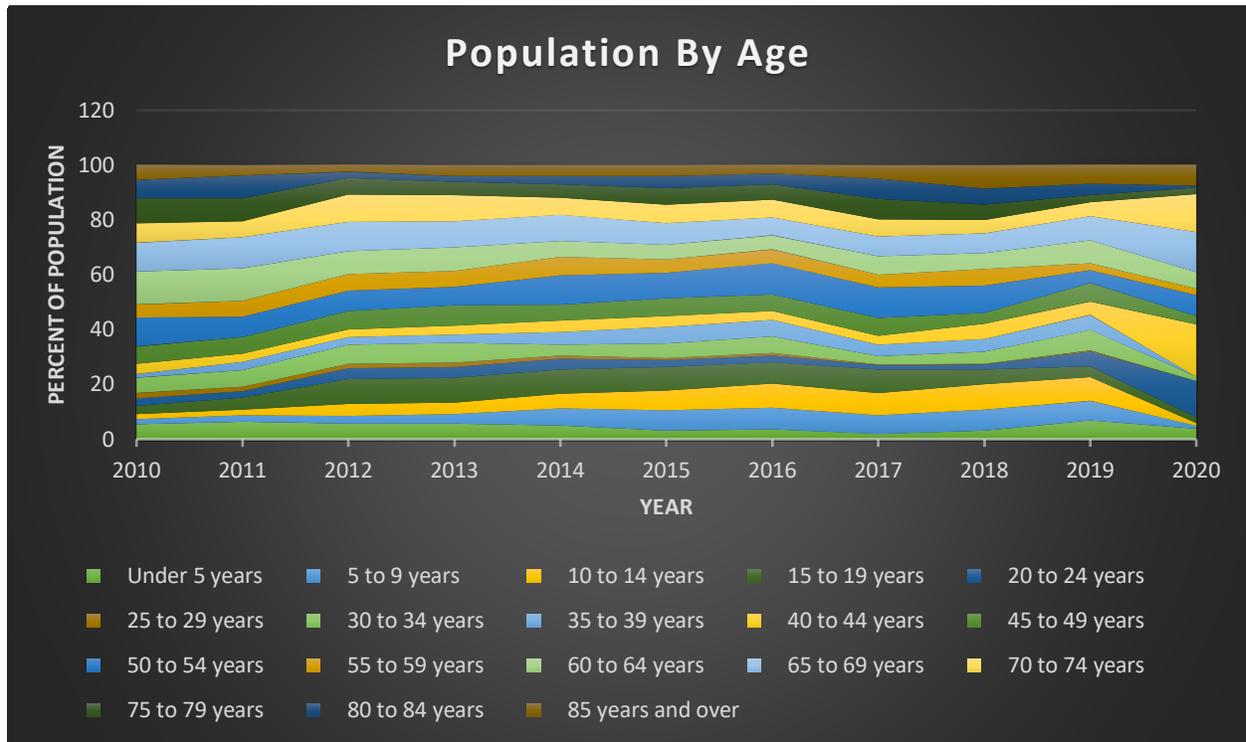
Source: US Census

Age Composition – What’s Our Mix of Younger and Older People?

Shelter Island’s year-round population shows trends in age characteristics that are consistent with other affluent communities: a relatively high median age (51.7 years); fewer people in the younger adult cohorts who are establishing careers and families (Aged 20-34 = 14.8%); and a high percentage of the population over age 50 (50+ = 55.2%).

Millennials (born 1982-1996, ages 25-39 =1.6%) and Gen Z (born 1999- 2012, ages 10-24 = 16.3%) are underrepresented in Shelter Island, likely because of the paucity of jobs and affordable housing for groups at the height of or beginning careers and families.

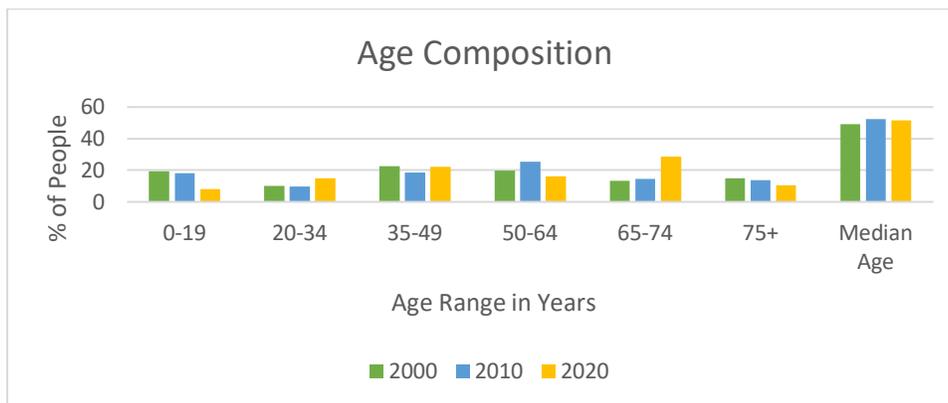
Source: US Census 2020



The median age in Suffolk County is 41.8, which is higher than New York State (39.2) and the US as a whole (38.5). Whereas the median age for Shelter Island is 51.7, 10 years older than the Median age of Suffolk County NY.

Age Composition and Median Age, 2000, 2010, 2020			
Age Group	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census
0-19	19.3%	18.0%	8%
20-34	10.1%	9.9%	14.8%
35-49	22.4%	18.4%	22.1%
50-64	19.6%	25.5%	16%
65-74	13.4%	14.6%	28.5%
75+	15.1%	13.6%	10.7%
Median age	49.2	52.5	51.7

Source: Census Counts



Source: US Census 2020

The official number for pre-K-12 enrollment for school year 2020-2021 is 226. In addition, 3 special education students sent to off-island schools are not counted. The number of Island students who attend private schools off-island has declined slightly in 2020-21 to 29 students from 33 in the previous two years.

What Kinds of Households Live on Shelter Island?

The census bureau divides households into “family households,” which are households containing people related by marriage, blood or adoption, and non-family households, made up of unrelated people. Family households include married-couple households without children or without children living at home, and non-family households include single-person households.

Shelter Island households are predominantly family households, with the majority

of those being families without children under 18 at home. Single person households make up approximately 39% of all households and about 66% all households include a person over 60 years old. The average household size in Shelter Island hovers around 2 (1.97) persons, while family households are somewhat larger (2.27 persons). This is a decline from the 2010 census when the average household size was 2.12 and the average family household size was 2.72.

Household Types and Percent of Total Households			
Households	2000	2010	2020
Family households	66.1%	60.3%	60.0%
Non-family households	33.9%	39.7%	40.0%
Married couple family households	55.2%	49.0%	42.3%
Households with own children under 18 years	20.8%	35.4%	9.1%
Single-person households	28.8%	32.7%	38.5%
Households w/ people 60+	52.6%	54.4%	65.6%
Source: US Census 2020			

What is the Median Income?

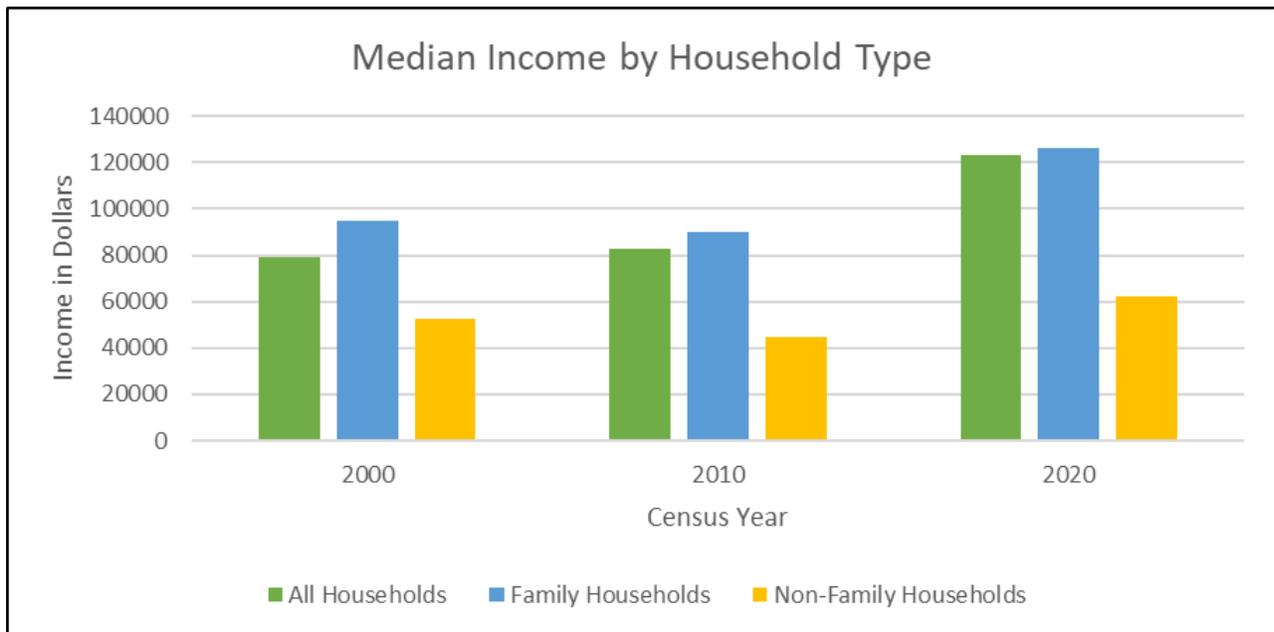
Median income (half are higher, half are lower) shows a generally well-off population, but there are also income disparities.

Business Analyst data from ESRI estimate 2020 median disposable household income at \$91,013. (Disposable income is the amount available to a household after income taxes.) The Shelter Island median income for family households is similar to Suffolk County’s which was estimated at \$123,117 in 2020. Shelter Islands median income for all households is slightly higher than Suffolk County (+\$17,000) and so is the income for non-family households (+\$10,000).

The census data indicate that, as is expected, family households have higher incomes than non-family households.

MEDIAN INCOME BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

Type of Household	Shelter Is 2000 Census	Shelter Is 2010 Census	Shelter Is 2020 Census	Suffolk Cty 2020 Census
All households	\$78,986	\$82,805	\$123,036	\$105,362
Family households	\$94,988	\$89,844	\$126,460	\$123,117
Non-family households	\$52,347	\$44,515	\$ 62,000	\$ 52,678
Source: US Census				

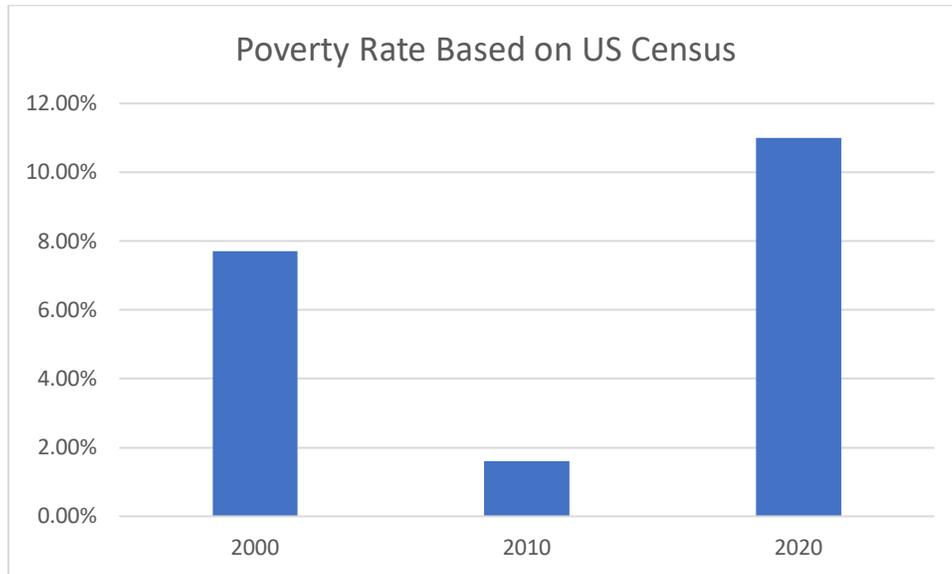


Source: US Census 2020

Are There People and Households in Poverty or Economically Disadvantaged?

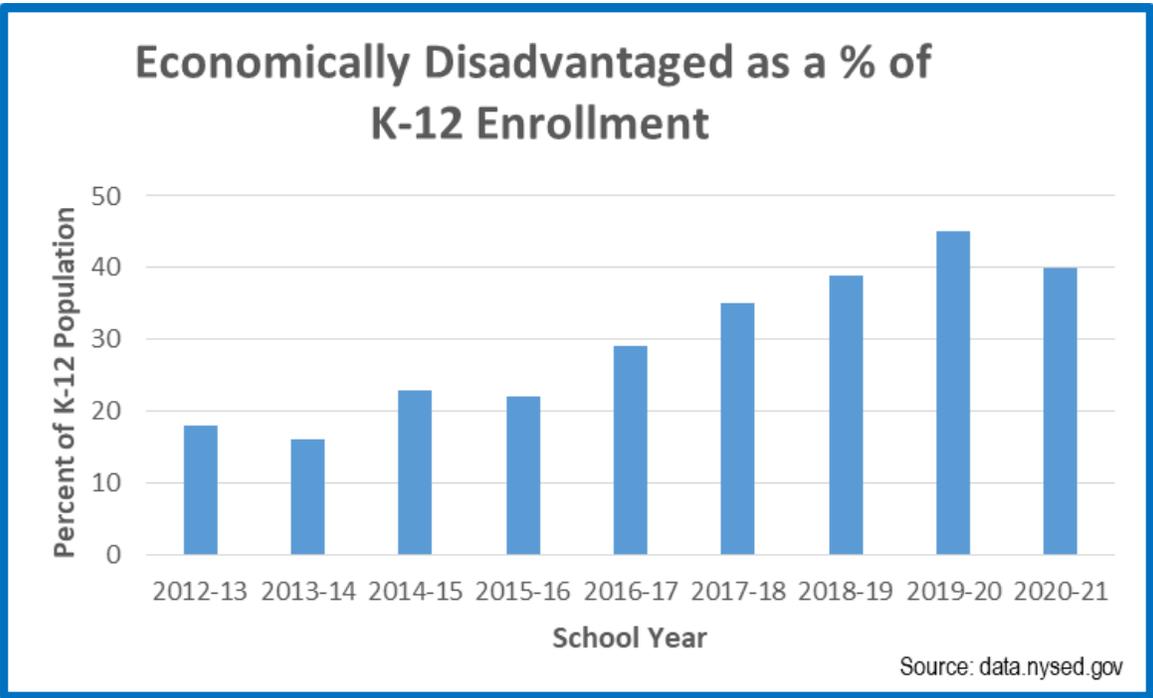
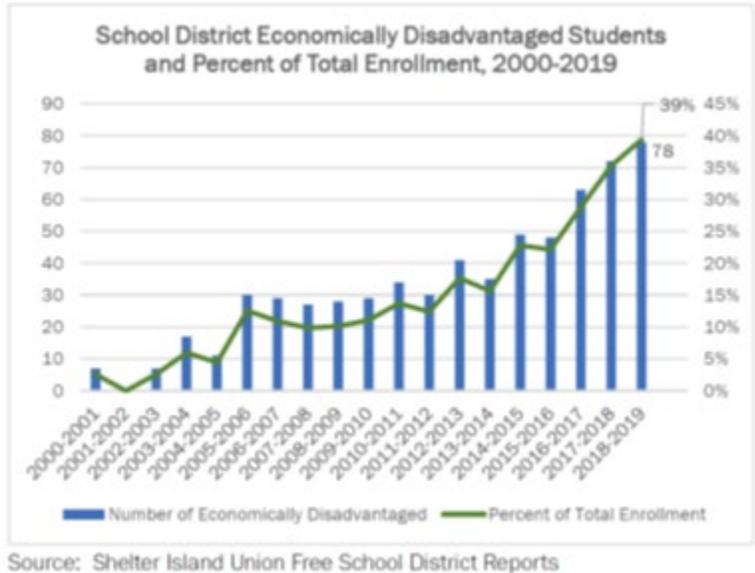
The 2000 census registered a 7.7% poverty rate for Shelter Island. In 2010, the poverty rate dropped to 1.6% and by 2020, the poverty rate increased to 11.0%, which is higher than the 2020 poverty rate of 6.5% for Suffolk County. The Census Bureau measures poverty by income level and this income level does not vary geographically. The result is that the Federal poverty threshold for a family of 4 is

a very low \$26,200, regardless of location. Newsday, on December 22, 2022, citing the Suffolk County Legislature's Welfare to Work Commission, declared that the actual poverty level in Suffolk County occurred at an income of \$55,500 for a family of four. It stands to reason, therefore, that in a high-cost location like Shelter Island, there can be significant numbers of low-income households that are not technically at poverty level.



Data from www.nysed.gov for the 2020-2021 school year, when K-12 enrollment was 200 students, show 80 students or 40% as economically disadvantaged. Prior to the 2012, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students was consistently below 10%.

The school district reports that almost all economically disadvantaged students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch through Medicaid. In 2020, New York State Medicaid eligibility for children aged 1 to 18 is reached when household income is no more than 154% of poverty level, adjusted for household size. This means that households of 3 or 4 would qualify with annual incomes in the \$33,000 to \$43,000 range.



How Well Educated Are We?

Shelter Island has long been a highly educated community. Over half the adults over 25 years old and living on Shelter Island are estimated to be college

graduates, with a significant additional group with graduate or professional degrees. The population with only a high school degree has been declining.

What Do We Know About the Population of Part-Time and Seasonal Residents and Visitors?

There are no direct data on the current population of part-time, summer, and visitor populations. In 2018, Suffolk County estimated the total Town of Shelter Island seasonal population as 8,825, including occupancy of seasonal (not year-round occupancy) homes, an estimate of guests in year-round homes, and an estimate of lodging guests. These estimates may not include Short Term Rental numbers, and do not include day visitors.

In 2020, the best estimate of part-time and seasonal (non-year-round) population: 12,300. The same assumptions about guest and occupancy factors used by Suffolk County in 2018 can produce an estimate of seasonal population in 2020. In 2020, the assessor’s database shows 2,459 single family homes, of which 1404 have off-island tax bill addresses, suggesting that they are not occupied year-round.

The 1055 year-round homes with an occupancy factor of 4, yield a total of 4,220 residents; add to that a .5 guest factor of 528 and the total for year-round residences in the summer is approximately 4,748. The 1404 seasonally used homes with an occupancy factor of 4, yield an estimated 5,616 seasonal residents. Adding up the two, we get 10,364 for summer residents. In addition, short term

Degree Level	2000	2010	2020
High School only	26.0%	22.5%	14.9%
Bachelor	23.7%	22.3%	31.3%
Graduate or Professional	19.2%	21.4%	28.1%

rentals are estimated to number 169 (supplied by Host Compliance, LLC on

9/1/2022) which adds (at an assumption of 4 people per rental) 676 people while the hotels add another 260 guests; day visitors and boaters may add another 1000 people for a grand total of 12,300 people on a summer's day.

Using these numbers, the summer resident population represents about 45% of the Island's population from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend while tourists account for 16% and year-round residents and their guests are approximately 39%

Findings:

Year-round population

- The year-round population of Shelter Island in 2020 was 3,253 (likely higher than normal due to the pandemic)
- Island residents are generally well-educated and affluent.
- Most households are composed of married couples without children under 18 at home, but there is also a significant number of single-person households.
- Over half the population is over 50 years old and over half the households include a person over 60 years old.
- In contrast, about 9% of households include children under 18.
- The population has become slightly more racially diverse over the last 20 years, but remains 87% white, non-Hispanic.
- School district data show growing diversity in the last decade. There has been a growing percentage of Hispanic students as well as economically disadvantaged students indicating income disparities in the year-round population.

Seasonal population

The summer seasonal population is estimated at approximately 12,300 persons

Challenges:

- Precise population numbers and other demographic information are difficult to obtain because of the seasonality of the Shelter Island Community.
- Managing and balancing the interests and needs of all groups in the population will require better data and community outreach.
- If the Baby Boomers in the full-time population continue to live on the island, aging into more fragile age groups, the demand for senior-friendly community systems and senior services and supports will increase.
- Growing diversity on the island, evidenced by the increase in Hispanic and low-income groups served by the public school system, may require responding to new needs but also bring economic and cultural benefits.

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