

LET'S
BUILD HOMES

House Committee on Environment
April 9, 2026

Our Mission



"Let's Build Homes works to create a Vermont of abundant housing for households of all income levels where communities thrive in harmony with our working lands. Through impactful policy change and grassroots action, we will help Vermont grow into a more affordable, vibrant, and inclusive state."

900+

Individual Vermonters

270+

Vermont Companies,
Orgs & Institutions

All 14

Vermont Counties

VHFA 2025-2029 Needs Assessment

“The Best Time to Plant a Tree Was 30 Years Ago, and the Second Best Time to Plant a Tree is Now”

Figure 3-6 Average annual increase in occupied housing stock

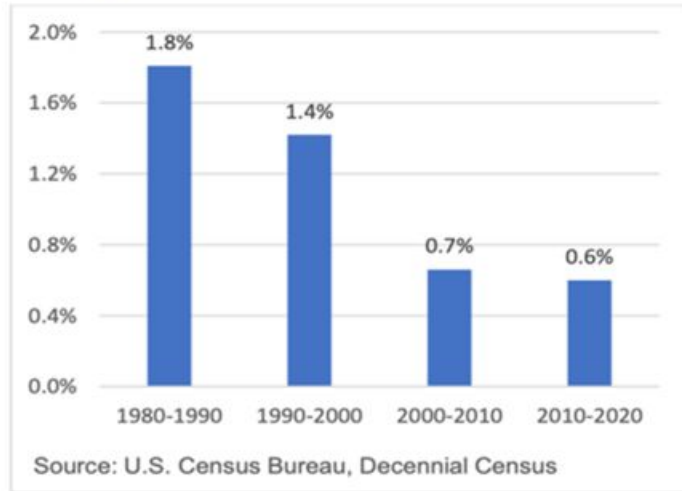
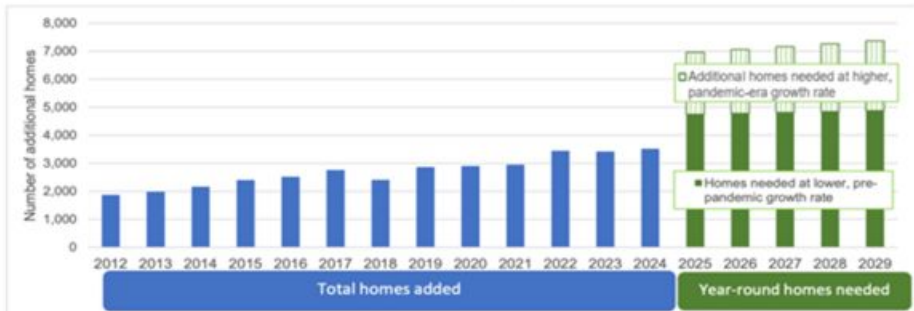
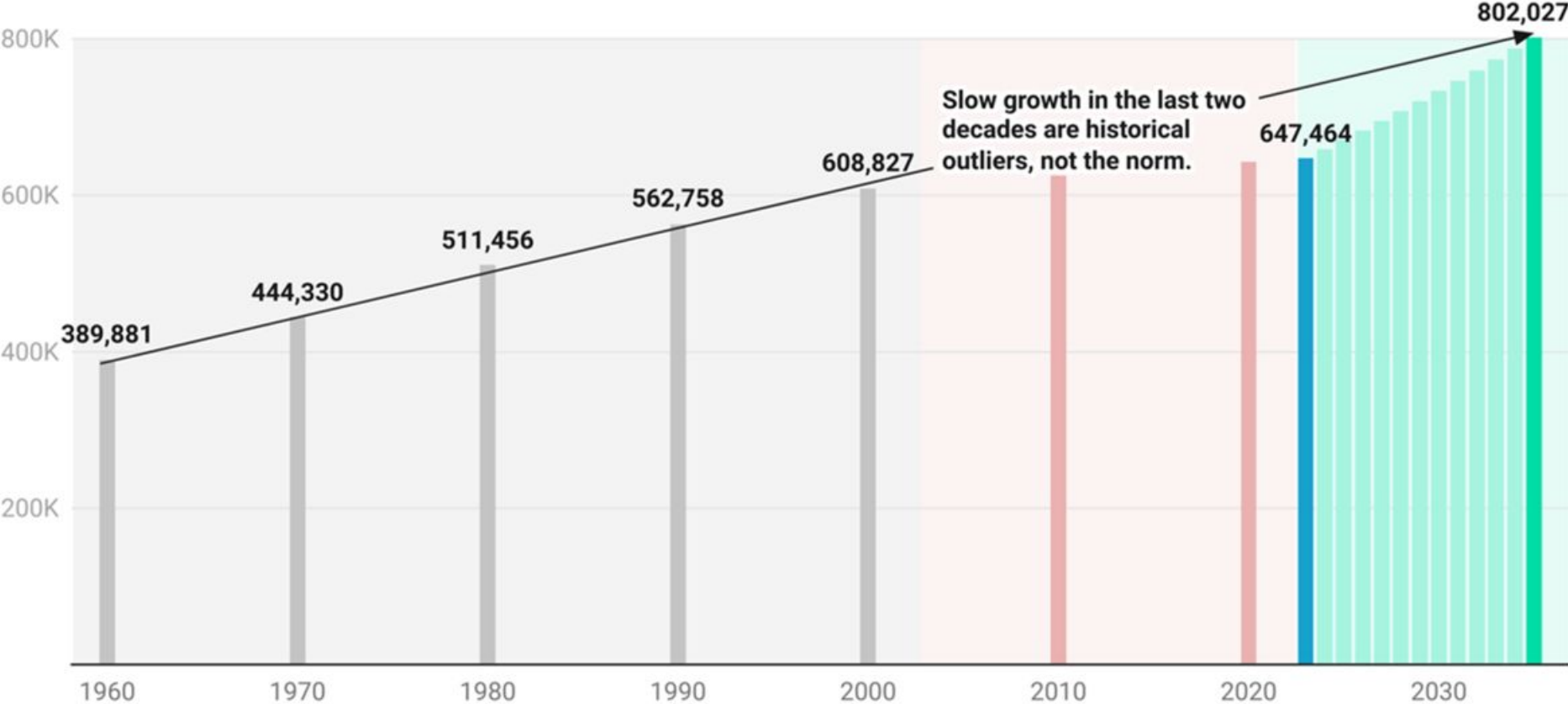


Figure 1-2 Gap in year-round Vermont homes reduces availability and affordability



Getting Back on Track: Growing to Address Demographic Pressures



Gray and red columns are historic decennial census data. Blue column is 2023 US Census American Community Survey estimates. Green columns represent future growth needed to close Vermont's projected workforce gap over the coming decade.

As housing growth slowed, demographics shifted

Vermont Age Distribution from 2000

At the turn of the century, Vermont had a high proportion of prime working-age adults relative to the number of children and elderly. There were significantly more children compared to today.

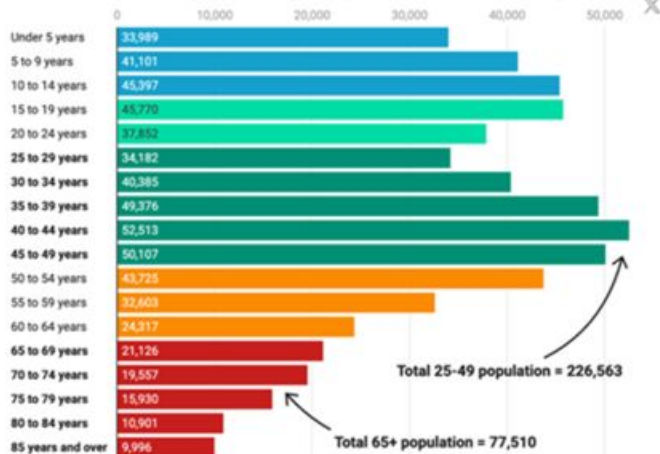


Chart: Vermont Futures Project • Source: US Census Bureau • Get the data • Embed • Download image • Created with Datawrapper

Vermont Age Distribution from 2023

Today, Vermont's prime working-age population is much smaller relative to the number of children and elderly. The fertility rate is too low to grow the future workforce and tax base.

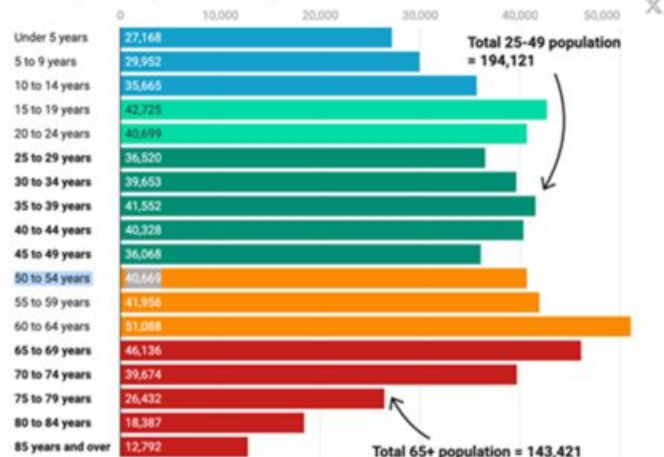
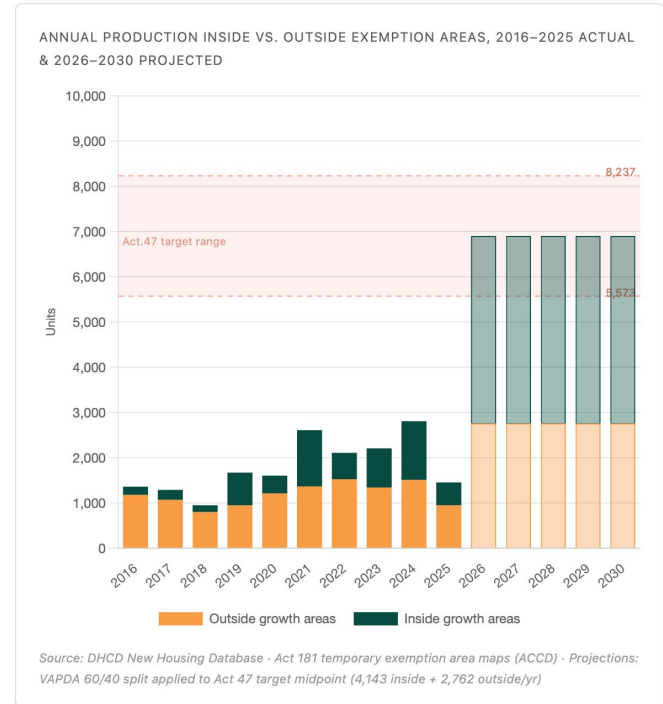


Chart: Vermont Futures Project • Source: US Census Bureau • Get the data • Download image • Created with Datawrapper

Why Focus on Building More Homes

- 1 The cost of housing is far too high, driven by cutthroat competition over scarce homes**
- 2 Homes are scarce because rising demand collided with fifty years of rules making it too hard to build**
- 3 Vermont's housing shortage is driving social, economic, and demographic decline**
- 4 The only comprehensive solution: build homes of all shapes and sizes for households of all incomes**



Vermont is producing roughly half of its housing targets

Housing Supply Strategies Work

INSIGHTS & PERSPECTIVES ▾ ABOUT ▾

Pew

TOPICS: IMPROVE ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

PROJECTS: HOUSING POLICY

Austin's Surge of New Housing Construction Drove Down Rents

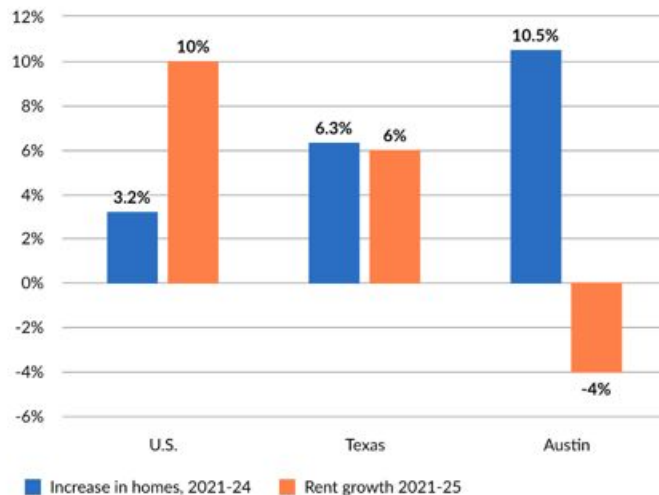
Amid robust demand and a wave of policy reforms, Texas capital added 120,000 new homes from 2015 to 2024

Authors: [Liz Clifford](#), [Seva Rodnyansky](#), and [Dennis Su](#)

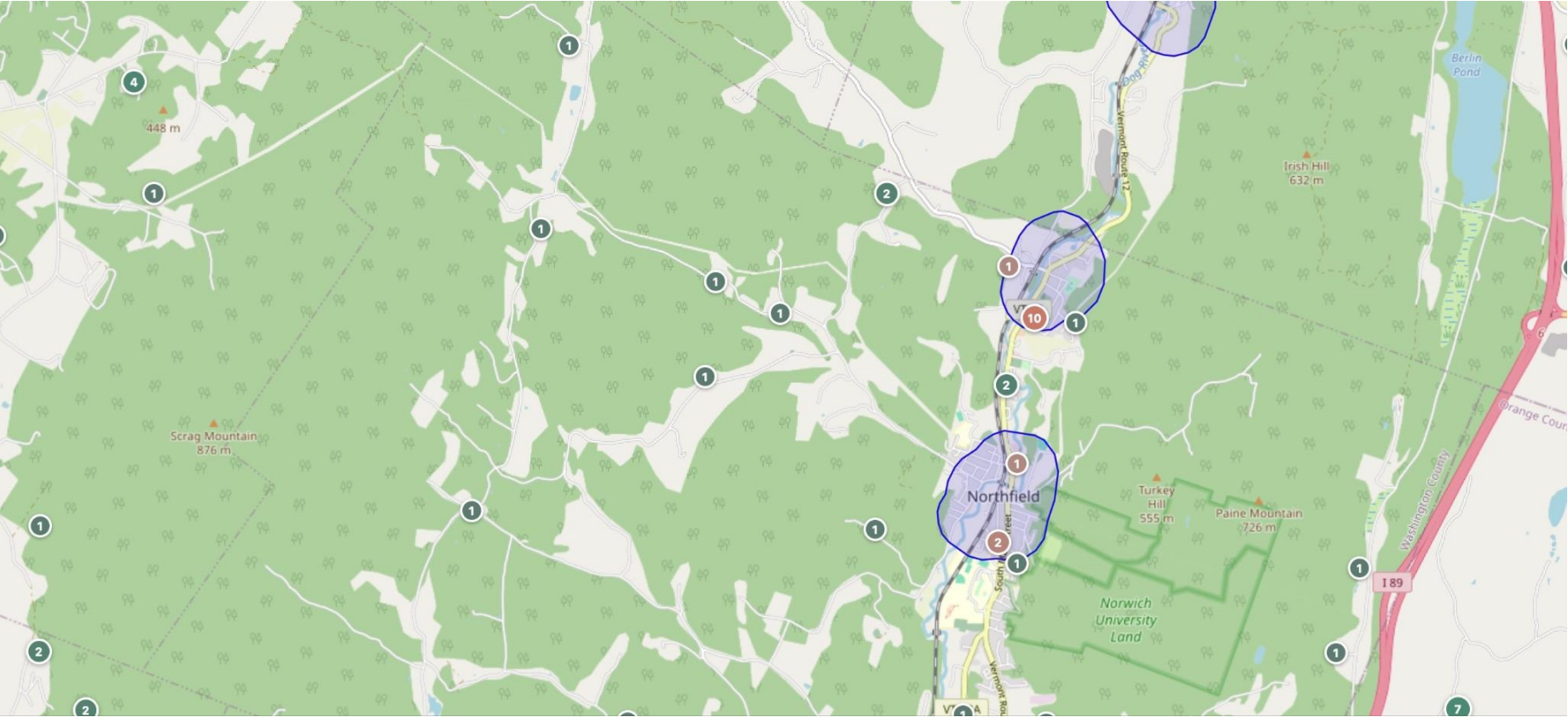
Figure 1

Housing Affordability in Austin Has Improved as More Homes Have Been Built

Home production in Austin outpaced that in Texas and the U.S.; rents fell



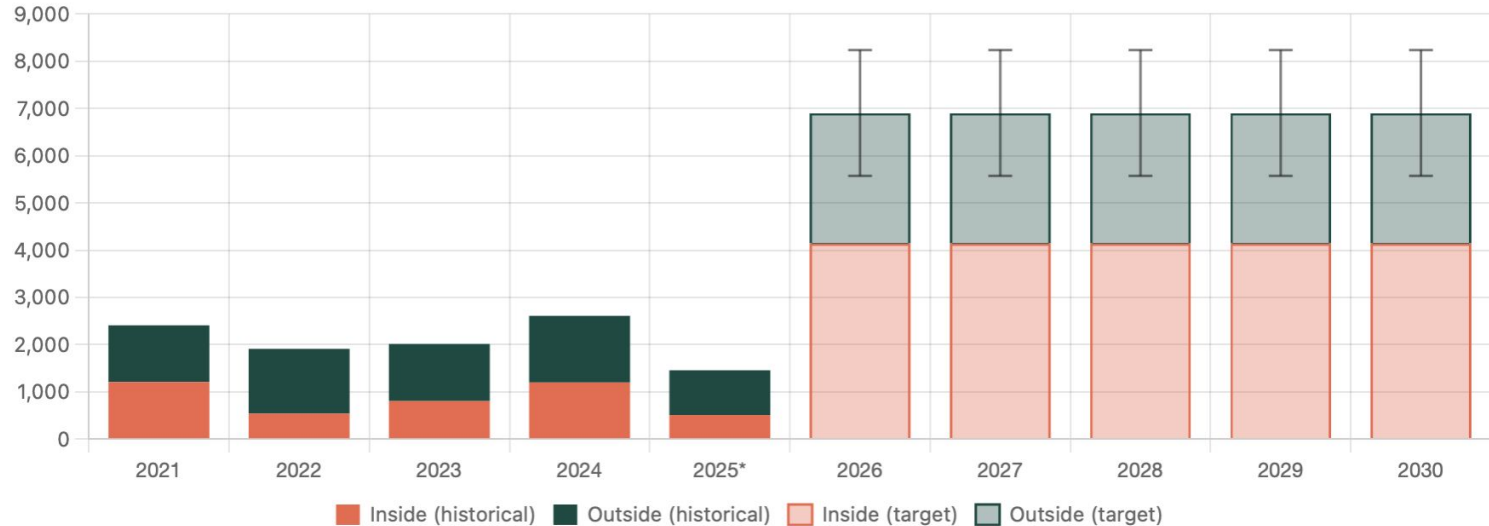
Let's Build Homes Housing Production Analysis



Annual Housing Production 2021 – 2025

The following chart shows the total number of housing units built each year, split by whether the site is inside or outside the Act 181 temporary exemption areas. The lighter bars for 2026–2030 show the Act 47 (2023) statewide housing targets (5,573–8,237 units/year), with the VAPDA estimate that 60% of future housing will be built inside growth areas. Error bars show the full target range. Data source: DHCD Vermont New Housing database.

ANNUAL UNITS — INSIDE VS. OUTSIDE TEMPORARY EXEMPTION AREAS (2026–2030 BARS SHOW ACT 47 TARGETS)



* 2025 data may not be final.

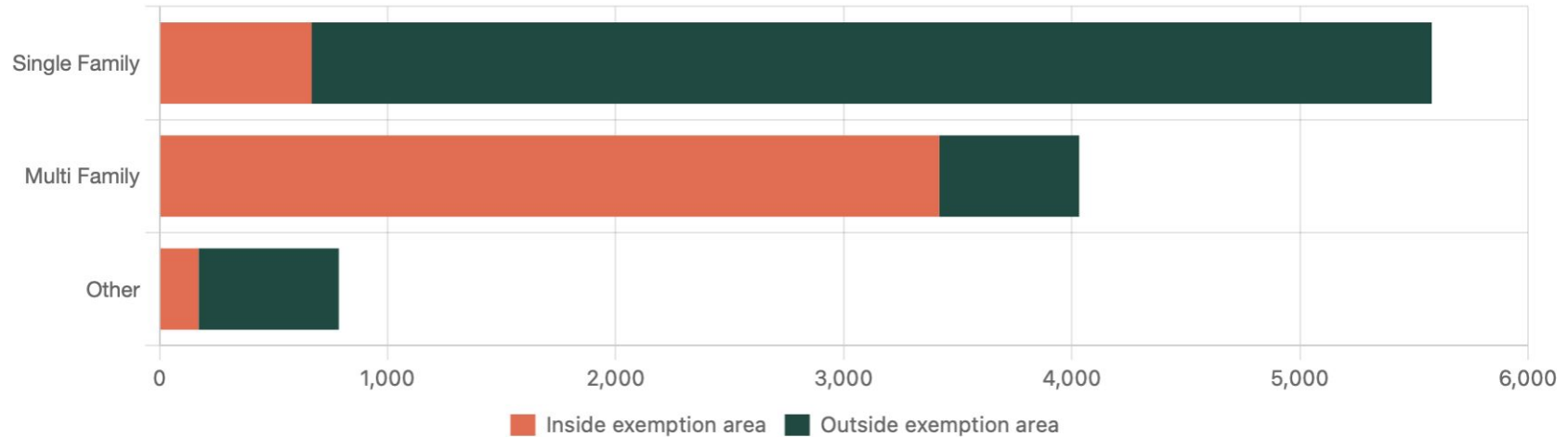
Year-by-year breakdown

Year	Inside units	Outside units	Total units	Inside %	Outside %
2021	1,208	1,200	2,408	50.2%	49.8%
2022	539	1,371	1,910	28.2%	71.8%
2023	804	1,209	2,013	39.9%	60.1%
2024	1,198	1,411	2,609	45.9%	54.1%
2025	508	948	1,456	34.9%	65.1%
Total	4,257	6,139	10,396	40.9%	59.1%

Housing Types Inside vs. Outside Exemption Areas

The following chart breaks down units by housing type (using the SiteType_General field from the DHCD source data), split by exemption area status. Totals cover 2021–2025; the per-year table below shows the same breakdown for each year individually.

TOTAL UNITS BY TYPE — INSIDE VS. OUTSIDE TEMPORARY EXEMPTION AREAS (2021–2025)



What are implications of this analysis for the housing shortage?

- **We have a lot of work to do to meet the state's housing targets**
 - Achieving VAPDA's projected 60% projection of homes in growth areas will require a major shift in recent trends
 - Simply creating an Act 250 exemption is unlikely to be enough to achieve this change – we need to be streamlining local zoning and creating financial incentives too
- **Our housing growth areas (Tier 1) likely needs to be expanded – especially if creating single family homes remains a state priority**
- **Even if we achieve VAPDA projection, substantial housing production outside of Tier 1 will be needed to meet our targets**

Without Action 2026 Will Take Us Backwards

1. Interim housing areas set to expire before Tier 1 is properly mapped
2. Broad new rules – Tier 3 and “road rule” – scheduled to take effect this year could impact significant needed supply

What we supported in S.325

- **Extended Interim Housing Exemptions to 2030**
Act 181 set exemptions to expire in 2027–28. S.325 extends them through 2030.
- **Cleaner Land Use Category Definitions**
Updated regional planning definitions should help maintain the RPC/municipal proposed Tier 1 boundaries
- **Faster Path to Tier 1B Expansion**
Municipalities can now request Tier 1B status independently, without a full regional plan amendment.
- **Better Clarity RE: Enforcement of Existing Act 250 requirements in Tier 1A**
- **Important Step Toward Clear and Objective Standards**
State to study replacing discretionary review and draft a Vermont Model Code (ROOT Zones)

S.325 Takes Modest Steps Toward By-right Housing

802 Homes: By-right housing prototypes



ROOT Zones: By-right housing zoning



S.325 moves 802 Homes and ROOT Zones forward, though both could be strengthened to accelerate implementation.

The National Parallel: Right to Build Zones (EIG)



RESEARCH POLICY ISSUE AREAS

Right to Build Zones Concept Paper

ANALYSIS, REPORTS, POLICY | FEBRUARY 12, 2026



Federal Right to Build Zones

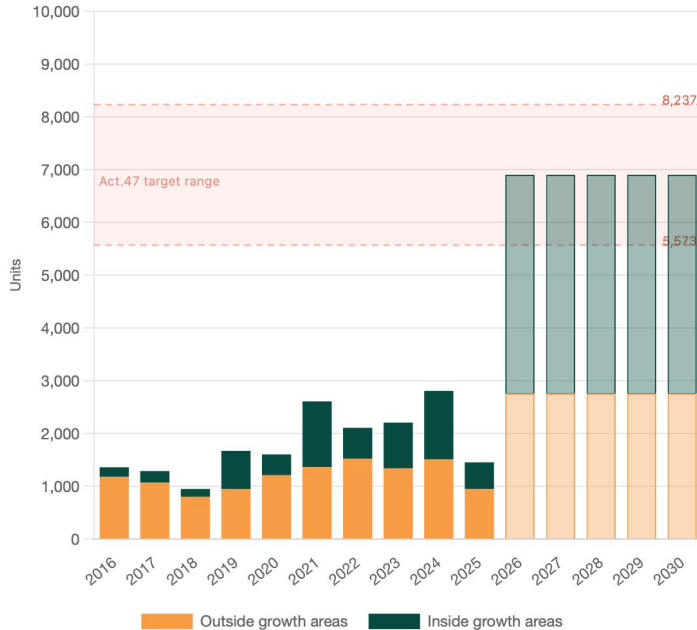
- Growing national consensus that discretionary review is major reason cities and states are not hitting housing targets
- Economic Innovation Group's concept paper proposes \$10,000 per permitted unit in federal payments to municipalities that eliminate discretionary review
- Bipartisan momentum

**Let's Build Homes Position on
Tier 3 and the Road Rule:**

*Let's not make the housing
shortage worse.*

Vermont is Building a Fraction of What It Needs

ANNUAL PRODUCTION INSIDE VS. OUTSIDE EXEMPTION AREAS, 2016–2025 ACTUAL & 2026–2030 PROJECTED



Source: DHCD New Housing Database - Act 181 temporary exemption area maps (ACCD) - Projections: VAPDA 60/40 split applied to Act 47 target midpoint (4,143 inside + 2,762 outside/yr)

Vermont can't meet its housing targets from Tier 1 alone

Historical data shows that Vermont is not close to meeting its housing targets relying on Tier 1 growth areas alone.

We don't know how new rules will affect housing production outside Tier 1

93% of rural permits are single-unit projects. These are the exact projects Tier 2/3 new rules would govern: individual families, small contractors, modest subdivisions.

New rules add friction to the most fragile production

Adding cost, uncertainty, and review to this category of construction moves directly against the goal of building more homes.

What Does Act 250 Review Actually Cost?

The permit fee itself is often modest, but the full cost of Act 250 review goes well beyond the fee. **Past state analyses have consistently underanalyzed these other, much larger costs.**

- 1 Legal and expert costs** — attorneys and expert witnesses are often required solely because of the Act 250 process. These costs don't appear in any permit fee data.
- 2 Speculative risk** — significant expenses are incurred before knowing whether a discretionary permit will be granted. If the project doesn't proceed, those costs are unrecoverable.
- 3 Party Status exposure** — the process creates formal avenues for opponents to intervene, delay approvals, or impose conditions on projects that would otherwise move forward.

When Act 250 compliance adds tens of thousands of dollars to a project, it doesn't just raise costs, it determines who can afford to pursue a project, and the burden falls hardest on those who can least afford it.

[Home](#)

[Act 250 Permit Application](#)

[Land Use Review Board](#)

[Act 250 Program & History](#)

[Statutes, Rules, Guidance,
Procedures](#)

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[Environmental Justice](#)

Party Status Petition (fillable PDF form)

[Forms](#)

March 2, 2026

Use the Party Status Petition form as a guide to draft a written party status petition or to request a hearing on an application that has been designated as a "Minor" by the District Environmental Commission. Download the form to your desktop and save often. Send your completed form to the appropriate district office (<https://act250.vermont.gov/contact-us>).

File

[Act250_PartyStatusPetition.pdf](#) (955.25 KB)

File Format

[PDF](#)

If the party status petitioner is an organization, describe the organization, its purposes, and how its membership could be affected by the proposed project.

The proposed project could impact me as follows: (Explain how you as an individual could be particularly impacted under each criterion for which you are applying for party status and requesting a hearing. For example, "I will be able to see the project from my living room windows, and will be adversely affected under Criterion 8, Aesthetics and Scenic Beauty.") For a list of all Act 250 criteria and additional information on each one, see: <https://act250.vermont.gov/act250-permit/criteria> and <https://act250.vermont.gov/regulations/commission-manual>

State the reasons why a hearing is required to review these criteria, and the nature of any evidence that you intend to present at a hearing:

LET'S BUILD HOMES POSITION:

We Need to Go Further

S.325 takes steps in the right direction — but Vermont needs more to protect and grow its housing pipeline.

EXPAND EXEMPTION AREAS

Protect and grow Tier 1 growth areas

Add all areas with municipal water and sewer to temporary exemption maps. When municipalities and RPCs approve Tier 1 expansion, that decision should carry a strong presumption of LURB approval

STRENGTHEN BY-RIGHT HOUSING

Make S.325's by-right provisions as strong as possible

S.325 advances 802 Homes and ROOT Zones, but both could be implemented sooner and with stronger state backing. Vermont shouldn't study its way to by-right housing, it should build it.

REPEAL OR NARROW NEW RULES

The Road Rule should be repealed. Tier 3 should be significantly narrowed or repealed.

The Road Rule pulls ordinary rural housing into Act 250 review. Tier 3 rulemaking is delayed, but the Board retains broad authority to define its scope. Delay is not enough.