



# **PATH for Vermont**

**Pathway to Accelerate and Transform Housing for Vermont**



# What is the Problem?

**Vermont has:**

**a shortage of housing units in every corner,**

**housing stock that does not fit current needs, and**

**neglected communities in rural Vermont.**



# What have we done?

## INVESTED

- Nearly **\$600M** of state and federal funds invested in housing unit creation during FY21-FY25
  - Affordable Housing
  - Middle Income & Workforce Home ownership & rental
  - Substance use Recovery Housing
  - Manufactured Housing Communities – *MHIR*
  - Reinvestment in Dilapidated Structures & Conversion of Commercial to Residential – *VHIP*

## REINVIGORATED

- Tools for Infrastructure Investment & Site Cleanup
  - Brownfields Revitalization Fund, Healthy Homes Fund, Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

## REFORMED

- Regulatory Reform
  - Statewide Reform of Local Zoning – **HOME Act (Act 47 of 2023)**
  - Statewide Land Use and Permitting Reform – **Act 181 of 2024**



# What have we done?

## HOME Act (Act 47 of 2023)

**Primary focus:** Municipal Planning & Bylaws

**Goal:** Reduce barriers to housing at the local level, enabling greater housing density, especially in areas with municipal water and sewer.

### **Reforms:**

- Duplexes in all residential zoning areas
- Mandatory Density Standards, including 1/5-acre cap on minimum lot size in W&S areas
- Multi-unit up to 4 units in areas served by municipal sewer and water
- Caps on minimum parking requirements in zoning (1 per unit in W&S area, 1.5 per unit elsewhere)

# What have we done?

## Act 181 of 2024

**Primary focus:** Statewide Land Use Permitting (Act 250 jurisdiction)

**Goal:** Reduce barriers to housing at the state level, streamline permitting, enable greater density.

### **Reforms:**

- Establishes new Land use Review Board (LRB) to replace Natural Resources Board (NRB)
- Enacted immediate 'Interim Exemptions' to Act 250 for Housing
- Established new location-based jurisdiction of Act 250
  - Tier 1A & 1B: New Exemptions for Centers
  - Tier 2: Maintained Jurisdiction + Road Rule (all areas not included in Tiers 1 or 3)
  - Tier 3: New Expanded Critical Resource Jurisdiction

# What is the Goal?

## Vision

Achieve and maintain a **healthy housing market** in Vermont to create opportunity for our most vulnerable, **revitalize our communities, foster resiliency**, grow the state's population and workforce, and ensure a vibrant future for all Vermonters.

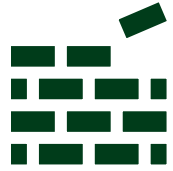
## Methods

Prime the **homebuilding pipeline** with direct public **investments and incentives** for private capital; **reduce cost, time, and risk** of homebuilding with targeted regulatory reforms in **zoning, permitting, and appeals**.



# Administration Housing Strategy

## Pathway to Accelerate and Transform Housing (PATH) for Vermont



- **Strengthen the Foundation for Growth**  
Infrastructure Funding and Financing



- **Revitalize Neglected Communities**  
Investments and Incentives to target rural VT



- **Expand and Accelerate Homebuilding**  
Broaden the base of small-scale development



- **Break Down Procedural Barriers**  
Land Use, Permitting and Appeals Reforms

# Infrastructure

## Vermont Infrastructure Sustainability Fund (VISF)

### **\$9.1M investment to establish new infrastructure revolving loan fund**

Administered by VT Bond Bank

#### Problems addressed:

- Communities face infrastructure constraints, limiting new unit production
- Developers face insurmountable investments, preventing project launch and increasing cost

#### Eligible Uses:

- Engineering, Design, and Construction of municipal water and wastewater systems
- Transportation investments required by municipal regulation, designation requirements, complete streets and transportation- and transit-related improvements, including improvements to existing streets.

#### Program Requirements:

- Direct connection to proposed or in-progress housing development
- Demonstrable progress toward regional housing target.

Find on page 74, line 1 – page 76, line 18





# Infrastructure

## Strategic Projects for Advancing Rural Communities (SPARC)

*SPARC is a municipal financing tool to help communities fund infrastructure, housing and economic development projects. This program will drive strategic investments in critically needed projects throughout Vermont.*

SPARC allows municipalities to:

1. Make project-based infrastructure investments to spur development and keep the increment for debt service for that infrastructure project; OR
2. Allocate a percentage of incremental property tax revenue *back to* an investment partner for a specific project for a defined period of time/number of years.

SPARC allows municipalities to invest in infrastructure projects utilizing a flexible financing tool that is accessible to all towns regardless of size. SPARC will incentivize project-based infrastructure investments (like water/wastewater) and drive secondary/tertiary development to occur.

Find on page 48, line 25 – page 60, line 2



# "SPARC"

## *Strategic Projects for Advancing Rural Communities*

### Addresses the Statewide Need for:

- More housing in rural areas via creating new and rehabilitating units
- Recovery and mitigation efforts to expand infrastructure investments in flood-impacted communities
- Economic growth in areas that have historically been challenges by limited municipal capacity
- Long-term solutions to address climate challenges in flood-impacted areas

#### Needs vs. Reality



Municipality  
wants growth, but  
project doesn't  
pencil out.



#### Collaboration



Municipality  
and investment  
partner create  
CA.



#### Approval



VEPC  
reviews  
the CA.



#### Construction



New  
property tax  
revenue.



#### Rebate



Portion of  
incremental tax  
revenue to  
investment partner.



#### Community Growth



New homes,  
community  
vibrancy, and grand  
list growth!

# Infrastructure

## Adjustments to TIF Statutes

There are necessary updates to the TIF statute to adjust for this model.

- 1. Lift the cap on two projects per county and the maximum number of TIFs VEPC can authorize statewide.**
  - The statute currently limits the creation of six new TIF districts. Currently, two are being utilized, and four remain to be created. This new capability needs to co-exist in municipalities that already have TIF districts.
- 2. Adjust the timeline of a district to begin on April 1 of the year it receives VEPC approval.**
  - It is currently April 1 of the year when it receives municipal approval, usually months before VEPC approval.

Find on page 60, line 3 – page 68, line 3



# Expand and Accelerate Homebuilding

## \$30M investment to VHFA

### **\$15M for *Middle Income Homeownership Development Program (MIHDP)***

MIHDP supports the **construction or rehabilitation of modest homes for purchase by Vermont households earning up to 150% AMI.**

The program provides a development subsidy up to 35% of development costs for program eligible homes.

### **\$15M for *Rental Revolving Loan Fund (RRLF)***

Established in the HOME Act of 2023, the RRLF to incentivizes the **creation and preservation of rental housing for middle-income households earning between 65%-150% AMI.**

The program provides developers and builders with a subordinate loan for up to 35% of the development cost per rental unit for middle-income households.

Find on page 80, line 19 – page 81, line 3



# Expand and Accelerate Homebuilding

## \$4M base funding for VHIP

- Fund unit creation and rehabilitation

Find on page 78, lines 14-21



## Infill Technical Assistance – Staff Resources

- Guide Property Owner

## Homes for All – Staff Resources

- Train & Grow the bench of builders
- Expedite Permitting

## Small-scale Development Investment & Capacity Growth

Three-pronged approach, leveraging **VHIP**, **Homes for All**, and **Housing Infill Technical Assistance**. Not only expands the housing supply but grows the small-scale homebuilder industry.



# Reinvigorate Neglected Communities

## \$2M base funding to MHIR program

- Repair existing units, keep people housed
- Strengthen & Expand Mobile Home Parks

Find on page 47, line 8 – page 48, line 14 AND page 78, line 23 – page 80, line 4

## \$2M to Brownfields Revitalization Fund

- Clean up infill sites in Downtowns & Village Centers
- Support conversion of brownfield infill sites to housing

Find on page 79, line 18 – page 80, line 12

## \$2M Increase to DT & Village Center Tax Credits

- Reinforce aging structures, and Repurpose underutilized buildings
- Flood Resilience in community core

Find on page 48, lines 16-23

## Community Revitalization in every corner of the state with Proven Programs

Double-down on investments that benefit Vermont communities where we have seen the greatest signs of atrophy.



# Appeals Reforms

## Stricter standard for appealing a housing project

- Require that appealing party must demonstrate a **clear and substantial departure from the comprehensive plan or land use regulation** that affects their property.

## Raise the threshold for a “petition appeal”

- Change current threshold from 20 individuals to 20% of municipality’s population.

## Rebalance appeals accountability

- Appellant of approved permit may be help liable for up to \$50,000 of Developer’s legal fees if permit issuance is upheld by the court.

## Environmental Division of Superior Court

- Provision to instruct Env. Court to hear appeals involving development of residential housing before other cases
- New goal for the Environmental Division to hear cases involving development of residential housing within 60 days

# Changes to Act 181

## Interim Exemptions

- Clarify administration of Interim Exemptions, including subdivisions as exempt
- Extend Interim Exemption sunsets to prevent uncertainty before Tier 1A & 1B exemptions
- Expand Interim Exemption areas to include all areas served by municipal Wastewater systems
- Expand Transit Route Interim Exemption to include Transit Routes beyond Chittenden County

Find on page 21, line 3 – page 24, line 5

## Governance

- Provisions to clarify transition of NRB duties to Land use Review Board (LURB), maintain existing rules under new body, etc.
- Exemptions to public meeting law to enable efficient operation of LURB (mirrors Public Utility Commission exemption)

Find on page 26, lines 8-17





# Changes to Act 181

## Tiers

- Adjust threshold for Tier 1A & 1B to make permanent exemptions attainable for more communities [Find on page 11, line 15 – page 12, line 6]
- Change Tier 1B process to automatically map Tier 1B areas, and require municipal action to opt-out [Find on page 9, line 24 – page 10, line 2]
- New exemption for PHPs in Tier 1B-eligible areas that opt-out [Find on page 20, lines 3-6]
- New exemption for PHPs in Tier 1B areas to allow for exemption up to 75 units (exceeds standard 50-unit Tier 1B exemption) [Find on page 20, lines 7-9]
- Convert Tier 3 rulemaking to a study of Critical Natural Resources & strike 8(C) rulemaking (forest blocks & habitat connectors) [Find on page 12, line 18 – page 17, line 7]
- Repeal the “Road Rule” [Find on page 1, line 9 – page 2, line 24 AND page 5, lines 11-17]

# Break Down Procedural Barriers

## Wetlands permitting adjustments

- Modifies Class II Wetlands standards in Designated Areas, Interim Exemption Areas, Tier 1A & 1B areas, and existing Industrial Parks
- Amends buffer zone to 25 ft. in areas described above to facilitate infill development while protecting mapped wetlands
- Adjusts ‘Net gain of Wetlands’ requirements
  - Extends date to July 1, 2026 for ANR to amend wetlands rules
  - Allows a 1:1 “mitigation” ratio for wetlands affected by projects in existing Act 250 permitted industrial parks, designated areas, Tier 1A and 1B areas, and interim exemption areas. (remains 2:1 outside of these areas)

Find on page 27, line 4 – page 33, line 15

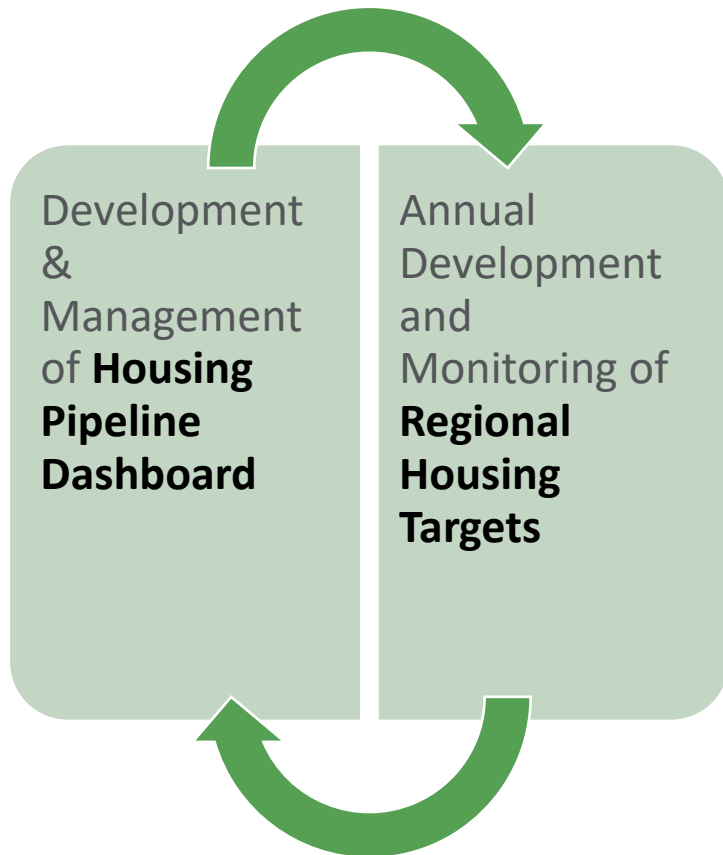
## Wastewater Connections

- Streamlined municipal water and wastewater connections permitting by delegating review to participating municipalities utilizing a General Permit

Find on page 68, line 23 – page 73, line 26

# Operational Execution

## Following Through & Operating Tactically



### Implement Systems to Double-Down on Data

Increase our focus on the housing pipeline to inform annual target setting, with the objective of making our housing strategy increasingly specific, measurable and tactical. Hold stakeholders accountable & lean into evidence-based approach with legislators.

**Proposal:** Allow Tax Dept and VCGI to accessing municipal CAMA data. This will enable us to gain deeper insights into our housing stock, enhancing our ability to monitor progress and make informed decisions to achieve our housing goals.

Find on page 76, line 20 – page 77, line 10

# New Housing in VT Dashboard

2025-2030

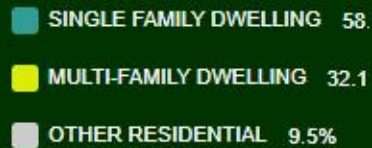
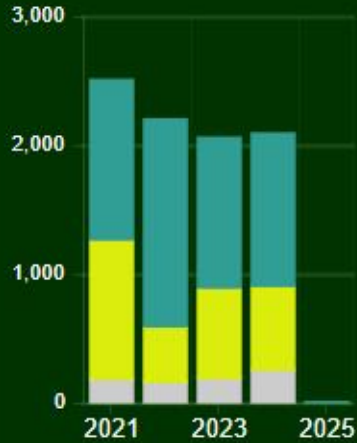
Target  
 **41,184**  
Annual need: 8,237

On Pace to Build  
 **11,148**  
Annual avg: 2,230

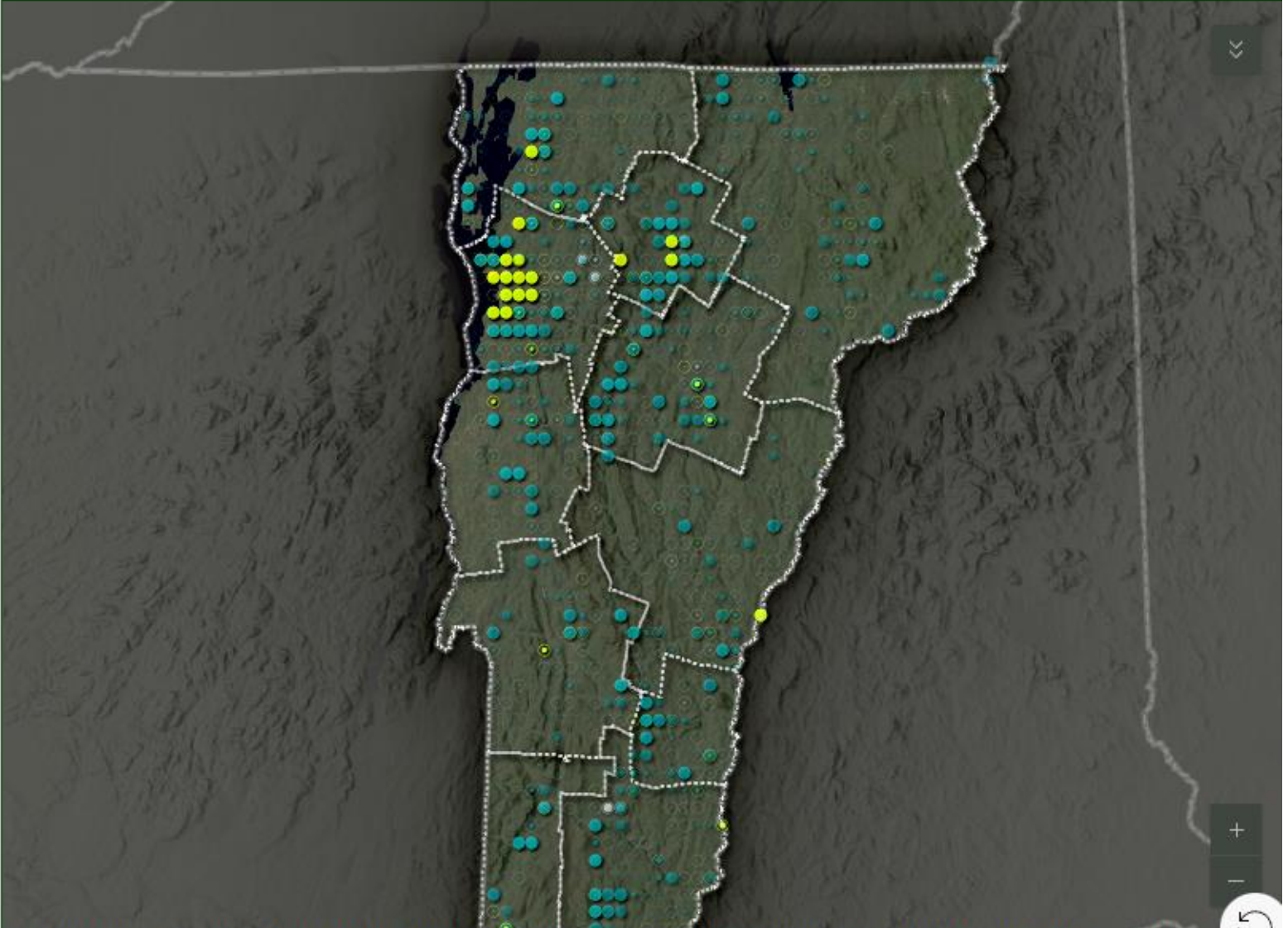


Annual Home Construction:  
2021-2024 Average vs Target

Units Built



New **Single** and **Multi** Family Homes (2021-Current)



# THANK YOU

## Helpful Links:

[HousingData.org](https://www.housingdata.org)

[Statewide and Regional Housing Targets](#)

[Housing Development in Vermont Dashboard](#)

["PATH for Vermont" Resource Page](#)

## Contact Information:

**DHCD Commissioner, Alex Farrell**

[Alex.Farrell@vermont.gov](mailto:Alex.Farrell@vermont.gov)

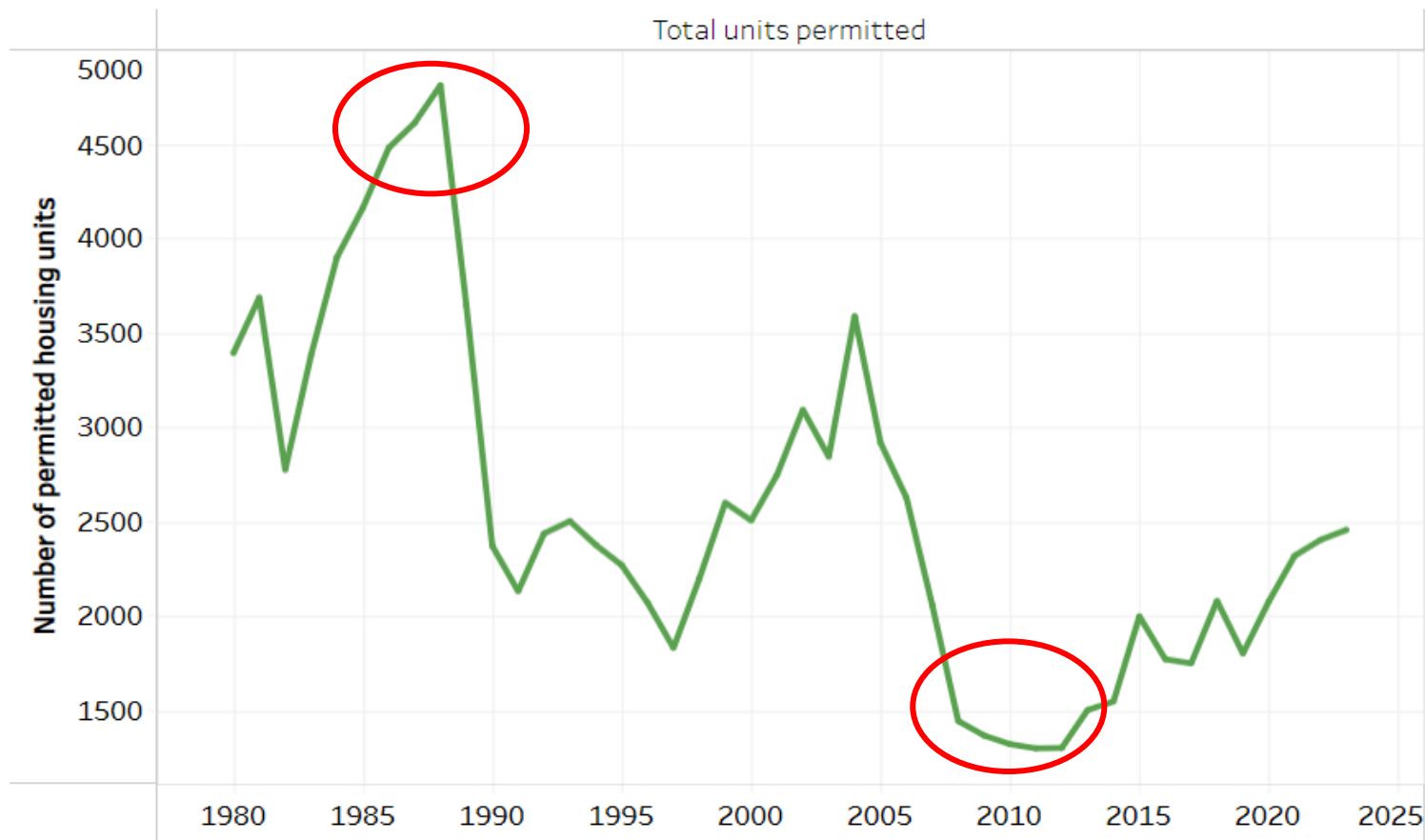
**DHCD Deputy Commissioner, Nate Formalarie**

[Nate.Formarlie@vermont.gov](mailto:Nate.Formarlie@vermont.gov)



# What are the contributing factors?

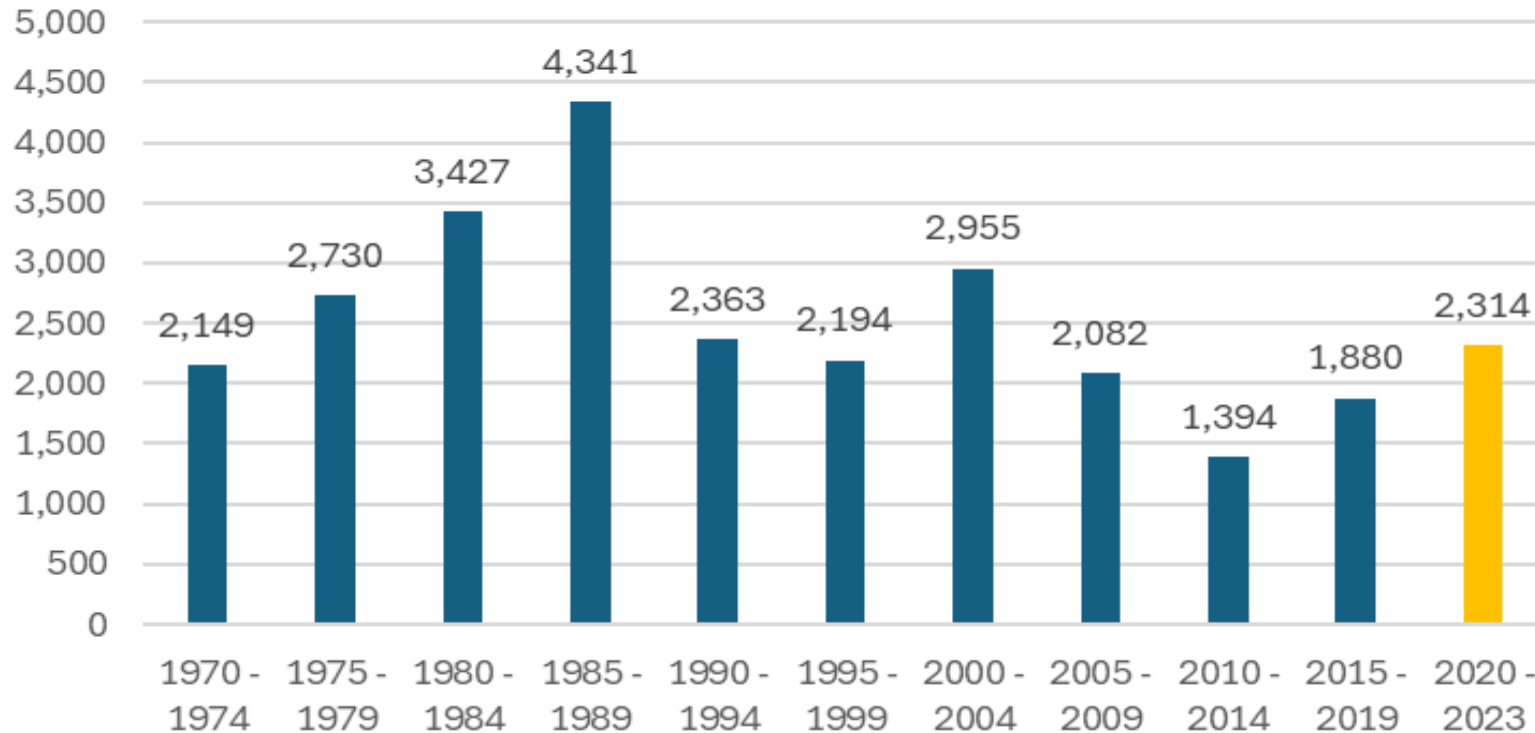
## Decades of Underdevelopment



Year Range	Units Permitted	Annual Avg Permitted
1970-1979	24,396	2,440
1980-1989	38,840	3,884
1990-1999	22,785	2,279
2000-2009	25,186	2,519
2010-2019	16,369	1,637
2020-2023	9,255	2,314
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>136,831</b>	<b>2,534</b>

# What are the contributing factors?

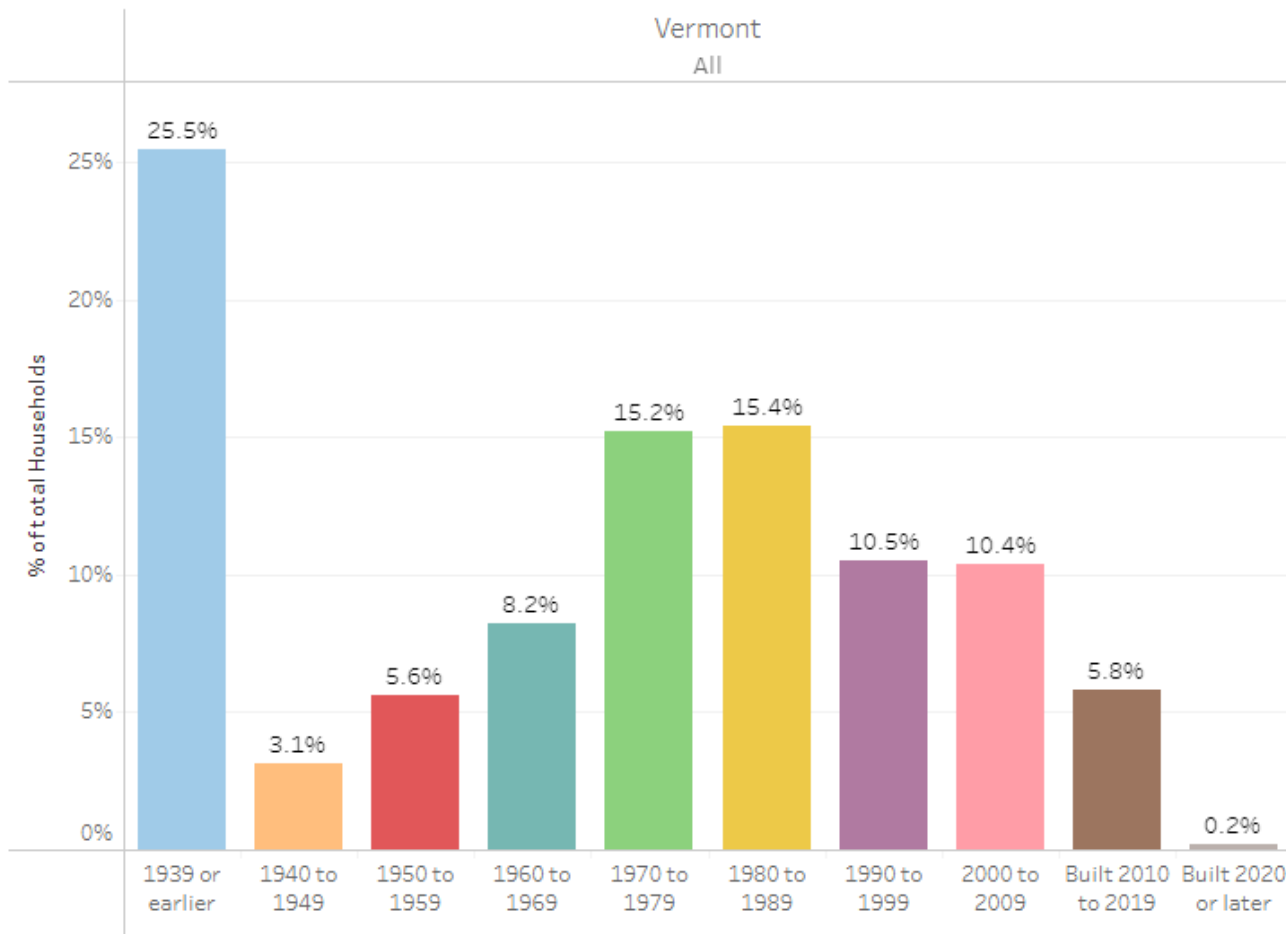
Average Annual Units Permitted



Year Range	Units Permitted	Annual Avg Permitted	Increase
1970 - 1974	10,744	2,149	
1975 - 1979	13,652	2,730	27.1%
1980 - 1984	17,135	3,427	25.5%
1985 - 1989	21,705	4,341	26.7%
1990 - 1994	11,817	2,363	-45.6%
1995 - 1999	10,968	2,194	-7.2%
2000 - 2004	14,776	2,955	34.7%
2005 - 2009	10,410	2,082	-29.5%
2010 - 2014	6,970	1,394	-33.0%
2015 - 2019	9,399	1,880	34.8%
2020 - 2023	9,255	2,314	23.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>136,831</b>	<b>2,534</b>	

# What are the contributing factors?

Estimated housing units by year structure built



## Aging Housing Stock

An estimated **500-600 units** (conservatively) are lost from VT's housing stock each year to deconstruction (disrepair, deferred maintenance, etc.).

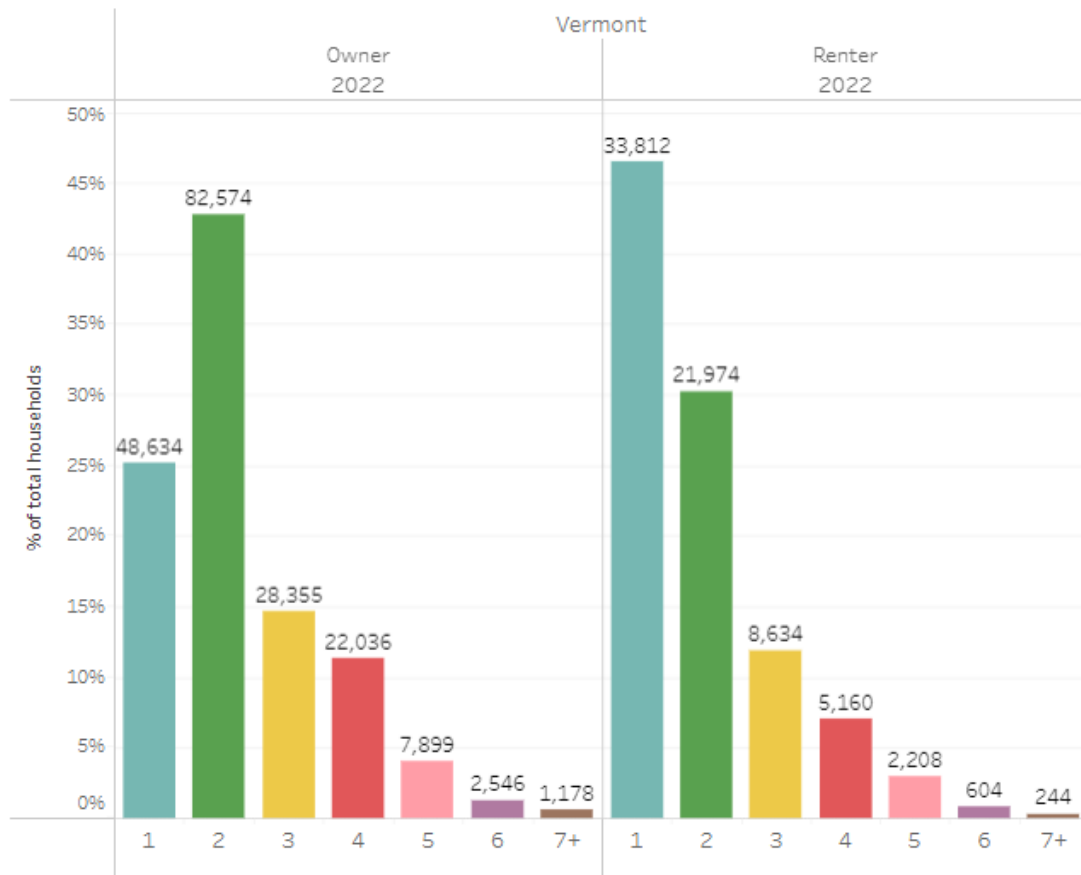
Source: HUD [Components of Inventory Change \(CINCH\)](#), 2017-2019. Housing needs projections in this report assume a 0.15% annual loss rate for both owner and renter homes to be conservative in light of the lack of state-level loss rate data.



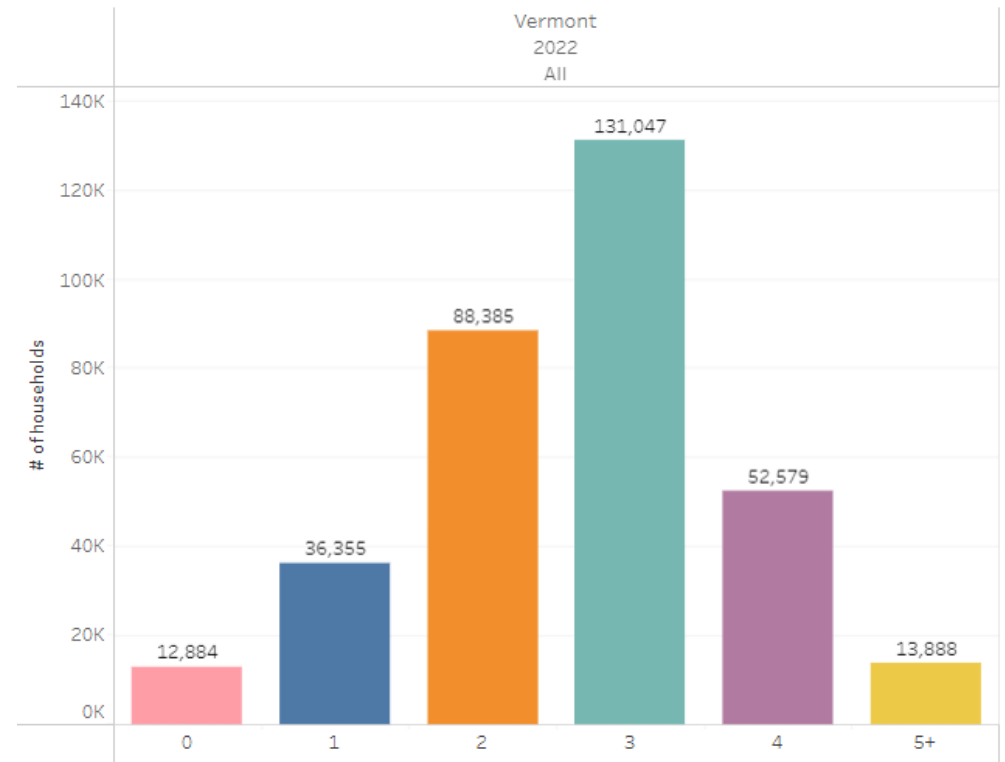
# What are the contributing factors?

## Mismatch – Housing Stock does not meet the needs of the population

Estimated households by number of people



Estimated occupied housing units by number of bedrooms



# What are the contributing factors?

## Other Factors:

- High cost of construction
- Mortgage rates remain high, preventing market churn
- Increased inward migration

Figure 2-4 Net migration flow into Vermont by year, 2010-2022

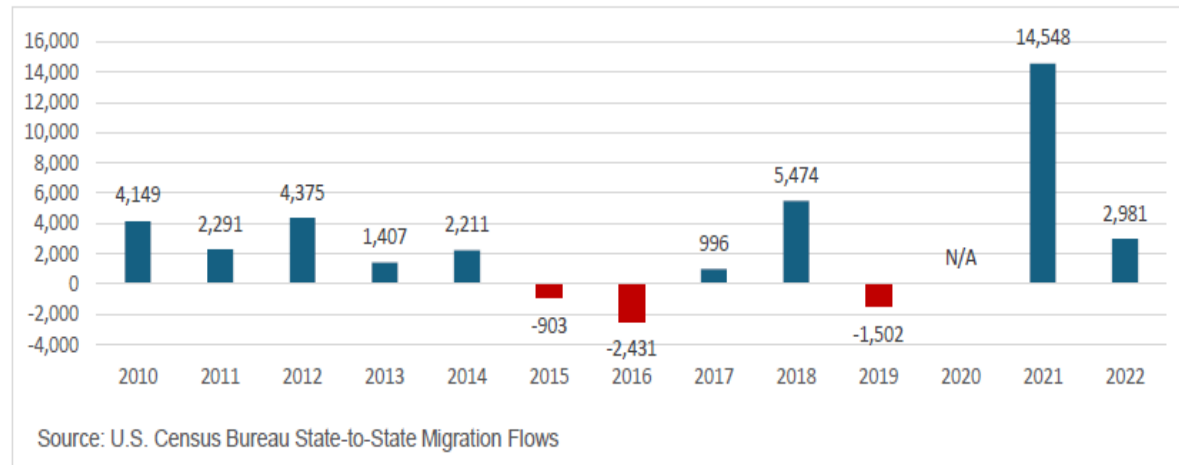


Figure 2-2 Cumulative population change, April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023

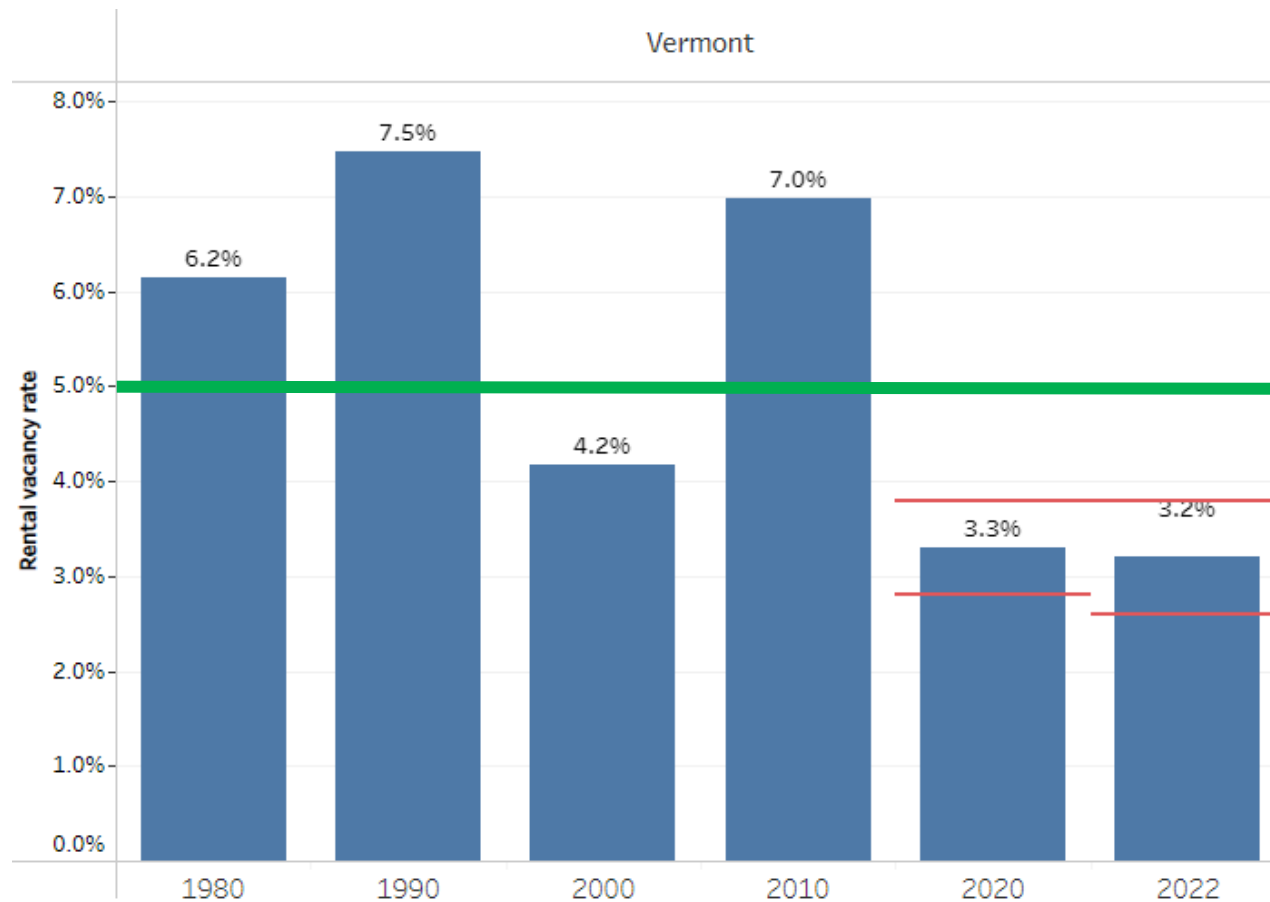
Total Population Change	Vital Events			Net Migration		
	Natural change	Births	Deaths	Total	International	Domestic
4,387	-5,191	16,913	22,104	9,503	2,757	6,746

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Annual and Cumulative Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change for the United States

30-Year Fixed-rate Mortgage



# What are the indications?



## Low Vacancy Rates

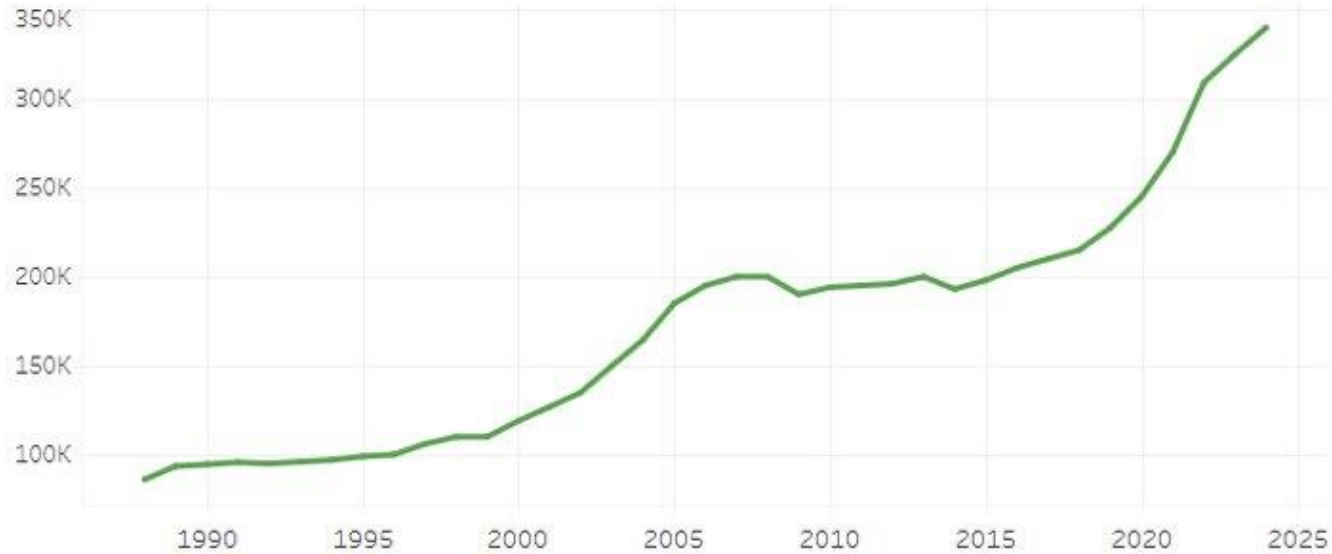
Healthy vacancy rates are considered to be around 5%. Because of a lack of housing stock, VT has an extremely low statewide vacancy rate.

As of 2023, the statewide vacancy rate is only 3% in VT, and just 1% in Chittenden County.

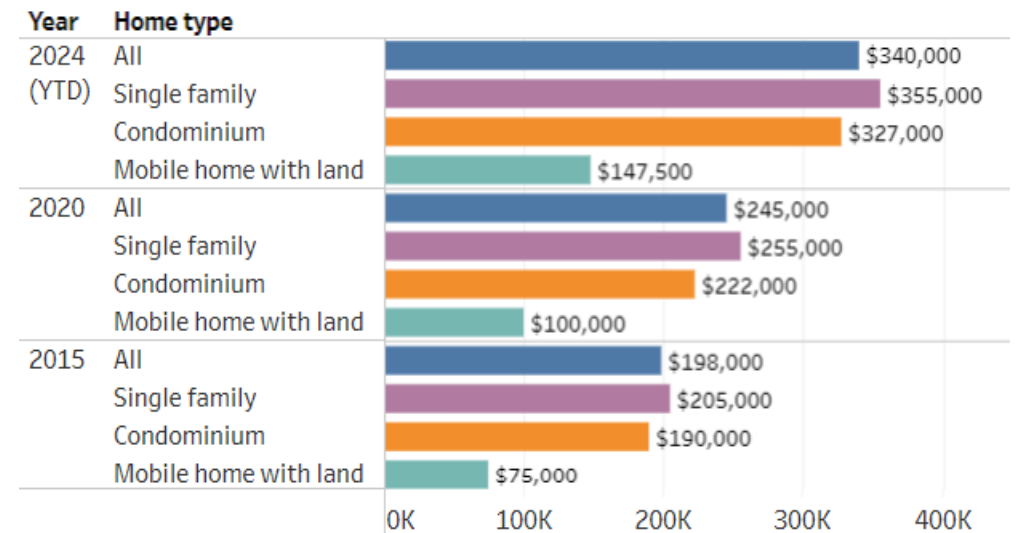
# What are the indications?

## High Cost of Homeownership

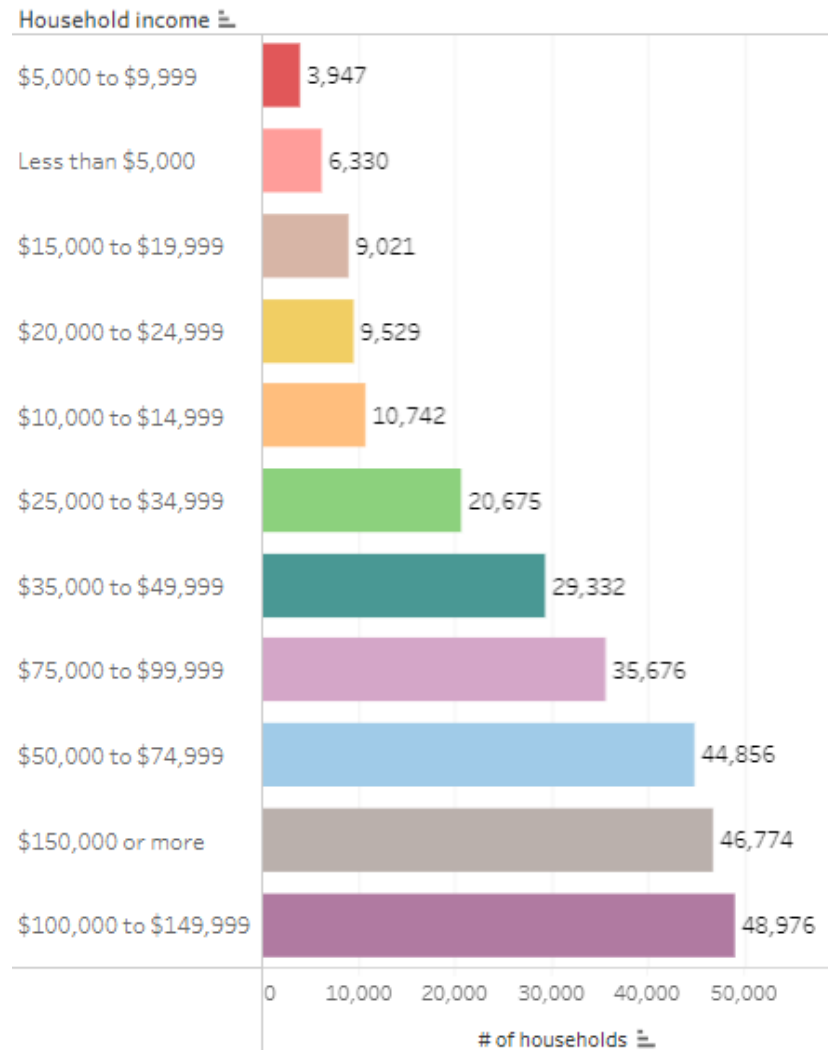
Median home sale price  
Vermont  
Home type: All



Median home sale price



# What are the indications?



## High Cost of Homeownership

\$340,000

\$340,000

To afford this house, you would need a household income of at least:

\$113,714

You would need to have the following cash available for closing costs:

\$28,759

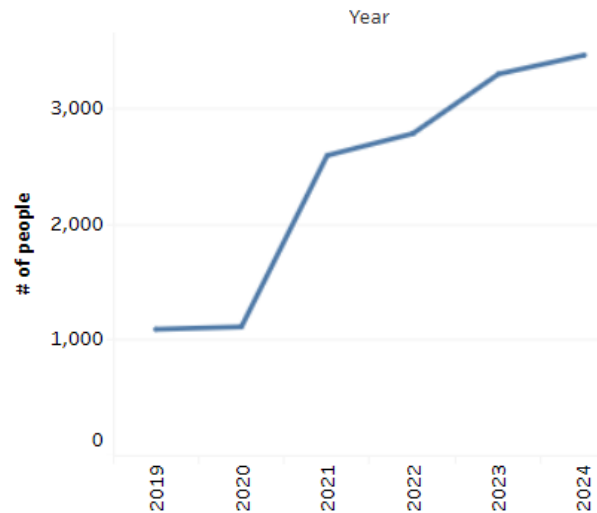
**Only 13% of VT Renter Households could afford to purchase a home at the median sales price in VT.**



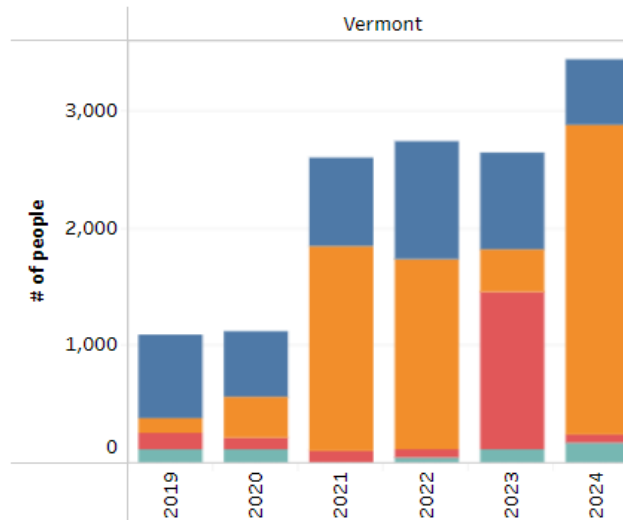
# What are the indications?

## Homelessness

Vermonters experiencing homelessness



Homelessness by shelter type



Shelter Types

- Emergency shelter
- Publicly funded hotel
- Transitional housing
- Unsheltered

According to the US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, VT has the **4th highest rate of homelessness in the nation**

