

Town of Windham  
**Housing Needs Study**

Windham Town Council Meeting  
January 14, 2025

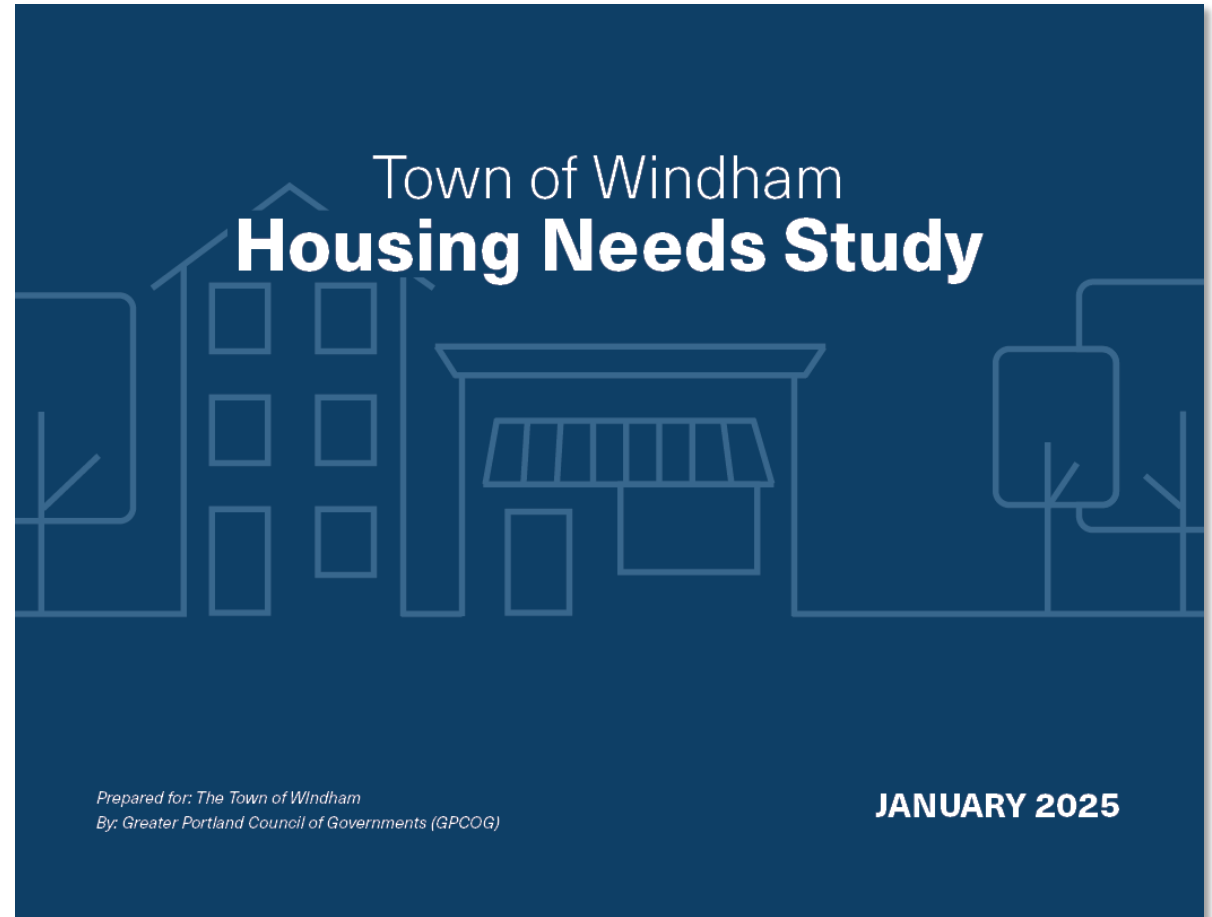
**GPCOG**  
GREATER PORTLAND  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

# Background

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## About the Study:

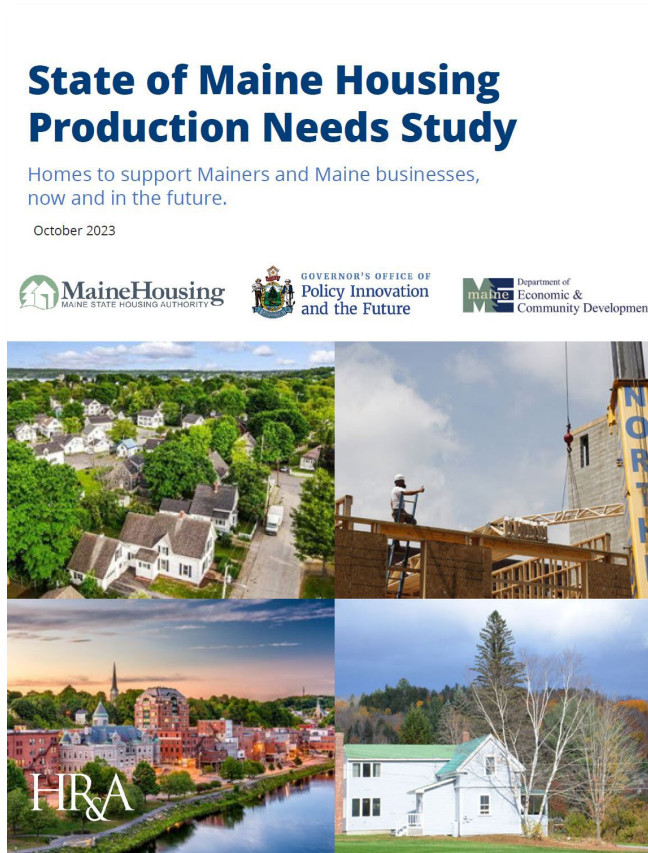
- **Project Team:** Prepared by GPCOG with support from town staff
- **Timeline:** June 2024 – January 2025
- **Funding:** Housing Opportunity Program grant from the Department of Economic and Community Development (*no cost to the town*)
- **Objective:** Evaluate the town's current demographics and housing trends, estimate future housing needs



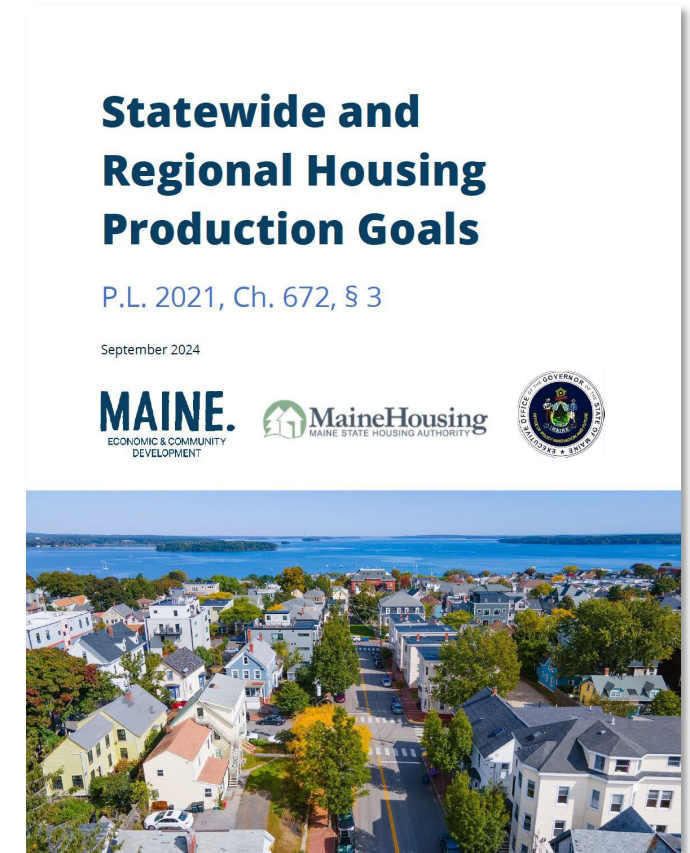
# Background

## Broader Context:

- **Nationally:**  
Need anywhere from 4M to 7M new homes
- **Maine:**  
Need 84,300 new homes by 2030
- **Cumberland County:**  
Need 18,830 new homes by 2030



2023



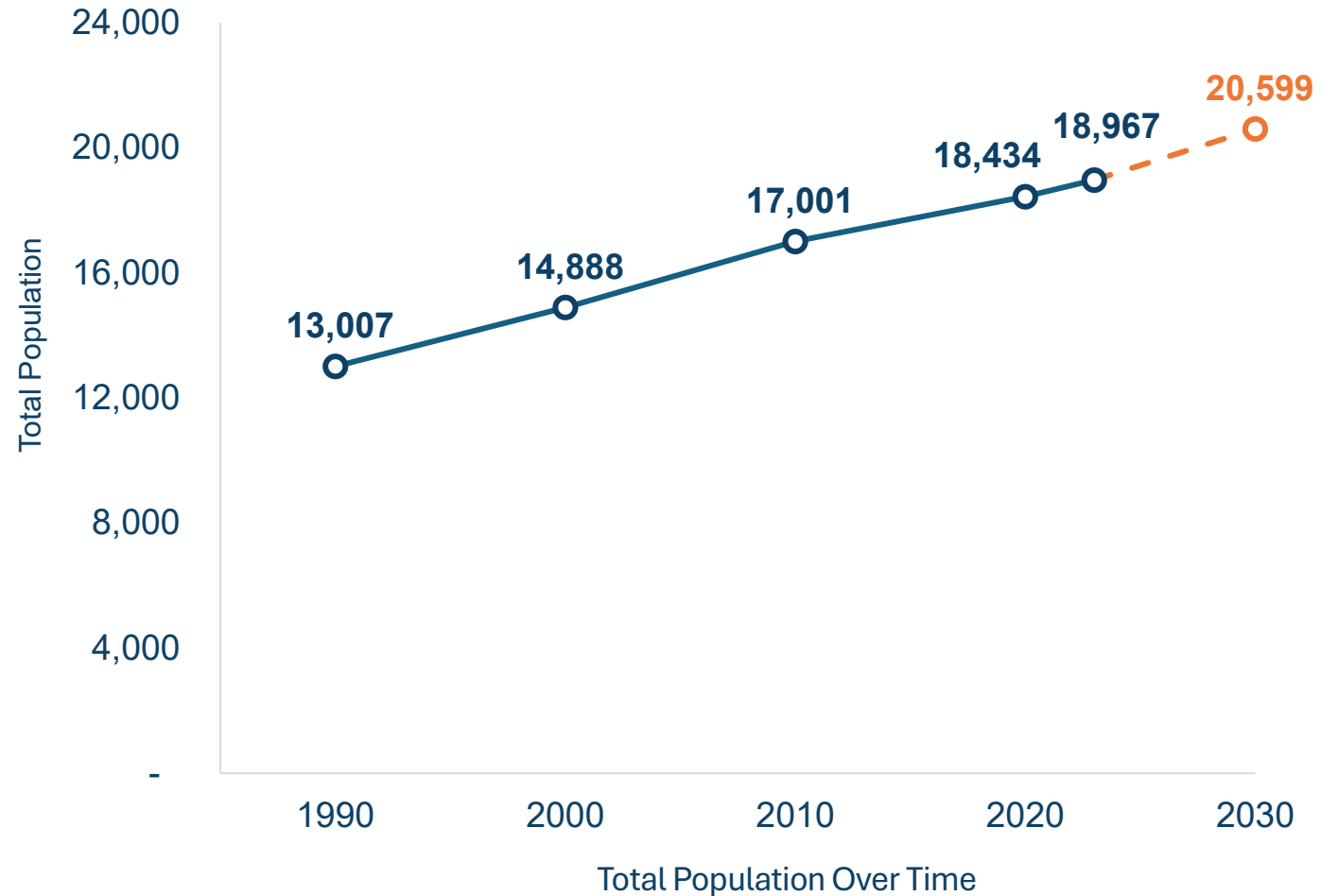
2024

# Demographics

# Demographics

## Population

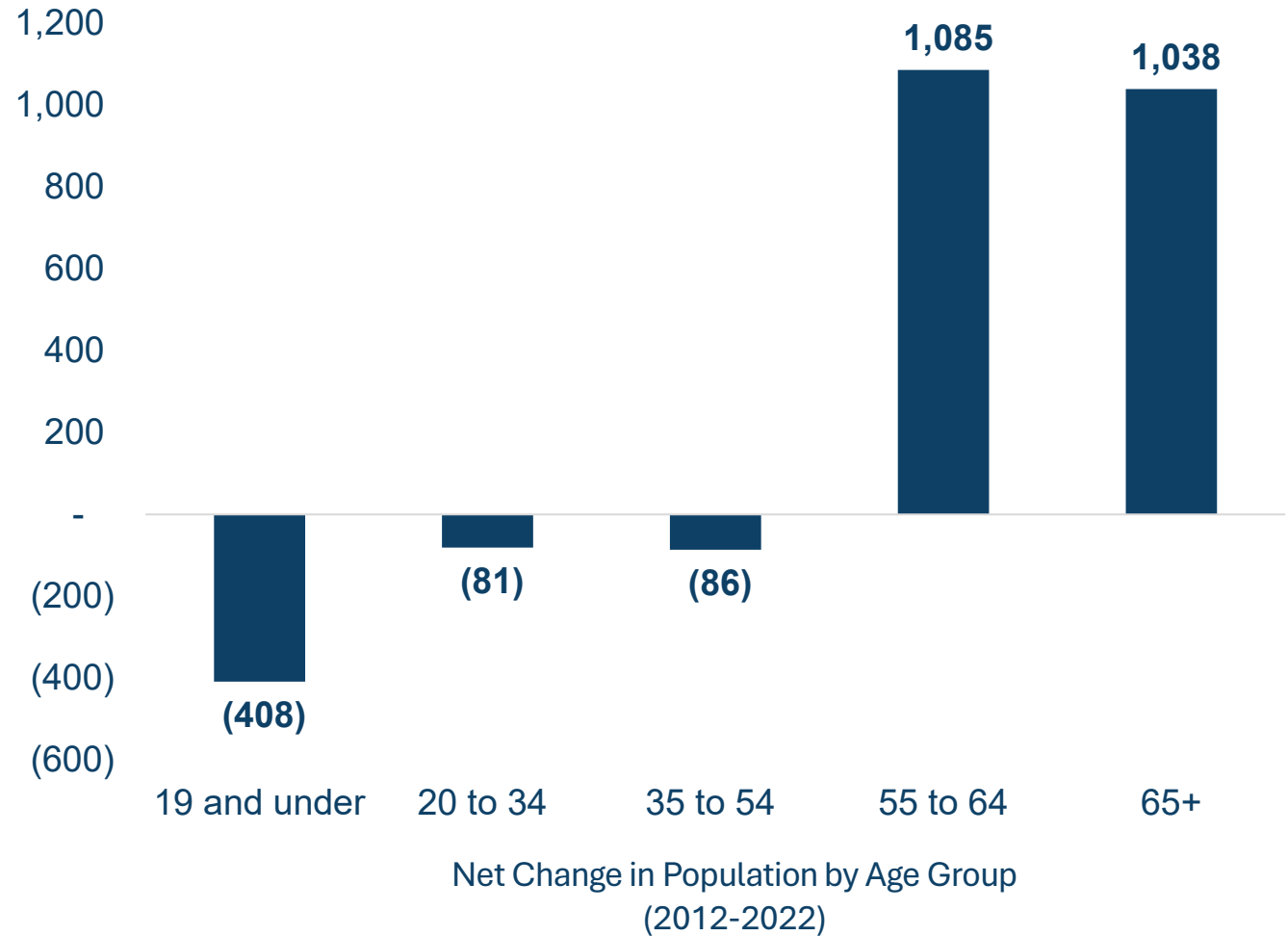
- Windham is growing
- Averaging about 1,800 people per decade
- 18,967 = current estimate
- 20,599 = Comprehensive plan projection



# Demographics

## Age

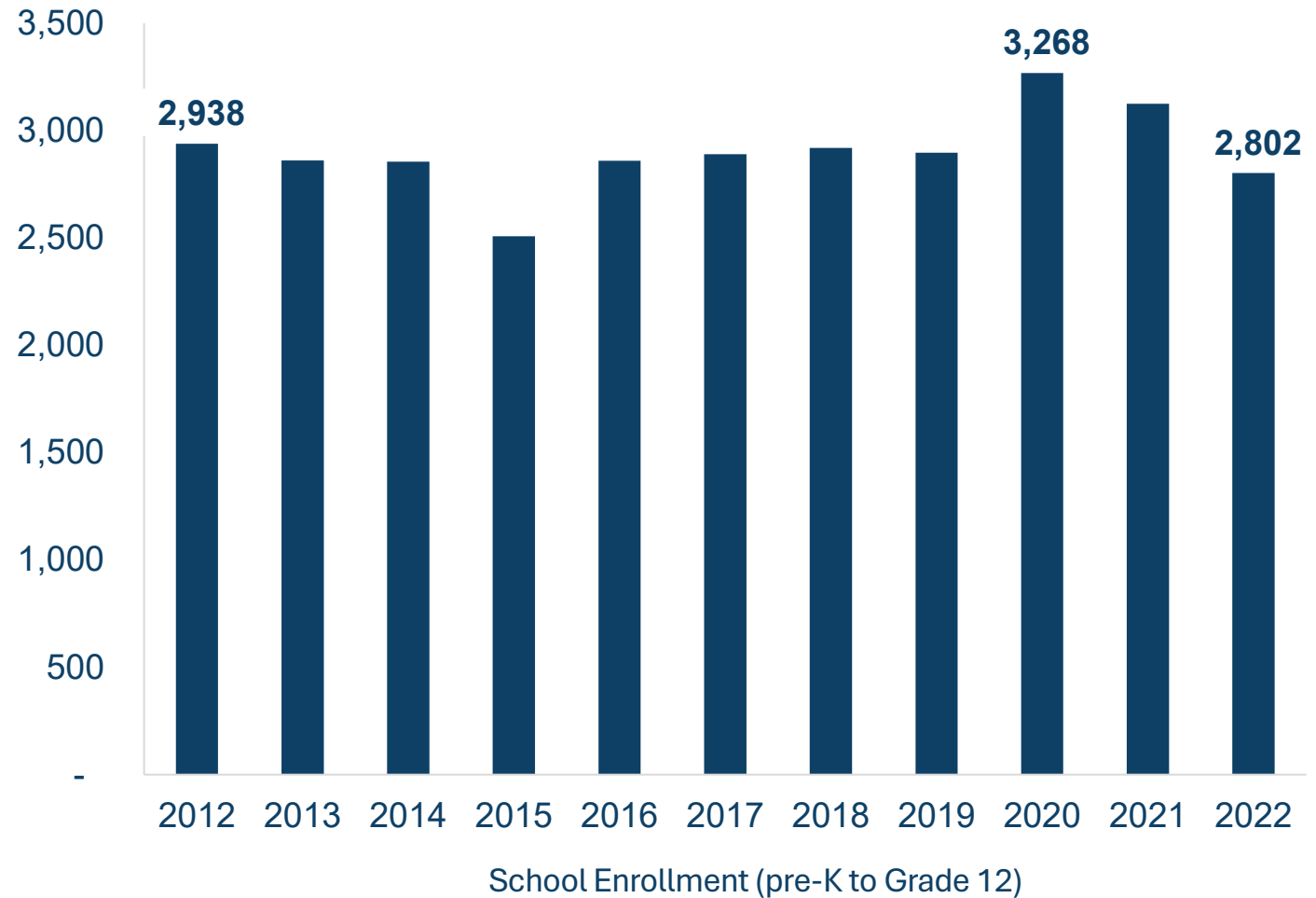
- Windham is also getting older
- Population growth primarily in 55+ age groups
- Median age increased from 38 to 41.7 years old (2012-2022)



# Demographics

## School Enrollment

- Fluctuating but stable
- Peaked in 2022

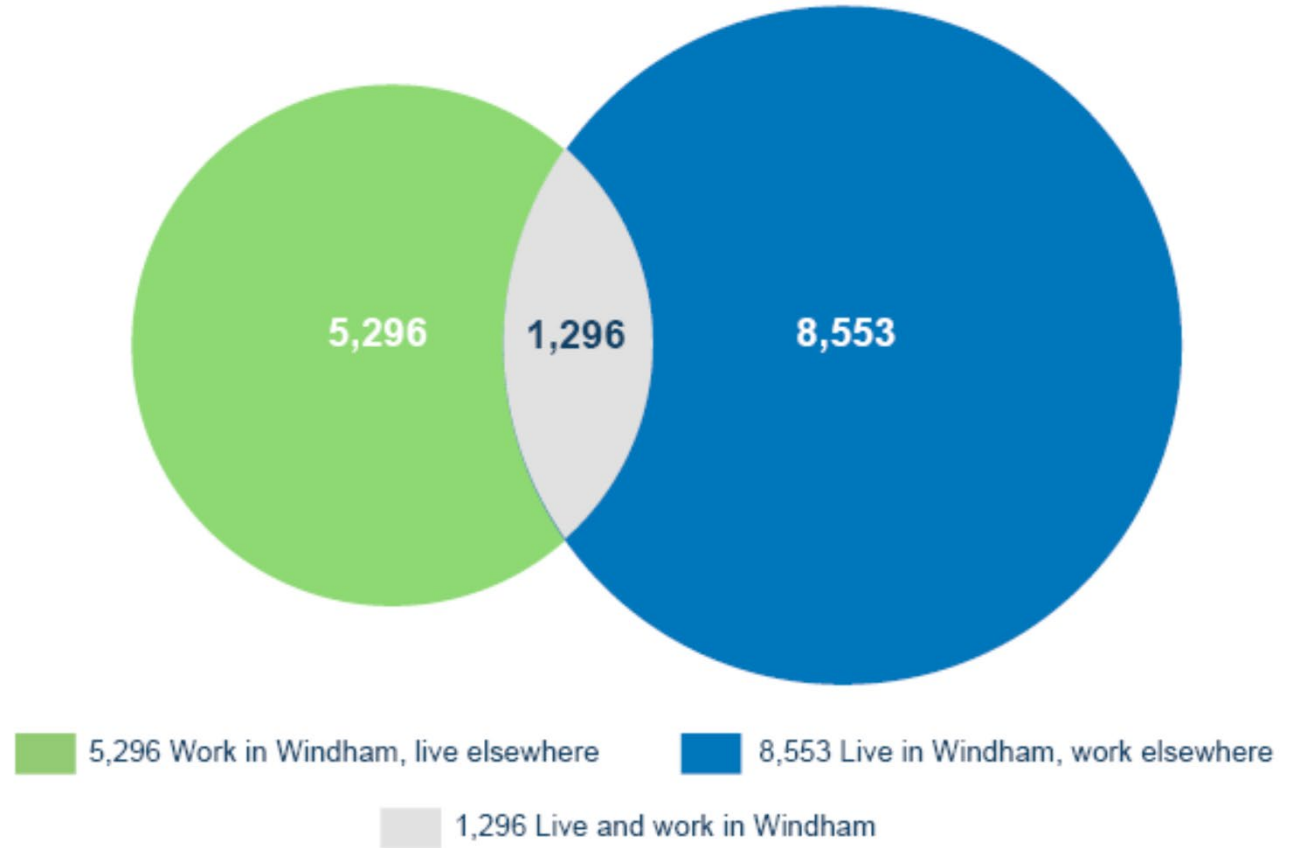




# Demographics

## Job & Commute Trends

- Most people who work in Windham (80%) live elsewhere (green circle)

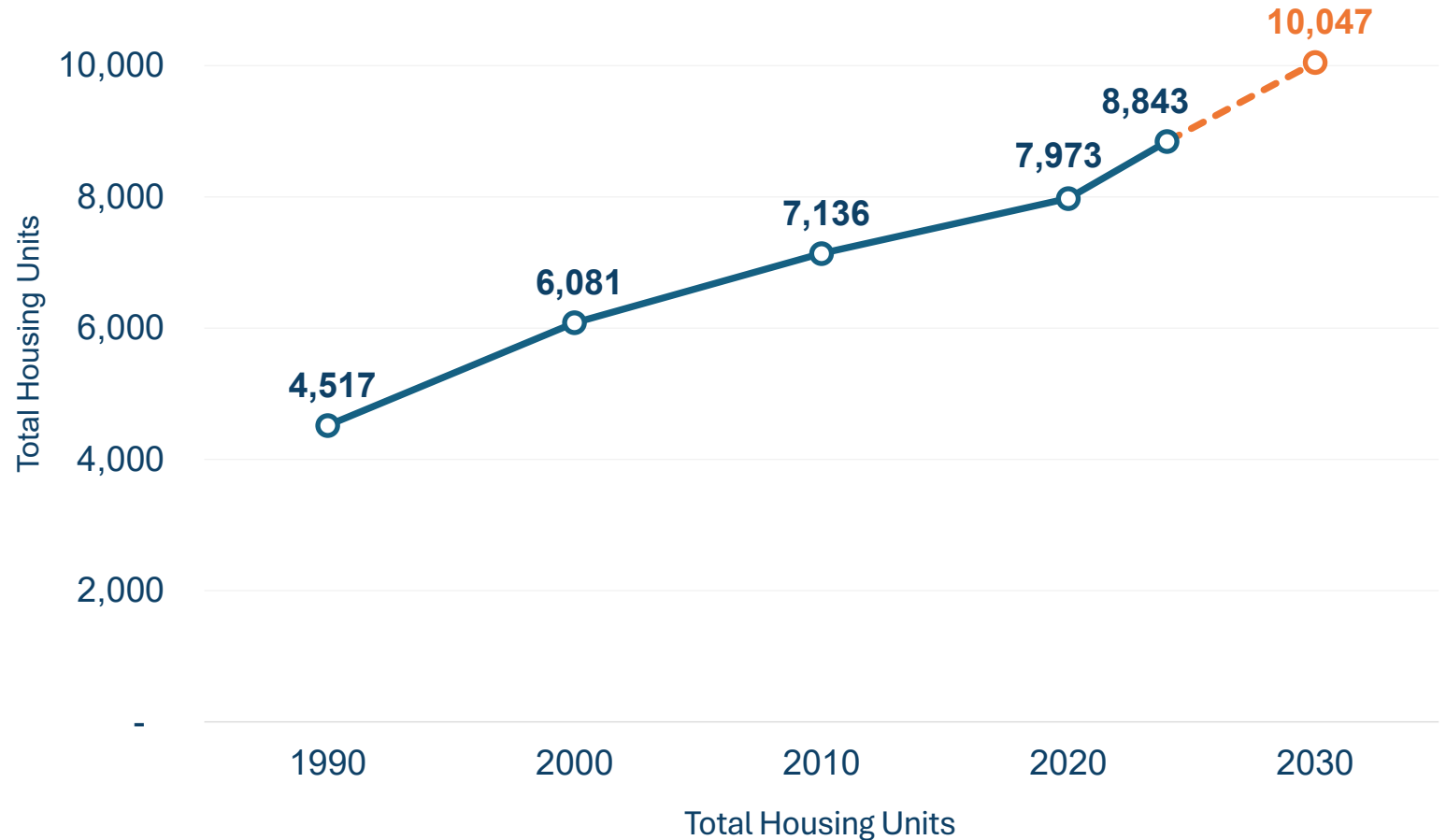


# **Housing Characteristics**

# Housing Characteristics

## Housing Units

- Averaging about 1,150 new housing units per decade (1990-2020)
- 8,843 total homes in 2024 (per assessor's database)
- 10,047 total homes by 2030 (GPCOG projection)

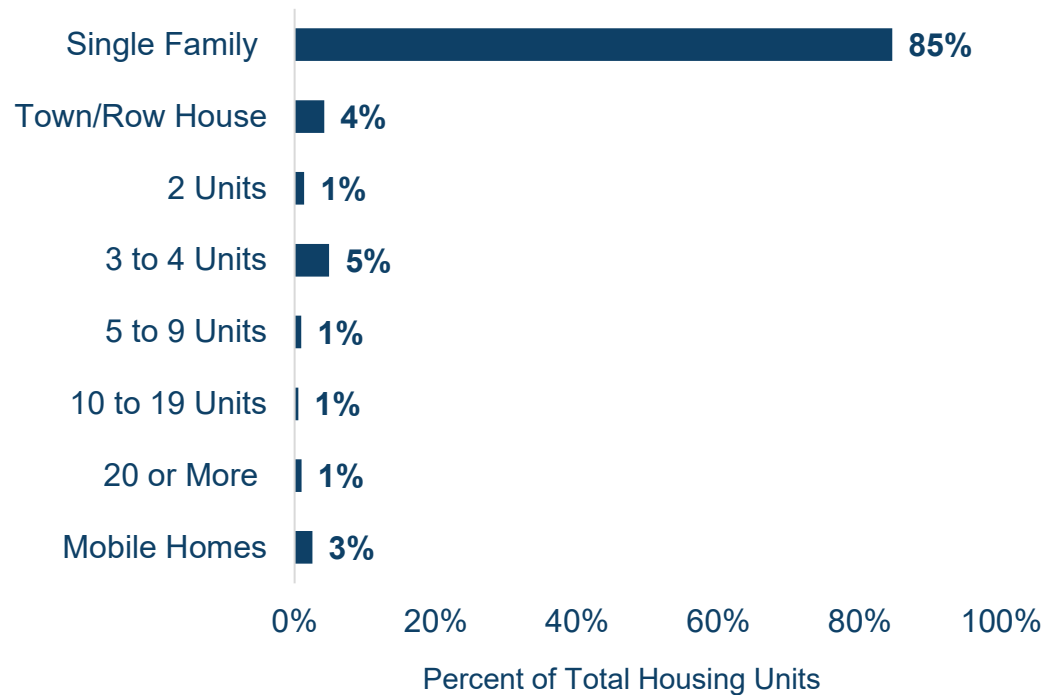


Data Sources: Decennial Census (1990-2020), Town of Windham (2024), GPCOG (2030)

# Housing Characteristics

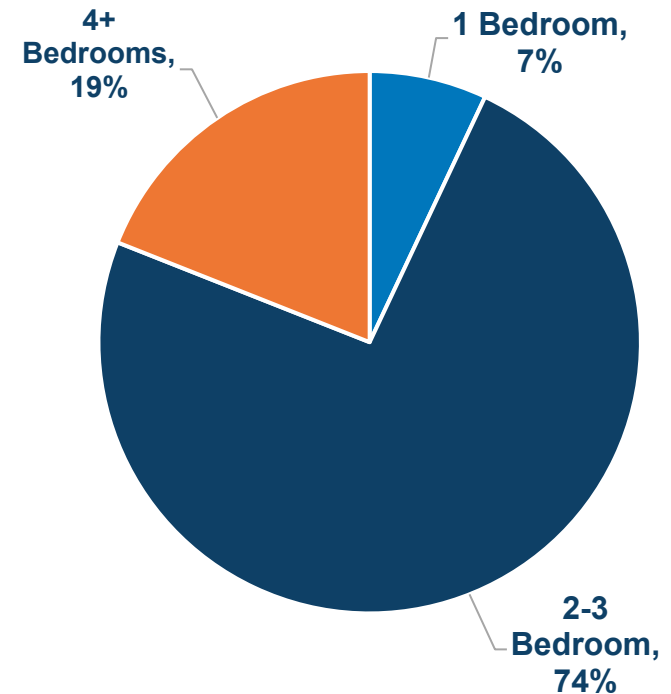
## Housing Types

- 85% of homes are single family



## Unit Types

- 93% of homes are 2+ bedrooms



# Housing Characteristics

**85/15%**

Owner / Renter Occupied

## Owner / Renter

- 85% (6,327 units) owner occupied
- 15% (1,144 units) renter occupied
- Slight increase in owner-occupied over the last decade

**10%**

Vacant Units

## Vacant Units

- 10% (862 units) are vacant
- Majority are “seasonal, recreational, or occasional use”
- Stable over the last decade

**1.6%**

Short Term Rentals

## Short Term Rentals

- Approximately 130 short term rental units
- Likely overlap with vacant units
- Most listings are near waterbodies (Highland Lake, Sebago Lake, etc.)

# Housing Affordability

# Housing Affordability

**0.4%**

Vacancy Rate

## Homeowner Vacancy Rate

- Homes that are vacant and listed for sale
- Healthy homeowner vacancy rate typically falls between 1% and 2%
- Cumberland County = 0.6%  
Maine = 0.9%

**0.0%**

Vacancy Rate

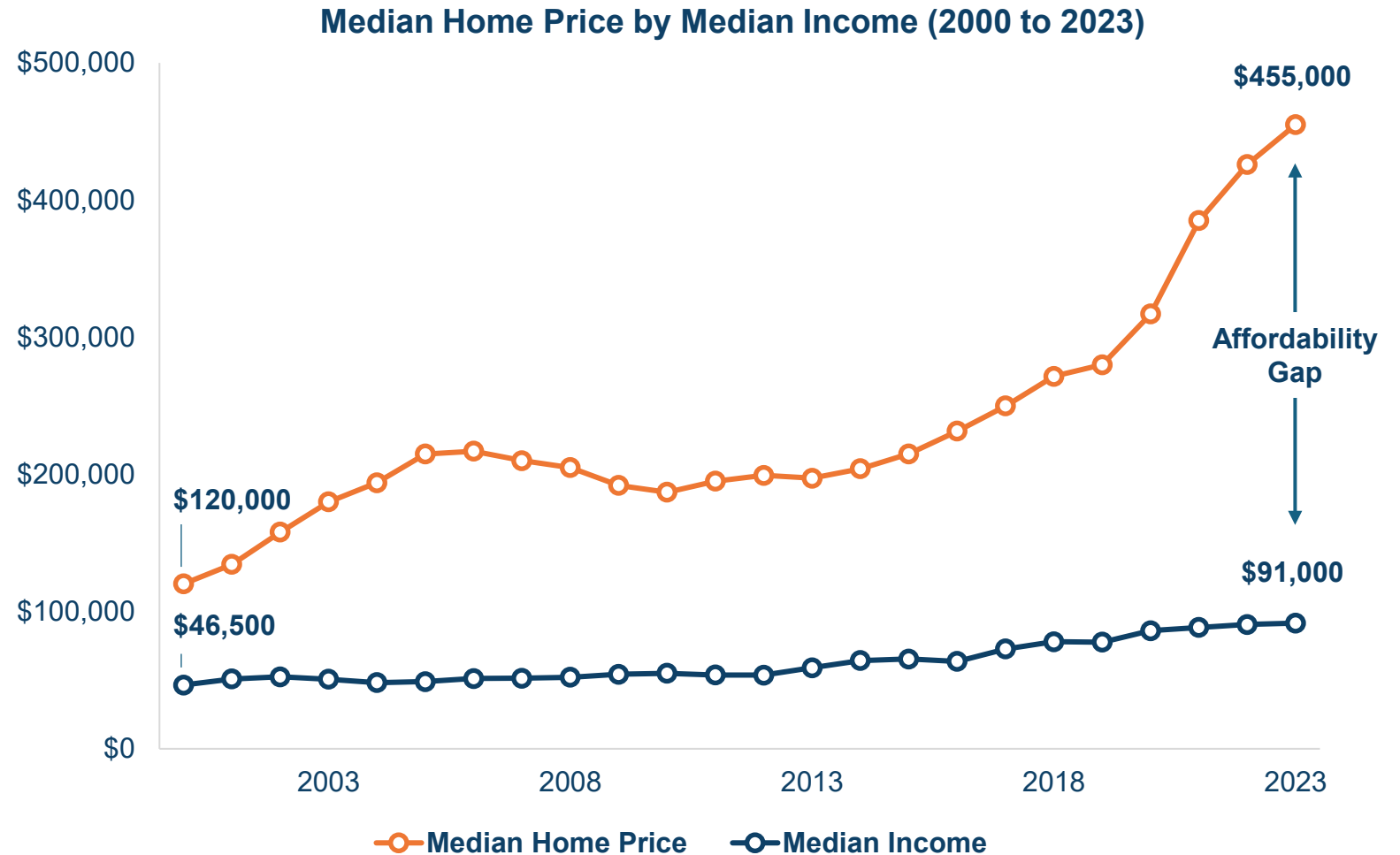
## Rental Vacancy Rate

- Rental units that are vacant and listed for rent
- Healthy rental vacancy rate typically falls between 5% and 7%
- Cumberland County = 3.6%  
Maine = 4.3%

# Housing Affordability

## Affordability Gap:

- What people earn vs. the actual cost of housing
- Since 2000:
  - Median incomes have doubled (\$46k to \$91k)
  - Median home prices have nearly quadrupled (\$120k to \$455k)





# Housing Affordability

The census considers a household “cost burdened” when they spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs

**25%**

**Cost Burdened**

## **Homeowners**

- In Windham, 25% of homeowners (or 1 in 4 households) are cost burdened

**20%**

**Cost Burdened**

## **Renters**

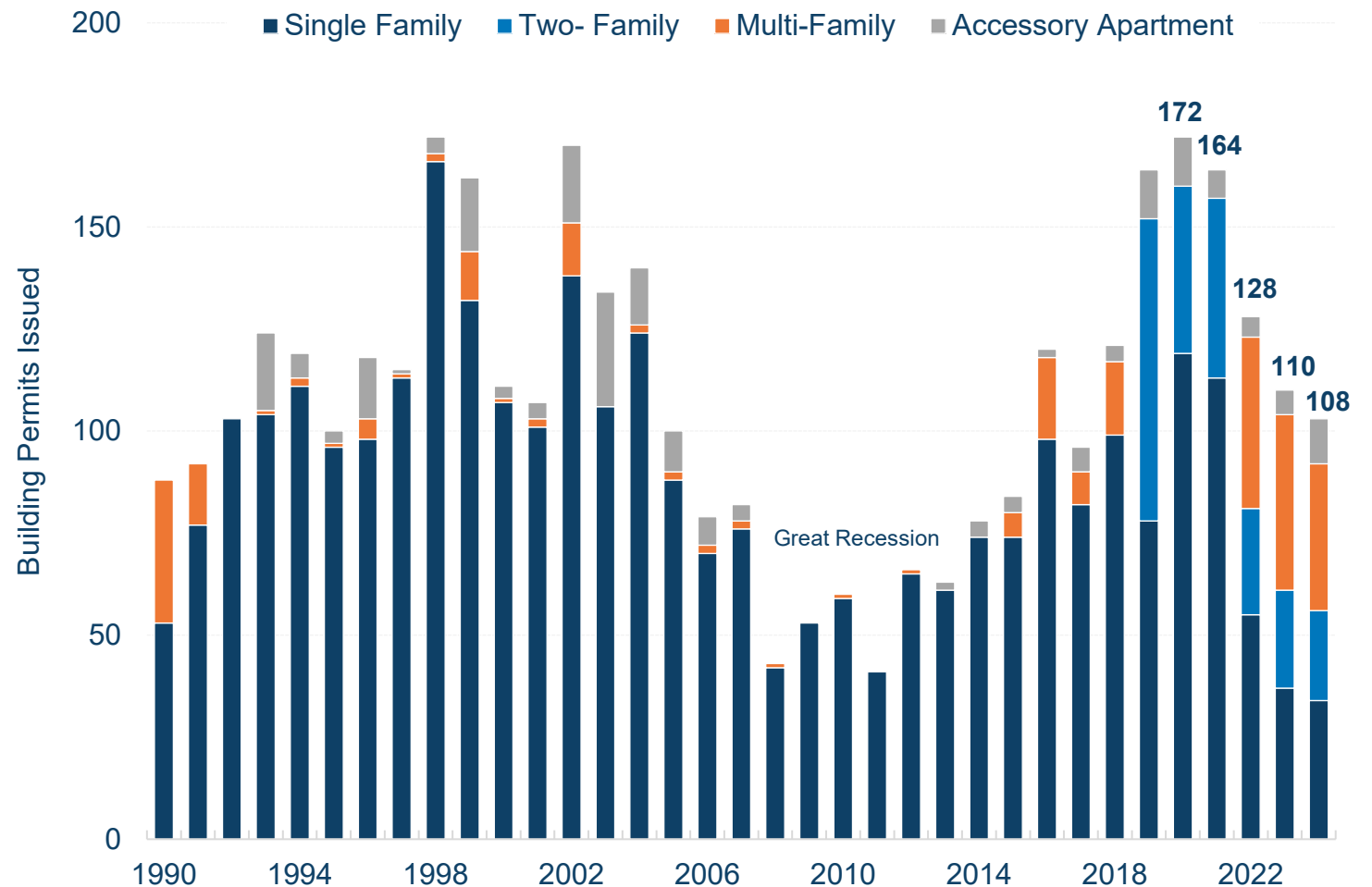
- In Windham, 20% of renters (or 1 in 5 households) are cost burdened

# Housing Needs

# Housing Needs

## Building Permits Issued:

- Impact of the Recession
- Since 2020:
  - Recent shift toward housing diversity
  - Overall decline in production
  - About 50% of permitted units were in growth areas



Data Source: Town of Windham

# Housing Needs

Based on *State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study* methodology

## Historic Underproduction

**+426 homes**

Existing Homes [8,843 homes]

8,807 [99.6%] Occupied or Seasonal Use

36 [0.4%]  
Existing Vacant Homes  
for Sale or Rent

Availability Deficit [+426 homes]

8,807 [95%] Occupied or Seasonal Use

36 [0.4%]  
Existing Vacant Homes  
for Sale or Rent

+426 [4.6%]  
Vacant Homes for Sale  
or Rent Needed to  
Achieve 5% Vacancy  
Rate

## Future Population Growth

**+778 homes**

2030 Population Forecast

+1,632 new people

2.4 Avg. Household Size

+680 [87.4%]  
New Homes Needed  
for 2030 Population

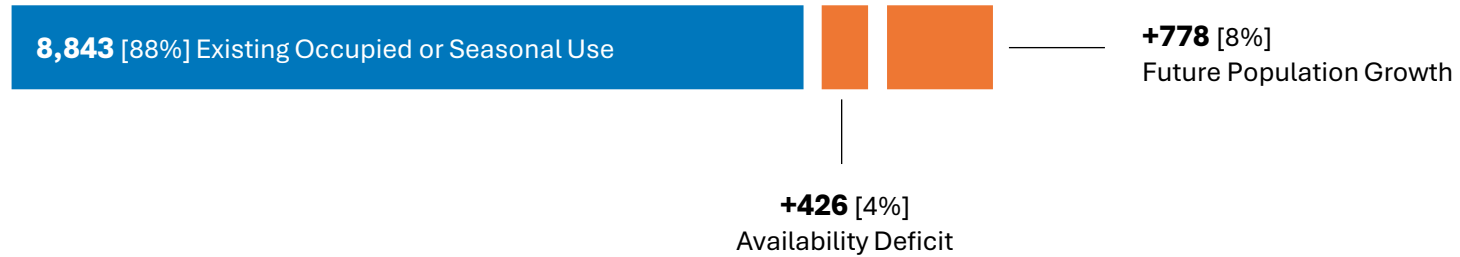
+39 [5%]  
Vacant Homes for Sale or  
Rent Needed to Achieve  
5% Vacancy Rate

+59 [7.6%]  
New Homes Needed to Maintain  
7.6% Seasonal Use Ratio

# Housing Needs

## Total Housing Needed by 2030

**+1,204 homes**



# Housing Needs

## Housing Projects Currently Under Review

Single Family Houses	# of Units	Zone	Review Status	Project Year Approved	Est. Date Complete	
Cross Ridge Subdivision	8	F	Final Plan	2024	2027	Subtotal 25
Beaulieu Subdivision	1	F	In Review	2025	2027	
Monique Drive Subdivision	1	VR	In Review	2025	2027	
Canada Hill Subdivision (Phase 2)	15	F	In Review	2025	2030	
<b>Two Family Houses</b>						
River Road	44	RM	In Review	2025	2027	Subtotal 66
Heights at Turning Leaf Drive	4	C-1	In Review	2025	2028	
Falmouth Road Subdivision	18	VR	In Review	2025	2028	
<b>Multi Family Houses</b>						
Anglers Road Apartments	24	C-1	Final Plan	2024	2026	Subtotal 704
Windham Village Apartments	172	C-1	Final Plan	2024	2027	
Senior Affordable Housing	48	F	Final Plan	2024	2027	
Andrews School Affordable Housing	18	VC	Final Plan	2024	2027	
Franklin Drive Residential Subdivision	300	C-1	In Review	2025	2028	
Heights at Turning Leaf Drive	142	C-1	In Review	2025	2028	
<b>Total Units = 795</b>				Data Source: Town of Windham		

## Housing Projects in Review:

- 795 total units
- Vast majority (89%) are multifamily
- Most in Growth Zones (VR, VC, or C-1)

# Housing Needs

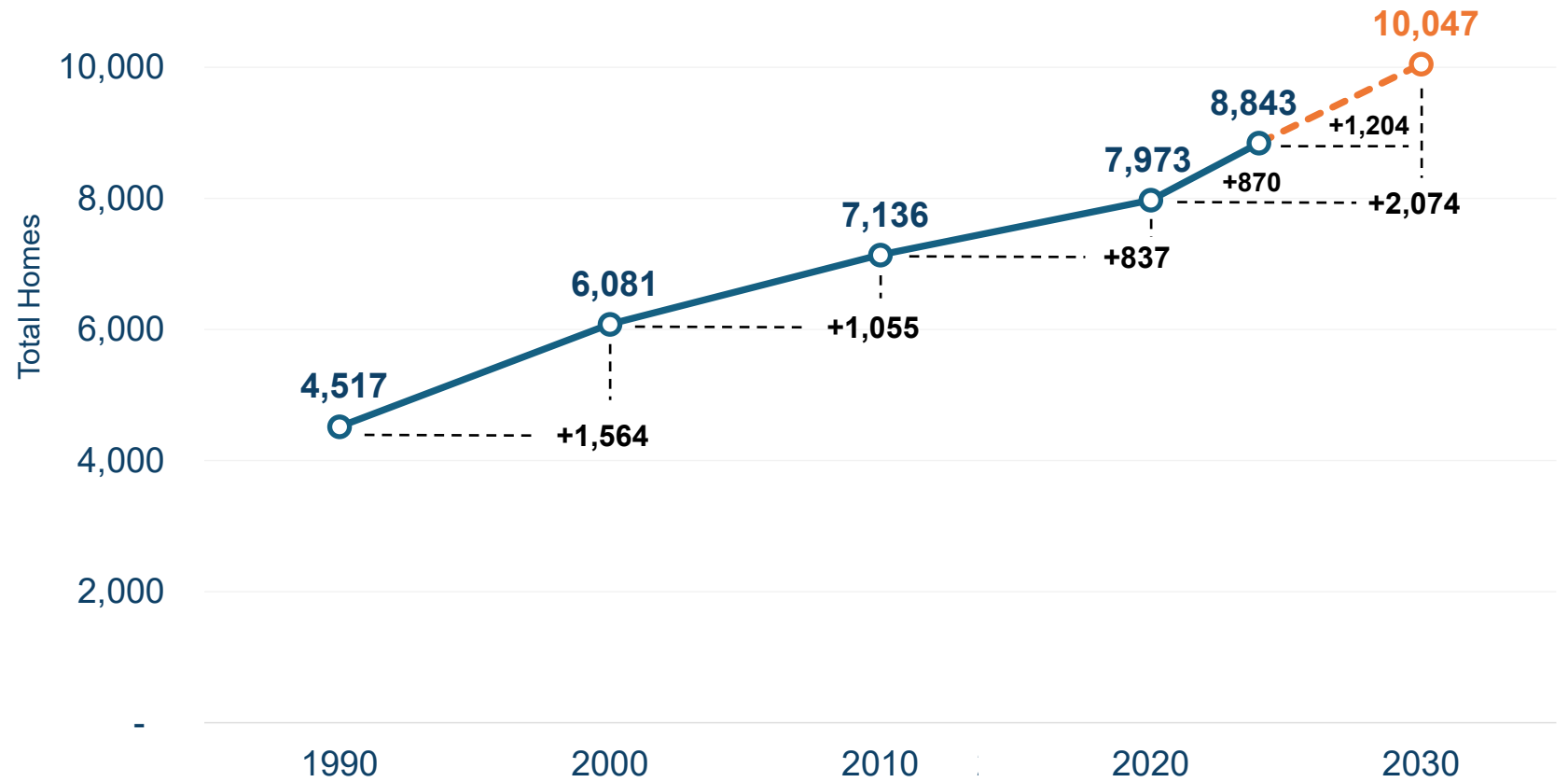
## Progress Toward Meeting Windham's Housing Needs

**1,204 units** by 2030

– **795 units** in review

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**409 units** needed



Data Sources: Decennial Census (1990-2020), Town of Windham (2024), GPCOG (2030)

# Recommendations



# Recommendations

1

## Increase Housing Production

- **Add 1,204 housing units by 2030** to address the existing housing shortage.
- **Prioritize development in designated growth areas** to align with infrastructure investments and the town's comprehensive plan.

2

## Promote Housing Diversity

- **Encourage a mix of housing types**, such as multi-family homes, condos, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), senior-friendly housing, and smaller affordable units to enhance accessibility, meet diverse needs, and reduce the town's overreliance on single family housing.

3

## Address Housing Affordability

- Partner with developers and non-profits to **create more subsidized housing**, using tools like tax increment financing (TIF) and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).

# Recommendations

4

## Revise Zoning and Land Use Policies

- **Align zoning policies with the Town's Comprehensive Plan** to support growth in designated "Future Growth Areas" (e.g., North Windham, South Windham, Windham Center) and reduce sprawl in non-growth areas (e.g., farm zones).
- **Update zoning to allow smaller lot sizes**, cluster housing, and higher-density development that align with the town's housing goals.

5

## Expand Infrastructure to Support Housing Growth

- **Invest in infrastructure projects**, like the North Windham sewer system, to facilitate higher-density development.
- **Ensure new housing projects align with available infrastructure** (e.g., roads, utilities, and public services).

6

## Address Housing Needs for Seniors / People with Disabilities

- **Partner with housing organizations to expand aging-in-place housing options**, like single-level accessible units, independent living communities, and assisted-living facilities.

# Recommendations

7

## Leverage State and Regional Partnerships

- **Collaborate with state agencies, the Greater Portland Council of Governments, and housing organizations** to secure funding and technical assistance for housing projects and initiatives.

8

## Monitor Short-Term Rentals

- **Track trends in rental prices, availability, and occupancy to assess short-term rental impacts.** Implement policies to regulate short-term rentals if needed, such as license caps or rental unit limits.

9

## Foster Sustainable and Equitable Development

- **Support energy-efficient building practices** by providing incentives for green construction and retrofitting.
- **Align new development with environmental goals**, like preserving open spaces and natural resources.
- **Promote equitable access to housing** through mixed-income developments and ensuring affordable housing is located near transit and job centers.

# Thank you!

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