

# MOUNT HOLLY

## Housing Needs Assessment



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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### **SPECIAL THANKS**

Special thanks to the many organizations and community members that contributed their input to this planning process.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction & Executive Summary .....	4
Existing Conditions .....	8
Housing & Land Use Inventory .....	26
Affordability & Gaps Analysis .....	43
Stakeholder Vision .....	66
Opportunities & Constraints .....	75
Action Plan .....	90



# INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **WHY CREATE A HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN?**

The purpose of this document is to bring together demographic trends, economic conditions, housing market data, infrastructure constraints, community input, and land use considerations to present a clear picture of Mount Holly's housing needs today and in the years ahead. This Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan was prepared to help the Town of Mount Holly understand current housing conditions, identify gaps in the local housing market, and outline practical strategies that respond to both immediate needs and long-term goals.

## **WHO IS THIS PLAN FOR?**

The plan is designed for the Selectboard, Planning Commission, town staff and volunteers, regional partners, housing organizations, and community members who will play a role in addressing housing issues over time. The intent is to provide the Town with an actionable and realistic roadmap that helps the community address affordability issues and find new locations for housing that make sense from an economic, environmental, and social perspective.

## **WHAT ARE MOUNT HOLLY'S MAIN HOUSING CHALLENGES?**

As a small rural community with limited infrastructure and a mix of year-round and seasonal households, Mount Holly faces housing challenges that require short-term and long-term actions. Because Mount Holly does not have municipal water or wastewater systems, and development capacity is limited by topography and conserved lands, this assessment presents a range of solutions that are scaled to the town's context. New housing is envisioned to complement existing development patterns, address the needs of residents across income groups and ages, and support the overall character of the town's historic villages and rural landscape.

## **I want to understand...**

Housing opportunities & constraints analysis and mapping  
→ See page 76-90

Rental housing targets in Mount Holly  
→ See page 63

Ownership housing targets in Mount Holly  
→ See page 63-65

The Action Plan  
→ See page 91-110

## About this Plan

This Housing Needs Assessment provides an overview of Mount Holly's demographic trends, existing housing stock, environmental and infrastructure constraints, affordability pressures, and community priorities. It concludes with an Action Plan that outlines feasible steps the Town can take to support year-round housing that prioritizes affordability and is consistent with Mount Holly's rural conditions.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### *Population Trends*

Mount Holly's population reached 1,456 residents in 2023 and grew 11.6% between 2000 and 2020, even as Rutland County as a whole declined. The community has an older age profile, with a median age of 54.7 years compared to Vermont's 43.7 years. Nearly 47.3% of households include at least one person aged 65 or older, and only 20.8% include someone under age 18. The projected K-6 school population is expected to decline from 112 students to 88 students by 2026.

#### *Housing Stock Characteristics*

Mount Holly contains 1,161 housing units, of which only 586 (50.5%) are occupied. Roughly 516 homes (44%) are vacant, and 92% of those vacant homes are for seasonal or occasional use. Only 70 homes (6%) are renter-occupied. The housing stock is dominated by single-family detached units (88.1%), with very few multifamily buildings (14 total). Many homes are older: 17.8% were built before 1939, and nearly 45.4% were built before 1980.

#### *Market Conditions*

Home sales surged during the pandemic, with average sale prices rising 150% from 2019 to 2023 (from \$209,159 to \$521,741). Home prices declined slightly in 2024 to \$511,198. Median sale prices increased 119% over the same period. Current for-sale inventory typically ranges from the high \$300,000s to above \$500,000, well above most affordability thresholds calculated in this assessment. Rental options are extremely limited: during fall 2025, only three publicly listed rentals appeared—two luxury/seasonal listings priced at \$9,000 and \$28,000–\$32,000 per month, and one year-round 1-BR rental at \$1,400 per month.

#### *Infrastructure Constraints*

Mount Holly has no municipal water or wastewater systems, which severely limits opportunities for new year-round homes. The Town Plan notes that most soils in the village are unsuited for in-ground septic without engineered solutions. Environmental constraints also shape housing feasibility: approximately 160 parcels intersect with the floodplain, and 30.7% of all land in town is conserved.

#### *Affordability Challenges*

Renter households earn a median of \$44,792, significantly lower than the median income for

homeowners (\$76,563). Median renter housing costs (\$1,161/month) exceed median homeowner costs (\$1,059/month). About 60% of renter households and 38% of homeowners with a mortgage are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of income on housing). Under affordability benchmarks, an estimated 15–20 additional long-term rental units are needed to balance the local rental market. Affordable purchase prices for typical households fall between roughly \$232,000 and \$380,000 depending on unit size, but only a small portion of homes listed fall within that range.

#### *Community and Stakeholder Input*

Stakeholders (e.g., employers, housing organizations, school representatives, and service providers) consistently highlighted challenges created by the limited supply of year-round housing. Employers reported difficulty hiring or retaining workers because employees cannot find housing within a commutable distance. School representatives noted that teacher candidates have withdrawn from job offers due to lack of housing. Other stakeholders noted that older residents struggle to maintain large, aging homes, while younger families who want to move to Mount Holly cannot afford available options. Stakeholders involved in the development community identified the absence of wastewater infrastructure, rising seasonal demand, and limited local development capacity as key barriers.

## **Top Priority Actions for the Town**

1. Conduct neighborhood-scale wastewater pre-feasibility studies for Belmont Village, Mount Holly, and the Municipal Center to identify where modest, infill-oriented housing can realistically be supported.
2. Strengthen partnerships with regional housing organizations and state programs, including the Community Housing Incentive Program (CHIP), to prepare sites and support small-scale development.
3. Encourage incremental housing types, especially ADUs, small multiunit buildings, and shared-septic subdivisions in appropriate locations.
4. Address underutilized and blighted properties as opportunities for rehabilitation or redevelopment.
5. Expand rental options through scattered-site approaches, leveraging small lots, accessory structures, and modular construction.
6. Plan for long-term site readiness through landowner engagement, subdivision regulation updates, and identification of priority housing areas.



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

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## Community Overview

Mount Holly is a town of 1,456 residents located in Rutland County, VT. The community is rural in character and is located on the backside of Okemo Mountain. The neighboring town of Ludlow is the primary gateway to Okemo Mountain Resort. Mount Holly contains four hamlets, including Belmont, which is a designated Village Center. The town has one school, the Mount Holly School, which serves PreK-6 and is part of TRSU and Ludlow-Mount Holly Unified Union School District Board (LMHUUSD). Middle and high school students can choose between attending GMUHS (Chester) and Mill River (North Clarendon).

## Demographic & Market Analysis

The following section provides an overview of demographic and market trends in Mount Holly. These trends are important to consider in an assessment of the Town's growth and housing needs.

### POPULATION & GROWTH TRENDS

#### *Population & Growth*

The town has experienced minor but steady population growth in recent decades. The 11% increase from 2000-2022 is substantial when compared to the Rutland Region, which saw a decrease from around 63,000 in 2000 down to 60,000 in 2020. The largest growth in the region occurred around recreation assets like Killington, Mount Holly, and Wells.

### Note on Census Data:

When using Census data from the ACS (American Community Survey) for rural or sparsely populated areas, there is often increased uncertainty (larger margins of error) due to smaller sample sizes and other factors. As summarized in *Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What Users of Data for Rural Areas Need to Know* (October 2020), "ACS estimates have a degree of uncertainty associated with them, called sampling error, because they are based on a sample. In general, the larger the sample, the smaller the level of sampling error. Rural communities tend to have smaller samples than large cities, so the 'margin of error' — a measure of the precision of an estimate at a given level of confidence — likely will be larger for rural areas. The U.S. Census Bureau provides margins of error at the 90 percent level of confidence for each published ACS estimate."

<b>(ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023)</b>	
<b>Total Population, 2023</b>	1,456 people
<b>Population Growth Rate 2000 – 2020</b>	11.6%

Table 1. Population in Mount Holly (ACS, 2023)

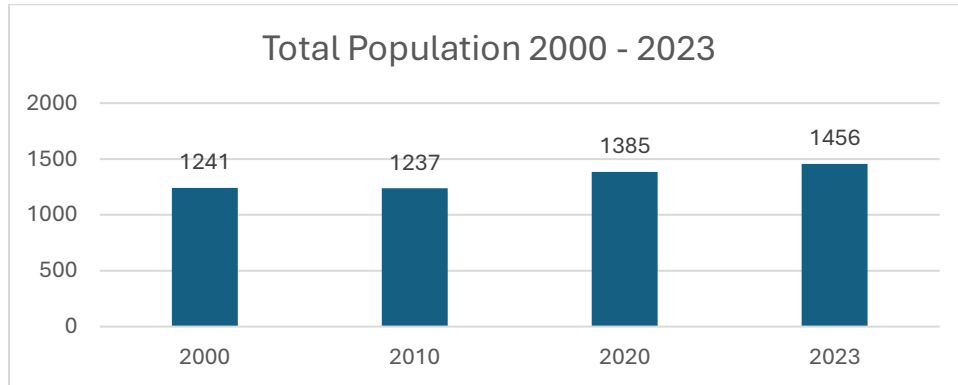


Figure 1. Mount Holly Total Population 2000 - 2023, US Census, ACS Estimates

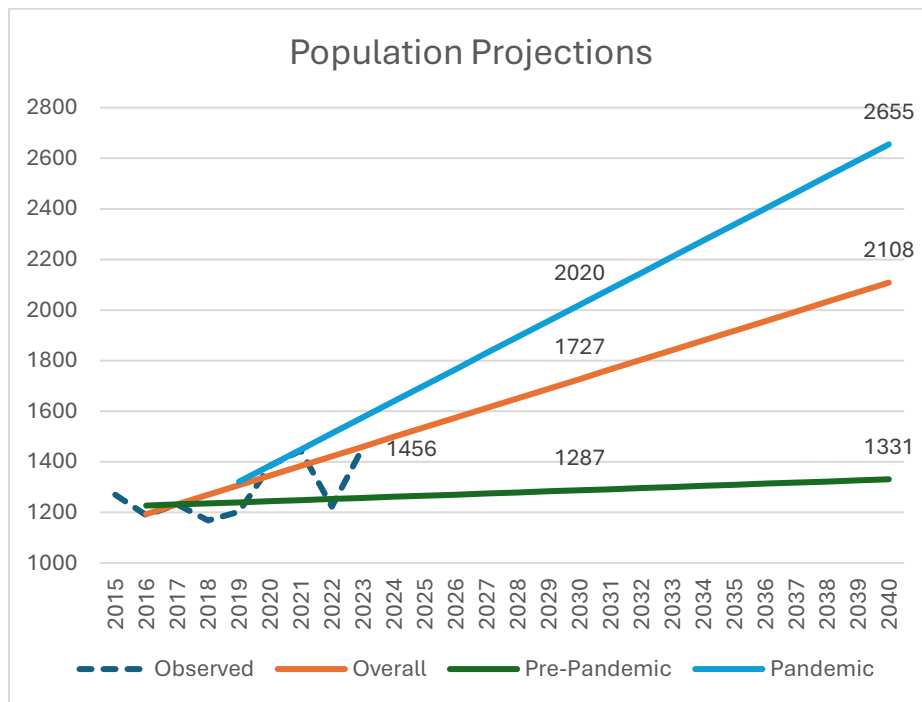


Figure 2. Population Projections

Population Estimate Type	2023 Total Population (US Census)	2030 Estimate	2040 Estimate
<b>Pre-Pandemic Growth Rate (Low, 2016-2019)</b>	1,456	1,486	1,530
<b>Overall Growth (Moderate, 2016-2023)</b>	1,456	1,727	2,108
<b>Pandemic Growth Rate (High, 2019-2023)</b>	1,456	2,020	2,655

Table 2. Population Estimates in Mount Holly (Extrapolated from ACS, 2023)

As shown in the chart above, pandemic era growth rates increased substantially compared to pre-pandemic rates. The overall growth rate shown is an average of the pandemic era and pre-pandemic growth rates. In all likelihood, the pandemic era growth rate will be an aberration from the broader growth trend, which has been more moderate.

Age

The majority of residents of Mount Holly are between the ages of 60 and 69. The town has very few residents between the ages of 15 to 19 and over 80 years old.

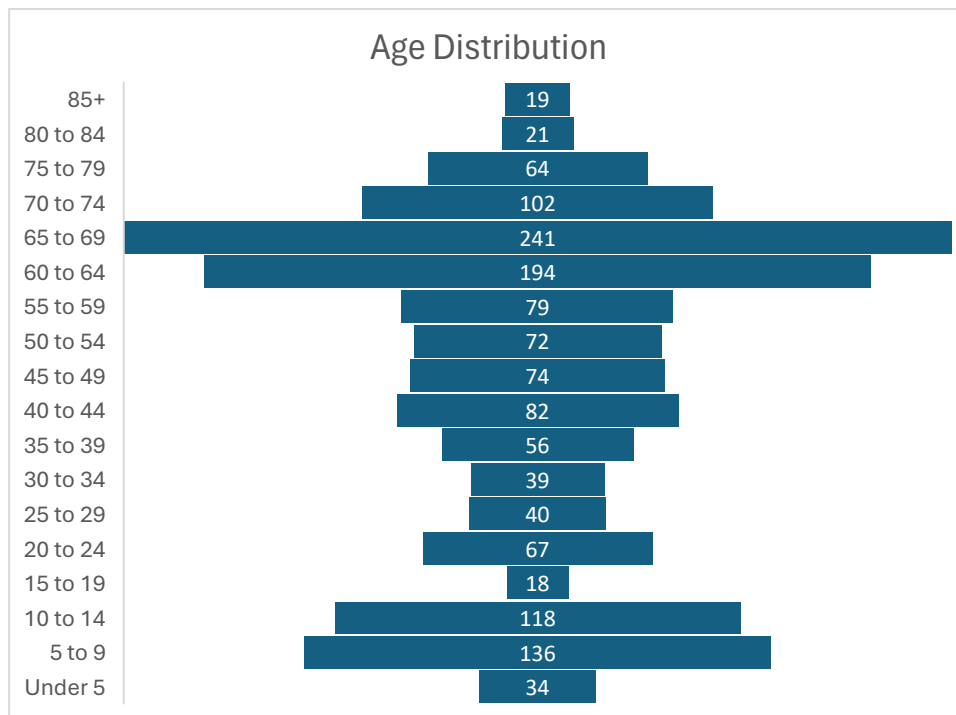


Figure 3. Mount Holly Age Distribution, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

<b>(ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023)</b>		<b>% of households</b>
<b>Mount Holly Median Age</b>	54.7 years	-
<b>Vermont Median Age</b>	43.7 years	-
<b>Households with one or more people under 18 years</b>	122 households	20.8%
<b>Mount Holly School Population (PreK-6<sup>th</sup> Grade)</b>	112 students	-
<b>Households with one or more people 65 years and older</b>	277 households	47.3%

Table 3. Age Composition (ACS, 2023)

The Town of Mount Holly has an older population than many communities, as shown by the high median age of the Town compared to the state and nearly 50% of households having at least one member over the age of 65. The very high average age of nearly 55 years old and recent population growth suggests that a portion of the growth in town has been from in-migration. Figure 3 shows the most populous age bracket of residents as 65-69 years old, followed by 60-64 years old. There is also a larger population of children aged 5-15 years old, likely related to the presence of the Mount Holly School, which serves students from PreK to 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. However, the school's 2024 annual report projects a declining future student population, with 99 students enrolled in 2025, and 88 students projected for 2026. There is a notable lack of young adults and middle-aged adults, suggesting a low population of working-age residents in Mount Holly. An aging and older population has implications for the community, its tax base, and the types of housing needed.

### Racial and Ethnic Breakdown

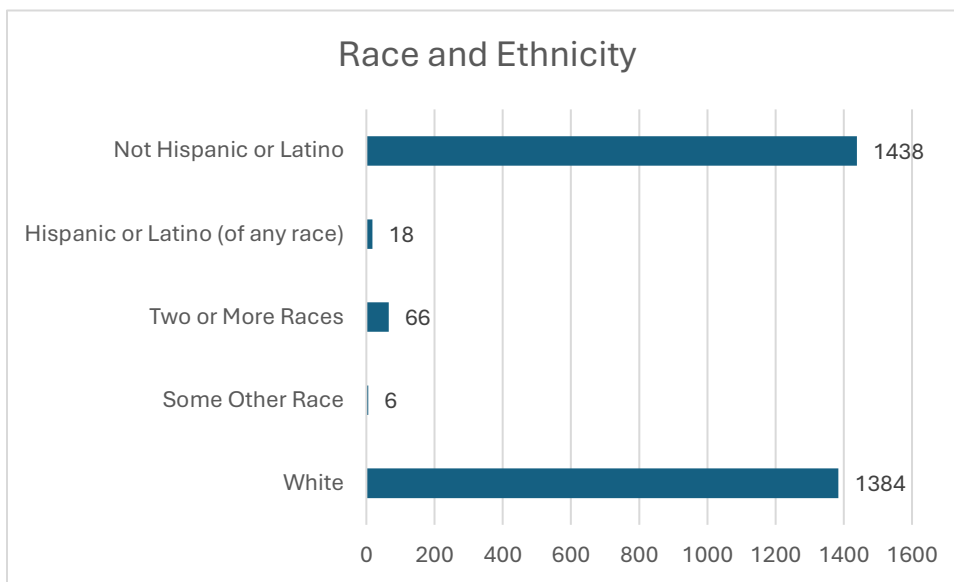


Figure 4. Mount Holly Race and Ethnicity, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Mount Holly has little racial or ethnic diversity among its residents. According to the 2023 ACS Census Estimates, there are zero Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander residents in Mount Holly. The large majority of the population (95.1%) identifies as White, and as Not Hispanic or Latino (98.8%).

### Households & Families

<b>(ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023)</b>	
<b>Total number of Households</b>	586
<b>Mount Holly Average Household Size</b>	2.48 people
<b>Vermont Average Household Size</b>	2.30 people
<b>Rutland County Average Household Size</b>	2.33 people

Table 4. Household Size (ACS, 2023)

The Town of Mount Holly has 586 total households, which consist of families or non-family units living together in one house. The average household size in Mount Holly is 2.48 people per household, higher than the state’s average of 2.30 people per household and the county average of 2.33 people per household. This number seems to conflict with other demographic trends in Mount Holly, which indicate few children and families and more retired empty-nester couples.

At-Risk Households

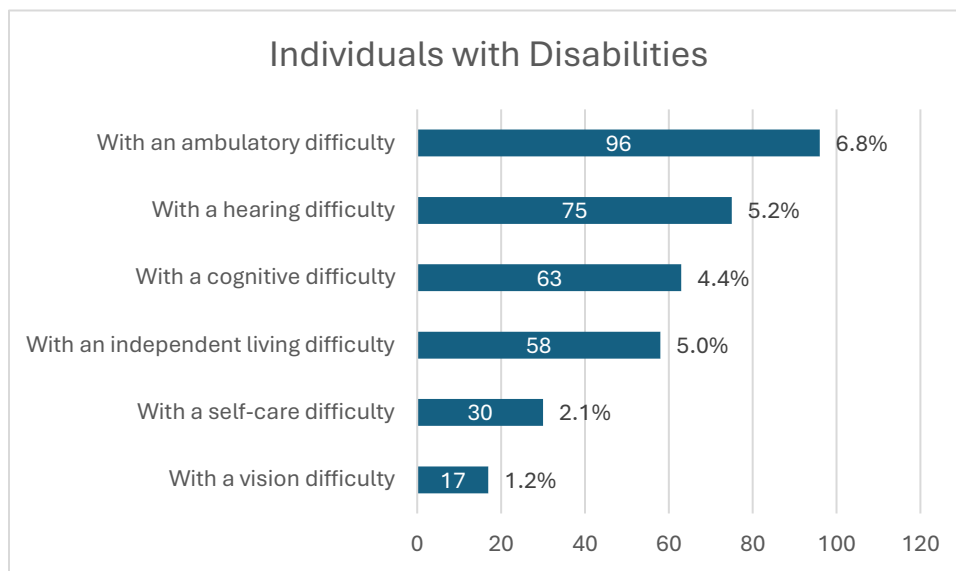


Figure 5. Mount Holly Individuals with Disabilities and Percentage of Population, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Approximately 14.4% of the Town’s population lives with at least one disability, roughly equal to the State of Vermont, at 14.5% of the state’s population. The most common disability in Mount Holly is ambulatory, or difficulty walking or climbing stairs, followed by hearing difficulties and cognitive difficulty. With an aging and older population, the number of community members with disabilities may rise over time and may have implications on needed housing types, transportation, and community services.

(ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023)	Number of Households	% of all Households
<b>Households without a computer</b>	19	3.2%
<b>Households without an internet subscription</b>	44	7.5%
<b>Households without a vehicle</b>	9	1.5%

Table 5. Households without computers, internet, and vehicles (ACS, 2023).

While not all households within the Town have an active internet subscription, the Mount Holly Town Plan states that Mount Holly is one of the few towns in the state to have nearly 100% of homes served by broadband internet – a feat for such a rural town. Phone service in Mount Holly, however, still lags behind the rest of the state. In 2022, the state commissioned a mobile wireless drive test, mapping voice and data connectivity throughout the state for the 6 major cell phone service providers. Of the roads in Mount Holly surveyed by this study, the majority had very little phone service, resulting in less than half of all calls completed or no calls completed in many areas (Figure 6). According to the 2024 Town Plan, the Town’s first-ever cellular phone tower went live in 2022, providing AT&T and FirstNet coverage to a majority of the VT-103 corridor.

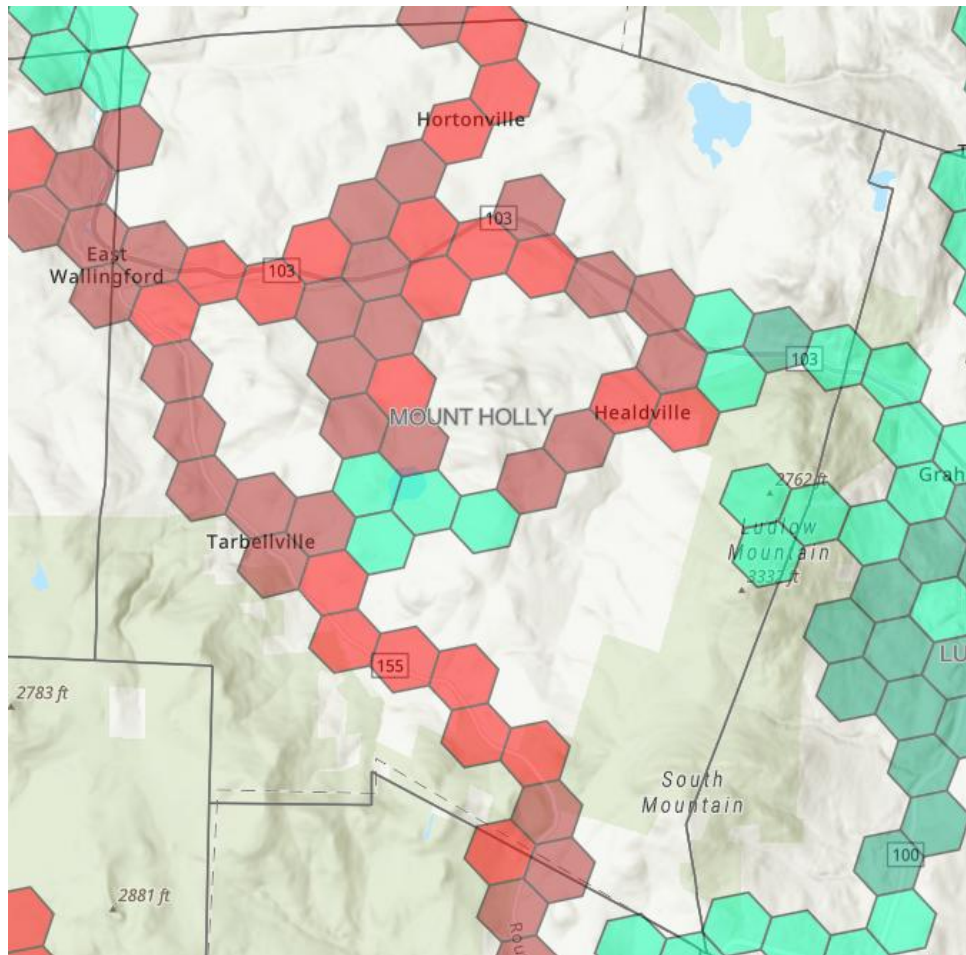


Figure 6. Mobile Voice Service Test Coverage, 2022. The map above is the best-available data, but service test coverage has expanded since data was collected in 2022.

Poverty & Homelessness

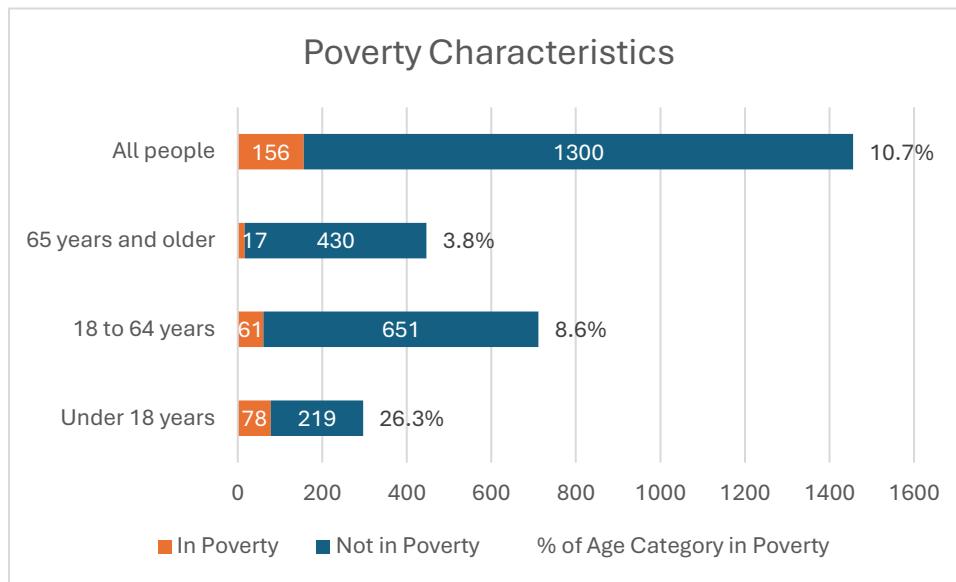


Figure 7. Mount Holly Poverty Characteristics, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Approximately 10.7% of residents in Mount Holly are below the federal poverty line, similar to the state poverty rate of 10.3%. However, children account for 50% of all people in poverty in the town, and the rate of childhood poverty in Mount Holly (26.3%) is significantly higher than the state’s childhood poverty rate of 10.8%. This suggests that young families in Mount Holly are significantly more likely to be in poverty than those without children.

While there is no homelessness data specific to Mount Holly, there are counts for the Rutland County region. The annual point-in-time (PIT) counts for Rutland County in 2023 indicated that 654 individuals were suffering from homelessness in 2023 and 502 in 2024 (VT HNA, 2025).

## SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

### Household Income

(ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023)	Mount Holly	Rutland County
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$66,810	\$64,778

Table 6. Median Household Income in Mount Holly & Rutland County (ACS, 2023).

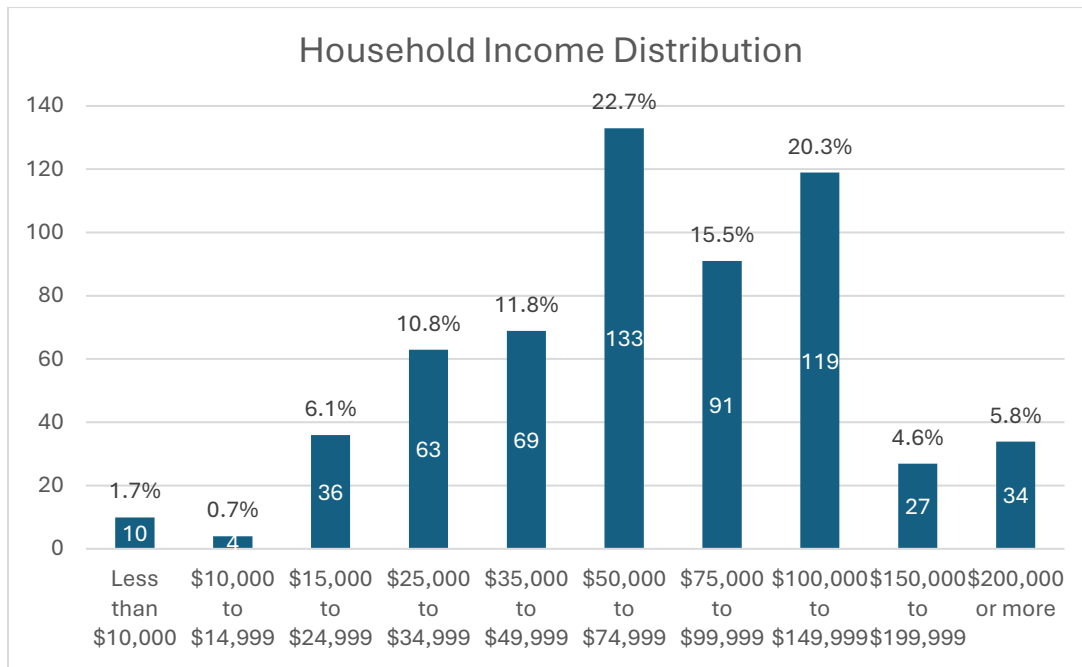


Figure 8. Mount Holly Household Income Distribution and Percentage of Total Households, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Household income distribution in 2023 shows that a large portion of households (22.7%) have an income in the \$50,000 - \$75,000 range, while another large portion of households (20.3%) have an income in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range. 31.1% of households make less than \$50,000, with very few households making less than \$15,000 annually.

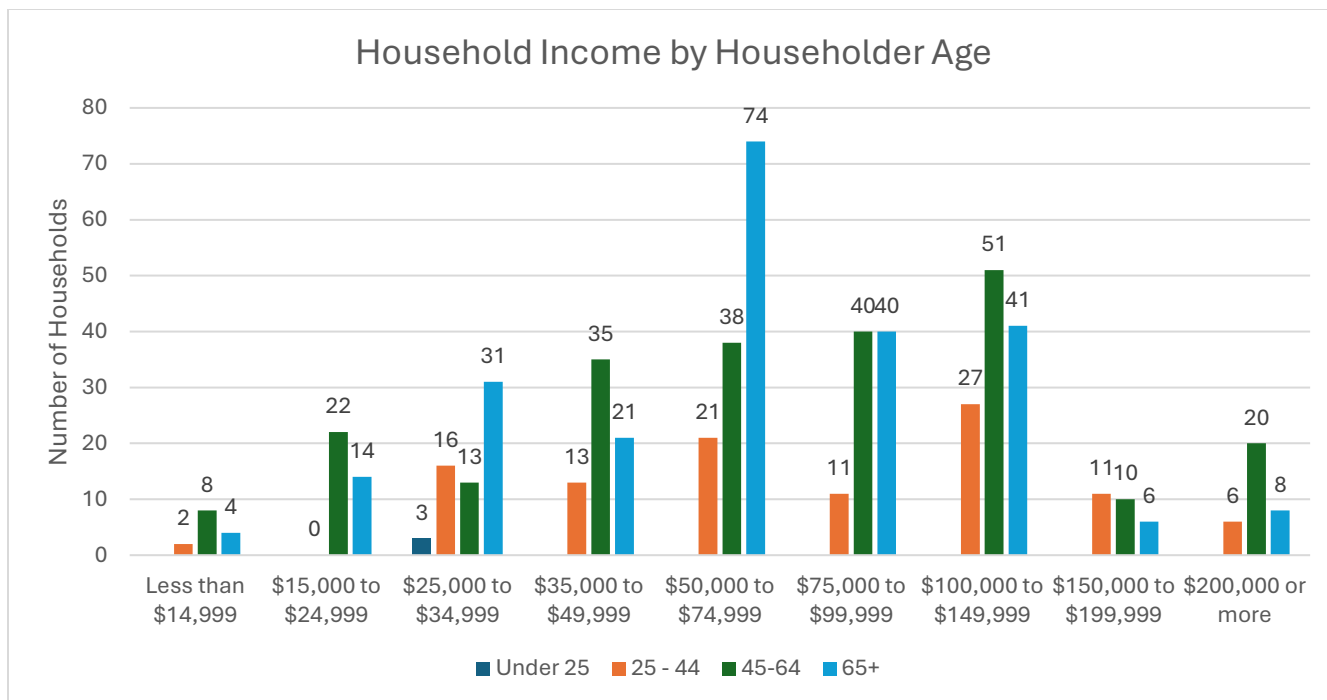


Figure 9. Household Income by Householder Age, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Household income distribution varies across different life stages, with peak earning potential typically occurring in the 45-64 age range. There are very few householders under the age of 25 – 3 total – all of which have a household income of \$25,000 – \$35,000, which is relatively low-income. Early- to mid-career householders (25 – 44) have a relatively even spread across most income brackets, with the highest concentration in the \$100,000-150,000 income bracket, followed by \$50,000-\$75,000. Mid- to late-career householders are strongly represented across middle to high income levels, with the highest representation in the \$100,000-\$150,000 income bracket followed by \$75,000-\$100,000 and \$50,000-\$75,000. This age group has the highest representation in the \$200,000+ income category, likely due to peak earning years. Seniors (65+) have the highest representation in the \$50,000-\$75,000 income bracket, with few households in the lowest and highest brackets, suggesting retirement income.

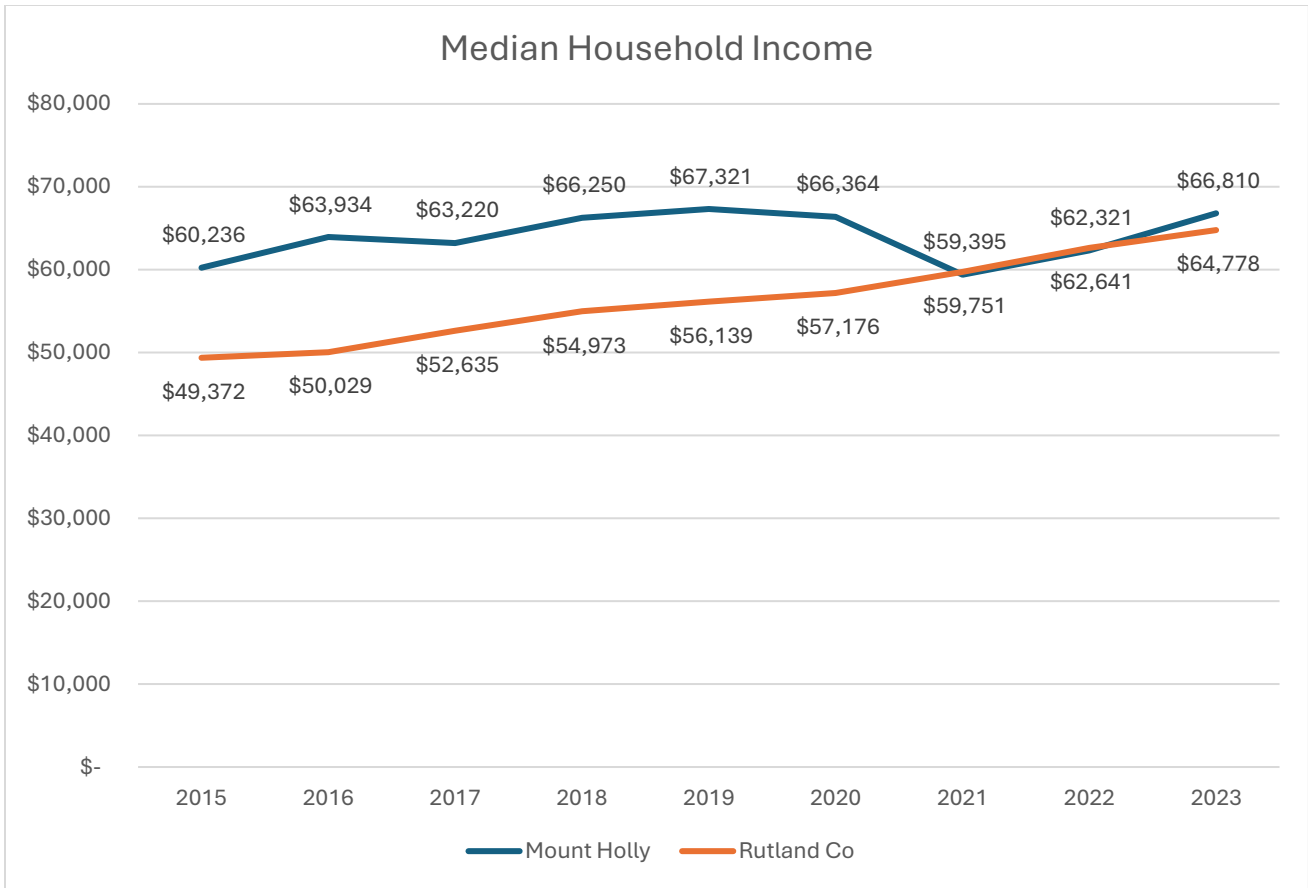


Figure 10. Mount Holly and Rutland County Median Household Income 2015 - 2023, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

The median household income in Mount Holly was \$66,810 in 2023, higher than the Rutland County median household income of \$64,778. Mount Holly has typically had a significantly higher median household income than the rest of the County, however, in 2020 many people quit or lost their jobs and Mount Holly’s median household income fell to approximately the same as the County for two years, only beginning to diverge again in 2023.

*Labor Force & Primary Industries*

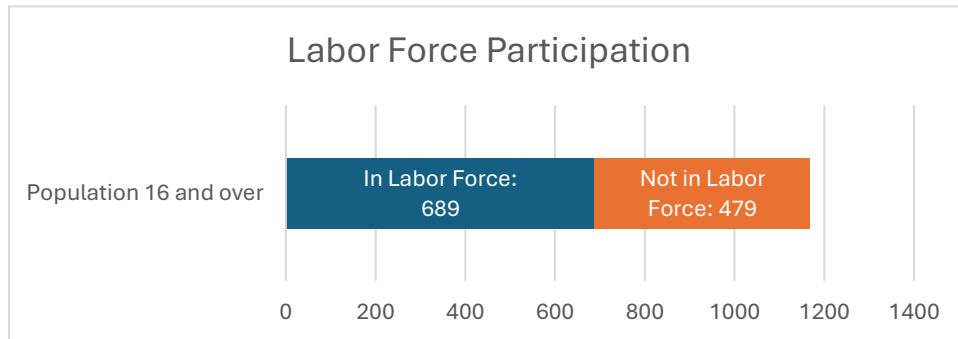


Figure 11. Mount Holly Labor Force Participation of Population 16+, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

<b>(ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023)</b>	<b>Mount Holly</b>	<b>Rutland County</b>
<b>Population 16 and over</b>	1,168 people	51,306
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	59%	58.4%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	1.9%	4.1%
<b>Worked from Home</b>	72 people (11.6%)	2,664 people (9.4%)

Table 7. Labor Force Data for Mount Holly and Rutland County (ACS, 2023).

While there are 1,168 people over the age of 16 in Mount Holly, 689 (59%) participate in the labor force, roughly on par with the rest of Rutland County. The Town's unemployment rate is 1.9%, less than half of the County's unemployment rate of 4.1%. Mount Holly residents are largely employed in the educational services, healthcare, and social assistance industry (29.3%), followed by construction (18.9%) and manufacturing (12.4%). Many Mount Holly residents are employed by local school districts and the Rutland Regional Medical Center. Approximately 11.6% of workers over the age of 16 work from home (72 people). This is higher than the County's rate of working from home and may be because of the limited nearby employment opportunities in Mount Holly and the recent increase in internet access throughout the Town.

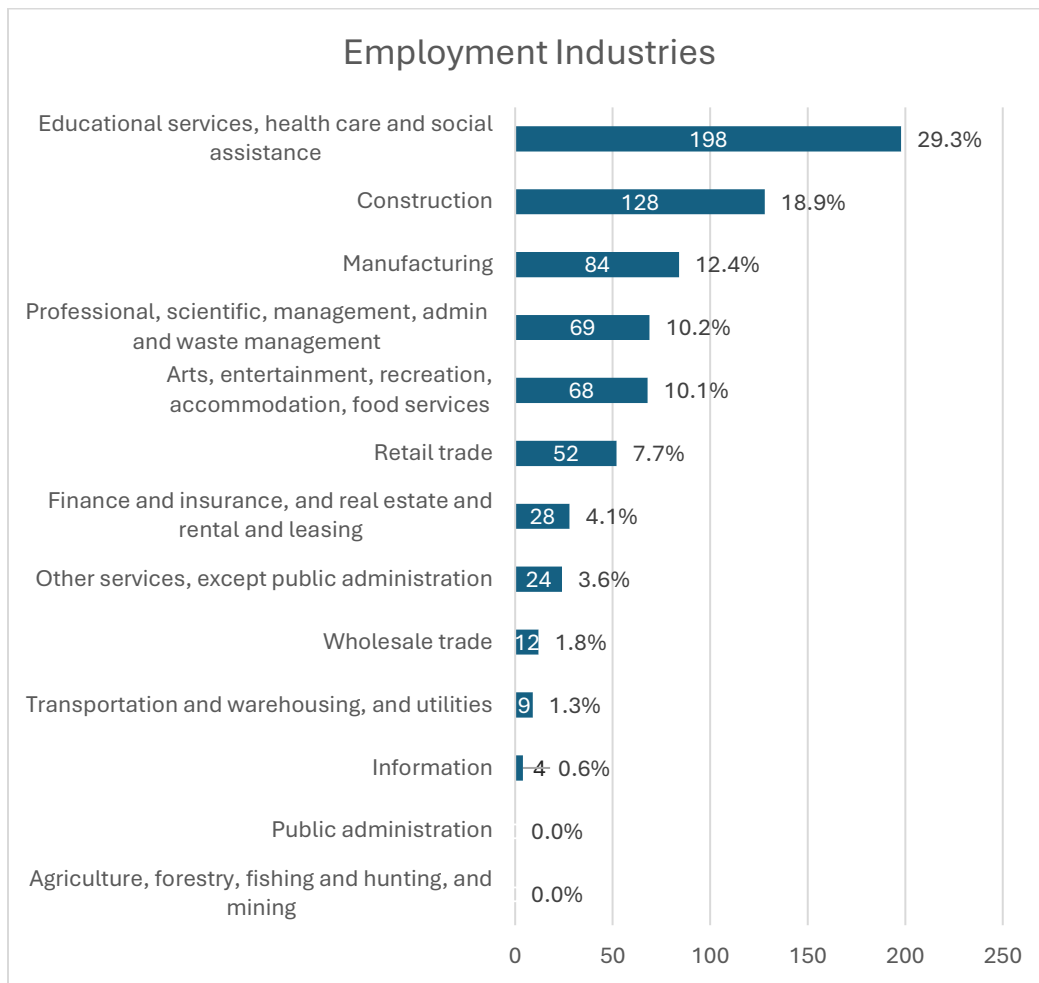


Figure 12. Mount Holly Employment Industries by Resident Jobs, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

### Commuting Patterns

Very few Mount Holly residents also work within the Town of Mount Holly (15 people, 2.7% of Mount Holly labor force). In 2022, there were a total of 110 jobs in Mount Holly and 95 (86.4%) were held by people living outside of Town limits. Mount Holly residents have an average travel time to work of 29.2 minutes, indicating a far commute for many residents. There are significant transportation costs associated with long commutes, as shown in Figures 13 and 14.

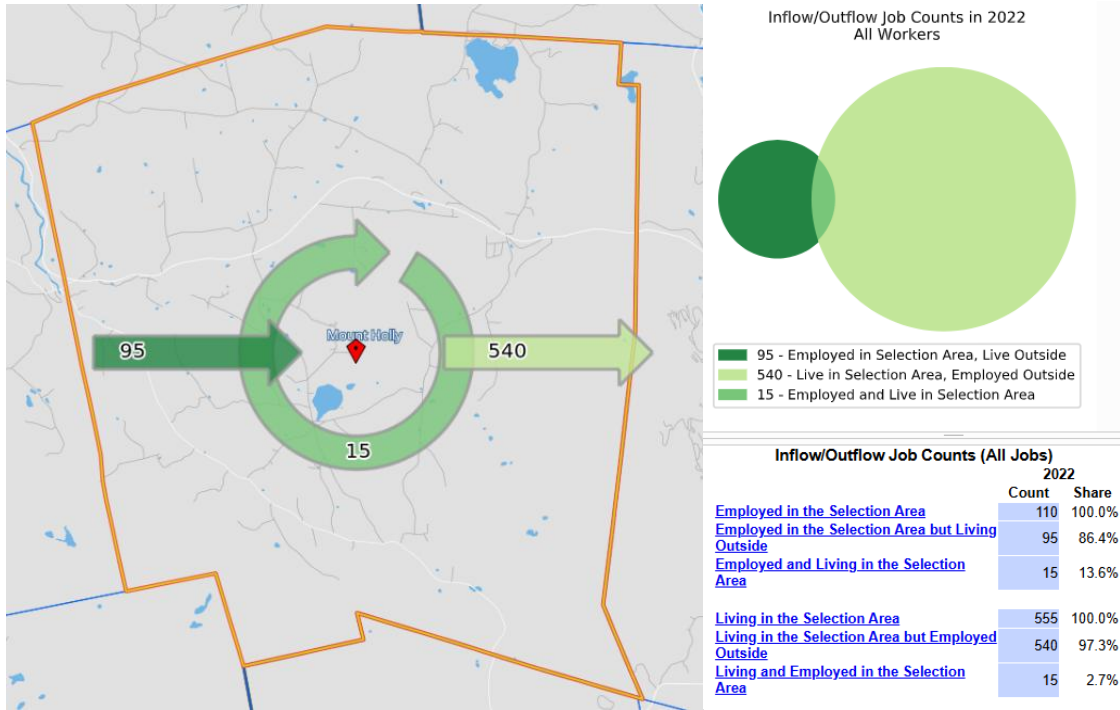


Figure 13. Job Count Inflow/Outflow, Census On the Map 2022

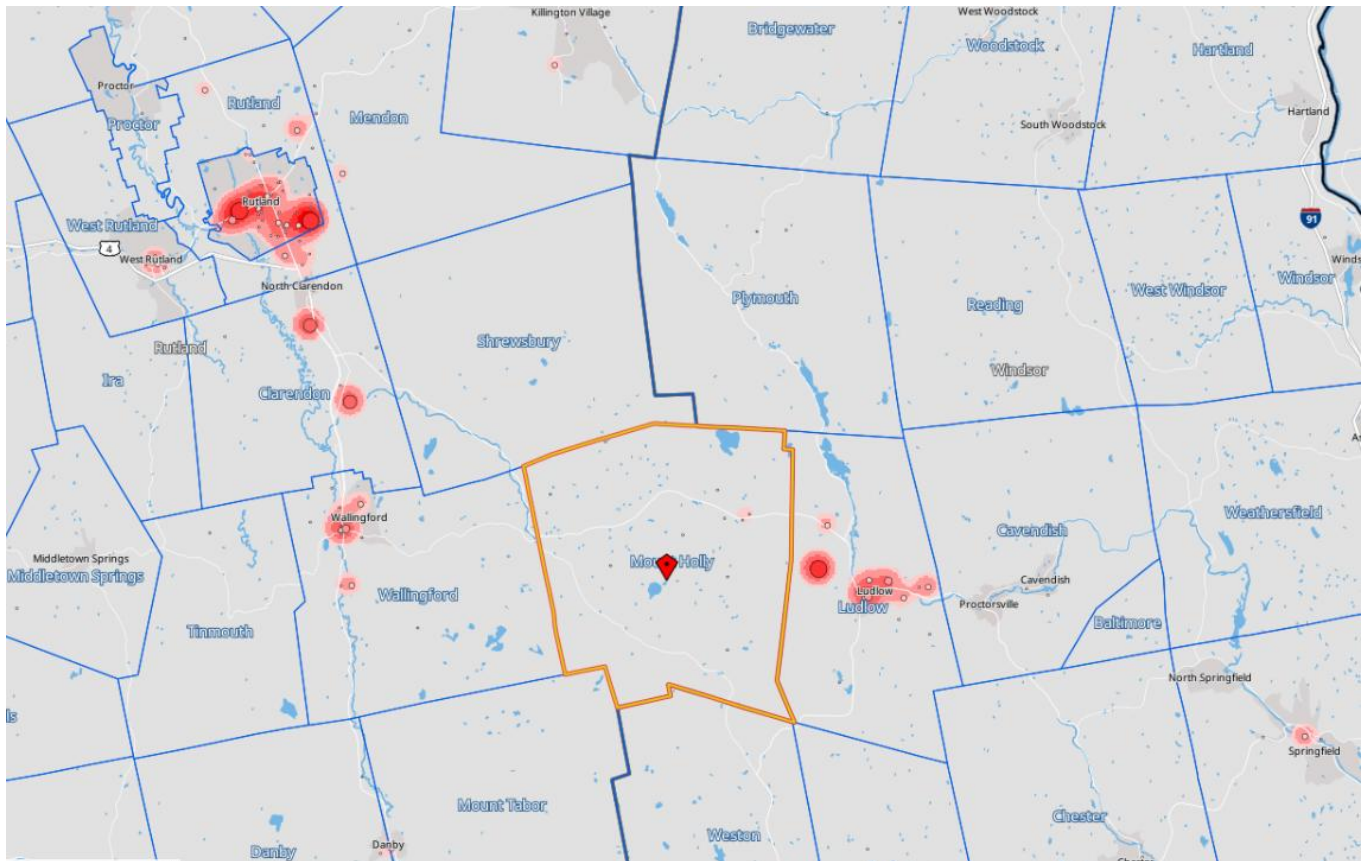


Figure 14. Mount Holly Resident Employment Locations, Census On the Map 2022

Figure 14 displays the geographic location and distribution of Mount Holly residents' employment locations, highlighting major employment centers in Ludlow, Wallingford, and Rutland. The only employment "hotspot" in Mount Holly is located in Healdville, which is where Wright Construction and a few other small businesses are located. Housing and economic development are closely tied together; a critical mass of jobs creates a need for housing. In this case, Mount Holly is primarily a bedroom community within the region, with larger job centers being located in Rutland and Ludlow.

## **RELEVANT PLANS & STUDIES**

### *Mount Holly Town Plan (2024)*

The Mount Holly Town Plan was adopted in February 2024. This plan provides “clear, written standards for orderly development that preserve the town’s distinctly rural character and appearance while providing community services and recreational and cultural opportunities.” The plan presents a vision for the town with 20 accompanying objectives that emphasize community diversity, rural development patterns, opportunities for smart growth to meet community needs, preservation of working lands and forest blocks, and economic and environmental sustainability.

The Town Plan provides an overview of the existing land uses throughout the Town, accompanied by specific recommendations where appropriate. The Village of Belmont and the Municipal Center are discussed as the two primary focal points of population and services within the Town. The Future Land Use Designations and Map describe the following Future Use Areas:

#### Rural Countryside

- Rural Residential
- Forest and Conservation
- Agricultural
- Wetland and Riparian

#### Residential, Village, and Municipal Centers

- Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Village Center
- Municipal

#### Special Use Areas

- Ski Area & Resort

The Plan also provides context and recommendations on the following topics:

- Transportation
- Utilities and Facilities
- Preservation
- Educational Facilities
- Housing
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Flood Resilience

The Town’s Subdivision Regulations serve as one of the primary regulatory implementation tools for this plan, alongside the Flood Hazard and River Corridors Bylaw. Non-regulatory implementation tools recommended include capital planning, public engagement, public investment, creation and/or nomination of historic districts or structures, land preservation

programs, Village Center Designations, acceptance or purchase of development rights, and supporting plans.

Like some other rural Vermont communities, the Town does not have zoning bylaws. Zoning bylaws are an important tool to both regulate and encourage different forms of housing development. However, they also require local capacity to adopt and administer. The fact that Mount Holly does not have zoning will mean that future housing development may be challenging to regulate. At present, the town's subdivision regulations, which were adopted in 1998, are the most comprehensive piece of land use regulation in Mount Holly. These regulations are expected to be updated in 2026.

#### *Belmont Village Plan (2023)*

Belmont is the central village area in Mount Holly and the only certified Village Center within the Town. In 2023, a Village Plan was created to identify the issues and opportunities related to the economic wellbeing of the Town, vitality of the Village, resident health, the environment, and overall quality of life. Some of the primary opportunities highlighted by this plan include:

- Measured residential and commercial growth in the Village, including opportunities to serve local seniors and younger workers in search of year-round rentals
- Exploring the development of community septic to serve the Village
- Continued work to protect and improve the Star Lake water quality
- Enhance recreation opportunities and network of walking paths in and around the Village
- Improved streetscape and parking infrastructure
- Improvement of the aging stormwater system

The plan provides recommendations for achieving these and other goals to improve and support the Belmont Village.

#### *Rutland Regional Plan (2018)*

This plan, drafted by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission in 2018, analyzes and addresses regional trends within Rutland County, including land use, housing, economic activity, community facilities and services, natural resources, infrastructure, and transportation. This plan identifies Mount Holly as a largely residential Town in which many residents commute to larger employment centers throughout the region. The plan highlighted Mount Holly's moderate residential development growth through the 2010's, acknowledging that almost 30% of new units were considered seasonal residences. According to this plan, in 2018, Mount Holly had 1 Registered Home Care Provider with capacity for 6 children, and 2 Licensed Childcare Providers, with capacity for 65 children.



## HOUSING & LAND USE INVENTORY

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## EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

### Total Units

According to 2023 ACS Census Data, there are 1,161 housing units in Mount Holly, 586 (50.5%) of which are occupied.

### Unit Typology

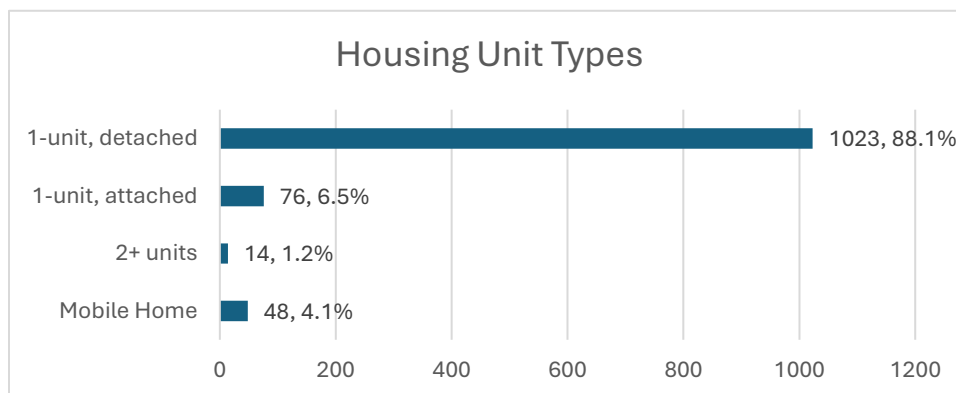
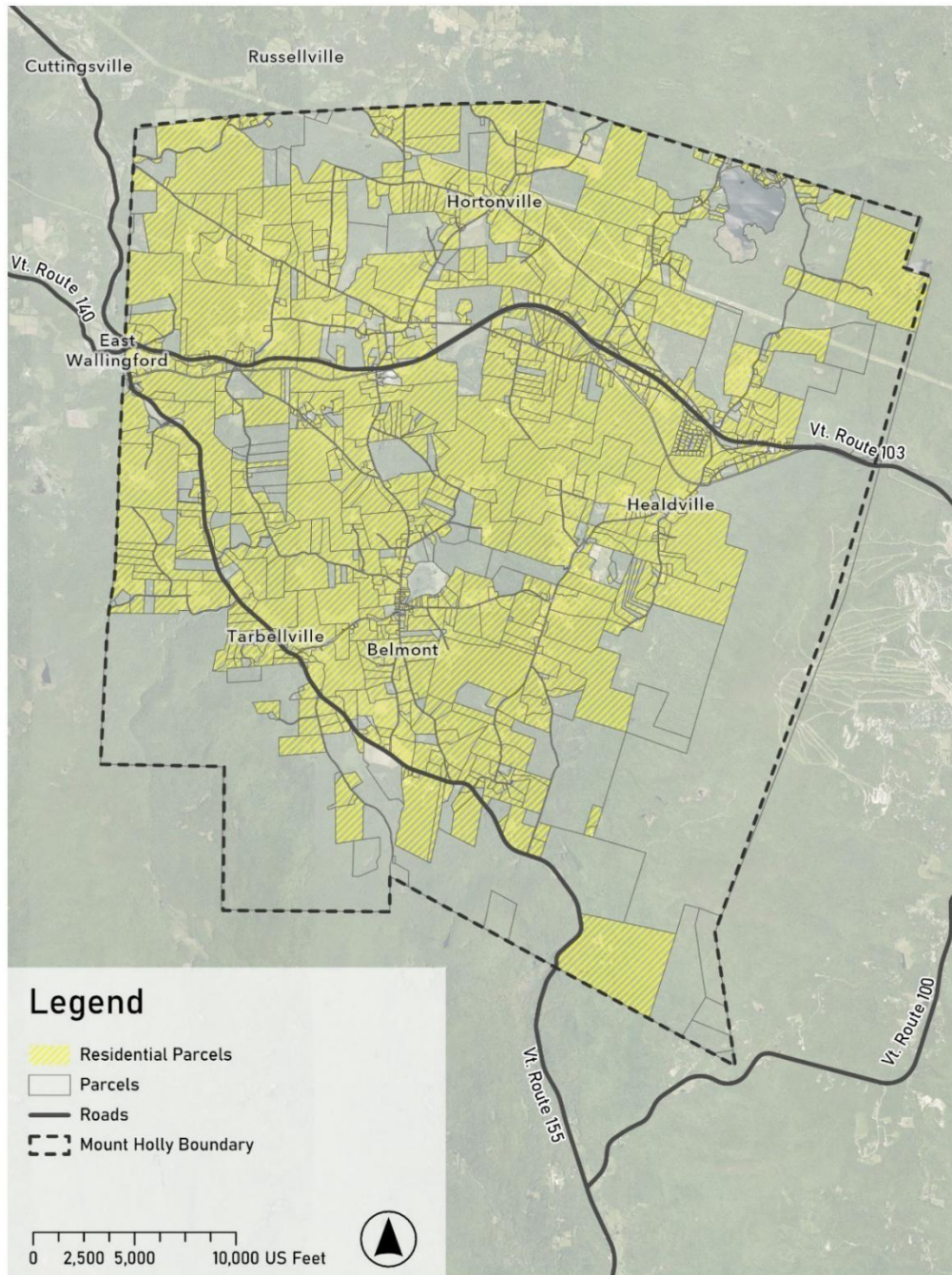


Figure 15. Mount Holly Housing Unit Types, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

The majority of homes in Mount Holly are single family homes, primarily detached (88.1%) as well as attached (6.5%). According to Census estimates, there are only 14 multi-family homes of two or more homes in Mount Holly, accounting for just over 1% of the Town's housing stock. Mobile homes are another somewhat common housing typology in Mount Holly, accounting for approximately 4% of the Town's housing stock. There are no official mobile home parks or communities in Mount Holly, meaning that the mobile homes in Mount Holly are located on privately-owned land.

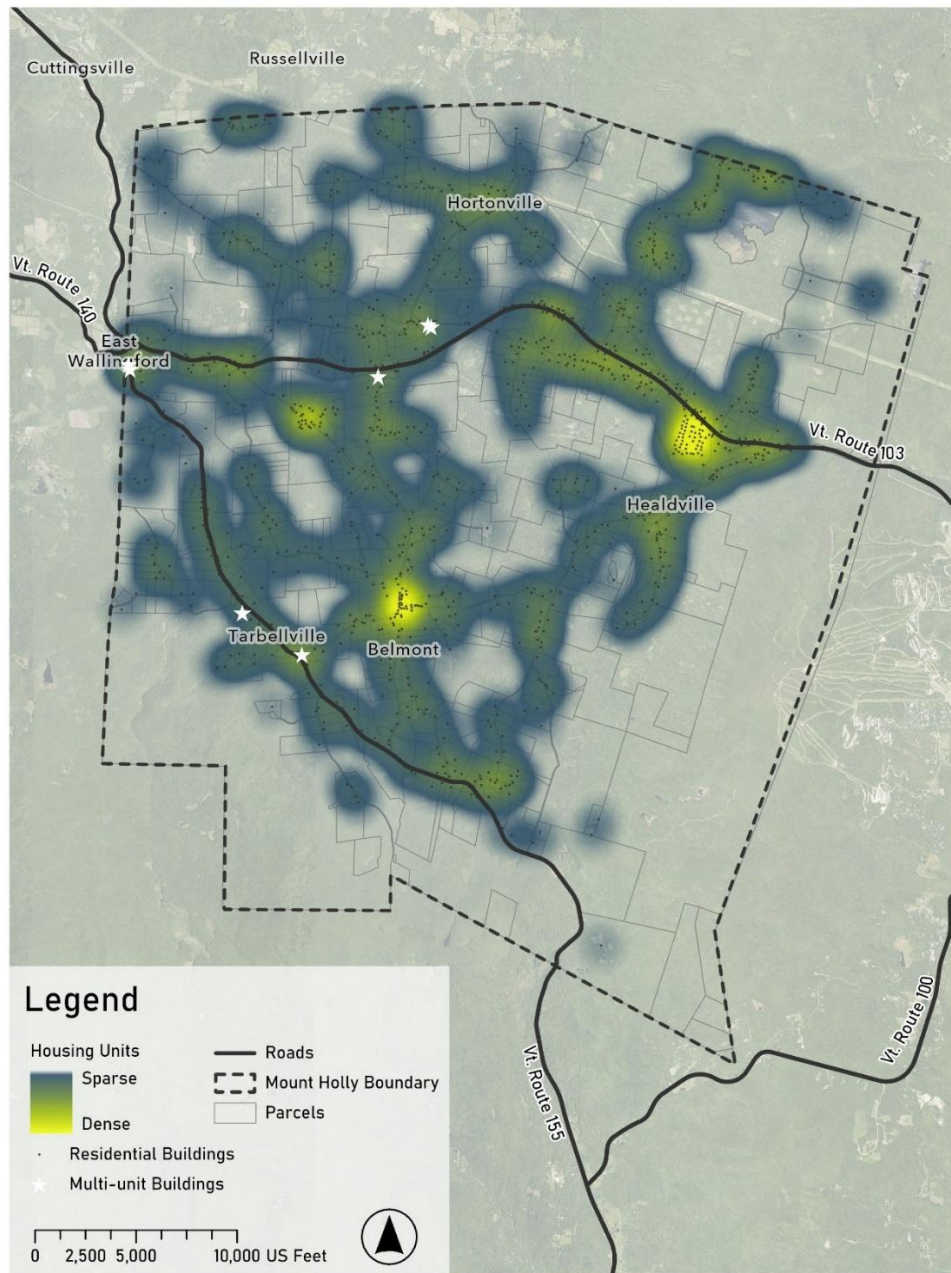
### Distribution of Residential Parcels



Map 1. Distribution of Residential Parcels

Out of 1,237 total parcels in Mount Holly, 974 are classified as residential in tax rolls and make up 78.3% of all parcels.

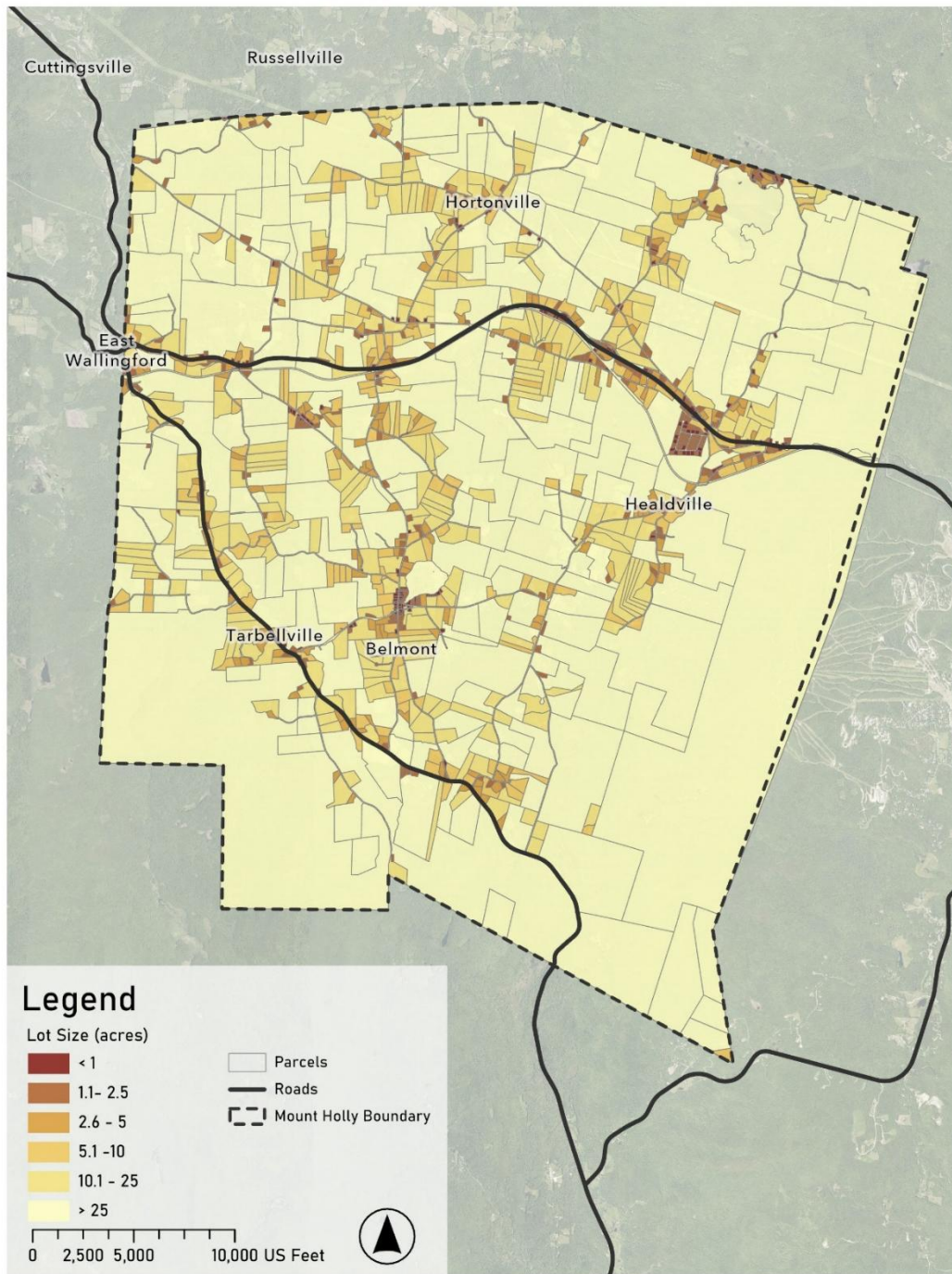
### Mount Holly Housing Density Map



Map 2. Housing Unit Density

Housing distribution in Mount Holly is largely clustered around the village of Belmont, in Healdville, and along State Routes 103 and 155, Lake Ninevah, and Hortonville Roads. According to state land use data, there are 7 multi-unit buildings in Mount Holly (2+ dwelling units on the same property).

### Lot Sizes



Map 3. Town of Mount Holly Lot Sizes

Lot sizes largely mirror residential density patterns, highlighting more village-style development with smaller lots in Belmont and near Healdville. The average parcel size of properties in Mount Holly is 25 acres, while the median parcel size is 5 acres, indicating a high number of small parcels and a few very large parcels within the Town.

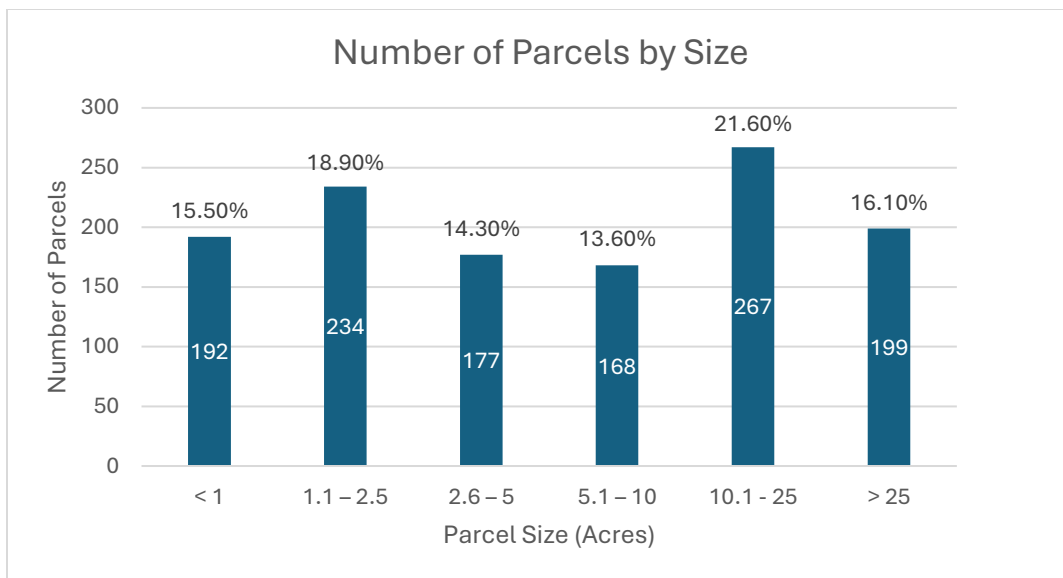


Figure 16. Number of Parcels by Size

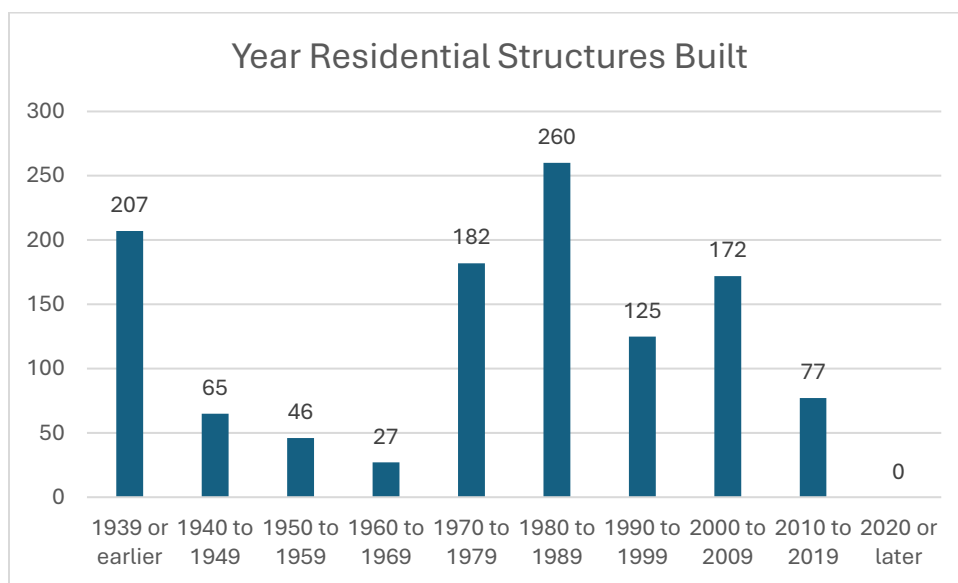


Figure 17. Mount Holly Year Residential Structures Built, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

The median year that homes were built in Mount Holly is 1982. Figure 17 shows the distribution of home ages according to the 2023 Census Estimates and highlights a peak of residential building activity during the 1980’s (260 homes) as well as before 1939. Older homes often require more maintenance and are more expensive to heat and cool.

Census estimates have not caught up to recent development in Mount Holly since 2020. However, the Town’s Building Registration Data in Figure 21 below show 109 new construction registrations since 2020.

Residency Breakdown (Owner, Renter, Vacant)

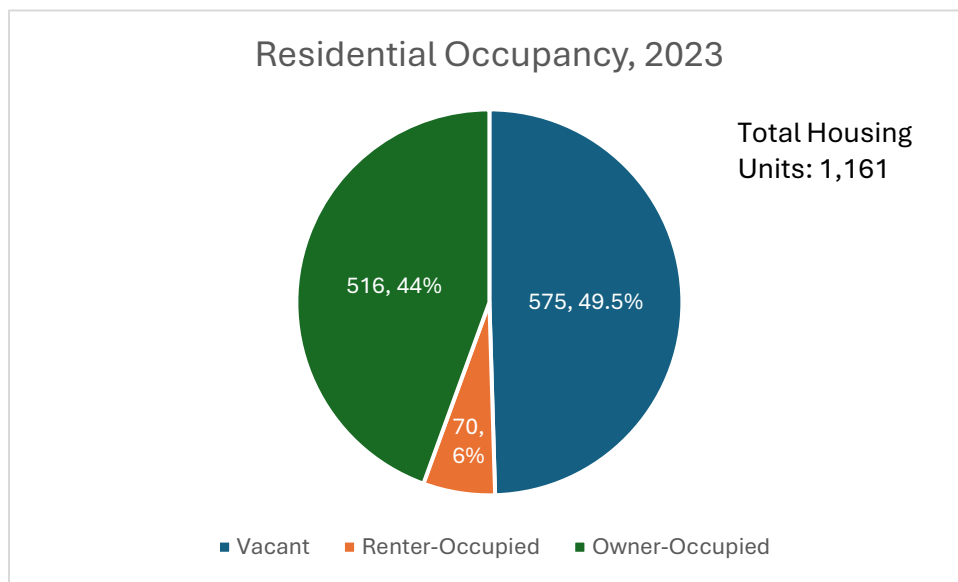


Figure 18. Mount Holly Residential Occupancy, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

Approximately 49.5% of all homes (575 homes) in Mount Holly are occupied by homeowners, while only 6% (70 homes) are occupied by renters. It should be noted that the small sample size for renters in Mount Holly can generally limit the accuracy of the ACS Census 5-Year Estimates for these categories. The remaining 44% of the housing stock (516 homes) are vacant, 92% of which are vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

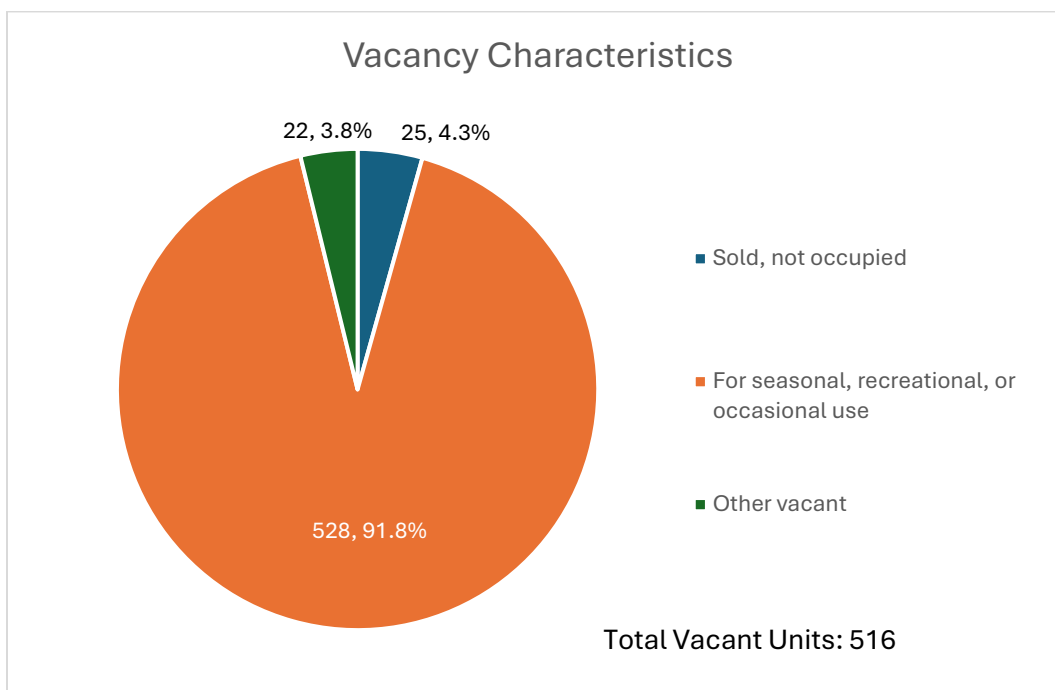


Figure 19. Mount Holly Vacancy Characteristics, ACS Census 5-Year Estimates, 2023

### Short-Term Rental Data

The 2025 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment estimates that there are 86 Short Term Rentals (STRs) in Mount Holly, accounting for 8% of the Town's total housing stock. The Mount Holly Town Plan similarly estimated between 90 and 100 STRs in 2023.

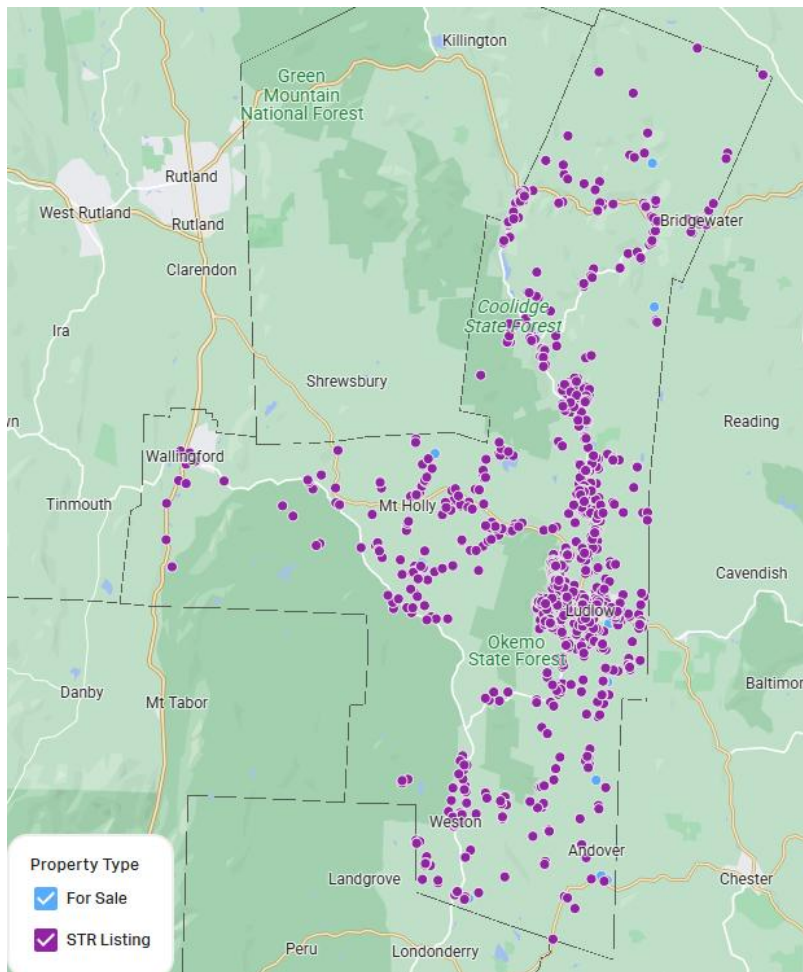


Figure 20. STR Distribution, Ludlow Submarket. Source: AirDNA

STR data can be accessed on the regional scale in the “Ludlow Submarket,” which includes Ludlow, Wallingford, Weston, Andover, Plymouth, and Bridgewater. This submarket has approximately 1,189 active STR listings with an average occupancy rate of 46%. Occupancy rates vary throughout the year, with the highest rate of occupancy generally occurring in winter, peaking in February (60 – 75%) and the lowest typically occurring in late spring, particularly in April (20 – 30%). Occupancy generally rises during summer months, averaging 50 – 60% in July and August before dipping slightly in the fall. The average revenue for STRs in the Ludlow submarket is \$59,700 annually, with average revenues higher for houses, and lower for apartments. Average revenues largely mirror occupancy trends, with the highest revenue generation typically occurring during the winter months, likely in response to the demand for ski-season rentals. The

average daily rate for STRs in this region is \$458.29 per night, with a rise in rates during the winter months.

At present, Mount Holly does not limit short-term rentals at the municipal level.

**DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

*Building Construction Registration Data*

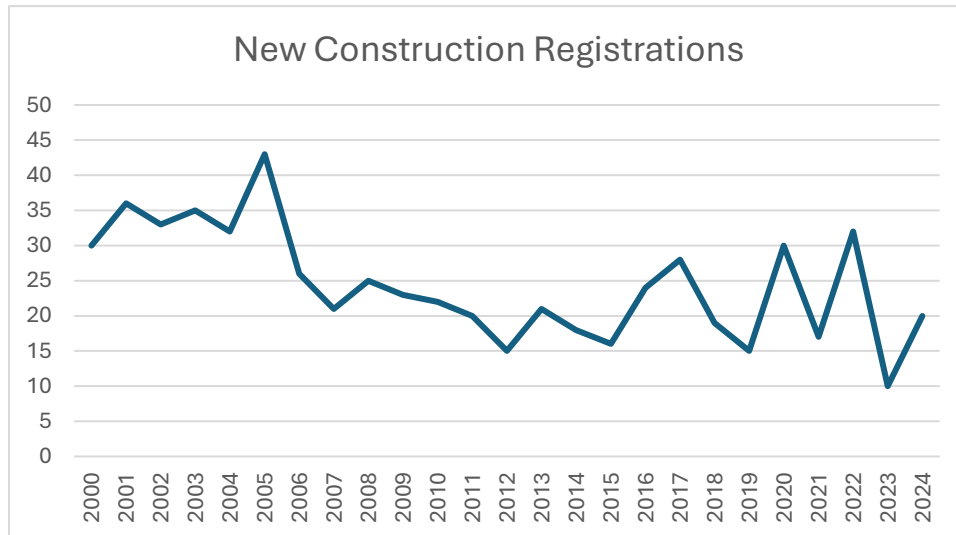


Figure 21. New Construction Registrations, Mount Holly 2000 - 2024

While the Town of Mount Holly does not have zoning permits, it has required the registration of new construction activity since 1995. The average number of new construction registrations between 2014 and 2024 was 20 each year. Development activity has varied in recent years, ranging from a low of 10 in 2023 to a high of 32 in 2022. Since 2020, 109 new construction registrations have been recorded. Compared to the years before 2008, fewer average homes per year have been constructed after that year, likely due to the 2009 housing market collapse and recession.

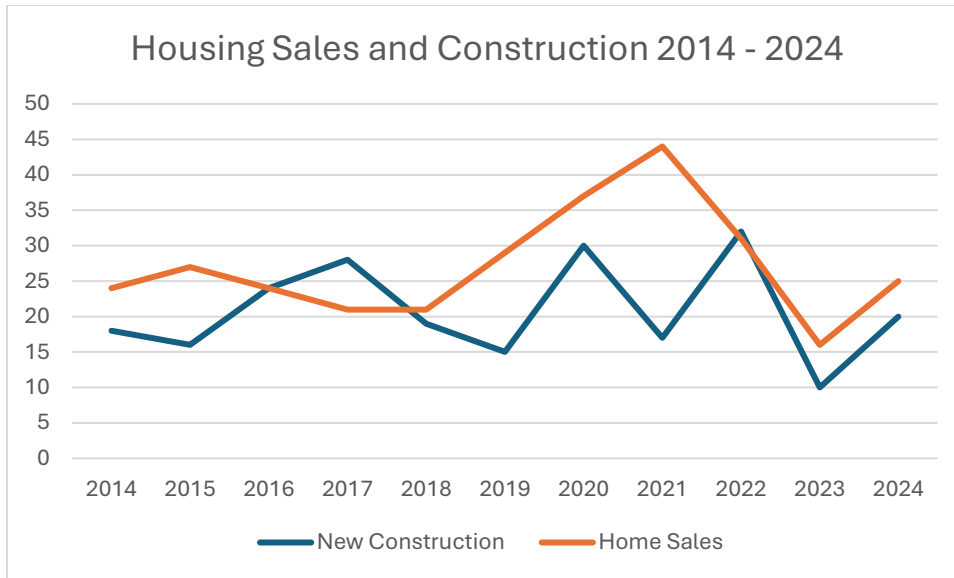


Figure 22. Housing Sales and Construction (2014-2024)

As shown in Figure 22, there is a slight relationship between housing construction and sales in Mount Holly, with sales typically outnumbering construction in a given year.

Home Sales

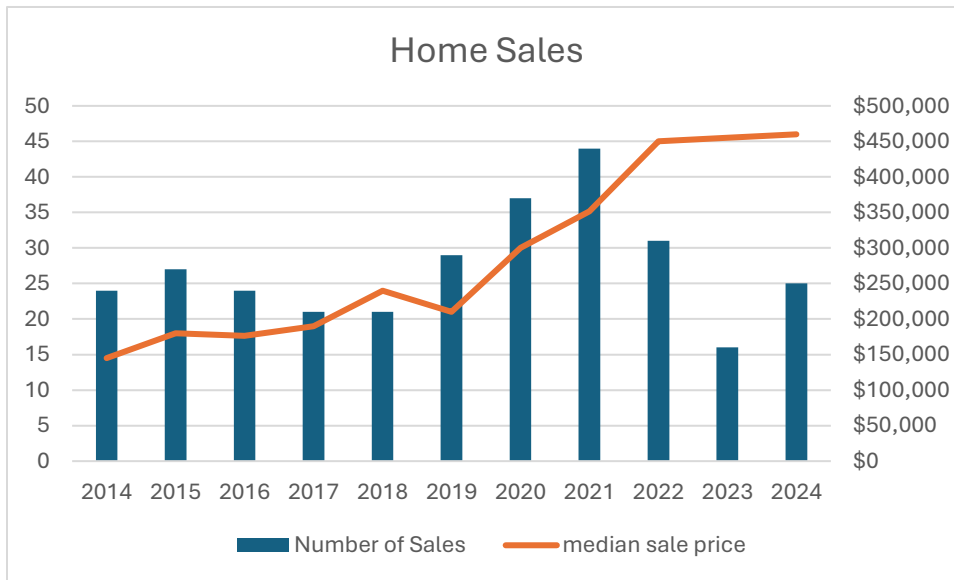


Figure 23. Home Sales (2014-2024)

Home sales maintained an average of approximately 20-25 per year in Mount Holly before the COVID-19 pandemic, but experienced a large boom in 2020 and 2021, with 37 and 44 home sales, respectively. Coinciding with this sharp increase in the number of home sales was a sharp increase in home prices; between 2019 and 2023, average home sale prices increased 150% from \$209,159 to \$521,741. Median home prices jumped 119% between 2019 and 2024. It appears as

though the housing market may have stabilized at a new approximate sales point in the \$450,000 range and a similar number of home sales per year (approximately 25).

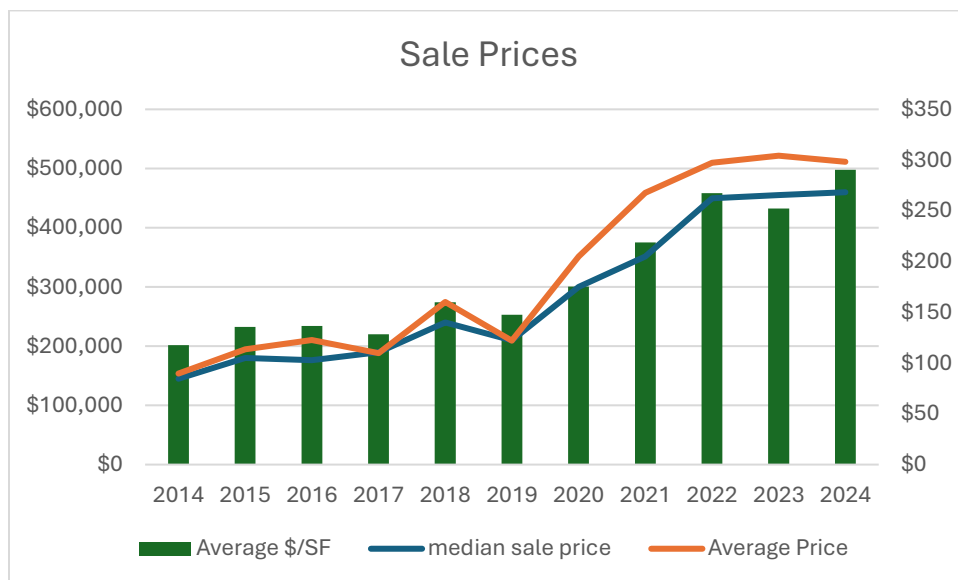


Figure 24. Home sale prices (2014-2024)

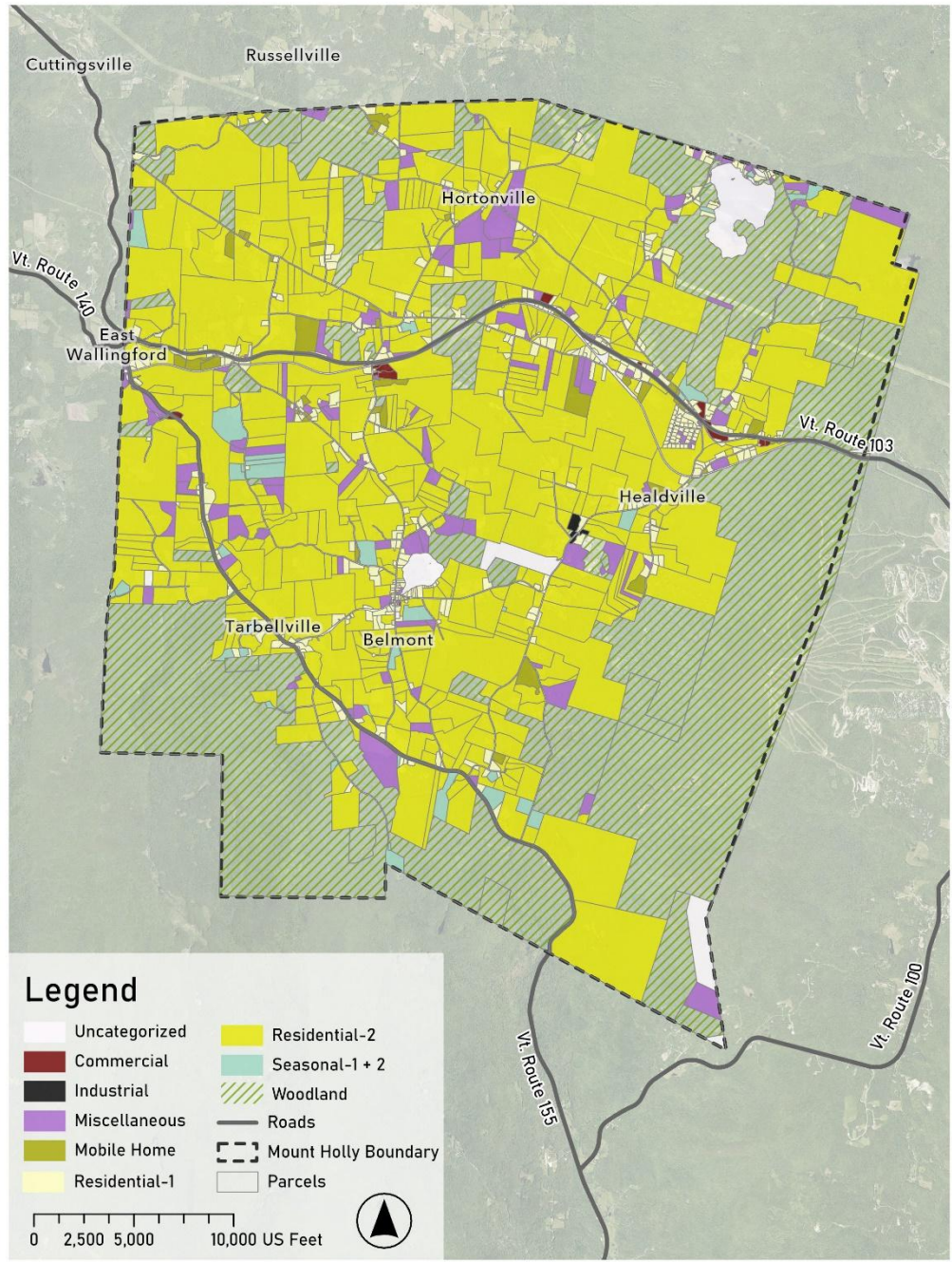
The average price per square foot (\$/SF) has increased at a slower rate than the average sale price of homes in Mount Holly, rising by approximately 150% between 2014 and 2024 while average home prices have increased by approximately 230% during that time frame. This suggests that while homes are getting significantly more expensive by square foot, homes being sold are also on average larger than they were over a decade ago.

*Trends*

During the pandemic, home sales increased at a faster rate than home construction. Average and median sale prices of homes climbed steeply during the pandemic. Though these prices have reached a plateau between 2022 and 2024, the price per square foot may continue to climb and pandemic-era trends may continue.

# LAND USE INVENTORY

## Existing Land Use Map



Map 4: Existing Land Use Map

Land Use Category	Number of Parcels	% of Parcels	Total Acreage	% of Town Acreage	Average Parcel Size
<b>Commercial</b>	17	1.4%	47.6	0.1%	2.8
<b>Industrial</b>	1	0.1%	15.2	0.0%	15.2
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	130	10.5%	1,204.3	3.8%	9.3
<b>Mobile Home</b>	49	4.0%	291.9	0.9%	6.0
<b>Residential - 1</b>	466	37.7%	988.8	3.1%	2.1
<b>Residential - 2</b>	453	36.6%	16,214.0	50.6%	35.8
<b>Seasonal - 1</b>	24	1.9%	47.7	0.1%	2.0
<b>Seasonal - 2</b>	21	1.7%	375.2	1.2%	17.9
<b>Woodland</b>	44	3.6%	11,677.4	36.4%	265.4
<b>Uncategorized</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	1,179.1	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>36.8</b>

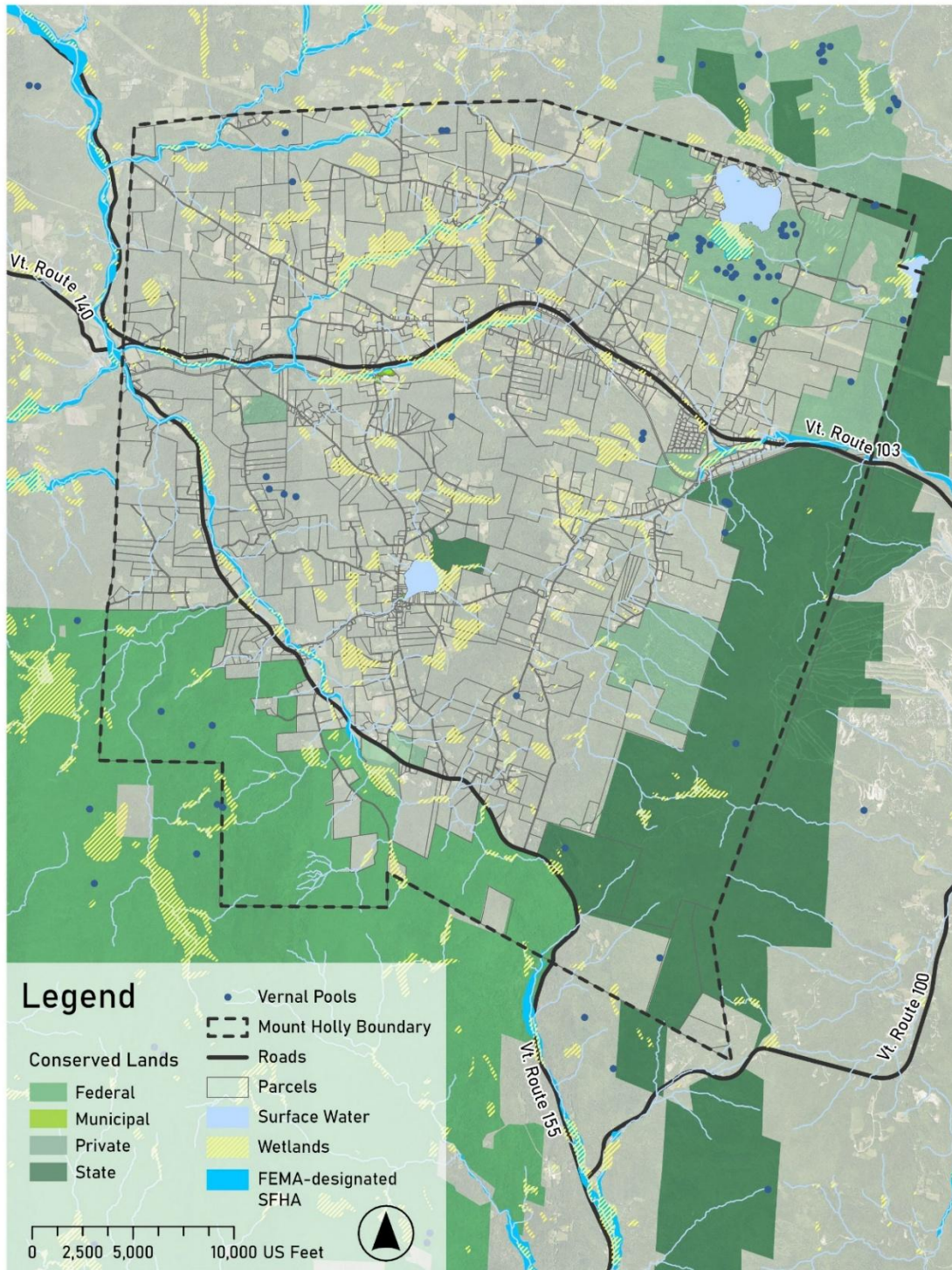
Table 8. Land Use Categories in Mount Holly.

There are 1,237 total parcels in Mount Holly, 78.3% of which are residential (Residential 1, 2, and Mobile Homes) and account for 54.6% of the total land area of the Town. Seasonal land uses mean seasonal camps and other temporary uses and account for 3.6% of all parcels and 1.3% of the total land area of the Town. There are 17 parcels with commercial land uses, the majority of which are located along Vermont Route 103. There is one industrial parcel located between Belmont and Healdville, which is the home of the Crowley Cheese Company. 3.6% of all parcels in the town are woodlands, but account for 36.4% of the total land area of the Town. Many of these woodland parcels are public lands or placed under conservation easements.

#### *Existing Infrastructure*

Water/wastewater infrastructure is highly important for housing development, particularly affordable housing development. The Town does not have water/wastewater infrastructure. There is some stormwater infrastructure in the municipal center and Belmont. In the Belmont Village Master Plan, Belmont Village has been designated as an opportunity area to consider wastewater infrastructure.

### Environmental Constraints Map



Map 5: Environmental Constraints and Conserved Lands in Mount Holly.

Approximately 30.7% of land in Mount Holly is conserved, either through the Federal, State, or Local Government, or in private conservation easements. Map 5 shows the majority of conserved lands but does not show other quasi-conserved lands, such as wooded areas on large residential lots where landowners do not intend to further develop the land. The State manages the most conserved land in town, followed closely by the Federal government. 16 parcels are conserved by private entities, accounting for 7.9% of the total acreage in the Town. The distribution of conserved lands impacts where and how housing develops in Town.

<b>Conservation Entity</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>% of Town Acreage</b>
<b>Federal</b>	32	3,387	10.6%
<b>State</b>	18	3,905	12.2%
<b>Municipal</b>	5	9	0%
<b>Private</b>	16	2,532	7.9%
<b>Total Conserved Parcels</b>	71	9,833	30.7%

Table 9. Conserved Lands Characteristics in Mount Holly.

Flooding is one of the predominant environmental constraints in Mount Holly. There are approximately 160 parcels in Mount Holly that are affected by a floodplain.

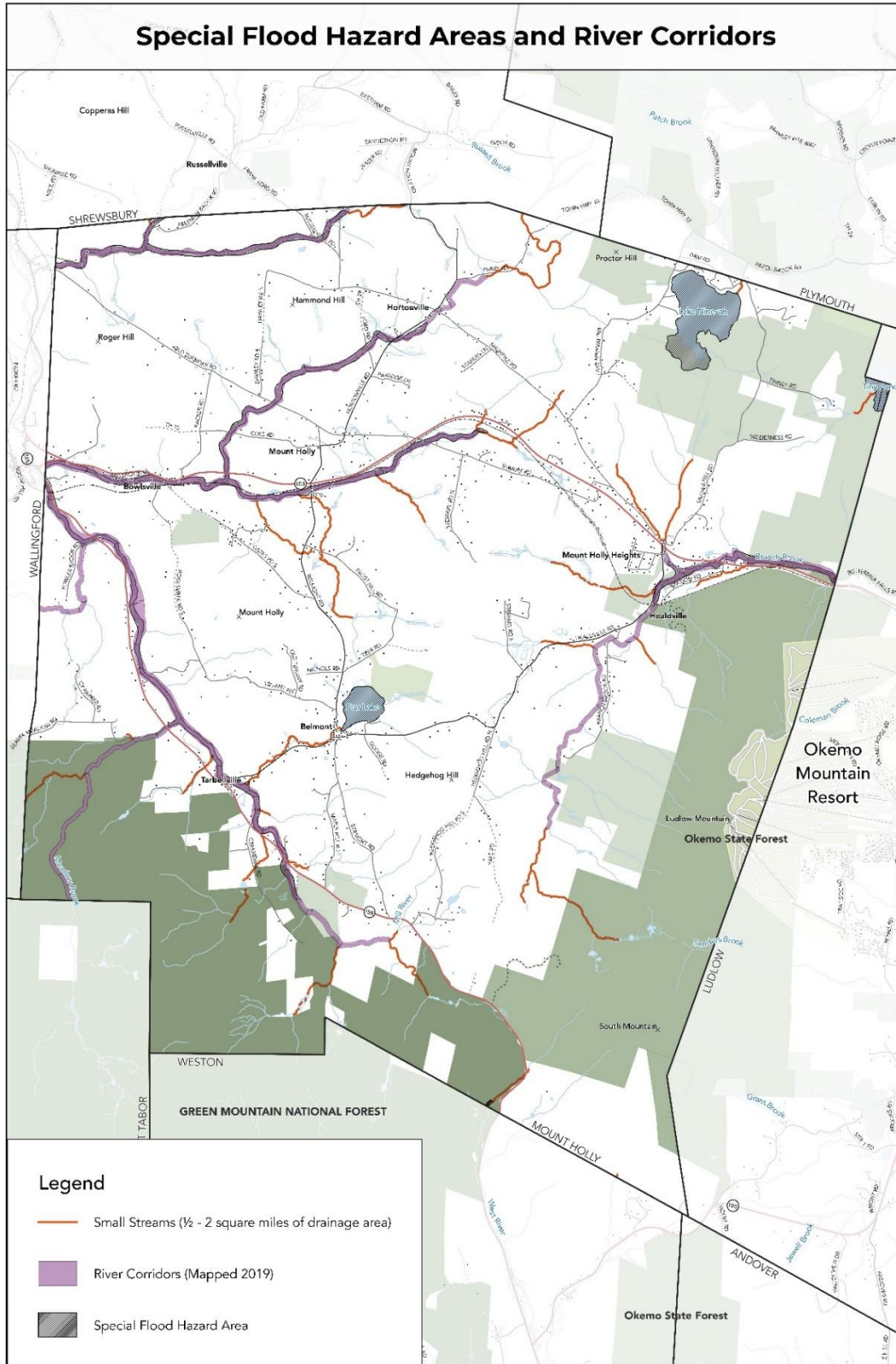
## **RELEVANT TOWN ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS**

### *Subdivision Regulations*

The Mount Holly Subdivision Regulations were adopted in 1998 and have not been updated since then. These regulations were adopted to promote orderly growth and development within the Town. Subdivisions are divided into Minor Subdivisions, which include the creation of up to three lots, and Major Subdivisions, which include the creation of four or more lots. The regulations encourage clustered development of planned residential and planned unit developments “where feasible and desirable”. The regulations provide general guidance on road development, utility, water, wastewater, drainage, and open space and recreation areas. The 2024 Town Plan identifies several areas of the subdivision regulations that are out of date, provide unnecessary overlap with state regulations, and are out of step with current needs and priorities.

### *Flood Hazard and River Corridor Bylaw*

This bylaw was adopted in 2023 to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and to preserve the floodplains and river corridor functions within the Town. These bylaws develop three districts; the River Corridor, Flood Hazard Areas, and the Floodway, and regulates and restricts development within these districts as appropriate. These bylaws are the only bylaws established by the Town and will have impacts on where future housing development can and should be sited.



Map 6. Special Flood Hazard Areas and River Corridors in Mount Holly.



## AFFORDABILITY & GAPS ANALYSIS

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## MEASURING AFFORDABILITY

This section analyzes housing affordability in Mount Holly by evaluating what different income groups can reasonably afford to rent or purchase and by comparing those affordability thresholds with actual local housing costs. The analysis identifies gaps in the existing housing market and estimates the number and types of units the town may need to support a more stable, year-round population.

## Limitations of this Analysis:

1. **Discrepancies between HUD and Census Data.** This analysis uses data from two federal sources – the Department of Housing & Urban Development and the US Census. However, there are important discrepancies to note between the two data sources, particularly with regard to the ways that the two sources measure income.

This analysis references HUD's Median Family Income, a figure that is the foundation for Area Median Income (AMI) calculations used in federal housing programs. HUD's income figures differ from Census data because they measure and adjust income in different ways. The Census Bureau reports median household income directly from survey data (including all households, even single-person ones), while HUD uses median family income (MFI), which includes only families and tends to be higher. HUD begins with the income of a standardized four-person family and then applies household-size adjustments to estimate income limits for 1-8 person households. Unlike the Census, HUD doesn't include single-person or non-family households in this baseline, which raises the reported figures. HUD also uses forward-looking income projections rather than historic survey data. **Because of these methodological differences, HUD's estimated MFI for Rutland County (about \$96,300) appears significantly higher than the ACS median household income for Mount Holly (\$66,810). This discrepancy reflects different methodologies, not errors, and is important to understanding why AMI-based affordability thresholds may seem higher than what local incomes suggest.**

2. **Estimates of Affordability at the Local Level.** HUD does not calculate Area Median Income (AMI), Family Median Income (FMI), or Fair Market Rents (FMR) at the town level. Therefore, assessing housing affordability in Mount Holly requires estimating local income levels and rental costs that are proportional to Mount Holly's conditions, rather than relying solely on county- or region-wide HUD data. The analysis below adapts county-level HUD data to Mount Holly's income conditions to provide realistic affordability benchmarks.

*Housing Cost Burdens*

	Homeowner	Renter
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$76,563	\$44,792
<b>Median Monthly Housing Costs</b>	\$1,059	\$1,161

Table 10. Housing Cost Burdens in Mount Holly.

Renter households have a median household income of \$44,792, nearly half of homeowner households, who have a median household income of \$76,563. While renter households make significantly less than homeowner households, median renter housing costs are \$1,161, while median homeowner costs are \$1,059. This indicates that renter households are spending significantly more of their income on housing costs compared to households that own their home. It is important to note, however, that the Census typically undervalues housing costs for both rental and ownership homes.

The traditional rule of thumb for housing affordability is that housing costs, including utilities, taxes, and maintenance, should not exceed 30% of a household's gross income. While there are relatively few renters in Mount Holly, approximately 60% of these households spend more than 30% of their income on housing and are considered cost-burdened, indicating a potential combination of low wages and high rental costs. Comparatively, 38% of homeowners with a mortgage are cost-burdened, and only 14% of homeowners without a mortgage are cost-burdened.

**ADDITIONAL COSTS***Transportation*

There are significant transportation costs associated with living in a rural town, such as Mount Holly. As mentioned in the Commuting section of this report, the average commute time for Mount Holly residents is 29.2 minutes, meaning that many residents spend at least one hour in the car every day, leading to high fuel and vehicle maintenance costs. The H&T index takes both housing and transportation into account when calculating the cost of living and cost burdens. In Mount Holly, an estimated 30% of a typical household's income is spent on transportation costs, higher than typical housing costs (28%). Together, housing and transportation account for 58% of the typical household's total income.

### Transportation Costs

In dispersed areas, people need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances which also drives up the cost of living.

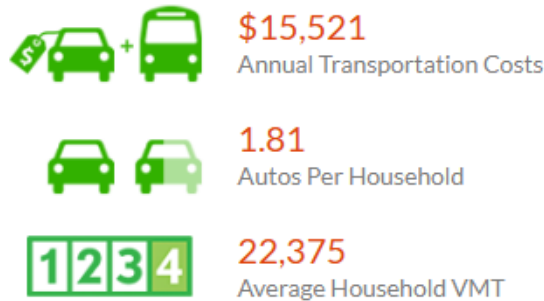
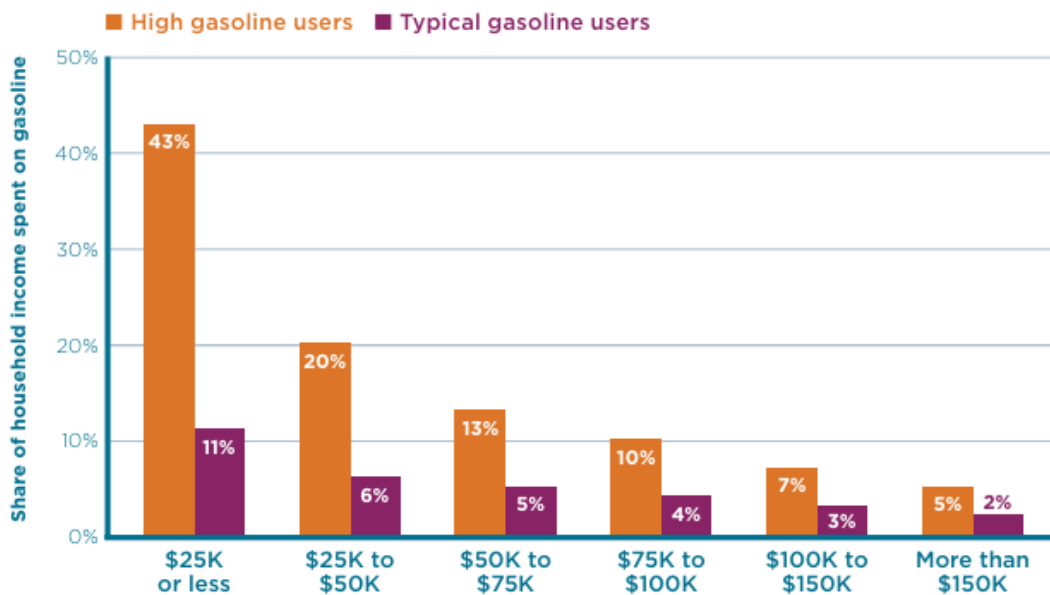


Figure 28. Mount Holly Housing & Transportation Costs (H&T Index 2025)

In Vermont, high gasoline users (top 10%) with low incomes (primarily rural Vermonters) face particularly high transportation cost burdens, as households with less than \$25,000 spend an average of 43% of their income on gasoline.

### Gasoline energy burden by income in Vermont



**Source:** Coltura, Gasoline Data Center, 2024. **Note:** Data include only expenditures on gasoline and are not inclusive of other transportation or vehicle ownership costs. "High gasoline users," which Coltura refers to as "Superusers," are the top 10% of light-duty vehicle drivers in the U.S. in terms of gasoline consumption. 14% of Vermont drivers fall into this category.

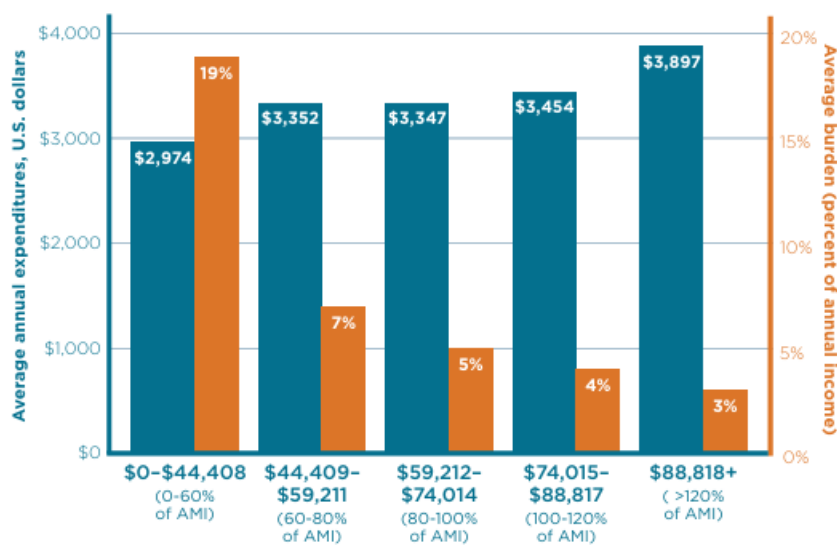
Figure 29. Gasoline Energy Burden in Vermont (EAN 2024)

### Heating Costs

Home heating can be another factor contributing to a high cost of living, especially in rural Vermont with an aging housing stock. According to Figure 17, 17.8% of the Town’s housing stock was constructed prior to 1939 and 45.4% were constructed prior to 1980. Older homes are more likely to be poorly insulated, less energy efficient, and more costly to heat. Lower-income households are more likely to rent or own older homes, which in turn are less efficient and more expensive to heat and cool ([VHFA](#)).

In Vermont, energy expenses disproportionately hurt those who are rural, lower-income, non-white, and renters ([UVM](#)). Households with lower incomes typically use less energy than households with higher incomes, but usually face higher energy burdens, or the percentage of household income spent on energy costs. Vermont households that earn less than 60% of the area median income (AMI) spend an average of 19% of their income on heating and electricity, while households at or above 100% AMI typically spend 4% or less of their income on heating and electricity ([EAN, 2024](#)). As of 2024, Vermont has the third highest average energy burden in the U.S. (share of household income spent on energy costs), at 8.3%.

### Vermont combined average household heating and electricity fuel costs and burden by income level, 2018-2022



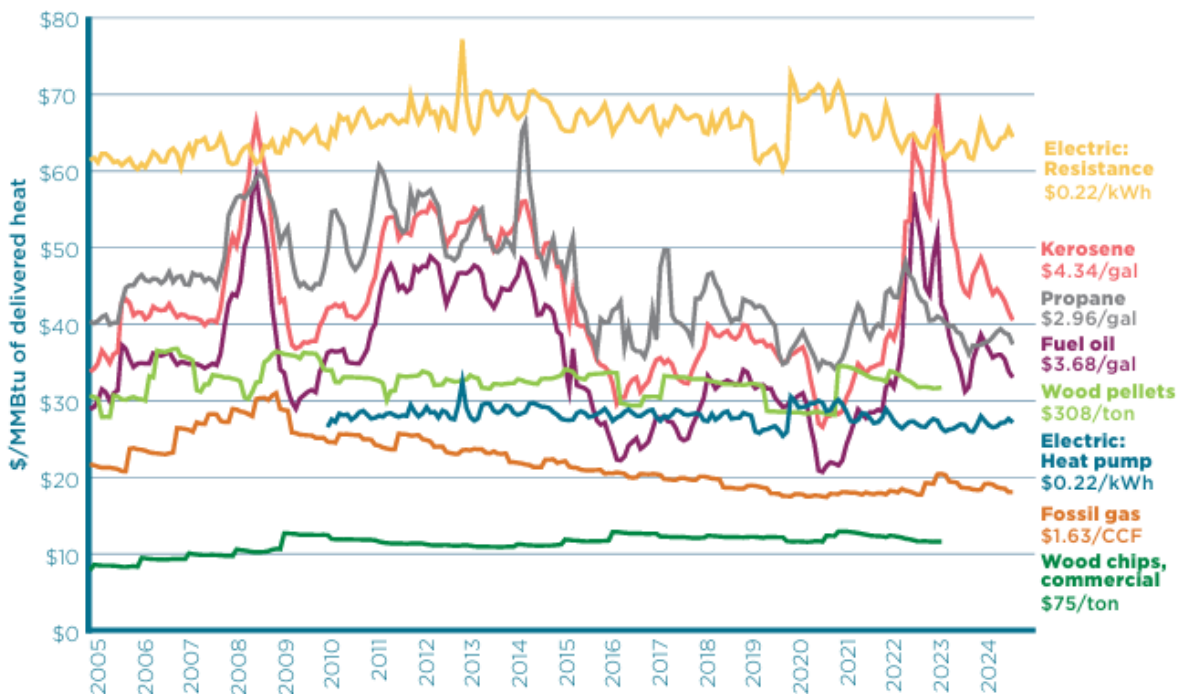
**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year Public Use Microdata Samples.  
**Notes:** Income categories are based on 2018-2022 median household income in Vermont of \$74,014. Energy burden refers to the share of annual household income spent on energy. Costs include fuel only and are not inclusive of equipment and maintenance costs.

Figure 30. Energy Burdens (EAN 2024)

According to 2023 Census data, 44.5% of homes in Mount Holly are heated using fuel oil or kerosene, followed by 26.6% heated by wood, and 20% heated by bottled, tank, or LP gas. The

majority of the Town is served by Green Mountain Power, with a small percentage receiving electricity from Ludlow Electric Light Department.

### Cost comparison of different heating fuel options over time (adjusted for inflation, June 2024 dollars)



**Sources:** Fuel oil, propane, kerosene prices: VT Department of Public Service, Retail Prices of Heating Fuels, 2024. Fossil gas: VGS, 2024. Electricity: EIA, 2024. Wood chips, wood pellets: Biomass Energy Research Center, 2023. **Notes:** Electricity prices presented here are a statewide average but vary by utility territory. The reason propane is usually more expensive per MMBtu than fuel oil but less expensive on a per gallon basis is because propane has a lower energy content per gallon (66% of the energy of fuel oil per gallon). Prices reflect data availability at the time of publication: through June 2024. Prices shown are in June 2024 dollars, using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index.

Figure 31. Heating Fuel Costs (EAN 2024)

The cost of different heating options in Vermont has changed over time, with electric resistance heating consistently the most expensive, and kerosene, propane, and fuel oil – Mount Holly’s most common heating source – showing the most variability and relative cost in recent years.

#### Reducing Energy Costs

The state’s Weatherization Assistance Program helps to improve a home’s energy efficiency, safety, comfort, and reduce energy costs. Mount Holly residents are eligible for weatherization services through BROCC Community Action, a Rutland-based organization. These weatherization services makes an average of \$10,000 worth of improvements per home, adds about 1,500 square feet of insulation, and reduces drafts by about 40% (DCF). Weatherization services are free to Vermont residents who meet income eligibility requirements, whether they own or rent their

home, apartment, or mobile home. In 2021, 110 homes in Rutland County received weatherization assistance services; specific data for Mount Holly was not available.



*Mount Holly, VT Historical Postcard*

## Affordability Analysis

### INCOME GROUPING

To evaluate affordability for different types of households, Mount Holly incomes are grouped into six ranges that correspond to typical area median income (AMI) categories. The analysis uses both county-level HUD MFI (\$96,300 for a four-person family) and Mount Holly's ACS median household income (\$76,563 for all households) to create local proportional AMI estimates. These groupings help illustrate which income levels are most constrained by local housing costs. In this step, we have broken up household income/family income into six primary ranges that correspond to different AMI categories. AMI is a measure of income in a region that is used to assess income levels (and affordability) in a given region. Because AMI is measured regionally, we can only estimate AMI figures at a local level. Below, we have included an estimate of AMI specific to Mount Holly for illustrative/comparative use. SE Group calculated this estimate using Rutland County AMI (\$96,300) and using Mount Holly median family income of \$76,563, as reported in the 2023 American Community Survey. These different income categories will allow us to assess how affordable it is to live in Mount Holly for residents at different income levels.

Income Group	Household Income Range	Relative to Typical AMI	Notes
<b>Very Low</b>	< \$30,000	~30% AMI or less	Aligns with HUD's extremely low-income. Likely cost-burdened renters, seniors, disabled.
<b>Low</b>	\$30,000 - \$50,000	~30-55% AMI	Often working households in service sectors; typically renters.
<b>Moderate</b>	\$50,000 - \$75,000	~55-80% AMI	Workforce housing need; teachers, healthcare aides, younger families.
<b>Middle</b>	\$75,000 - \$100,000	~80-110% AMI	Median households; may afford modest ownership but strained by rising prices.
<b>Upper</b>	\$100,000 - \$150,000	~110-165% AMI	Can generally afford ownership at current sales prices; less cost-burdened.
<b>High</b>	\$150,000+	165%+ AMI	Least likely to face affordability barriers; may drive up demand for higher-cost housing or seasonal homes.

Table 11. Income Grouping in Mount Holly (ACS 2023, HUD).

Income Group	Household Income	Rutland County AMI	Mount Holly AMI Estimate*
<b>Very Low</b>	< \$30,000	Below 31%	Below 39%
<b>Low</b>	\$30,000 - \$50,000	31 - 52%	39 - 65%
<b>Moderate</b>	\$50,000 - \$75,000	52 - 78 %	65 - 98%
<b>Middle</b>	\$75,000 - \$100,000	78 - 104%	98 - 131%
<b>Upper</b>	\$100,000 - \$150,000	104 - 156%	131 - 196%
<b>High</b>	\$150,000+	Above 156%	Above 196%

Table 12. Income Groups in Rutland County Estimated in Mount Holly.

\*Note: This is an estimate of AMI specific to Mount Holly for illustrative/comparative use. SE Group calculated this estimate using Rutland County AMI (\$96,300) and using Mount Holly median family income of \$76,563, as reported in the 2023 American Community Survey.

## AFFORDABILITY THRESHOLDS

Next, we consult HUD Income Limits. HUD income limits establish standardized income tiers (30 percent, 50 percent, 60 percent, 80 percent, 100 percent, 120 percent AMI) used nationally to evaluate affordability. These income limits are used to determine which households qualify for various forms of affordable housing. Although Mount Holly is unlikely to support the scale of housing required for HUD-subsidized programs such as LIHTC, these benchmarks provide valuable reference points for understanding affordability. For our purposes, we use them to understand income limits *by household size*. These limits translate area median incomes into standardized income tiers (typically 50 percent and 80 percent of AMI) that help define what “affordable” means within federal and state policy contexts. Including this information allows the town to compare its local income and housing cost patterns to broader regional and county baselines, identify which income groups may be underserved, and align any future local initiatives or partnerships with established affordability metrics, even if large-scale HUD-funded projects are not feasible.

The following chart estimates income limits for Rutland County using Rutland **County HUD Income Limits** FY2026 and a county median household income of \$96,300:

<b>HUD Income Limits</b>	<b>1 Person</b>	<b>2 Persons</b>	<b>3 Persons</b>	<b>4 Persons</b>	<b>5 Persons</b>
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$36,300	\$41,500	\$46,650	\$51,850	\$56,000
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$58,100	\$66,400	\$74,700	\$82,950	\$89,600

Table 13. HUD Income Limits FY2026.

SE Group adjusted these figures proportionally to show additional AMI brackets:

<b>HUD Income Limits</b>	<b>1 Person</b>	<b>2 Persons</b>	<b>3 Persons</b>	<b>4 Persons</b>	<b>5 Persons</b>
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$21,800	\$24,900	\$41,500	\$49,800	\$66,400
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$36,300	\$41,500	\$46,650	\$51,850	\$56,000
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$43,560	\$49,800	\$55,980	\$62,220	\$67,200
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$58,100	\$66,400	\$74,700	\$82,950	\$89,600
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$72,600	\$83,000	\$93,300	\$103,700	\$112,000
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$87,120	\$99,600	\$111,960	\$124,440	\$134,400

Table 14. FY 2026 HUD Income Limits (Extrapolated to Show Additional Income Brackets).

Then, adjusting for the Mount Holly median household income of \$76,463\*:

\*Note: This is an estimate of AMI specific to Mount Holly for illustrative/comparative use. SE Group calculated this estimate Mount Holly median family income as a proportion of Rutland County median family income:  $\text{Mount Holly HUD Income Limits} = \text{Rutland's value} \times (\$76,563 / \$96,300) \approx 0.795$ .

Income Limits	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$17,332	\$19,796	\$32,992	\$39,591	\$52,788
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$28,858	\$32,992	\$37,087	\$41,221	\$44,520
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$34,630	\$39,591	\$44,504	\$49,465	\$53,424
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$46,190	\$52,788	\$59,386	\$65,945	\$71,232
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$57,717	\$65,985	\$74,174	\$82,442	\$89,040
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$69,260	\$79,182	\$89,008	\$98,930	\$106,848

Table 15. Income Limits Scaled to Mount Holly Incomes.

## Determining the Affordable Rent

In this step, we estimate the affordable rent for Rutland County and Mount Holly by income bracket and household size. HUD Fair Market Rents for Rutland County were used to estimate affordable monthly rents for various household sizes, then proportionally adjusted for Mount Holly. These estimates indicate what different income groups should reasonably be able to pay without becoming cost-burdened.

Based on [Rutland County HUD Fair Market Rent FY2026](#) and the county median household income of \$96,300, average affordable rents for different unit sizes are estimated as follows:

Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3BR	4 BR
<b>\$1,019</b>	\$1,026	\$1,345	\$1,638	\$1,987

Table 16. Affordable Rents for County Median Household Income.

If benchmarked to the cost of modest rentals that a household at ~50% AMI should be able to afford, and assuming different household sizes, this is equivalent to:

AMI	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$1,019	\$1,182	\$1,345	\$1,638	\$1,987

Table 17. Affordable Rents for 50% AMI in Rutland County.

Estimates of household size:

- Studio/1BR = 1-2 person household
- 2BR = 2- or 3-person household
- 3BR = 4-person household
- 4BR = 5-person household

Adjusting these figures to show additional AMI brackets by proportional calculation, generates the following results:

	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$611	\$709	\$807	\$983	\$1,192
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$1,019	\$1,182	\$1,345	\$1,638	\$1,987
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$1,223	\$1,418	\$1,614	\$1,966	\$2,384
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$1,630	\$1,891	\$2,152	\$2,621	\$3,179
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$2,038	\$2,364	\$2,690	\$3,276	\$3,974
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$2,445	\$2,837	\$3,228	\$3,931	\$4,769
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$3,363	\$3,901	\$4,439	\$5,405	\$6,556

Table 18. Rutland County Affordable Rents for all AMI categories (extrapolated by proportional calculation).

If these figures are adjusted for the **Mount Holly median household income** of \$76,563\*:

*\*Note: This is an estimate of AMI specific to Mount Holly for illustrative/comparative use. SE Group calculated this estimate Mount Holly median family income as a proportion of Rutland County median family income: Mount Holly HUD Income Limits = Rutland’s value × (76,563 / 96,300) ≈ 0.795.*

	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$486	\$564	\$642	\$781	\$948
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$810	\$940	\$1,069	\$1,302	\$1,580
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$972	\$1,128	\$1,283	\$1563	\$1,895
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$1,296	\$1,504	\$1,711	\$2,084	\$2,527
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$1,620	\$1,880	\$2,139	\$2,604	\$3,159
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$1,944	\$2,256	\$2,566	\$3,125	\$3,791
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$2,673	\$3,102	\$3,528	\$4,297	\$5,214

Table 19. Mount Holly Affordable Rents for all AMI categories (extrapolated by proportional calculation).

## Comparing the Affordable Rent to Actual Monthly Rent for the Overall Median Income and Renters Specifically

In this step, we compare the estimates of affordable rents for Rutland County and Mount Holly by income bracket and household size to actual monthly rents. Mount Holly’s actual median rent is \$1,161, which is higher than the Rutland County median rent of \$965.

Available public data shows that:

- Studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom rentals in Mount Holly are only affordable for households earning at least 80% AMI when compared to HUD MFI.
- When adjusted for Mount Holly’s lower median renter income, rentals are only affordable for households earning approximately 120% of Mount Holly’s renter-specific AMI (about \$54,000).
- There is insufficient data for 3-bedroom or larger units, but available observations suggest those units are also priced above what most local renters can afford.
- Public rental listings confirm that very few long-term rentals exist in Mount Holly, and those that are listed tend to be luxury or seasonal.

**Rutland County** actual median gross rent (ASC 2023-5Yr):

- Total: \$965
- Studio: \$899
- 1BR: \$828
- 2BR: \$1,085
- 3BR: \$1,210
- 4BR: \$1,271
- 5+BR: \$1,461

**Mount Holly** actual median gross rent (ASC 2023-5Yr):

- Total: \$1,161
- 1BR: \$950
- 2BR: \$1,000
- 3+BR: Data not available

Assuming Household Size:

- Studio/1BR = 1-2 person household
- 2BR = 2- or 3-person household
- 3BR = 4-person household
- 4BR = 5-person household

	Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$611	\$616	\$807	\$983	\$1,192
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$1,019	\$1,026	\$1,345	\$1,638	\$1,987
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$1,223	\$1,231	\$1,614	\$1,966	\$2,384
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$1,630	\$1,642	\$2,152	\$2,621	\$3,179
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$2,038	\$2,052	\$2,690	\$3,276	\$3,974
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$2,445	\$2,462	\$3,228	\$3,931	\$4,769
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$3,363	\$3,386	\$4,439	\$5,405	\$6,556

Table 20. Rutland County affordable monthly rent by unit type.

	Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$486	\$490	\$642	\$781	\$948
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$810	\$816	\$1,069	\$1,302	\$1,580
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$972	\$979	\$1,283	\$1,563	\$1,895
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$1,296	\$1,305	\$1,711	\$2,084	\$2,527
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$1,620	\$1,631	\$2,139	\$2,604	\$3,159
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$1,944	\$1,957	\$2,566	\$3,125	\$3,791
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$2,673	\$2,693	\$3,528	\$4,297	\$5,214

Table 21. Mount Holly affordable monthly rent by unit type.

	Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
<b>Actual Median Rent</b>	\$899	\$828	\$1,085	\$1,210	\$1,271
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$611	\$616	\$807	\$983	\$1,192
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$1,019	\$1,529	\$1,345	\$1,638	\$1,987
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$1,223	\$1,835	\$1,614	\$1,966	\$2,384
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$1,630	\$2,445	\$2,152	\$2,621	\$3,179
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$2,038	\$3,057	\$2,690	\$3,276	\$3,974
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$2,445	\$3,668	\$3,228	\$3,931	\$4,769
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$3,363	\$3,386	\$4,439	\$5,405	\$6,556

Table 22. Rutland County gap between affordable monthly rent &amp; actual rent by unit type.

Rents shown in **orange** are unaffordable for that category, while rents shown in **dark blue** are affordable for that category.

### THE TAKEAWAY: AFFORDABILITY IN RUTLAND COUNTY

Rentals in Rutland County (all unit types) are priced affordably, except for people who earn less than ~37% of County AMI (~\$36k). Given that the HUD median income statistics are high relative to reported incomes in ACS data, this is likely a substantial under-estimate of the affordability gap.

The table below shows the gap between affordable monthly rent and actual rent for Mount Holly AMI brackets, which is likely a closer reflection of the true affordability gap.

	Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
<b>Actual Median Rent</b>	\$950	\$1,000	\$2,000	No Data	No Data
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$486	\$490	\$642	\$781	\$948
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$810	\$816	\$1,069	\$1,302	\$1,580
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$972	\$979	\$1,283	\$1,563	\$1,895
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$1,296	\$1,305	\$1,711	\$2,084	\$2,527
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$1,620	\$1,631	\$2,139	\$2,604	\$3,159
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$1,944	\$1,957	\$2,566	\$3,125	\$3,791
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$2,673	\$2,693	\$3,528	\$4,297	\$5,214

Table 23. Mount Holly gap between affordable monthly rent & actual rent by unit type.

Rents shown in **orange** are unaffordable for that category, while rents shown in **dark blue** are affordable for that category.

### THE TAKEAWAY: AFFORDABILITY IN MOUNT HOLLY

- Rentals in Mount Holly (studios, 1BRs, and 2BRs) are priced affordably, except for people who earn less than ~80% of Town AMI (~\$61k). Rentals in Mount Holly are slightly more expensive than in Rutland County overall, and Mount Holly residents earn less than Rutland County residents overall.
- There is not a full dataset for 2+ BR unit types available, but renters likely also struggle to afford 2+BRs in Mount Holly at the same threshold (~80% Town AMI (~\$61k).

As reported in American Community Survey data, renters in Mount Holly make much less than homeowners. The Mount Holly median renter income reported by ACS 2023 is \$44,792 (compared to the median family income of \$76,563 reported by HUD). To account for the lower median income of renters, we need to adjust our assumptions accordingly.

	Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$284	\$287	\$376	\$457	\$555
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$474	\$477	\$625	\$762	\$924
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$569	\$573	\$751	\$913	\$1,109
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$758	\$763	\$1,002	\$1,218	\$1,478
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$948	\$954	\$1,251	\$1,523	\$1,849
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$1,137	\$1,146	\$1,501	\$1,828	\$2,218
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$1,564	\$1,575	\$2,065	\$2,513	\$3,048

Table 24. Mount Holly affordable monthly rent by unit type.

	Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
<b>Actual Median Rent</b>	\$950	\$1,000	\$2,000	No Data	No Data
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$284	\$287	\$376		
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$474	\$477	\$625		
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$569	\$573	\$751		
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$758	\$763	\$1,002		
<b>100% AMI</b>	\$948	\$954	\$1,251		
<b>120% AMI</b>	\$1,137	\$1,146	\$1,501		
<b>165% AMI</b>	\$1,564	\$1,575	\$2,065		

Table 25. Mount Holly gap between affordable monthly rent & actual by unit type.

Rents shown in **orange** are unaffordable for that category, while rents shown in **dark blue** are affordable for that category.

Renter AMI	Mount Holly Renter Household Income (based on \$44,792 median)
30%	\$13,438
50%	\$22,396
60%	\$26,875
80%	\$35,834
100%	\$44,792
120%	\$53,750
165%	\$73,907

Table 26. Mount Holly Renter AMI & Household Income.

### THE TAKEAWAYS:

- Rentals in Mount Holly (studios, 1BRs, and 2BRs) are priced affordably, except for people who earn less than ~120% of Town renter-specific AMI (~\$54k). Rentals in Mount Holly are slightly more expensive than in Rutland County overall, and Mount Holly residents earn less than Rutland County residents overall.
- There is not a full dataset for 2+ BR unit types available, but renters likely also struggle to afford 2+ BRs in Mt. Holly at the same threshold (~120% Town Renter-Specific AMI (~\$54k).

## Comparing Available Rentals to the Affordable Rent

In Mount Holly, there are essentially no publicly listed long-term rentals (i.e., MLS, Zillow, etc.) and all visible rentals are luxury/seasonal.

What's currently on the market in October 2025:

- Mount Holly: ~3 rentals; a [3-BR](#) at \$28-32k/mo, a 1-BR at \$9k/mo, and a [1-BR](#) at \$1,400/mo).
- Nearby (Ludlow, etc.): a few long-term options appear (e.g., \$2,200+ for 3-BR).

Monthly Rent Band	Count in Mt. Holly (public listings)
≤ \$1,000 (covers many 30–50% AMI rows)	0
\$1,001–\$1,700 (≈ studio/1BR at 80–100% AMI)	1 (a 1-BR at \$1,400)
\$1,701–\$2,200 (≈ 2BR 80–100% AMI)	0
\$2,201–\$2,700 (≈ 3BR 80–100% AMI)	0
\$2,701–\$3,200 (≈ 4BR 100% AMI)	0
> \$3,200	1-2 (the 1-BR at \$9k; the 3-BR at \$28–32k)

Table 27. Available Mount Holly rentals by price point.

### TAKEAWAY:

MLS and public feeds currently show no Mt. Holly rentals at or below the affordable rents for applicable AMIs, even at 100% AMI for larger units.

- Mt. Holly's rental stock is tiny and skews short-term/seasonal due to its proximity to Okemo, so monthly rates are posted at premium levels.
- Many true long-term rentals are placed via local word-of-mouth, Facebook groups, or property managers and may never hit MLS/Zillow/etc.

## Rental Housing Targets

We have identified assumptions for the distribution of unit types across the housing stock. Assuming about 5% of the housing stock (about 20 units) turns over each year, about 16 total additional rentals are needed as turnover in a given year to address existing gaps.

Unit Size	Target % of Stock	Target # Long-Term Rentals (if ~20 total)	Current # Rentals	Needed Additional Rentals Per Year
<b>Studio</b>	10%	1-3	0-2	+2
<b>1-BR</b>	25%	4-6	2-4	+2
<b>2-BR</b>	30%	6-8	0-2	+6
<b>3-BR</b>	25%	4-6	0-2	+4
<b>4-BR</b>	10%	1-3	0-2	+2

Table 28. Rental housing targets in Mount Holly.

## Targets for Ownership Units

Homeownership affordability was evaluated by estimating monthly budgets and corresponding maximum affordable home prices. In this step, we identify the monthly budget for different unit sizes and the maximum affordable sale price for a home. Unlike rentals, the monthly budget for homeownership must also specifically account for added expenses like property taxes and insurance. The methodology for calculating the max affordable price is included in the Appendix of this document.

Unit Size	Monthly Budget (C)	Max Affordable Price
<b>Studio</b>	\$1,620	\$232 k
<b>1-BR</b>	\$1,631	\$234 k
<b>2-BR</b>	\$2,139	\$310 k
<b>3-BR</b>	\$2,604	\$380 k
<b>4-BR</b>	\$3,159	\$464 k

Table 29. Maximum Affordable Home Prices for Units of Different Sizes in Mount Holly.

A lower interest rate (e.g., 5.5%) increases max prices ~8–12%; a smaller down payment or higher insurance/HOA lowers them. By 3–4 BR, large households may already have higher AMIs and therefore similar purchasing capacity.

Studio / 1-BR “starter homes” would need to be ≤ \$234 k to stay affordable—as shown below, essentially none of Mt. Holly’s stock meets that today. As a result, Mount Holly’s ownership market is largely inaccessible to moderate-income households.

Based on current publicly available MLS data (October 2025) for Mt. Holly:

- Active listings: ~18–22 single-family homes
- Price range: roughly \$300 k – \$950 k
- Median listing price: about \$495 k
- Typical home: 3 beds / 2 baths, 1,600–2,200 sq ft, often on 2–5 acres, mostly near Okemo or Star Lake.

This suggests that the *median market home* is nearly double the 100% AMI affordability range of ~\$275–\$300k, reinforcing a substantial affordability gap in Mt. Holly.

Home Price Tier	Approx # of Listings	Approx % of Stock
< \$250,000	1-3	~5%
\$250,000 - \$400,000	2-4	~10-15%
\$400,000 - \$600,000	8-10	~40-55%
\$600,000 - \$800,000	4-6	~20-30%
> \$800,000	2-4	~10-15%

Table 30. Available Listings by Price Tier.

As specified above, affordability thresholds (for typical household sizes) are in the range of ~\$190,000 to \$300,000 (depending on number of bedrooms) under a HUD-style income limitation model. The distribution shows:

- A very small fraction (< ~20%) of active homes are below or near those thresholds.
- The bulk of homes (~ 40–55%) are in \$400k–\$600k – significantly above most affordability caps.
- There is a nontrivial tail in the higher price tiers (above \$600k) that are far out of reach for many.

In effect, most of the housing stock in Mt. Holly is outside the reach of what many moderate-income households could afford under standard affordability models.

In a healthier market, Mount Holly would have ~20 active homes for sale aligning with the following distribution:

- 15% of stock (< \$250 k) serves low/moderate 1-BR buyers
- 30-35% (\$250-400 k) serves working-class 2-3 BR buyers
- 30-40% (\$400-600 k) serves middle/upper income
- < 15% (>\$600 k) serves second home / luxury

With these target percentages, the following number of new homes in different income brackets would be needed to have ~20 homes for sale each year.

Home Price Tier	Target % of Stock	Target # Homes (if ~20 total for sale)	Current # Homes (MLS data)	Needed Additional Homes in a Given Year
< \$250k	15%	3	1-3	+2
\$250-400k	35%	7	2-4	+5
\$400-600k	35%	7	8-10	-3 (oversupplied)
\$600-800k	10%	2	4-6	-4 (oversupplied)
> \$800k	5%	1	2-4	-3 (oversupplied)

Table 31. Targets for Additional Homes for Sale in a Given Year by Price Point.

### TAKEAWAY

Mount Holly would need roughly 5-7 new homes priced below \$400K (roughly half the current total inventory) to bring the market into balance for moderate-income residents.

## Ideal Construction Phasing of New Homes

While the Town cannot direct year-over-year construction trends, it can be helpful to identify an ideal phasing strategy for the construction of new homes. Annual turnover can come from new construction and from the resale of existing homes. Assuming 25–40% of annual turnover from new construction, the town could likely absorb **7–8 new year-round homes per year** without overshooting demand. This pacing avoids over-building and keeps pricing tied to local incomes rather than speculative demand.

Construction Timeframe	Recommended Focus	Rationale
<b>Years 1–2 (Pilot phase)</b>	4–5 small infill / ADU / duplex units under \$350k	Test absorption, refine permitting, target 1- and 2-bed workforce housing
<b>Years 3–5 (Ramp-up phase)</b>	8–10 new ownership homes + 4–5 small-scale rentals	Demand proven; local contractors can plan ahead
<b>Years 6–10 (Stabilization)</b>	Maintain ~7–8 new units/yr mix; emphasize 2–3BR family homes	Keeps pace with normal turnover and demographic replacement

Table 32. Construction Phasing Timeline.

### TAKEAWAY

Overall, Mount Holly’s projected housing needs are 35–40 new year-round homes over five years (7–8 per year), with at least half priced below \$400,000. Ideally, construction should be phased in small increments (4–8 units annually) to match natural market turnover and infrastructure capacity.



## STAKEHOLDER VISION FOR HOUSING & PREVIOUS PLANNING

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## Stakeholder Input & Local Housing Vision

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

As part of this housing needs assessment, a series of outreach conversations were conducted with employers, housing organizations, and local institutions to better understand Mount Holly's housing challenges and opportunities. These discussions sought to capture on-the-ground perspectives about workforce housing, affordability barriers, and community priorities. Stakeholders included construction and trade employers, regional housing nonprofits, local schools, and social service organizations. Together, their insights provide valuable context for the data analysis provided in the previous section.

Across all stakeholder conversations, participants emphasized that Mount Holly's housing challenges mirror those of rural Rutland County but are intensified by its small size, limited infrastructure, and growing pressure from second-home and short-term rental demand.

#### *Employer Perspectives: Construction and Trades*

- Workforce shortages are a major issue; the company has struggled to hire for three years, citing housing availability as a core factor.
- Only three employees currently live in Mount Holly; most commute from Rutland, Chester, Springfield, and Castleton—adding high transportation costs.
- Wright Construction subsidizes travel for workers commuting more than 20 miles.
- Affordable homeownership opportunities are limited; even employees with stable jobs cannot afford to buy locally.
- Employers noted the lack of starter homes and the prevalence of older, deteriorated (“dump”) housing stock.
- Concern about properties being purchased by second-home owners or converted to STRs, which tightens the year-round housing supply.
- There is no interest in employer-provided housing, but recognition that workforce housing is essential to retention and local economic stability.
- Strong sentiment to preserve Mount Holly's rural character and avoid large-scale development resembling nearby Ludlow.

**Takeaway:** Employers see affordable, modest-scale housing as essential for workforce retention but are constrained by high land costs, infrastructure limitations, and community resistance to large developments.

### *Housing Organizations and Developers*

Cornerstone Housing Partners / Housing Trust of Rutland County

- Active in Rutland and Bennington counties; currently no projects in Mount Holly due to lack of municipal water and wastewater systems, which makes affordable development financially unviable.
- Typical project scale is 20+ units, which exceeds Mount Holly's feasible capacity without shared systems.
- Current focus includes:
  - Homebuyer assistance and buyer-driven shared equity programs, where households identify homes and partner with the Trust for financing.
  - Energy-efficiency upgrades and rehabilitation of existing homes.
  - 
  - Examples from Dorset and Shaftsbury demonstrate models applicable to Mount Holly: small, community-based developments tied to shared or decentralized wastewater systems, often supported with ARPA or state funds.
- Housing Trust is exploring senior and first-time homebuyer solutions using shared septic and existing structures in other small towns—potentially replicable locally.

### **Common Needs & Priorities Identified:**

Stakeholders consistently emphasized that Mount Holly must resolve its wastewater limitations (ideally through shared or decentralized systems) before most housing partners can realistically invest. They agreed that any new development should remain small in scale, generally between 2 and 10 units, to align with the town's character and capacity. Workforce housing emerged as a top priority, with a focus on affordability and year-round access rather than luxury or seasonal units. Expanding homeownership opportunities, particularly for first-time buyers and moderate-income households, was also identified as important. Many stakeholders highlighted the value of adaptive reuse, noting that converting existing or underutilized buildings such as older homes offers a practical and lower-impact path to new housing. Across conversations, there was strong support for collaborative approaches involving nonprofits, employers, and town leadership. Finally, stakeholders stressed that any new housing should preserve and enhance Mount Holly's rural character rather than fundamentally alter the scale or feel of its village centers.



Habitat for Humanity and NeighborWorks

- Focus on rehabilitation and affordable ownership; limited capacity in Mount Holly but supportive of partnership models that leverage local land and volunteer engagement.

**Takeaway:** Nonprofit housing partners are interested in Mount Holly but need basic infrastructure solutions, local champions, and smaller-scale project sites to make development feasible.

**RELEVANT PLANS & STUDIES**

*Vermont Housing Needs Assessment (2025)*

The Vermont Housing Needs Assessment provides an analysis of housing gaps and opportunities throughout the state, down to the County and Municipal level. This HNA provides projections of additional year-round homes needed in each County by 2029. Rutland County is estimated to need an additional 623-1,470 owner homes and 1,907-2,148 renter homes, for a total of 2,531 – 3,618 homes by 2029. While Mount Holly accounts for a small percentage of the County’s overall population and housing stock, any additional housing units developed in Mount Holly will help the County reach these housing goals to support the residents of the area.

*Figure 21-2 Projected year-round homes needed by tenure, 2025-2029*

Additional homes needed	Pre-pandemic growth (Lower)	Pandemic-era growth (Upper)
Owner homes	623	1,470
Renter homes	1,907	2,148
Total additional homes needed	2,531	3,618
<small>Source: VHFA analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data (Building Permits, Housing Completions, American Community Survey estimates, Population and Housing Unit Estimates and Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey) and the Vermont 2023 Point-In-Time Count of those Experiencing Homelessness. “Pre-pandemic demand” assumes resuming trends that occurred in 2016-2019. “Pandemic-era demand” assumes continuation of trends that occurred in 2019-2022 Assumes a target vacancy rate of 5% for rental and 2% for owner homes and annual housing destruction rate of 0.15%.</small>		

Figure 25. Rutland County Housing Needs Projections, VT HNA 2025

*Mount Holly Town Plan (2024)*

The Mount Holly Town Plan provides important context and recommendations around development and housing. Some of the following relevant information and recommendations are copied below:

Subdivision Regulations & Recommendations

- Subdivision regulations were first adopted in 1998 to encourage orderly growth and development but have since become outdated and should be modernized.
- General settlement should be encouraged in the Belmont Village Center and immediate area.

- Grouped and clustered development is recommended to preserve forest blocks, habitat, and natural resources.

#### Housing Needs & Recommendations

- Aging in place housing to support aging and elderly community members.
- Affordable housing development within a 5-minute drive to the Municipal Center for emergency responders.
  - “The town should work with property owners to identify areas within a 5-minute drive to the Municipal Center and Belmont Village that can be developed to increase the housing stock.”
  - “The town should work with local property owners and private organizations, and seek grants if and when available, to find affordable housing solutions to aid in recruitment and retention of personnel necessary for the delivery of town services.”
- Act 250 exemptions through Neighborhood Development Area
  - “The town should work with landowners and developers to identify areas within walking distance of the Village Center that can be developed for new or infill housing that doesn’t contribute to sprawl.”
- ADUs
  - “The town should consider policies that encourage the use of ADUs for permanent or long-term housing.”
- Wastewater treatment will be critical for future housing development. “Since at least 1973, sewage disposal has been identified as one of the primary constraints to providing additional housing capacity in town. Most of the soils in the town are not suitable for in-ground septic systems and engineered or alternative disposal systems are more costly to construct and maintain. The space requirements of these systems preclude their use in the very small lot size that typifies much of the village, and so contributes to undesirable growth patterns. A village-based wastewater disposal system would serve the needs of existing residents and provide more opportunities for much-needed additional in-fill housing.”
  - “The town should pursue capacity planning and feasibility studies for a village wastewater disposal solution to maintain the vitality of the historic village center and increase in-fill housing capacity.”

#### *Belmont Village Plan (2023)*

The Belmont Village Plan summarizes the current housing conditions in the village and provides several explicit recommendations about future housing development. Relevant recommendations and excerpts of the plan are listed below.

“Additional housing in the greater Mount Holly area is needed, and the village represents the most suitable location to accommodate a denser arrangement of smaller, clustered dwellings. This is

especially true for more cost-effective living arrangements suitable for seniors looking to downsize, younger families, independent adults, and long-term rentals – underserved demographic groups which have been moving to more affordable areas. However, the current limitations of available sewer must first be addressed in order for this to be economically practical.”

#### Housing-Related Recommendations:

- Infill housing to be encouraged within the village center through residential expansions, ADUs, and long-term rentals.
- Additional housing should be accommodated to the direct west of the village center in what is now an open and vacant field. This housing should be small-scale, small cottage-lot arrangements that mirror the traditional scale and street pattern of the historic Belmont development. Deed restrictions should be placed on any new housing on this site.
- Diversity of housing developments is needed; cottage homes, duplex or quad-plex.
- Walkability is critical to housing development in and around the village center.
- Utilize Community Recovery and Revitalization Program funding to develop municipal wastewater and water supply.
- Develop a registry of short-term rentals as a step towards regulation.

#### *Rutland Region Housing Needs Assessment (2023)*

The Rutland Region Housing Needs Assessment analyzed housing gaps and opportunities in Rutland County, summarizing socioeconomic and housing stock data for the region and its municipalities. This HNA noted an increase in year-round homes during the pandemic, especially in Mount Holly; “In 2020, nearly 700 more households than in 2010 reported living in the Rutland region most of the time. Half of these additional year-round houses were located in Killington, Mount Holly, and Putney.” These new households were likely seasonal homes converted to year-round residences.

This HNA outlined the primary housing needs in the Rutland Region:

- 3,000 severely cost-burdened households live in the region with housing costs that consume more than half of their income, placing them in a state of severe housing cost burden
- Homelessness in the region increased dramatically between 2018 and 2022.
- The growing segment of BIPOC residents in the region are disproportionately unlikely to own their homes. Homeownership rates among BIPOC households in the region are 38%-58% compared to 71% among white alone households.
- Hundreds of homes in the region show indications of housing quality issues
  - Rutland County has the oldest housing stock in the state, with over 8,000 built before 1940.
  - At least 816 households are living in homes with potential housing quality flags and another 1,147 homes are vacant due to housing quality uncertainties

- Large homes in the region outnumber large households
  - While 71% of the region’s households have 1-2 people, 37% have 2 or fewer bedrooms indicating underutilization of the existing housing stock.
- Projected demand to live in region year-round exceeds pace of homebuilding, with a need for 625 - 9,419 additional homes by 2040

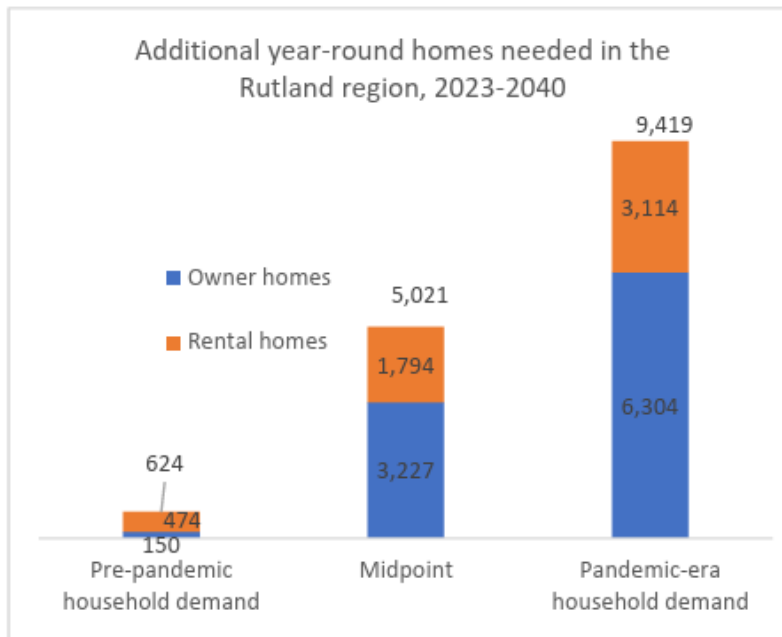


Figure 26. Rutland County Housing Needs Projections (2023-2040), Rutland County 2023 HNA

The HNA also provided municipal strategies for addressing housing needs in the following table, many of which Mount Holly could leverage:

**Municipal strategies for expanding housing access and affordability**

	Rutland region top housing needs					
	3,000 severely cost burdened households	Increased people experiencing homelessness	Low homeownership rate among BIPOC residents	Housing quality	Home size mismatch	Need for 850-9,000 additional year-round homes by 2040
Make changes to local zoning bylaws and permitting requirements/fees to allow more housing and remove barriers to housing production					X	X
Support non-profits, such as Homeless Prevention Center, and others involved in assisting and preventing homelessness, including housing developers seeking to expand the availability of service-enriched affordable rental housing.		X				
Expanding or creating municipal infrastructure needed to support more housing						X
Pursuing VT Downtown Designation or Village Center Designation to access state incentives for housing creation						X
Encouraging historic building rehabilitation and/or conversion to housing				X		X
Creating local rental registries or landlord email lists to share relevant opportunities and solicit input about their needs				X		
Using code enforcement to remedy severely deteriorated, unhealthy or unsafe housing conditions				X		
Funding a local Housing Trust Fund	X		X	X	X	X
Join IDEAL Vermont (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Action, Leadership)			X			
Bolster support and relationships with regional non-profit organizations offer client-based housing assistance such as BROCC and NWWVT	X			X		
Support municipalities planning to expand housing in smart-growth locations.		X				X
Pursue opportunities to bring off-line units back on line and for infill/adaptive reuse like Tuttle Block (Housing Trust of Rutland County in partnership with VHFA)						X
In municipalities with older homes and potential quality issues, promote use of VHIP, WRAP, lead paint abatement, advertise renter rights information				X		
Promote and offer financial and regulatory support for development of ADUs					X	
Spur rehab of existing stock						X
Spur neighborhood amenities				X		
Seek technical assistance and grants for placemaking				X		
Seek of offer grants for buying rentals and rehabbing				X		X
Encourage employers interested in developing staff housing to support existing housing development system						X

Table 33. Municipal strategies for expanding housing access and affordability (Rutland County HNA, 2023).

## Regional Housing Efforts

### ***RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (RRPC)***

The Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) is a resource for the municipalities in Rutland County, including Mount Holly. The RRPC promotes cooperation among the various municipalities and assists communities with creating and maintaining plans, studies, and bylaws. The RRPC commissioned the Rutland Region Housing Needs Assessment in 2023 and is making strides towards supporting and developing housing in the Rutland region.

### ***OTHER REGIONAL HOUSING EFFORTS***

- **Ludlow:** As the closest service and employment center to Mount Holly, Ludlow plays an outsized role in shaping local housing dynamics. The town's tourism and resort economy, anchored by Okemo Mountain Resort, has driven significant demand for short-term rentals and second homes, pushing up housing costs and reducing the availability of year-round housing for workers. Ludlow has begun exploring regulatory tools to balance economic vitality with housing stability, including short-term rental registration and consideration of workforce housing partnerships with regional employers and developers. The pressures facing Ludlow also influence how Mount Holly's housing market is affected by regional demand for vacation properties and seasonal accommodations.
- **Rutland:** The City of Rutland is the county's urban and economic center and is leading several coordinated efforts to revitalize existing housing stock and expand affordable and workforce options. The Housing Trust of Rutland County (Cornerstone), NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, and Habitat for Humanity are all focused on Rutland and surrounding areas.



## **OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS**

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## Opportunities & Constraints Analysis

### OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

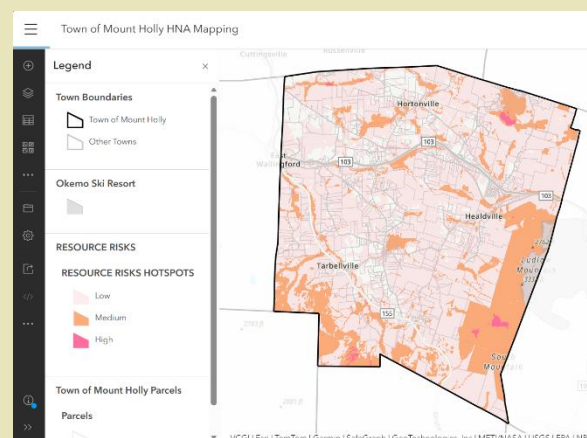
- A small number of town-owned parcels present potential opportunities for housing development. These should be evaluated for suitability and alignment with community goals.
- The town office and school site could serve as a community hub, provided future development avoids flood-prone areas.
- There is an opportunity to expand the Odd Fellows Hall in Belmont Village, which could support small-scale infill housing or mixed-use community space.
- Limited development potential exists on state-owned lands, as these are largely conserved and contain Significant Natural Communities.
- Agriculturally important soils are widespread across Mount Holly, particularly around Belmont Village and Hortonville. These soils may create constraints for development, though Healdville is relatively unencumbered by agricultural soils.
- Forest blocks (Act 174 Highest Priority) are not a major constraint for most of the town. However, Hortonville and Tarbellville border these areas, requiring careful planning to avoid habitat fragmentation.

### Potential Opportunity Sites:

1. Town Office and School Property – explore potential for community or mixed-use development while avoiding flood-prone areas.
2. Mount Holly Village Area – consider infill housing development in this area, which has a relative lack of constraints compared to other areas in Town.
3. Healdville Subdivision Area – promote denser residential infill where infrastructure and employment proximity make development feasible.
4. Wallingford Act 250 Exemption Area (adjacent) – support increased density near the exemption area; collaborate with Wallingford and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission on regional housing solutions.

### Opportunities & Constraints Interactive Map:

Click [here](#) to explore the interactive map of opportunities and constraints areas for housing in Mount Holly. Click the “Layers” button on the left panel to turn layers on and off. Please note that this is a desktop-level analysis and further analysis will be required prior to any development.



- Floodplain risks are most pronounced in Healdville, Tarbellville, the outer edge of Hortonville, and along the southern edge of Route 103. Development in these areas should be avoided or mitigated.
- The lack of municipal water and wastewater infrastructure remains the single largest barrier to new housing opportunities and affordability. This limitation makes decentralized or shared wastewater systems especially important.
- Septic suitability appears generally favorable across town, including within village centers, but must be confirmed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.
- Conserved lands near Healdville limit outward expansion, suggesting infill or redevelopment as the most viable approach. Other hamlet areas appear largely unaffected by conservation constraints.
- Steep slopes are not a significant constraint in any of the hamlet areas, though individual site assessments remain necessary.

## Hamlet Area Takeaways

### **HORTONVILLE**

#### *Opportunities*

- Presence of agriculturally important soils, but potential for infill near existing residential clusters.
- Generally moderate slopes and decent septic suitability.
- Potential small-scale development opportunities along Route 103.

#### *Constraints*

- Proximity to Act 174 Highest Priority Forest Blocks to the north and west requires ecological sensitivity.
- Some floodplain risk along the periphery.

### **BELMONT**

#### *Opportunities*

- Strong village core with community assets like Odd Fellows Hall and Star Lake.
- Presence of town-owned parcels nearby.
- Potential for adaptive reuse and infill housing within the existing village fabric.

#### *Constraints*

- Extensive agricultural soils may limit large-lot development.
- Must avoid flood-prone areas near the lake and streams.

## HEALDVILLE

### *Opportunities*

- Relatively free from agricultural soil constraints.
- Existing subdivision pattern allows for potential density expansion.
- Proximity to local employers and transportation routes makes it well-suited for workforce housing.

### *Constraints*

- Nearby conserved lands limit outward expansion; redevelopment and infill are preferred.
- Contains notable floodplain areas that must be avoided.

## TARBELLVILLE

### *Opportunities*

- Proximity to major transportation routes.
- Adjacent to the Act 250 exemption area, creating regional opportunities for collaboration.
- Generally manageable slopes and moderate septic suitability.

### *Constraints*

- Floodplain areas and adjacency to high-priority forest blocks may limit expansion.
- Requires coordination with Wallingford and the Rutland RPC to ensure compatibility with regional growth and infrastructure plans.

## Connecting Opportunities and Constraints to Housing Strategies

Mount Holly's opportunities and constraints suggest that an ideal local housing strategy should focus on small-scale, context-sensitive growth, reuse of existing resources, and regional collaboration. Given the town's physical and environmental conditions and its rural infrastructure limitations, large-scale development models are neither feasible nor desirable. Instead, the most effective path forward is one that builds on Mount Holly's existing strengths: compact village centers, resilient community institutions, and strong regional partnerships.

The mapping analysis underscores that infrastructure capacity is the single greatest barrier to expanding housing options affordably. This constraint can be addressed in a variety of ways, including shared or decentralized wastewater systems, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and incremental infill rather than major subdivisions. Encouraging small-scale development in Belmont Village, Healdville, and Hortonville, where soils and slopes are generally favorable and

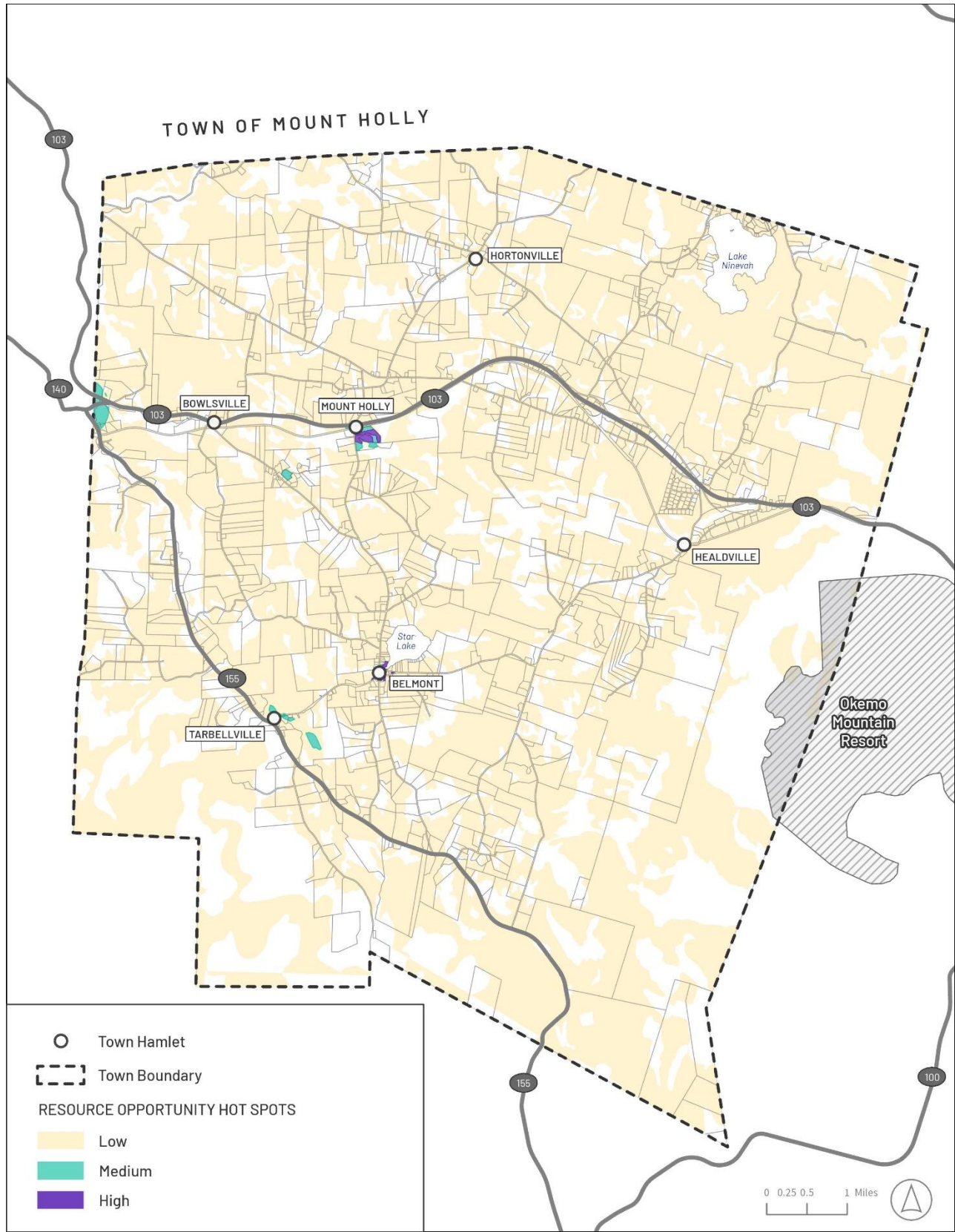
community facilities already exist, can help meet local housing needs without overextending town resources.

Environmental and resource-based limitations also shape where growth should occur. Floodplains, agricultural soils, and conserved lands delineate areas where new development should be minimized, while opportunities exist in previously developed areas or lands with moderate septic suitability. The Healdville subdivision and portions of Belmont Village stand out as logical focus areas for new investment and infill. In contrast, Tarbellville and Hortonville will require careful coordination to protect forest blocks and avoid flood-prone areas, while still accommodating modest residential development.

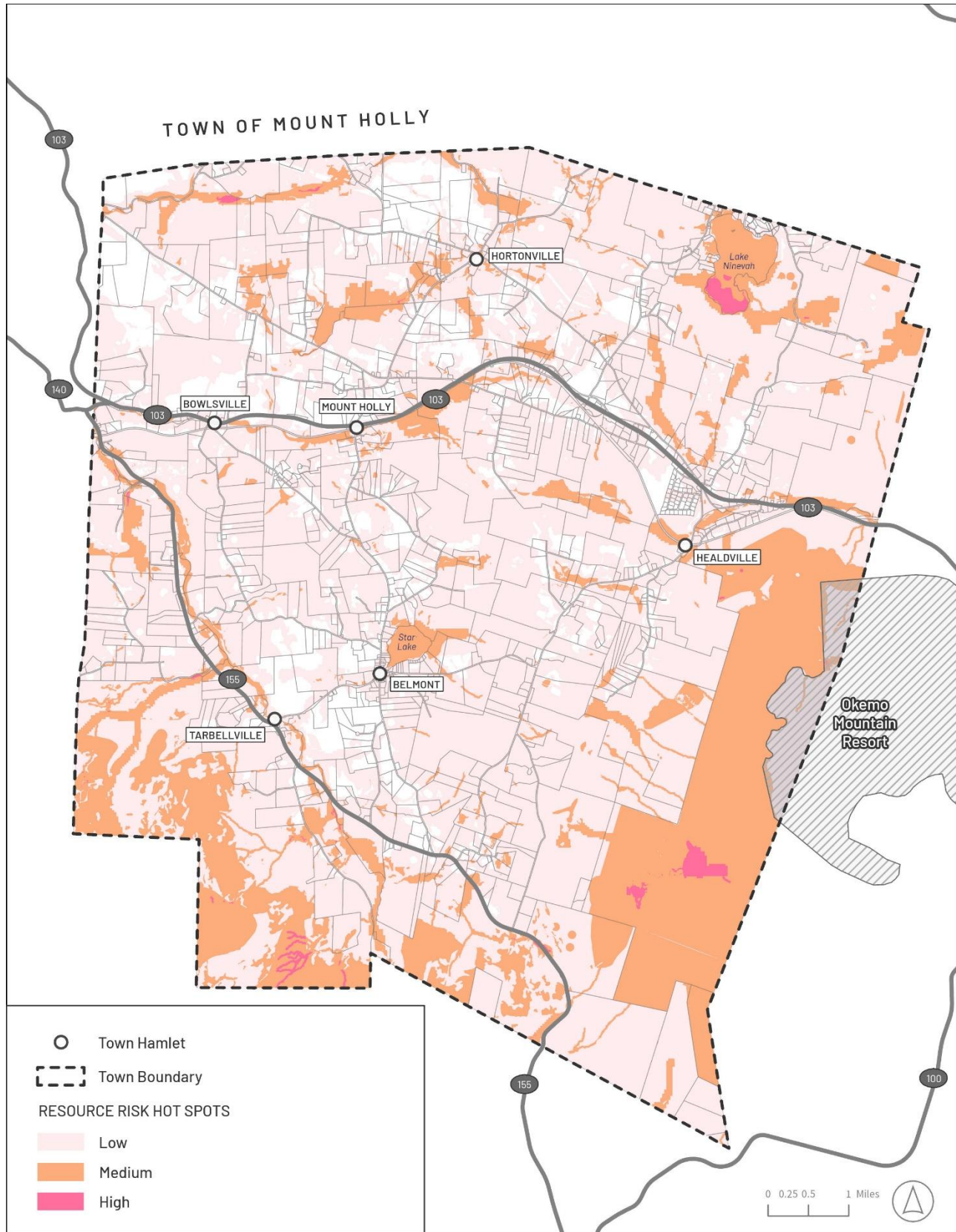
The town's limited number of municipally owned parcels, including those near the town office and school, may offer valuable sites for community-oriented projects or partnerships. Opportunities to expand existing buildings (e.g., Odd Fellows Hall) or build accessory structures on currently developed lots could help create much-needed smaller units and community gathering spaces that reinforce the vitality of the village center.

Finally, the mapping analysis reinforces the need for Mount Holly to work regionally. The Act 250 exemption area in neighboring Wallingford presents a potential outlet for coordinated workforce housing, supported through partnerships with Wallingford, Rutland Regional Planning Commission, and state housing organizations.

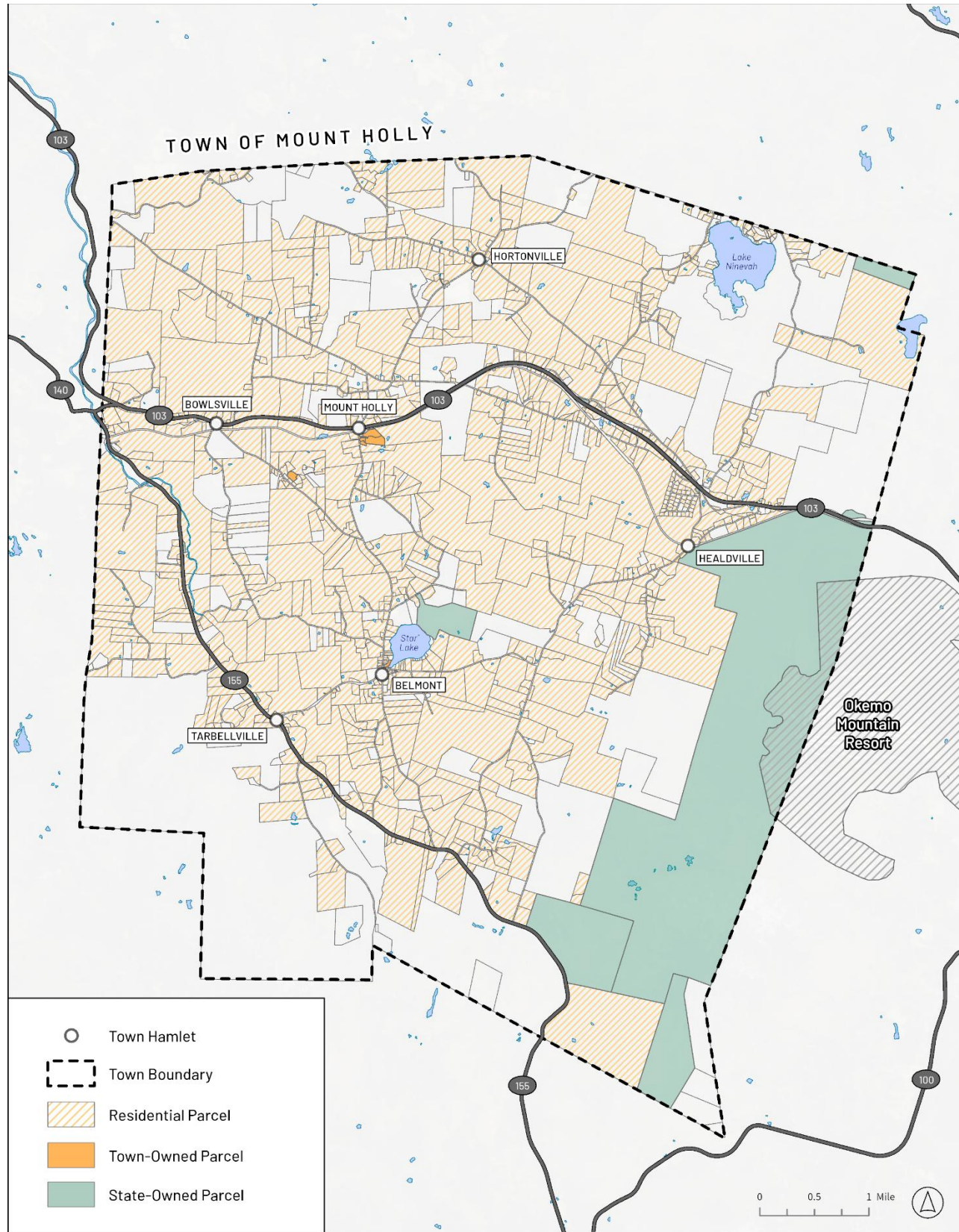
Taken together, these conditions suggest a clear direction for Mount Holly's housing strategy: pursue targeted, locally appropriate interventions (e.g., ADUs, shared systems, modest multi-unit infill, and employer partnerships) that expand housing opportunities without compromising the town's rural character or environmental integrity. The following Housing Action Plan outlines specific steps the town can take to implement this balanced approach.



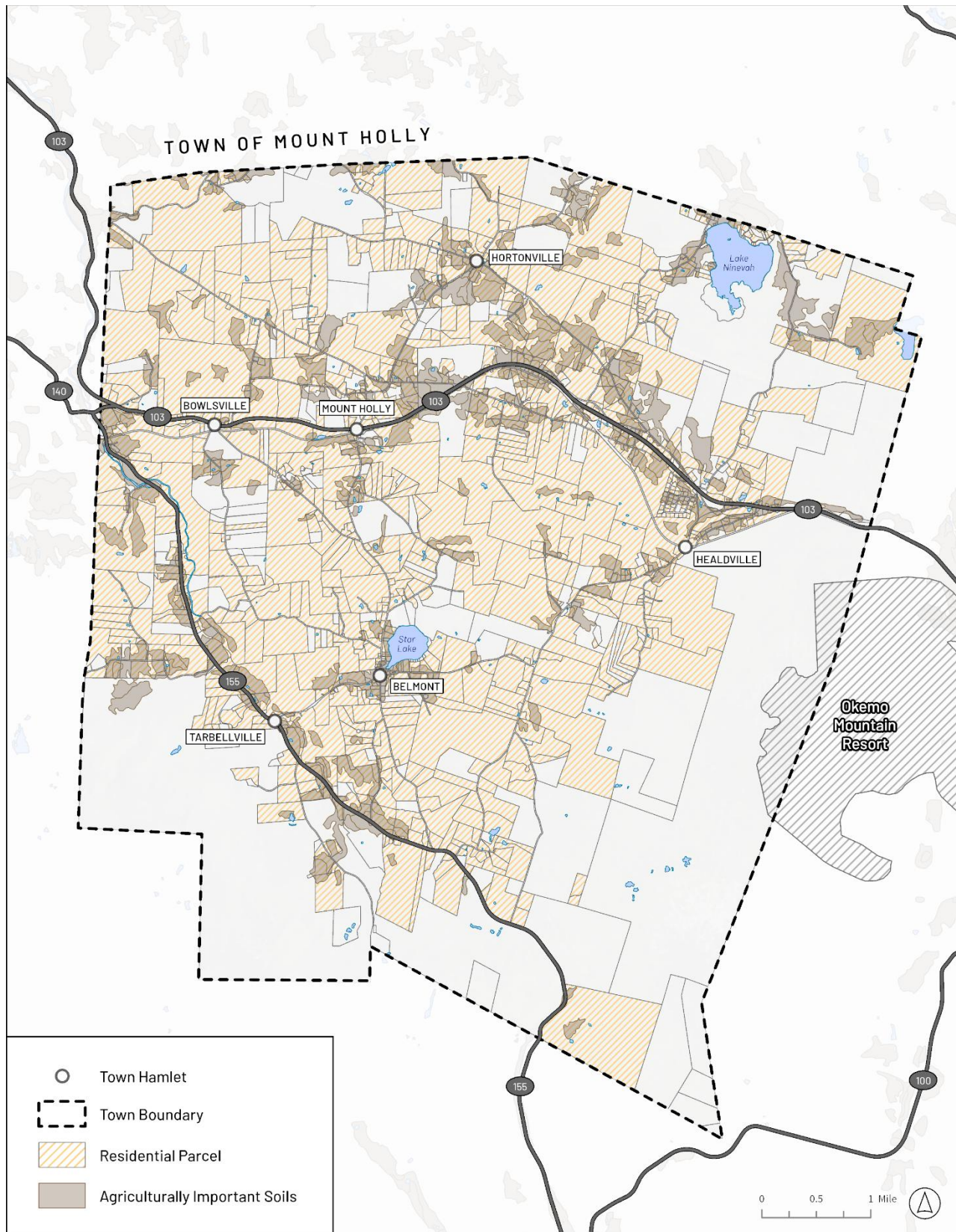
Map 7. Resource Opportunity Hot Spots.



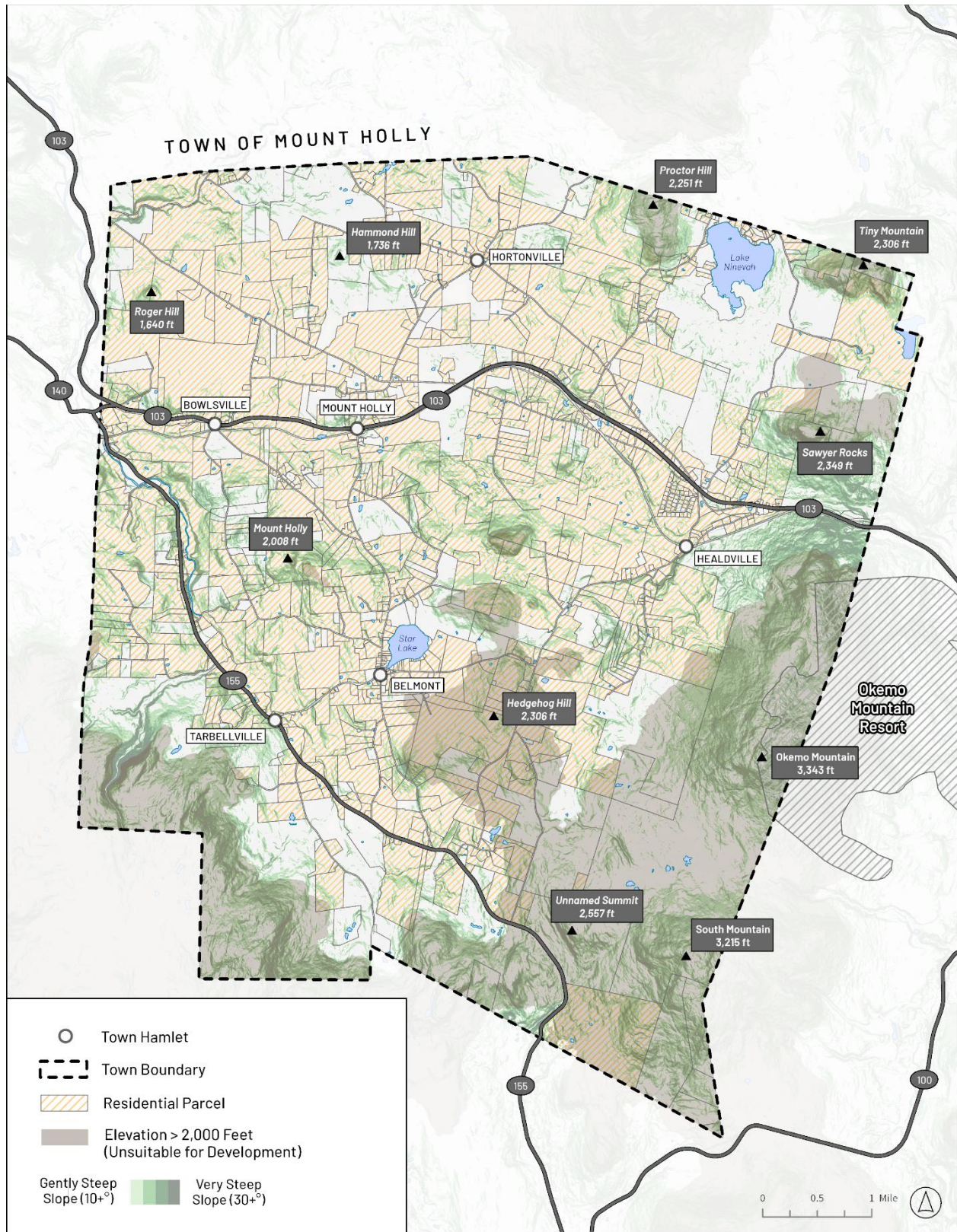
Map 8. Resource Risk Hot Spots.



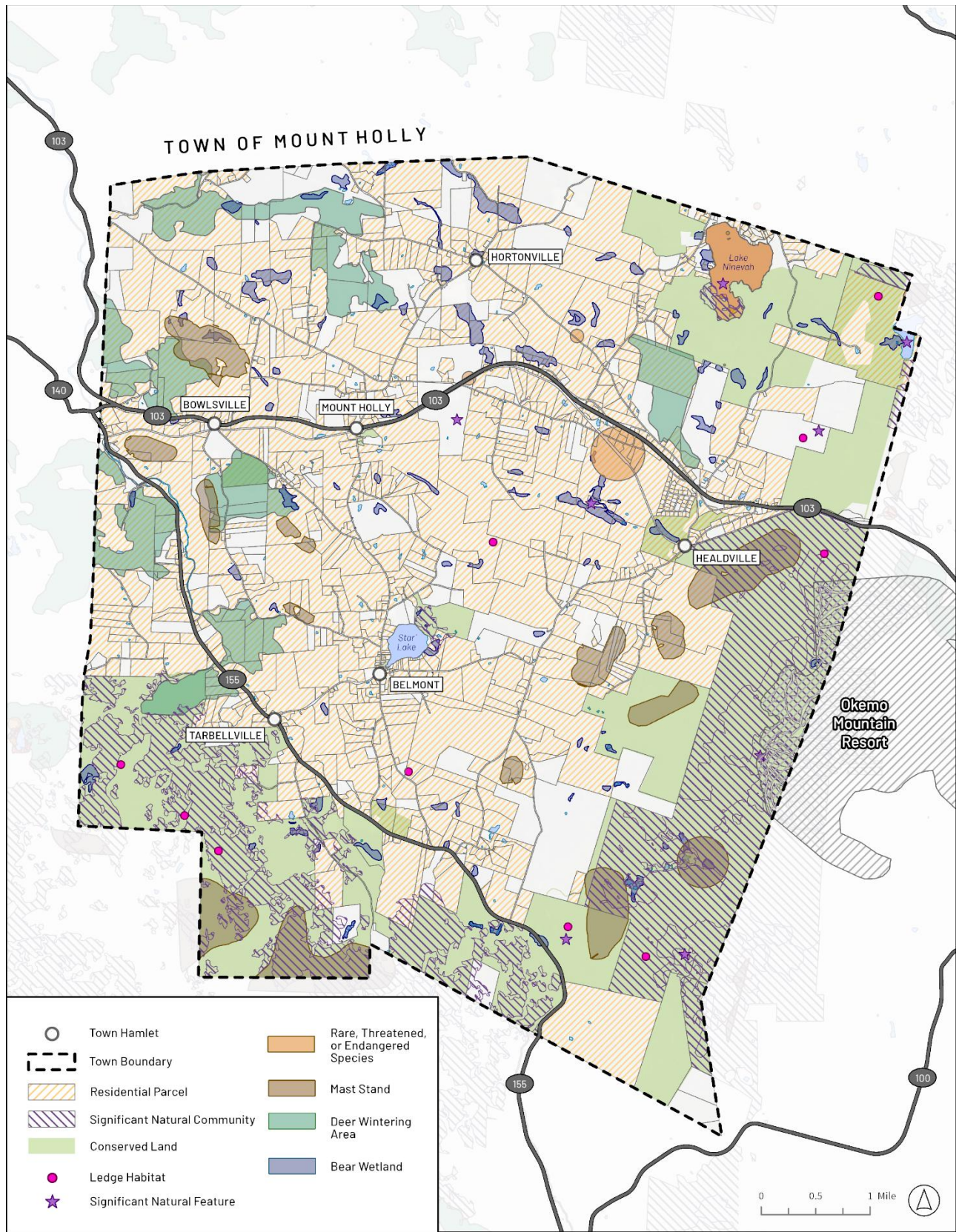
Map 9. Town-Owned, State-Owned, and Residential Parcels.



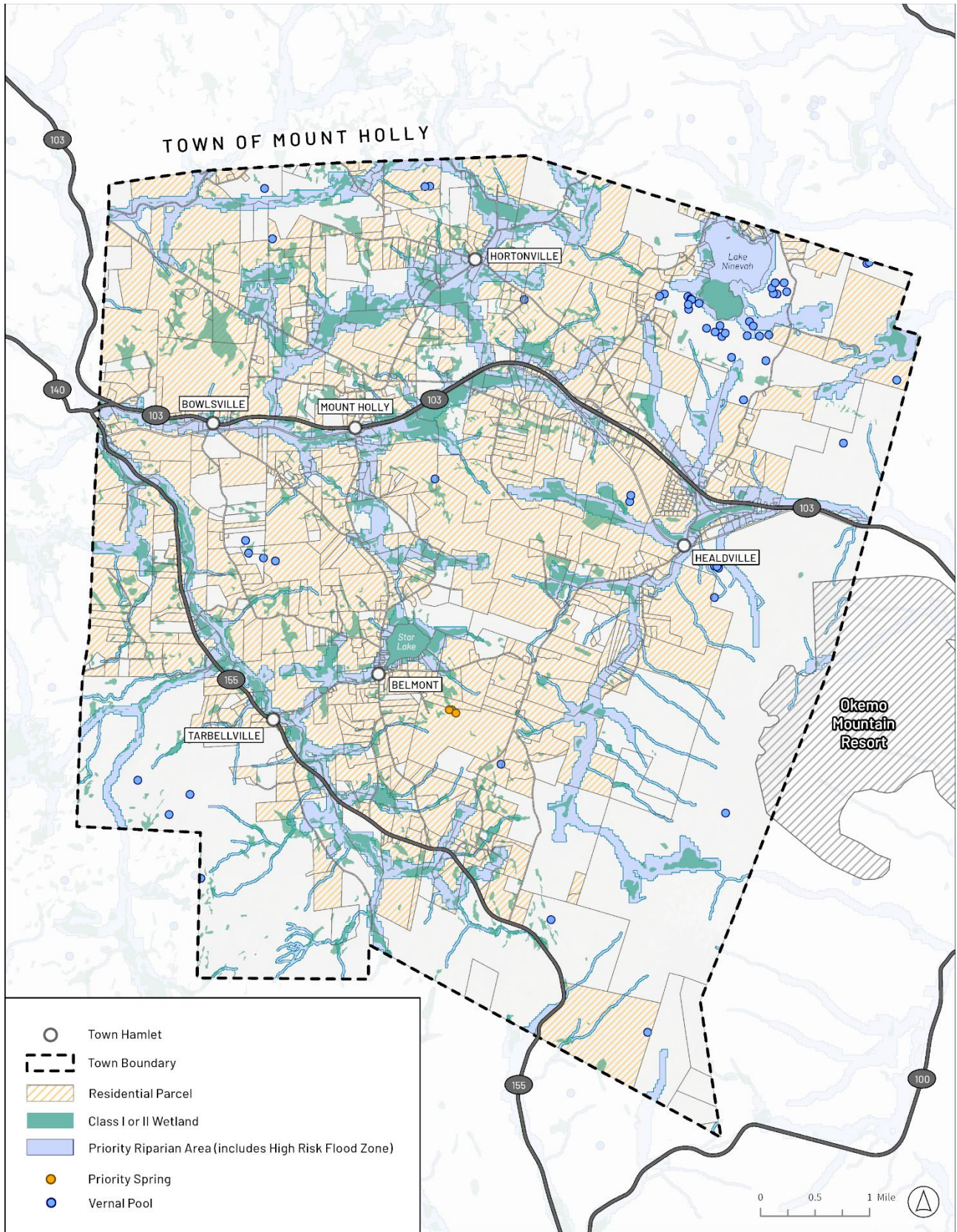
Map 10. Agriculturally Important Soils.



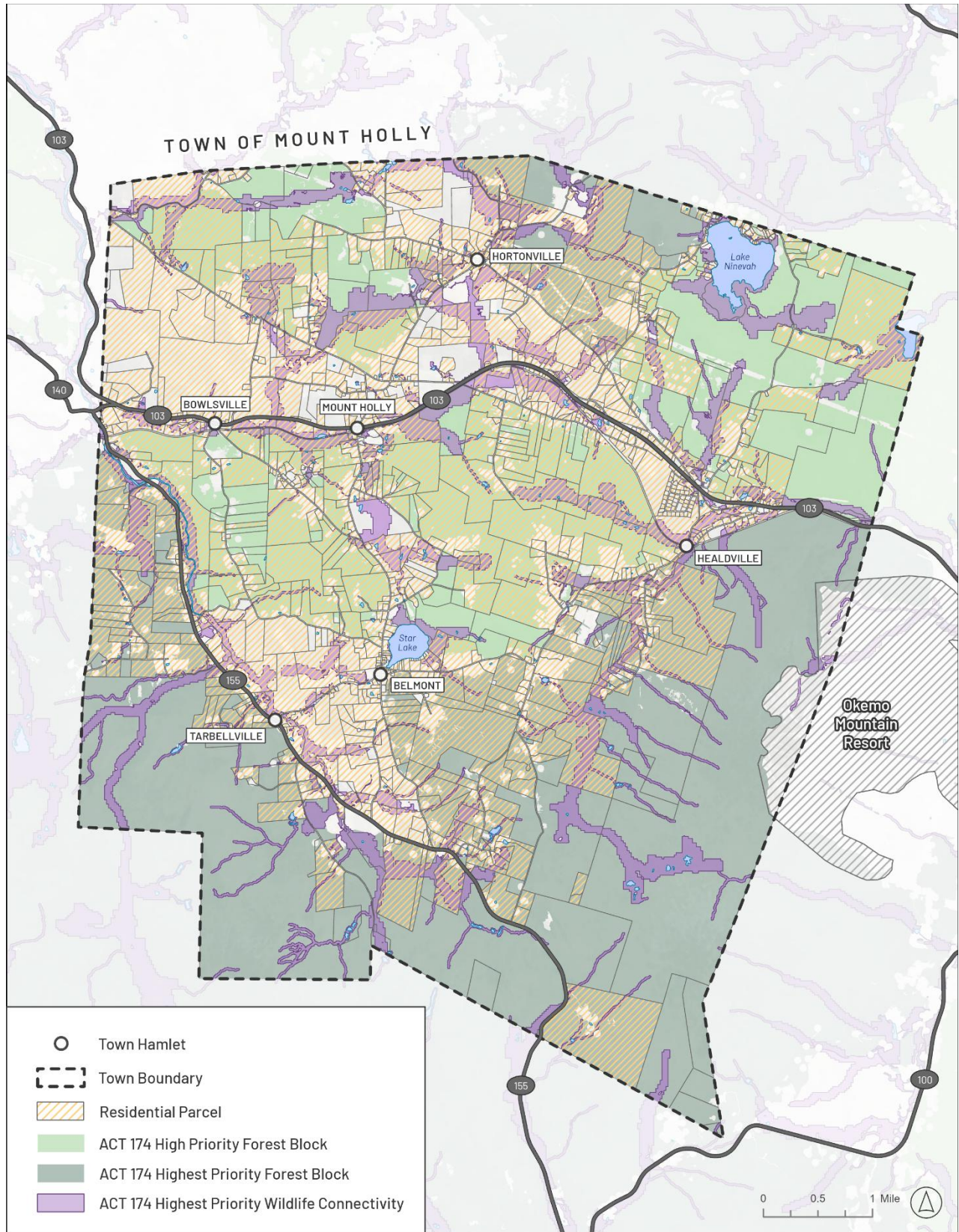
Map 11. Slope & Elevation Risks.



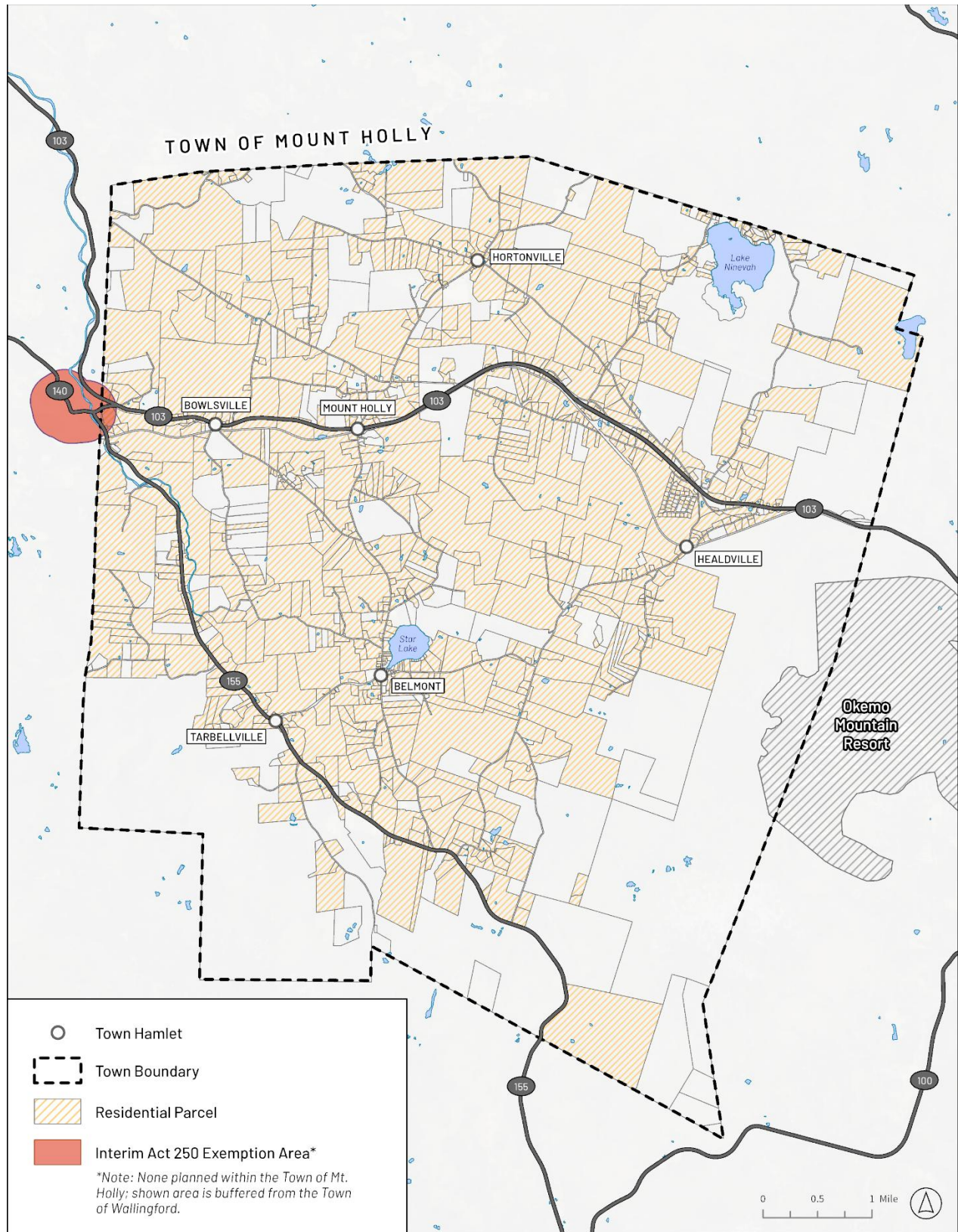
Map 12. Significant Natural Communities & Additional Natural Features.



Map 13. Water Resources Constraints.

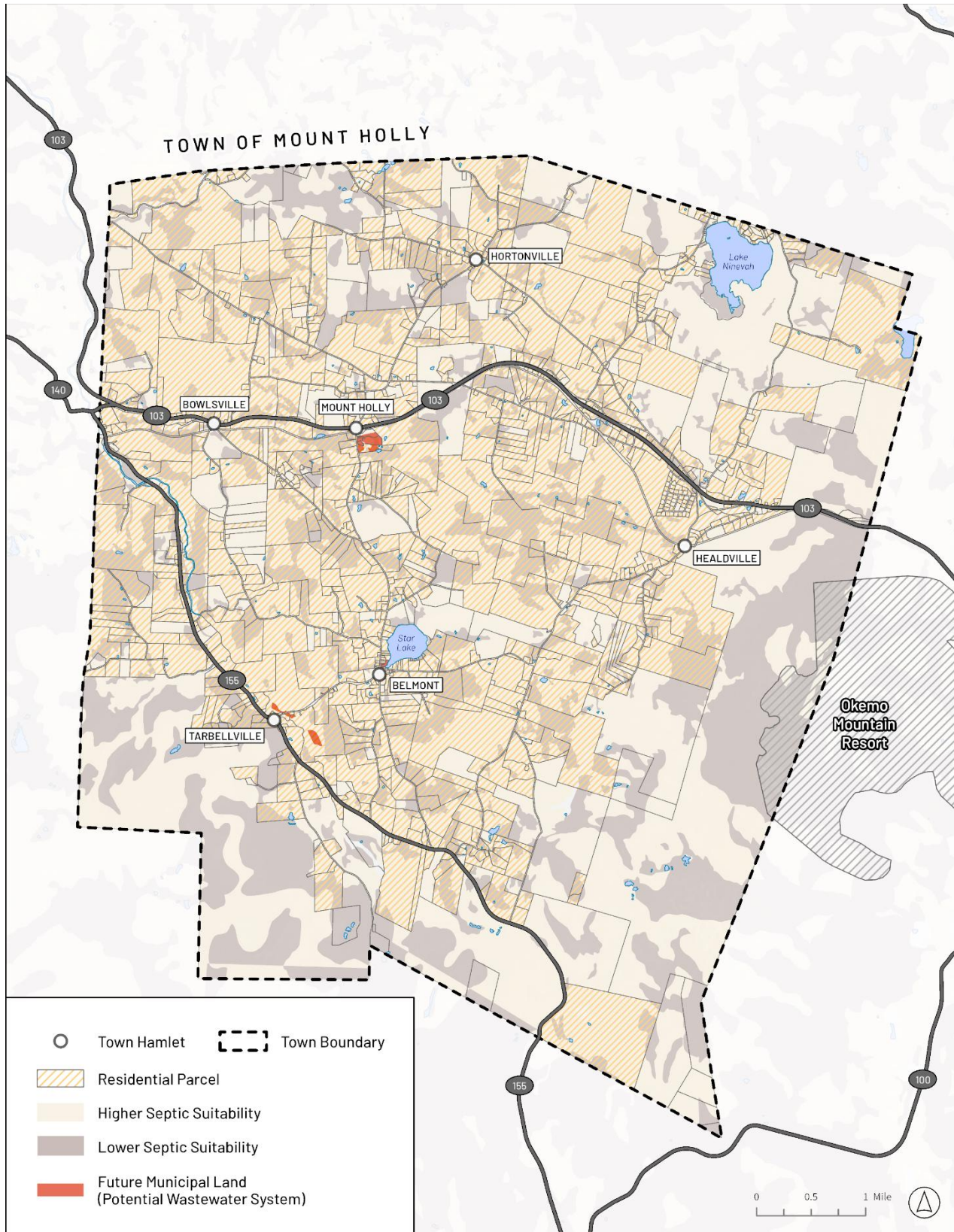


Map 14. Forest Blocks & Wildlife Connectivity Areas.



Map 15. Potential Interim Act 250 Exemption Area in East Wallingford.

Note: No exemption area planned within the Town of Mount Holly. The area shown is buffered from East Wallingford.



Map 16. Septic Suitability in Mount Holly.



## ACTION PLAN

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## Strategies & Recommendations

Addressing housing needs in Mount Holly is a challenge that extends beyond the capacity of any single small town. Local actions must connect to regional strategies, state programs, and partnerships with housing organizations and employers. The goal is not just to add housing units, but to shape a housing market that supports a thriving, resilient, and affordable year-round community. As a small, rural community without municipal water or wastewater systems, Mount Holly must pursue strategies that are financially responsible and aligned with real community capacity.

### 1. ADVANCE NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE WASTEWATER PLANNING

The lack of wastewater infrastructure is the single largest barrier to adding year-round homes in Mount Holly. While large-scale systems are unlikely, targeted investments in neighborhood-scale wastewater solutions can unlock modest, community-appropriate housing in existing village areas.

- Initiate a neighborhood-scale wastewater pre-feasibility study for Belmont Village, Mount Holly hamlet, or the Municipal Center. This should address soil suitability, parcel-level feasibility, technology comparisons (cluster systems, small packaged plants, community leach fields, or advanced decentralized systems), permitting pathways, and long-term maintenance responsibilities.
- Conduct a master plan for the Municipal Center similar to the Belmont Village Master Plan (2023) to assess future growth opportunities for that area.
- Pursue state and federal funding sources appropriate for small-town wastewater planning and implementation. Potential programs include:
  - Vermont Community Housing Incentive Program (CHIP), which helps rural Vermont communities create development-ready sites (top-priority funding to pursue)
  - State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Planning Loans and Grants, including subsidies for disadvantaged or small rural communities.
  - Vermont Clean Water State Revolving Fund construction financing (for decentralized, cluster, or innovative systems).
  - USDA Rural Development Water & Waste Disposal Program (planning and construction grants for towns under 10,000 population).
  - Northern Border Regional Commission grants for community infrastructure.
  - Other potential sources (when available):
    - Federal Community Project Funding (Congressional Directed Spending) for wastewater infrastructure with economic or community benefit.
    - Vermont Village Wastewater Initiative, which supports decentralized wastewater solutions in village centers.

- Department of Housing and Community Development programs that support enabling infrastructure for housing.
- Coordinate early with Vermont DEC to ensure the preferred wastewater concepts meet state permitting requirements and are designed to reduce long-term maintenance liabilities for the town.
- Include clear cost-benefit guidance in the feasibility study to help residents understand what the town would gain and what it may need to contribute. At minimum, the analysis should compare:
  - Estimated total project costs under different system types (cluster, decentralized, small community plant).
  - Eligible grant percentages versus required local match.
  - Annual household costs (user fees, connection charges) under each alternative.
  - Impact on property values and the grand list if wastewater allows new housing or revitalization of village areas.
  - New taxable value generated versus any long-term municipal obligation.
  - Housing growth enabled with and without the system over 10–20 years.
  - Long-term maintenance responsibilities: whether the system is town-owned, jointly managed, or privately managed with town oversight.
  - Comparison of "do nothing," "minimal upgrades," and "neighborhood-scale system" paths, including the cost of deferred action (e.g., continued housing shortages, stalled village reinvestment, inability to support younger families).
  - If pre-feasibility indicates that one or more areas are viable candidates for decentralized wastewater, conduct a public education and engagement process to address residents' questions about the potential project(s) and the expected costs, benefits, and long-term management.
- If wastewater feasibility improves, evaluate the need to modify local land use regulations to ensure optimal wastewater system utilization and that new housing is well-located, avoids sprawl, and meets community goals.

## **SUMMARY OF THE VERMONT COMMUNITY HOUSING INCENTIVE PROGRAM (CHIP)**

### *About the Program*

The Community Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) is a new statewide funding program passed in 2025 that is designed to help small towns and rural communities prepare sites for housing. Unlike programs that fund construction directly, CHIP focuses on one of the most difficult aspects of rural housing: getting sites development-ready. CHIP funds can be used for predevelopment costs, planning, environmental reviews, site due diligence, permitting, engineering, and infrastructure improvements that make a parcel viable for small-scale homes. Municipalities, housing organizations, and regional partners (RPCs, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, and others) may collaborate to apply, and the program encourages multi-stakeholder partnerships that reduce the administrative burden on small towns.

Typical eligible activities include:

- Site planning, feasibility studies, and pre-permitting
- Surveying, engineering, and environmental testing
- Infrastructure improvements such as shared or decentralized wastewater, stormwater upgrades, access improvements, and utility extensions
- Remediation or rehabilitation of blighted properties
- Support for small subdivisions, cottage-style clusters, infill housing, or modest multiunit buildings

### *Why CHIP is Relevant to Mount Holly*

CHIP is intentionally structured so that RPCs and VLCT can assist towns with financial management and administration, making it accessible to small communities with limited capacity. CHIP aligns directly with Mount Holly's needs in several ways:

- The town lacks the staffing and technical capacity to prepare development sites on its own. CHIP allows regional partners to shoulder much of that administrative burden.
- Mount Holly's greatest barriers to new housing are site readiness, wastewater constraints, and the high up-front costs of converting or preparing small parcels. CHIP can fund these early steps.
- The town has several potential small "infill" or redevelopment sites, including fields near Belmont Village, parcels near the Municipal Center, and blighted or underutilized lots. These are locations where CHIP resources could help conduct site assessments, design shared wastewater solutions, and make the properties viable for new housing.
- CHIP also supports the rehabilitation or reuse of existing structures, which aligns with the local priority to evaluate and improve blighted homes.
- The program does not require large-scale development; rather, it is geared toward exactly the kind of 2-10 unit, community-minded projects Mount Holly wants to encourage.

## 2. BUILD STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS THAT EMPHASIZE AFFORDABILITY

Mount Holly cannot advance housing solutions alone. Regional coordination and specialized partners will be essential.

- Work with regional and state partners such as the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Cornerstone, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, and local housing trusts to explore the feasibility of developing small-scale (2–6 unit) workforce and community housing projects. Projects should provide opportunities for full-time residents and preserve community.
- Participate in Act 181 implementation efforts with the Town of Wallingford to align Mount Holly's actions with broader regional housing goals, including for the potential Act 250 exemption area (Tier 1B) in East Wallingford.
- Explore grant opportunities (e.g., Vermont Community Development Program, Municipal Planning Grants, or CHIP rural infrastructure grants) and align local projects with eligible funding streams.
  - Belmont Village options
  - Municipal Center options
  - Mount Holly Village options
- Create a sample voluntary deed restriction for the sale of new lots that can encourage local ownership. Work with Cornerstone/Neighborworks on the management of the deed restrictions. The deed restriction can be based on income and/or local occupancy. There should also be a clause in the deed restriction that if the property does not sell within a certain period of time, it may be sold for use as a second home.
- Pursue partnerships that use town land or land owned by churches or non-profits for small-footprint community housing.



## **THE ROLE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN ADVANCING HOUSING IN MOUNT HOLLY**

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) will be essential to making housing development feasible in Mount Holly. Because the town has limited staff capacity, no municipal wastewater system, and a housing market shaped by seasonal demand, most projects will require collaboration between multiple entities, including municipal, nonprofit, and private companies. PPPs offer a way to distribute responsibilities, reduce risk, and leverage the strengths of each partner.

In Mount Holly, public-private partnerships are highly important for three main reasons. First, small-scale housing projects (typically 2-10 units) are often too complex for individual property owners to pursue alone but too small to attract conventional developers. Regional housing organizations such as NeighborWorks and Cornerstone can help bridge this gap by providing financing tools, construction management capacity, shared-equity ownership models, and access to state funding. Second, the town's infrastructure limitations require coordination across agencies and property owners. Developers, nonprofits, engineers, and the town may need to pool resources to create shared septic solutions, undertake predevelopment studies, or bundle several small sites into one coherent project. Third, PPPs allow the town to maintain community control—ensuring that new housing serves local residents—while reducing the municipal fiscal burden. Tools such as voluntary deed restrictions, land leases, and shared system agreements allow the town to guide affordability and ensure year-round residency without taking on full ownership or operation of housing assets.

Effective PPP models for Mount Holly could include:

- A nonprofit developer partnering with the town to rehabilitate a blighted building and create 2-4 year-round rental units.
- A shared-equity or land-trust model where a private landowner contributes land, the town secures CHIP or VCDP funding for site readiness, and a regional nonprofit manages construction and long-term affordability
- Collaboration between local employers and a housing organization to develop ADUs or small cottages targeted to the local workforce
- Church- or nonprofit-owned land being used through long-term lease agreements to host a cluster of small, energy-efficient homes supported by a shared septic system.

These partnership structures help ensure that development remains financially viable while aligning with Mount Holly's goals for modest scale, rural character, and community-serving outcomes. For a town with limited staff capacity, PPPs offer one of the best pathways to producing new housing without creating new municipal departments or taking on unsustainable long-term obligations.

## VERMONT EXAMPLES OF DEED-RESTRICTION / LOCAL-OCCUPANCY HOUSING PROGRAMS

### Woodstock Community Trust – “Local Deeds” Program

Woodstock, VT’s [Local Deeds program](#) helps local workers purchase homes in the Woodstock area (Barnard, Bridgewater, Hartland, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, Woodstock) by providing down-payment assistance in exchange for a deed restriction on the property. Under the restriction, at least one occupant must work locally (minimum 25 hours/week within a 16 mile radius of Woodstock Town Hall) and the home must serve as their primary residence. Short-term rental use is prohibited. The down-payment assistance is provided as a cash grant (not a loan). The amount is up to 16% of the property’s appraised value – for [example](#), roughly \$30,000 for a \$200,000 home, or higher as needed for more expensive properties. The Local Deeds approach places no resale price cap – rather, the deed restriction focuses on local occupancy only. Over time, this helps preserve homes for working residents who might otherwise be priced out.

### Mad River Valley Housing Coalition (MRVHC) – Community-Driven Housing Support in Waitsfield / Mad River Valley

The [MRVHC](#) is a long-standing nonprofit coalition serving towns like Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston. It supports affordable housing via planning, shared-equity programs, accessory dwelling units, and other housing strategies tailored to small-town and resort-area conditions. Among its efforts, the coalition has promoted creation of ADUs, [“Tenants for Turns”](#) programs (matching seasonal workers with rent-ready units), and small-scale shared housing or housing clusters.

While MRVHC does not rely solely on deed restrictions, its work shows how a nonprofit housing coalition can support workforce housing in rural, resort-influenced towns. This type of coalition can provide technical support, manage shared-equity or shared-ownership models, partner with municipalities for housing readiness and land use guidance, and support diverse household types (workers, families, retirees, seasonal-to-year-round transitions)



Photo: Local Deeds program.

## **INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TINY HOME OR SMALL-SCALE HOUSING ON INSTITUTIONAL OR TOWN LAND**

Small-footprint housing offers a high-impact, low-cost option in rural communities. These types of housing support many relevant goals for Mount Holly, including aging-in-place and year-round housing opportunities. This model is also helpful for small lots and areas adjacent to existing community facilities, such as the Municipal Center. Several model strategies are relevant to Mount Holly:

- **Tiny-Home or Modular Neighborhoods on Town Land:** Town-owned parcels—especially near the Municipal Center—could host 2–6 small units if wastewater capacity is solved (shared septic). These can serve local workers, older residents, or people seeking starter homes.
- **Partnerships with Churches or Nonprofits:** Churches often own underused land or buildings. Creative options include:
  - Placing one or two modular cottages on church-owned land
  - Converting underutilized rectories, parish halls, or community rooms
  - Forming long-term land leases to keep occupancy affordable
- **If Mount Holly adopts zoning in the future, tiny homes, cottages, and micro-cluster housing can be enabled via:**
  - Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)
  - Cottage court overlays
  - Reduced minimum lot sizes
  - Shared parking or driveway access



*Photo: Cottage Court in Bristol Village, VT Cohousing (Vermont Integrated Architecture)*

### 3. ENCOURAGE INCREMENTAL, CONTEXT-SENSITIVE HOUSING TYPES

Given Mount Holly's rural infrastructure and small-town context, the most feasible solutions involve small, incremental additions rather than large projects. As discussed in #1, larger projects dependent on wastewater still may be valuable and will add housing more efficiently than gradual lot-by-lot intensification. The town should support shared-septic developments, scattered-site infill, and modest workforce housing in areas with appropriate soils, ideally adjacent to communities facilities, businesses, or existing neighborhoods.

- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):
  - Promote 1–2 new ADU builds per year to meet small-unit needs (studio/1-BR).
  - Prioritize locally owned or occupied ADUs to maintain community connection and year-round residency.
  - Encourage shared systems (e.g., septic, water) to make ADU development more feasible.
  - Take advantage of [state funding](#) and loan opportunities for ADUs, including opportunities for people exiting homelessness.
  - Consider offering additional forgivable loans to homeowners who construct an ADU on their property and rent it affordably to a long-term tenant.
- Cottage Courts, Condo-ized Developments, and Cooperative Housing:
  - Encourage small clusters of cottage-style homes (6–12 units) in village areas to support aging in place, downsizing, and social connection.
  - Allow condo-ized small-unit developments to simplify permitting and share maintenance, septic systems, and infrastructure.
  - Support cooperative housing models where residents jointly own land or structures, improving affordability and stability.
  - Prioritize locations near village centers, community facilities, or existing development patterns to reinforce walkability and community cohesion.
- Multiunit Housing:
  - Encourage modest multiunit buildings in Belmont Village, Mount Holly (hamlet) and Healdville, where there is already a denser pattern and proximity to employers.
  - Focus on structures that fit the scale and character of existing neighborhoods.
  - Encourage a “telescoping” style of development that provides new units as additions on existing structures.
- Large-Lot Opportunities and Incentives:
  - Work with the Mount Holly Community Foundation or other partners to identify large-lot landowners who might be willing to build an ADU or otherwise subdivide their property.

## **PARCEL SIZE, SUBDIVISION, AND SMALL-SCALE LOT OPTIONS**

Most new housing in Vermont requires subdividing land into parcels that can support water and wastewater systems. In towns without zoning—like Mount Holly—subdivision regulations are the primary tool shaping lot patterns and development feasibility. A few key concepts are particularly relevant for small, incremental housing:

### *Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)*

ADUs are small, independent living spaces located on the same parcel as an existing home. They can be attached (internal or addition) or detached (cottage, garage conversion). Because ADUs do not create a new parcel, they avoid the subdivision process entirely. Instead, they rely on demonstrating adequate wastewater capacity, either via onsite septic, expansion of an existing system, or shared/separate systems.

### *Fee Simple Lots*

Fee simple subdivision creates wholly independent parcels, each of which must have its own wastewater capacity or an allocated share of a shared system. This is the traditional form of subdivision and is the primary mechanism by which new homeownership units are created. However, larger lot sizes and septic siting requirements often make fee simple lots expensive or impractical in village areas.

### *Flag Lots*

Flag lots allow development on “back-lots” that do not directly front the road. These parcels are accessed through a narrow “flag pole”-shaped driveway. They can enable gentle infill and better use of deep village lots. Mount Holly’s subdivision regulations could be updated to explicitly allow or encourage flag lots, with standards to ensure safety and road access.

### *Subdivisions & Wastewater*

Shared systems dramatically increase the feasibility of small-footprint lots or cottage clusters in village centers. It is important to note that subdivisions are still possible within a parcel or parcels that have a shared system. Under Vermont’s wastewater rules, multiple parcels may share a decentralized wastewater system if the system is designed for total anticipated flows, each parcel has wastewater capacity allocated to it, and there is a legally binding shared system agreement (easement, O&M responsibilities, cost-sharing plan) recorded in the land records.

## 4. OPTIMIZE USE OF EXISTING HOUSING

- Reduce vacant homes:
  - Identify and engage owners of underutilized or seasonal homes to increase full-time occupancy through surveys, community lunches, or workshops.
  - Explore tax or other incentive strategies that encourage year-round rental or sale to local residents.
  - If an empty homes tax ever becomes authorized in Vermont, explore this as a solution to address second homes and vacant homes in Mount Holly. The vacancy tax could apply only to homes that are vacant more than 180 days/year with reasonable exemptions (e.g., active renovation, medical issues) and the revenue could support local housing rehabilitation or down payment assistance.
- Short-Term Rentals (STRs):
  - Study the local STR market to understand its impact on the long-term rental supply and local economy.
  - Based on findings, regulate STRs through a local ordinance to protect housing availability for residents. An STR registry and annual fee system is likely a good starting place for managing STRs in Mount Holly. State law already requires STR operators to collect and remit the Meals and Rooms Tax, and establishing a local STR registry would help Mount Holly ensure compliance, improve data accuracy, and better understand the impact of STRs on year-round housing availability.
- Shared Ownership Strategies:
  - Encourage models such as cooperative housing or shared-equity partnerships to expand attainable ownership options.
- Address blighted housing:
  - Explore opportunities for the Town to acquire blighted, vacant homes and sell to affordable housing developers for \$1 for the purposes of creating new affordable homes in Mount Holly.
- Age-Friendly Infrastructure:
  - Plan for home modifications, accessibility improvements, and service coordination that enable older residents to age in place or downsize.

## EXAMPLES OF STR REGULATION IN RURAL VERMONT COMMUNITIES

### *Woodstock, VT – Conditional Use & Registration for STRs*

[Woodstock](#) defines a short-term rental (STR) as a dwelling/dwelling unit rented fewer than 30 days, with more than 14 days of rental per year. STRs are regulated via a local ordinance and require annual registration. The ordinance limits the number of STR registrations per year (both owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied), to help cap overall STR supply in relation to total housing stock. STR operators in Woodstock must meet health and safety requirements because STR units are treated under state “public building” regulations.

### *Plymouth, VT – Licensing & Oversight for Larger STRs*

In 2022, [Plymouth](#) adopted a local ordinance requiring licensing/permit for any dwelling rented short-term (less than 30 days). The regulations differentiate based on capacity: units accommodating 8 or more overnight guests must comply with state wastewater/septic regulations, obtain any required land-use permits (e.g. if subject to environmental permitting), and undergo inspection for safety. The ordinance emphasizes “community integrity, noise and activity control, occupancy levels, sanitation, safety, and parking” as criteria for any STR license.

### *Killington, VT – STR Registration, Safety & Occupancy Controls*

Killington requires operators to complete a formal STR registration through the town’s online system. ([Killington Town](#)) Safety and fire-code compliance are required for rentals; any STR with occupancy above a threshold must pass inspection by the state fire & safety authority. ([Killington Town](#)) Off-street parking is required for STR guests; on-street parking by guests is prohibited. ([Killington Town](#)) The STR regulations apply across zoning districts (with exceptions for very large guest counts), indicating that rural and resort-area towns can regulate STRs even across broad geographic areas. ([Killington Town](#))

### *Implications for Mount Holly*

STR regulation in rural Vermont takes many different forms. Some towns (Woodstock) focus on registration and caps; others (Plymouth, Killington) incorporate capacity, septic, parking, and safety standards. Annual or periodic registration helps build accurate data about the number of STR units. This is an important first step before more substantial regulation. Safety, septic/wastewater, and occupancy/parking standards address primary risks for low-infrastructure towns. These elements seem especially relevant for Mount Holly, given its lack of municipal wastewater and sensitivity to environmental constraints. The Town can choose to have different regulations for owner-occupied, host-occupied, and non-owner-occupied STRs, or between small units and large-lot STRs, which provides flexibility in the regulatory approach.

## **CASE STUDY – VILLAGE VENTURES REHABILITATION (61 N. PLEASANT STREET, BRADFORD, VT)**

*This case study illustrates a model that is highly relevant to Mount Holly's blighted homes, underutilized structures, and interest in small-scale infill.*

Village Ventures is a Vermont-based development company that specializes in redevelopment of blighted or aging residential properties into modest, code-compliant, energy-efficient homes for year-round residents. In a recent project at 61 N. Pleasant Street in Bradford, VT, Village Ventures converted a dilapidated single-family home and vacant horse barn into updated, code-compliant multifamily housing affordable to people making 60% AMI.

### **Relevance to Mount Holly:**

- The town has several aging or deteriorated structures that cannot currently support safe occupancy;
- Rehabilitation is often far cheaper than new construction (\$40,000–\$80,000 typical per-unit rehab, depending on conditions);
- Local or regional partners (NeighborWorks/Cornerstone, Habitat for Humanity, or small-scale developers) could replicate this model;
- Works especially well in village areas where wastewater constraints favor reuse over new septic-dependent construction.



61 N. Bradford Street – Before (Source: Village Ventures)



61 N. Bradford Street – After (Source: Village Ventures)

## **HOW RURAL VERMONT COMMUNITIES DELIVER HOUSING REHABILITATION**

In Vermont, most successful housing rehabilitation is carried out by regional housing organizations and nonprofits, not individual towns. Small rural municipalities rarely have the staff, funding capacity, or legal structures needed to acquire and redevelop properties. Instead, towns act as partners and enablers, while specialized organizations lead the technical and financial work.

Across the state, groups such as the Housing Trust of Rutland County, NeighborWorks, Downstreet, and Twin Pines Housing routinely acquire aging homes, rehabilitate them using state programs (VHCB, VHIP, CDBG, USDA Rural Development), and convert them into safe, energy-efficient, affordable units. These projects often involve modest buildings in small towns (at the same scale that is relevant for Mount Holly) and produce long-term affordable rentals or ownership opportunities without requiring major municipal involvement.

Towns typically contribute by identifying priority properties, supporting grant applications, providing letters of support or minor matching funds, preparing sites through programs like CHIP, or offering public land for redevelopment. By relying on nonprofit partners to handle acquisition, rehab, compliance, and long-term management, rural towns avoid financial risk while still expanding year-round housing.

## 5. EXPAND RENTAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

- Increase rental unit availability:
  - Encourage small, scattered-site rental development and rehabilitation of existing properties for long-term rental. A scattered-site approach, which is a development that disperses housing units across multiple lots rather than in one location, can be helpful in rural areas where there are not many opportunities for large buildings that can be converted to apartments and limited or no infrastructure that could support new construction of a small to midsize apartment building.
- Support low-income renters:
  - Advocate for rental and/or utility assistance for households earning below 100% AMI.
  - Establish a local emergency fund to be used for mutual aid purposes for Mount Holly residents experiencing a unique challenge regarding high housing costs.
- Explore a new mobile home park or manufacture home development:
  - Assess land availability, environmental constraints, infrastructure feasibility, and partnerships to create affordable manufactured housing opportunities.
  - Create a tiny home guide to support the feasibility and development of tiny homes in Mount Holly. Consider innovative solutions to encourage tiny home development on town-owned land.

Note: Mobile home parks in Vermont are subject to state wastewater and potable water permitting, lot-size and spacing standards, and siting restrictions that generally limit new parks to areas with suitable soils or existing infrastructure. As a result, very few new parks have been created in recent decades. Because new parks must meet environmental, access, and safety standards and often require Act 250 review they can be difficult to establish, making expansion of existing parks or small clustered manufactured home developments more feasible than building entirely new ones.

## **RENTAL & UTILITY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE IN VERMONT AND RUTLAND COUNTY**

With renter incomes averaging about \$45,000 and monthly rents exceeding affordability thresholds, awareness of rental assistance programs is critical. The town can partner with BROCC Community Action and NeighborWorks to circulate resources, host informational sessions, and assist residents applying for aid.

A variety of programs support low- and moderate-income renters in Mount Holly and the surrounding area:

- **Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (Rutland Housing Authority):** Provides long-term rental assistance based on income. Limited availability; waitlists open periodically.
- **Vermont Rental Assistance Program (VHIP & ERAP legacy efforts):** Emergency Rental Assistance (2021–2023) has largely ended, but some stabilization funds remain available through local service agencies for crisis situations.
- **BROCC Community Action – Rutland County:** BROCC provides a variety of services and assistance, such as:
  - Utility assistance (electric, fuel, water)
  - Homelessness prevention funds
  - Weatherization Assistance Program for efficiency upgrades
  - Case management for renters at risk of displacement
- **Fuel & Utility Supports:** There are several energy assistance programs available for households with a gross household income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level:
  - Vermont Gas discount programs for natural gas bills
  - Green Mountain Power discount programs for electric bills

## 6. STRATEGIC SITE READINESS AND LAND ENGAGEMENT

- Landowner Outreach:
  - Develop a catalog of property owners interested in supporting affordable or workforce housing, either through land donation, long-term lease, or direct participation in development projects.
- Pre-Entitlement:
  - Pursue planning studies or overlay maps that identify “priority housing areas” where future development would be most appropriate once enabling regulations are adopted.
- Avoid Environmental Risks:
  - The town should steer new housing away from risk-prone areas, including floodplains and steep slopes. This can be achieved in part through changes to local land use regulations, including standards requiring identification of building or development envelopes and lot layout that avoid constrained areas.
- Update Subdivision Regulations:
  - Update subdivision regulations to implement the recommendations of the Town Plan through clear standards that support needed housing types, guide development to appropriate locations, and avoid undue adverse impacts on constrained land and community character.
  - Allow and clearly define cottage courts, cooperative housing, small condominiumized clusters, and other development forms that do not rely on conventional lot creation as permitted subdivision outcomes, including shared driveways and shared wastewater systems.
  - Add explicit standards enabling flag lots and back-lot development, with safe access requirements, to support gentle infill in village areas and hamlets.
  - Create a streamlined subdivision pathway for small-scale projects (2–6 units) for applicants who elect to qualify by agreeing to recorded deed restrictions that preserve affordability, year-round occupancy, age-friendly housing, or other local housing objectives, thereby reducing time and administrative burden for qualifying projects.
  - Incorporate provisions for shared or decentralized wastewater systems so multiple lots can legally use a single system with recorded maintenance agreements.
  - Require identification of proposed building or development envelopes in site plans where needed to determine whether new lots or development areas are suitable for safe access, wastewater service, and development consistent with the Town Plan.
  - Create clear review pathways for development areas that do not rely on conventional parcel or lot creation, including condominium, common-interest, clustered, and planned unit forms of development.

## 7. MONITOR AND ADJUST

Ongoing monitoring is essential to ensure that Mount Holly's housing strategies remain aligned with real conditions on the ground. Because small towns experience rapid shifts from relatively few housing transactions, maintaining a clear understanding of vacancies, new units added, and short-term rental activity will help the Selectboard and Planning Commission course-correct and prioritize actions over time. Monitoring will help the Town detect early warning signs (e.g., shrinking year-round rental market, rising vacancy in seasonal homes, or unmet demand for modest ownership housing) and adjust local approaches accordingly.

- Track absorption and demand:
  - Monitor new home sales and rental uptake; if properties remain unsold or unrented beyond six months, adjust the pace or type of new development accordingly.
- Data and Evaluation:
  - Regularly compare local trends with county and regional housing indicators to ensure Mount Holly's actions remain aligned with evolving conditions.

### *Suggested Steps*

- Pull annual data from HousingData.org: home sales, median sale price, housing units by type, vacancy / seasonal home rates, rental vacancy / rent estimates, household income, and demographic change.
- Maintain the Town's own new-construction registration data and link to E-911 or building-permit/registration logs – use these as a proxy for new housing units added each year.
- Add a simple STR / vacancy registry or tracking log – even a one-row database or spreadsheet summarizing number of STRs (or AirDNA count), number of long-term rentals, number of vacant / seasonal homes can be effective for this.
- Compile this information in an annual "Housing Monitoring Report" to the Selectboard/Planning Commission, summarizing 5-10 key indicators and noting trends or anomalies relative to prior years. Provide comparisons to this document and future housing needs assessments.

## **8. BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY AND COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS**

Expanding housing opportunities in Mount Holly will require sustained local capacity and coordination across institutions. Strong community champions and administrative capacity are foundational for implementing the recommendations in this plan.

- Consider creating or partnering to support a part-time housing coordinator potentially shared with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission or neighboring towns to manage pre-engineering tasks, grant writing, partner coordination, and communication with residents. This role can also help the town navigate state programs, prepare funding applications, and coordinate with DEC, VHFA, VHCB, and regional housing nonprofits.
- Establish a small Housing Advisory Group composed of volunteers, employers, school representatives, and local landowners, which can help build shared ownership of the housing strategy.
- Build partnerships with regional housing organizations, including NeighborWorks, Cornerstone, Habitat for Humanity, and BROCC Community Action. These organizations offer technical expertise, financial tools, and program delivery that small towns cannot provide alone. By formalizing these relationships and involving them in priority projects, Mount Holly can expand its effective capacity without expanding municipal staffing or over-relying volunteer support.
- Whenever possible, provide public workshops/discussions of local housing plans and visual examples of small-scale projects to build trust and reduce anxiety about growth.

## **UNDERSTANDING PROPERTY VALUES, CLA, AND HOUSING DEMAND IN MOUNT HOLLY**

### **WHAT IS THE CLA?**

The Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is a state-calculated ratio that compares the town's assessed property values (the Grand List) to actual market sales values. It measures how closely assessments reflect current market conditions. When market values increase faster than assessed values, the CLA falls below 100 percent. When this occurs, the state adjusts the education tax rate to maintain equity across municipalities. The Town of Mount Holly does not control the CLA.

### **DOES THE CLA DRIVE UP PROPERTY VALUES?**

The CLA does not cause property values to rise. It is a metric that reflects changes in the housing market. Rising property tax burdens associated with the CLA are the result of rising market values, not the driver of them. This Housing Needs Assessment documents that home prices in Mount Holly have increased approximately 150 percent since 2019, and that the current median listing price is approximately \$495,000. These market changes are the underlying factors affecting the CLA.

### **WHAT IS DRIVING HOUSING PRICES IN MOUNT HOLLY?**

Mount Holly has 1,161 housing units, of which approximately 44% are seasonal. Only 6% are renter-occupied, and 88 percent are single-family homes. Single-family homes can sometimes be more expensive than other housing types.

In addition, infrastructure limitations are significant and have cost implications. The town does not have municipal water or wastewater systems, and so development feasibility is largely determined by septic capacity. Floodplain areas and agricultural soils further constrain development in certain locations. These constraints and broader market dynamics all contribute to a clear affordability gap, particularly for renters and would-be homebuyers. The median household income is \$66,810. Median renter income is approximately \$45,000, and about 60% of renters are cost-burdened. Affordable homeownership thresholds are well below current listing prices.

#### WHAT ROLE DO SHORT-TERM RENTALS PLAY?

Stakeholder conversations documented in the assessment identified short-term rentals as one factor reducing year-round housing availability. Housing partners noted that the rental market is extremely small and difficult to operate within at Mount Holly's scale. With only 6% of units renter-occupied and nearly half of all units seasonal, the year-round housing supply is already limited. In a small housing market, even a relatively small number of units shifting to short-term rental use can affect availability. The assessment does not conclude that STRs are the sole cause of rising property values. Rather, they are one contributing factor within a constrained housing system.

#### WOULD REGULATING STRS REDUCE PROPERTY VALUES?

Regulating STRs (as proposed in Goal #4) could potentially increase the availability of year-round rental units. It may reduce some investor-driven demand for properties intended primarily for short-term use. However, STR regulation alone would not resolve broader structural constraints identified in the assessment, including limited infrastructure capacity, a lack of modest new housing production, and the overall scarcity of rental units. To address housing needs more broadly, Mount Holly is best positioned to expand year-round supply through accessory dwelling units (ADUs), small multi-unit projects, infill development, and neighborhood-scale wastewater solutions.

#### ARE PROTECTED PUBLIC LANDS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF HIGH PROPERTY VALUES?

Protected public land is not the principal driver of rising property values. Public lands and outdoor amenities can influence property values by potentially increasing seasonal ownership, infrastructure constraints, and desirability of housing/quality of life. However, infrastructure capacity, septic feasibility, and limited rental inventory are the most significant constraints affecting housing supply.

#### WHAT CAN THE TOWN DO?

The town cannot directly control market prices or the state education funding formula that incorporates the CLA. However, this Housing Needs Assessment outlines practical steps the town can take to respond to housing demand.

Top strategies include supporting neighborhood-scale wastewater planning, encouraging small-scale and context-sensitive housing types, partnering with regional housing organizations, better utilizing existing housing stock, and monitoring housing trends over time. Addressing housing supply is the most concrete tool available to help moderate long-term affordability pressures and stabilize the housing market for year-round residents.