

Wrentham

Social Vulnerability

Social vulnerability refers to social, economic, demographic, or health factors that may make groups of people less resilient to climate change impacts. Certain vulnerabilities tend to be correlated; for example, older adults are more likely to have a disability and live alone than younger adults.

Our strategies for adapting to a changing climate should protect these populations in addition to our natural and built environment.

Who is most at risk from climate change impacts?

People who may be more susceptible to negative health effects: These can include older adults, young children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and people with pre-existing health conditions, as they are more likely to be physically vulnerable to the health impacts of extreme heat and poor air quality caused by climate change. Individuals with physical mobility constraints, such as people with disabilities and seniors, may need additional assistance with emergency response.

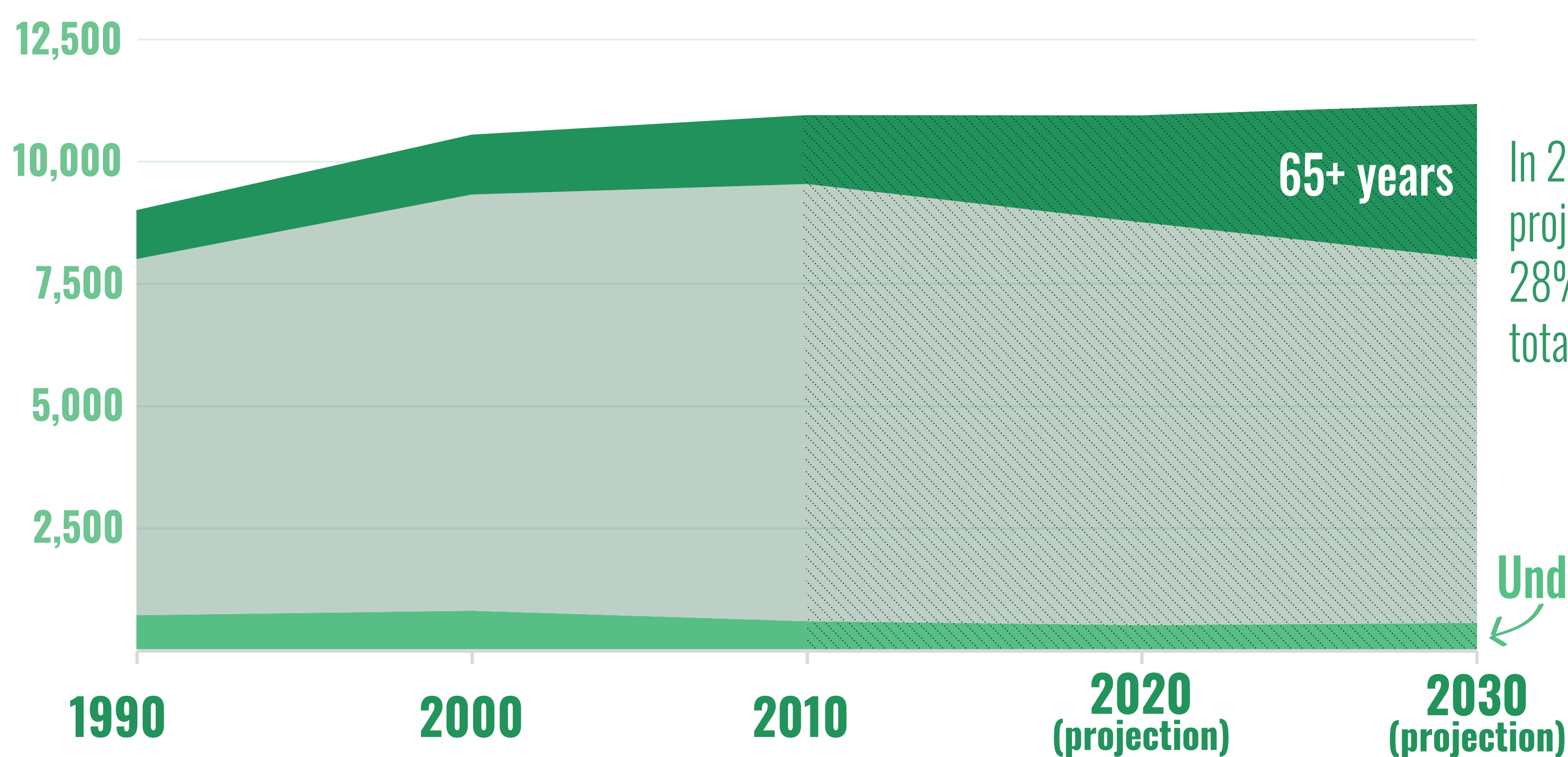
People who may have more difficulty adapting to, preparing for, or recovering from extreme weather events: Socioeconomic characteristics such as income and race can influence vulnerability to climate change. Low-income people are often more susceptible to financial shocks, which can occur after extreme weather and which can impact financial security and the ability to secure safe shelter and meet medical needs. Social isolation can also influence vulnerability, as it limits access to critical information, municipal resources, and social support systems. People at the most risk for social isolation include those living alone and people with limited English language proficiency.

People who live or work in vulnerable locations: Historic or predicted floodplain, urban flooding locations, areas prone to wildfire, heat islands, neighborhoods prone to power outages. Outdoor workers, first responders, those working in hot indoor environments.

Older Adults and Young Children

Adults over 65 and children under 5 are more likely to develop health problems on very hot days or during heat waves. Older adults are also more likely to have disabilities or mobility constraints and may need additional assistance during emergencies. They are also more likely to live alone than younger adults.

Wrentham Recent and Projected Population by Age



In 2030, seniors are projected to make up 28% of Wrentham's total population.

Under 5 years

People Living Alone



As of 2010, about 1/5 of Wrentham households consisted of someone living alone.

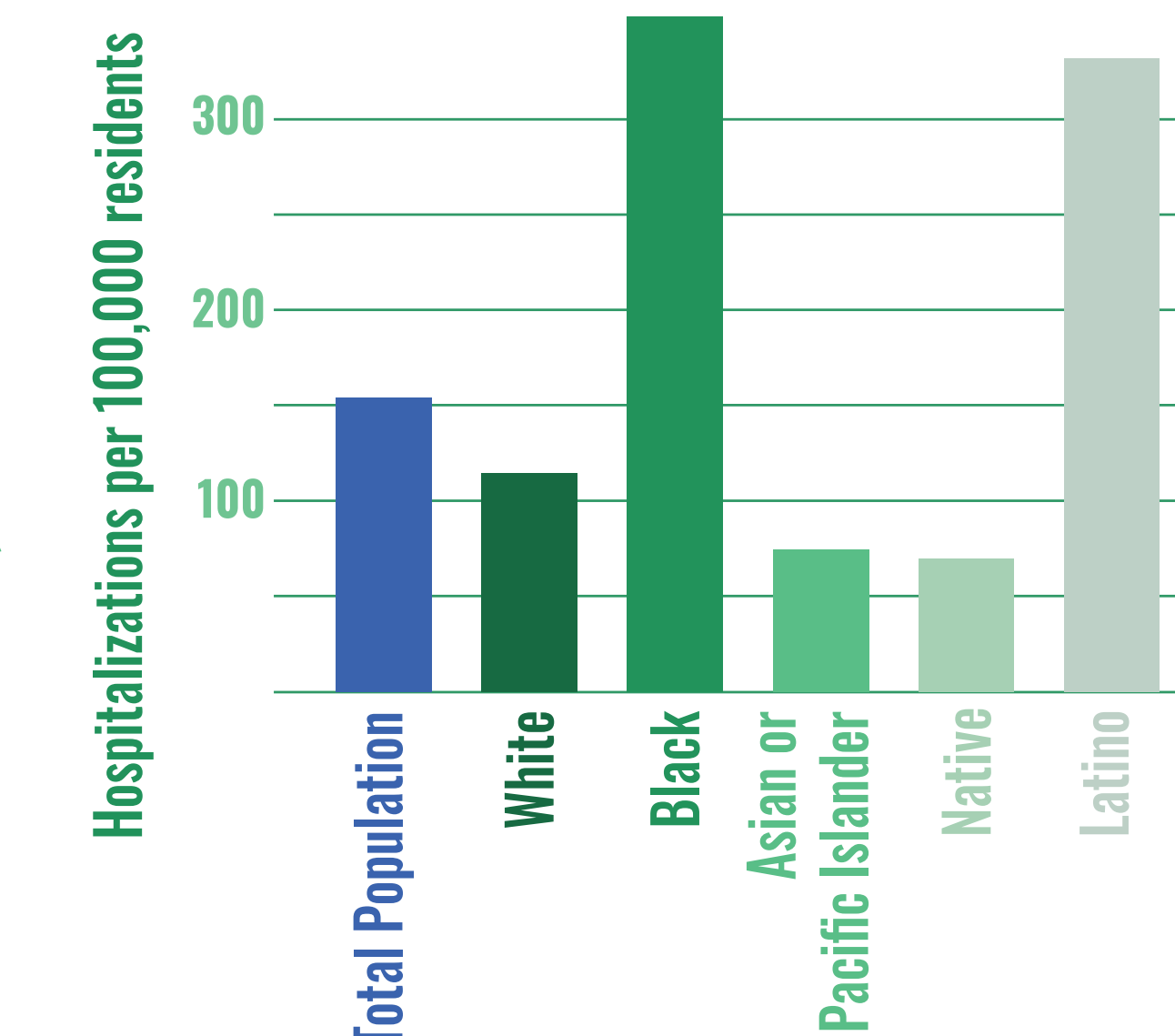
About 40% of people living alone were over 65.

Single-person households

People with Health Conditions

Massachusetts Asthma Hospitalizations

People who are already in poor health are more likely to be harmed by hot weather and resulting poor air quality.



Communities of Color

Particular racial or ethnic groups may also be more likely to have certain social vulnerabilities than others. For example, Black and Latino populations have a much higher rate of asthma hospitalizations than other groups.

Wrentham is becoming more diverse...

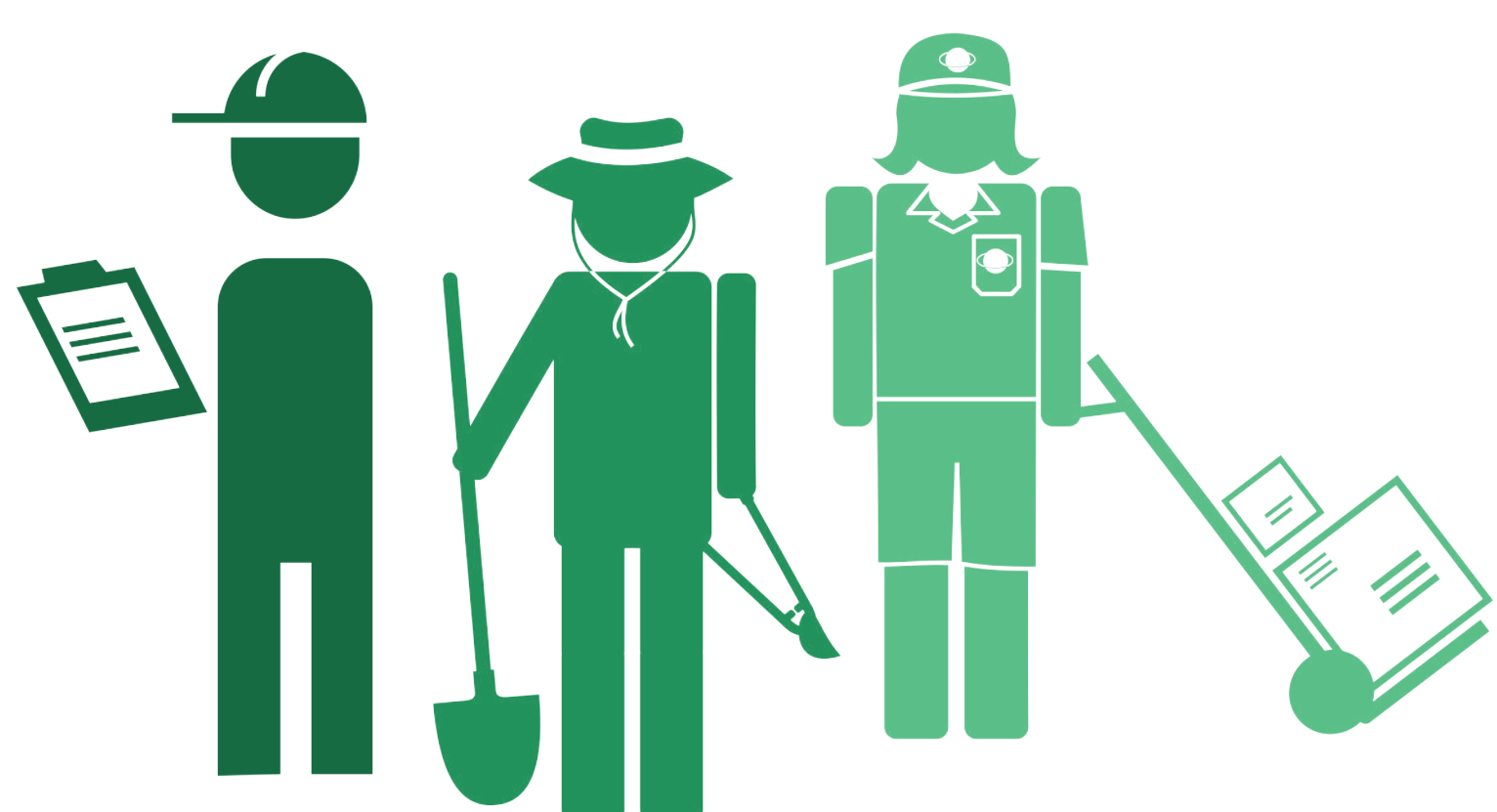
Although over 96% of the town's population is white...

Populations of color have increased since 1990.

3x
Latino population increase since 1990

1.5x
Asian population increase since 1990

People Who Work Outside



People who primarily work outside, such as parcel delivery people, construction workers, or farmers, may be at added risk from extra exposure to high heat and poor air quality.

Low Income Households

Households that earn low incomes or live under the poverty line are more susceptible to financial shocks triggered by extreme weather, which can cause long-lasting financial insecurity and can make it hard to secure safe shelter, sufficient food, and medical care.

27% ± 4.5% Households in Wrentham that are low-income

6% ± 2% Households in Wrentham that are below poverty level

*A four-person household earning less than \$78,150 is considered low-income; a four-person household earning less than \$24,563 is below poverty level