



Comprehensive Plan: Phase 2

Town of Leverett
Committee Meeting #3
June 27, 2023



AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions.
2. Approval of Minutes from May 10, 2023

Discussion 1: Existing Conditions (40 minutes)

1. Presentation from Consultant Team on Existing Conditions
2. Q&A

Discussion 2: Community Engagement and Outreach (40 minutes)

1. Continued discussion of outreach process.
2. Create schedule of outreach and engagement.

Next steps: Meeting dates and task assignments.



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Roles

- Review draft reports and materials.
- Provide feedback on public outreach and input.
- Circulate flyers, social media tags, and emails about workshops and meetings.
- Encourage people to attend meetings and answer surveys.
- Staff public meetings and events.

Responsibilities

- Be open to many and different ideas.
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others.
- Be ready to participate fully – in and out of the meeting.
- Remember we are talking about the needs of the whole town.



EXISTING CONDITIONS: Phase 1 Report

- Focus data collection in Phase 2 on updates and missing information, such as market data for economic development and housing, infrastructure and mobility, and town services/ facilities. Understand who in Leverett is working where and what that means for the Town's future.
 - RKG Associates: Housing and Economic Development
 - Tighe & Bond: Infrastructure
 - Interview Town staff (space and maintenance needs) and major landowners
 - Focus on Areas of Concern Map (page 24) identified in Phase 1
 - Open space/recreation areas
 - Town Center
 - North Leverett
 - Moore's Corner
 - Route 63
 - East Leverett
- Recent planning efforts focused on climate, open space (including natural resources) and recreation, and historic resources (including cultural resources).
 - **Gaps in planning will be addressed by this process:**
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Town Services and Facilities
 - Infrastructure, including roads, water, sewer, and energy.

Demographics, Housing and Economic Development

Chris Herlich, AICP

Juliane Ding

RKG Associates

Demographics & Housing

Introduction

This section provides a detailed look at the existing demographic and housing characteristics influencing Leverett's housing market today and into the future. We will review demographic trends, households, housing units, pricing, and housing affordability. A town's demographic and housing characteristics are deeply intertwined. The housing stock can determine who is able to, or interested in living in a town, and the existing demographics and demographic trends influence housing demand and the market response. This information is key to identifying issues and opportunities within Leverett's housing market, and how to steer strategies and resources to address issues and capitalize on opportunities.

The following analysis also provides an overview and insights comparing Leverett to surrounding towns. This includes Amherst, Montague, Shutesbury, Sunderland, and Wendell. Throughout the analysis, Leverett is also compared to the surrounding "Region" which comprises of the five surrounding towns plus Leverett.

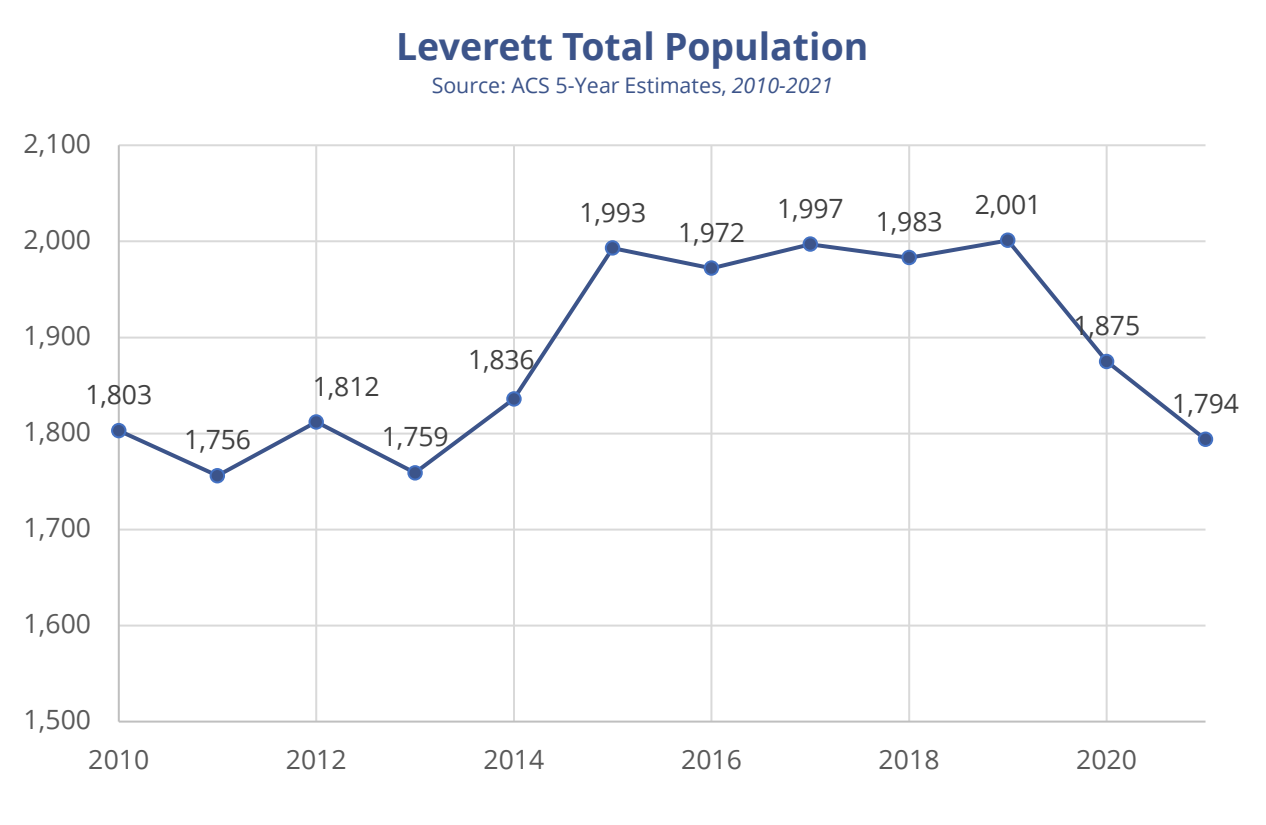


[292 Shutesbury Rd](#)
Source: Realtor.com

Total Population

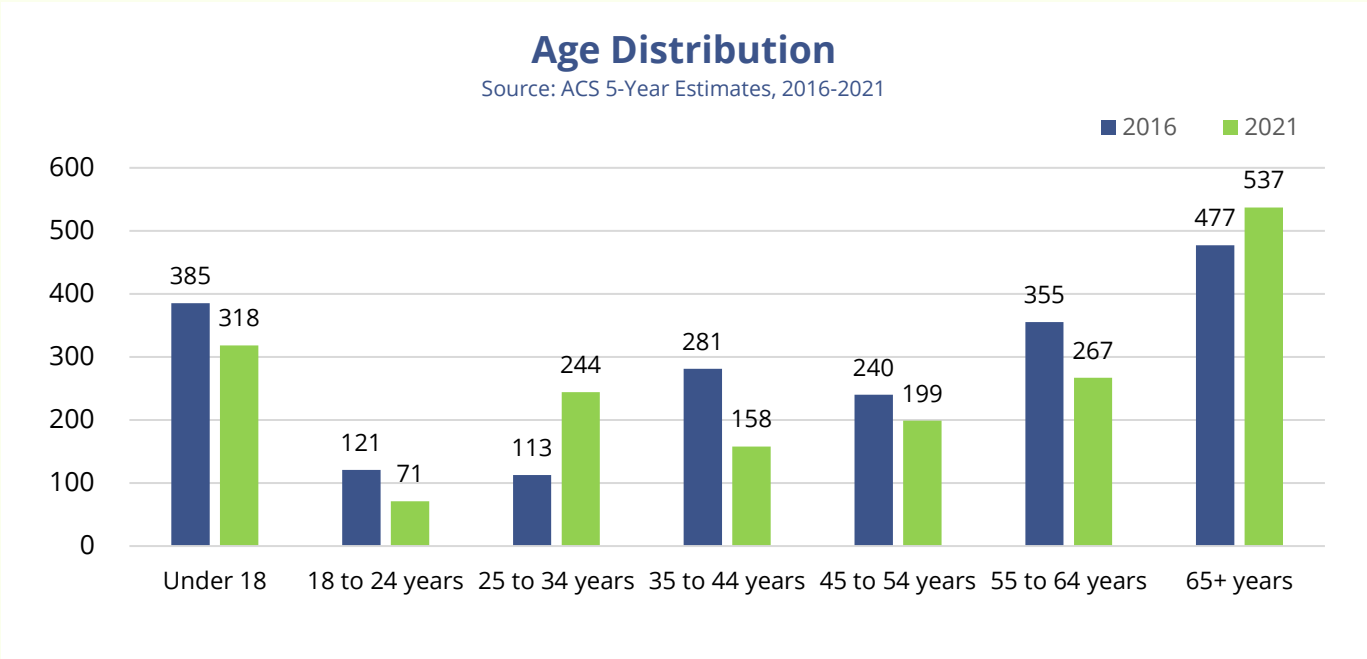
Leverett's population is decreasing from historic highs of the mid-2010s.

The Census estimates indicate that over the last decade the total population of Leverett has fluctuated, with a decrease of 9% over the last five years. The encompassing region has decreased by 0.3% over the last five years, while the state of Massachusetts population has increased by 3.7%.



Age Distribution

Median Age	
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021	
Town	Age
Leverett	50.1
Amherst	21.3
Montague	44.6
Shutesbury	51.2
Sunderland	34.5
Wendell	50.6



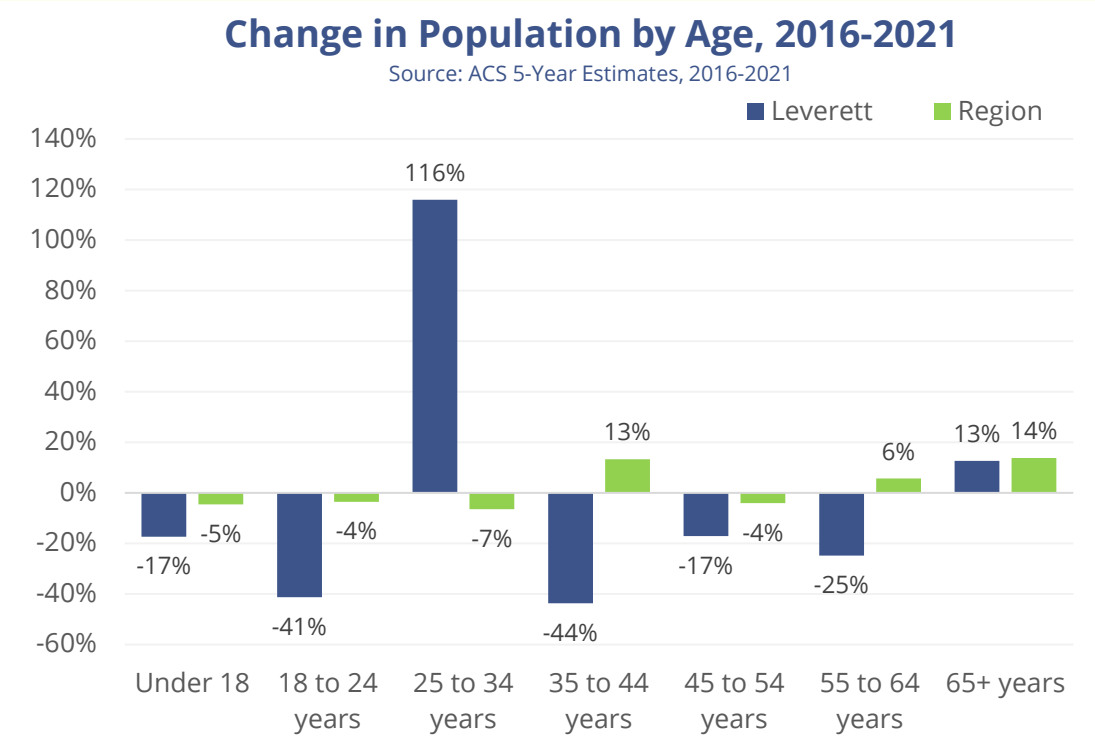
Like many communities across the country, Leverett’s older adult population continues to grow.

Leverett’s median age of 50.1 is similar to some nearby communities, though much older than others. Residents ages 65+ make up about 30% of Leverett’s population, a 6% increase from 2016. Residents ages 25-34 increased by 131 residents, going from 6% of the population to about 14%. Attracting younger residents to Leverett will be important for the workforce, household spending, and continuing to replenish an aging population.

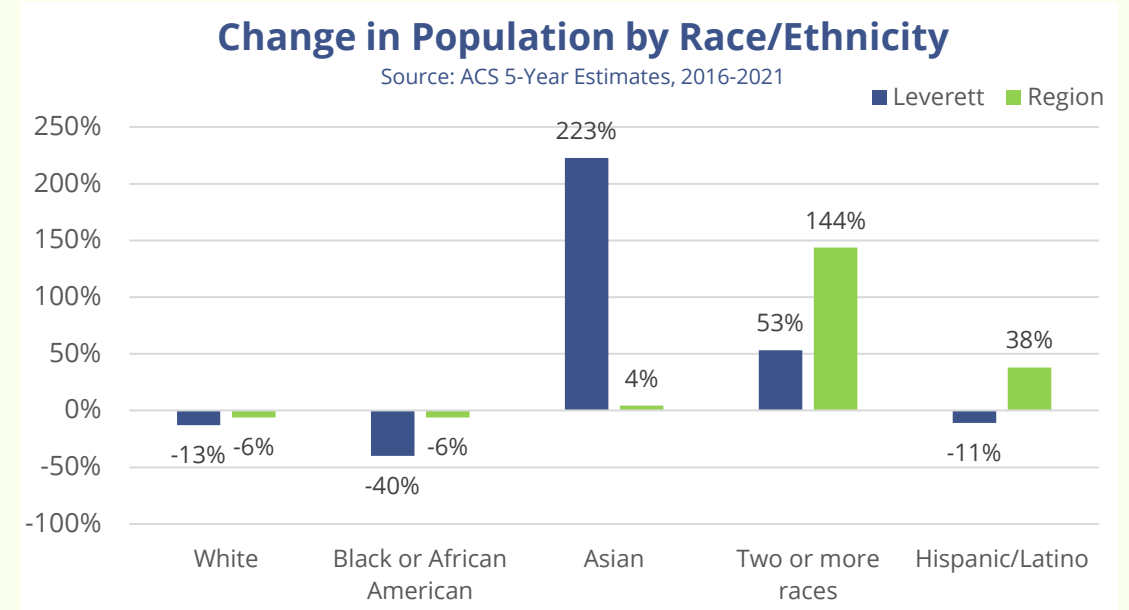
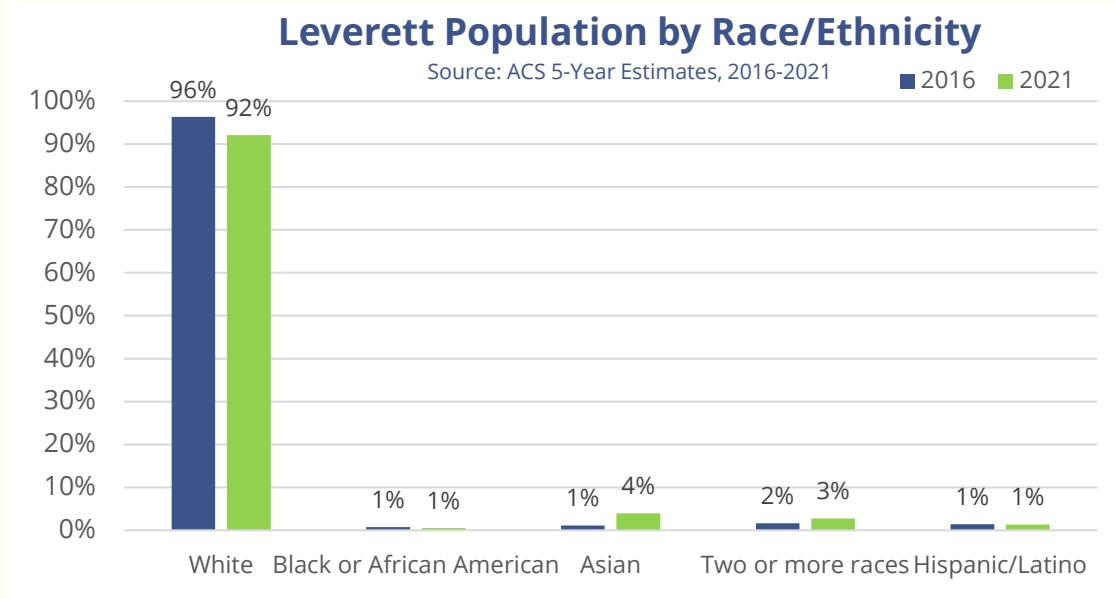
Change in Population by Age

Leverett’s population skews older but has a growing Millennial population.

The largest percentage growth was in residents 25-34 by 131 residents, while the largest percentage decrease in residents 35 to 44 was by 123 residents. Keeping these younger residents in Leverett will be important for the workforce, household spending, and continuing to replenish an aging population.



Race & Ethnicity



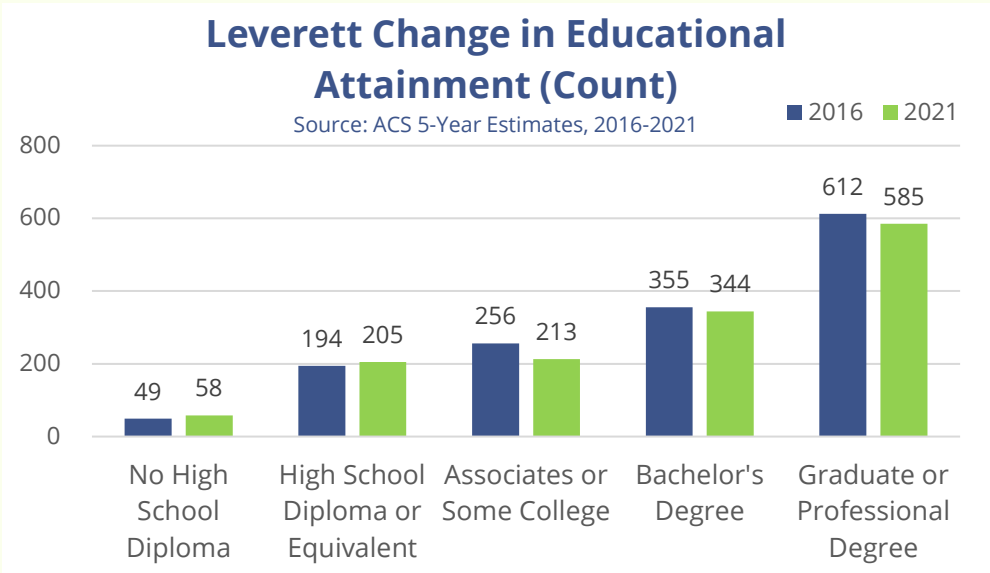
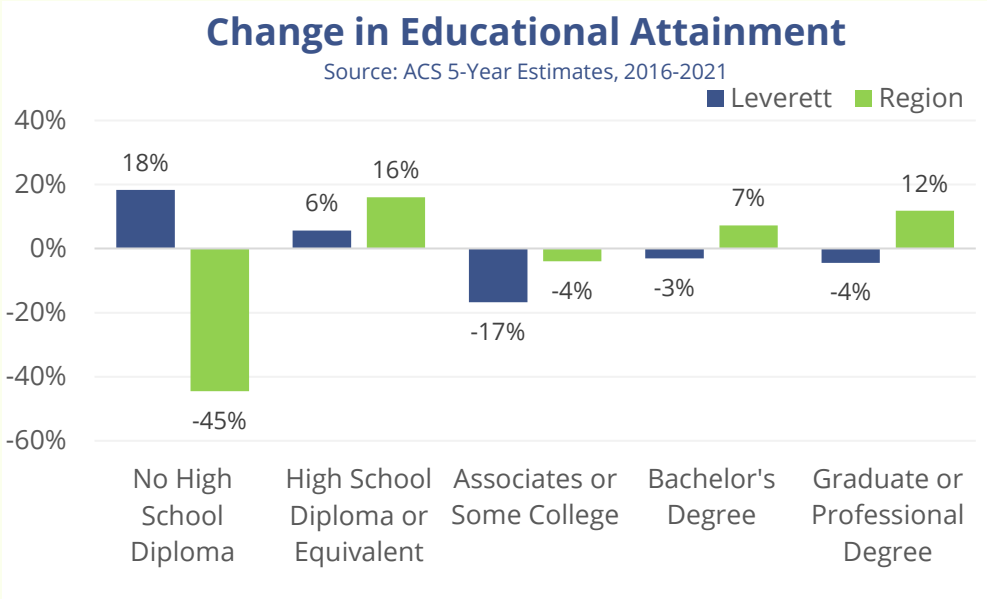
Leverett's population has become slightly more diverse.

- Over the past five years, the share of residents that identify as White decreased by about 4% (247 residents).
- The largest percentage increase was from Asian identifying residents, with an increase of about 3% (49 residents). In comparison, the region had significant proportional increases in Hispanic/Latino residents with a 38% increase (1,114 residents) and residents who identify as two or more races with an 144% increase (2,397 residents).

Education

The number of Leverett residents who attended college or hold a bachelor's degree or higher has decreased.

Over the last decade, the number of residents with a bachelor's degree decreased by about 3% (27 residents) and while residents with no high school diploma increased by about 18% (9 residents). This varies greatly from the region, where more highly educated people are increasing in proportion and residents with no high school diploma are decreasing in proportion.

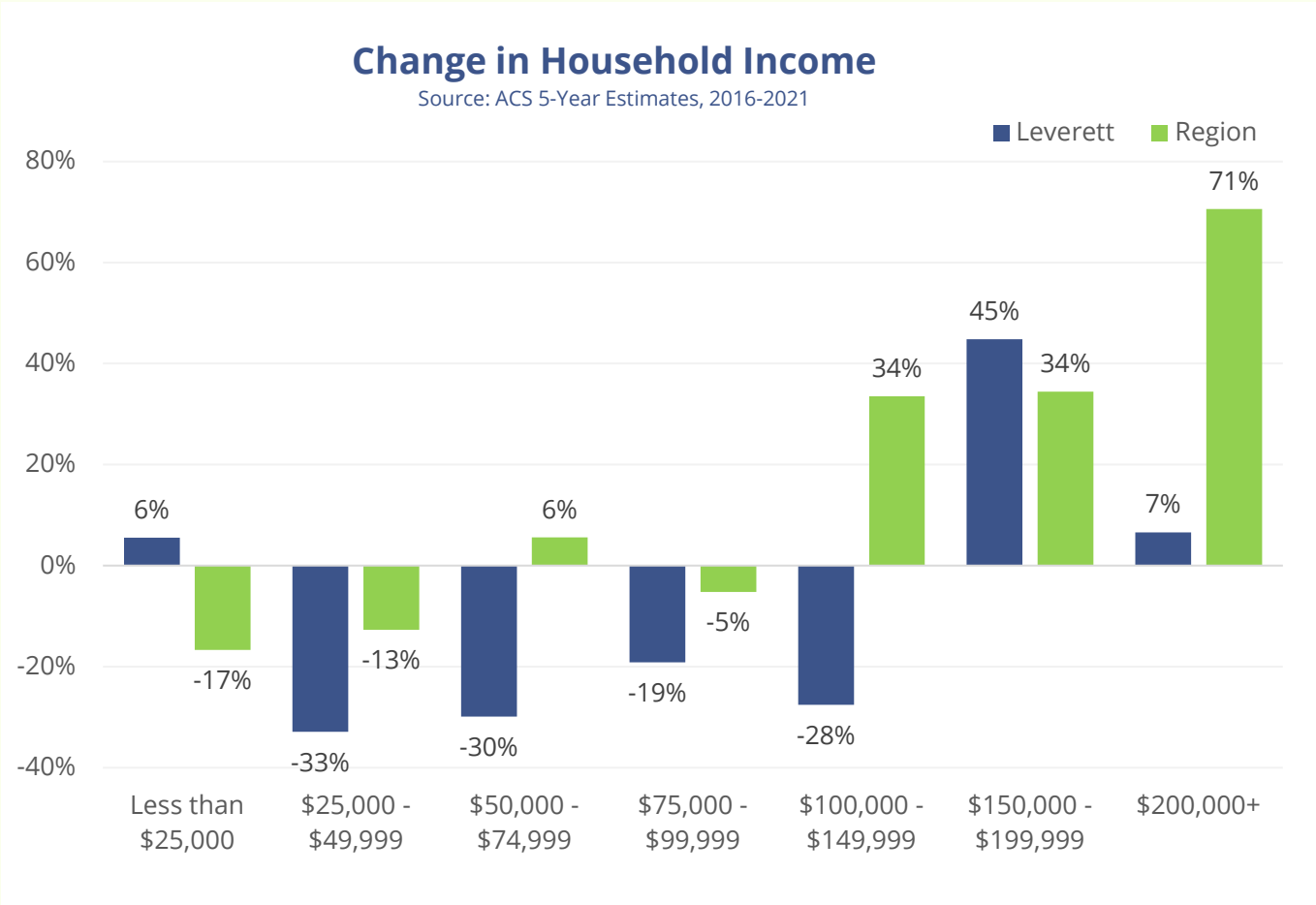


Income

Household incomes are increasing in Leverett.

Over the past five years, Leverett saw a 45% increase in households earning between \$150,000 - \$199,999 and a 7% increase in residents earning over \$200,000. The median household income in Leverett increased from \$86,771 to \$97,188.

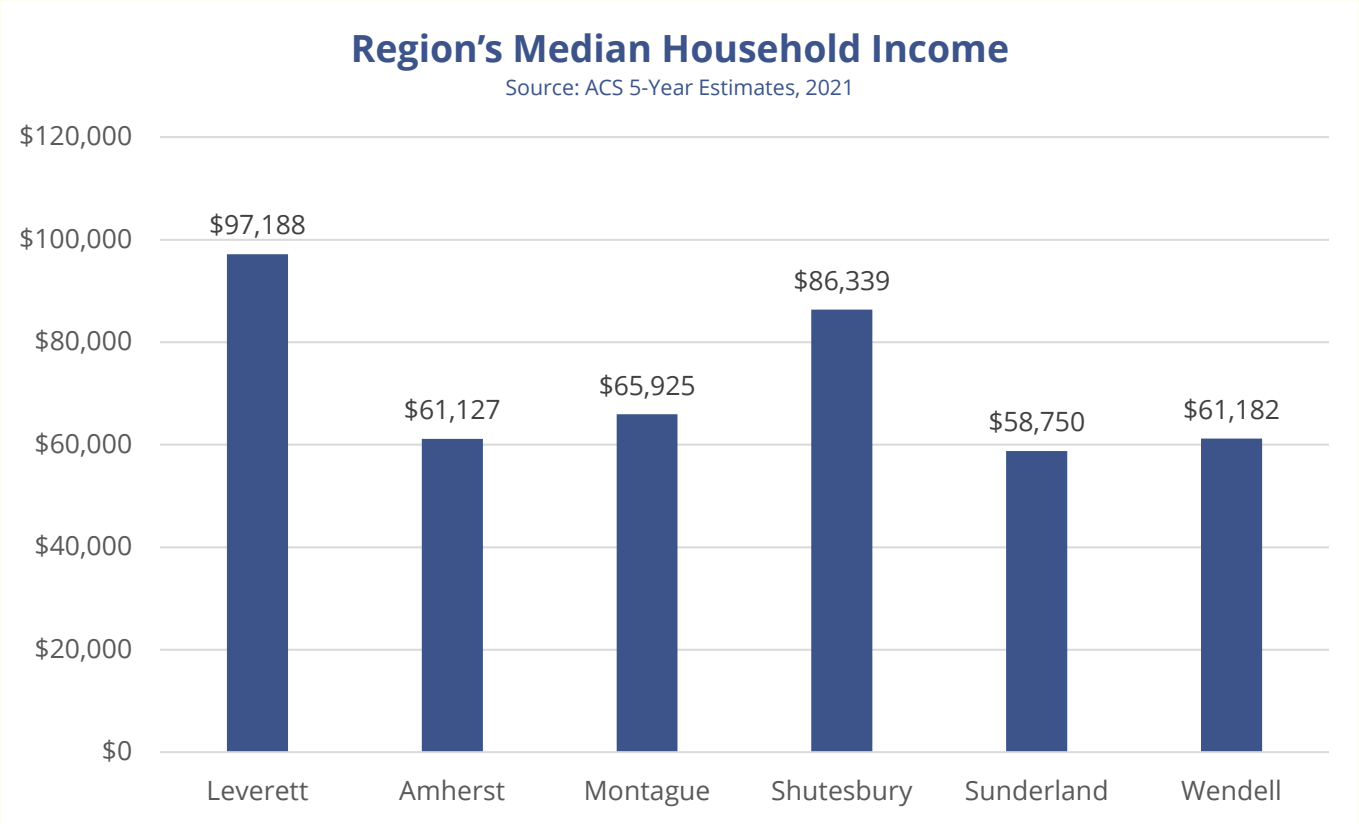
These increases in higher income households mean high household purchasing power and spending in local businesses as a key economic driver. This may also mean households have more income to spend on housing as home prices and rents continue to rise.



Income

Leverett has the highest median household income in the surrounding region.

Leverett’s median income of \$97,188 was the highest in the region, with Shutesbury having the second highest median income at \$86,339. All other communities range similarly from about \$58,000 to \$66,000.





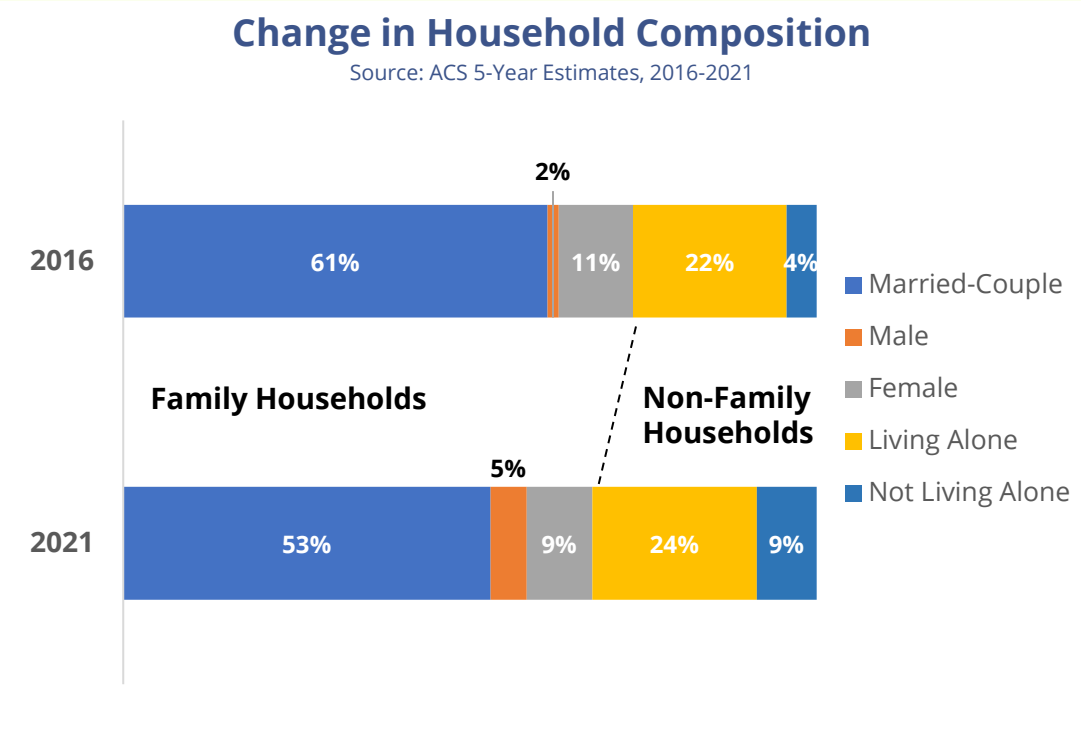
Household Composition

Household composition continues to shift as non-family households increase.

Following total population trends, the number of households decreased from 809 to 708 households.

Over the past five years, Leverett saw an increase in the number and percentage of non-family households, primarily driven by the increase in non-family households not living alone . The share of family households decreasing by 116 households. Non-family householders not living alone increased by 26 households.

For the region, the most significant proportional change was in householders living alone, with an increased of 637 residents.



Household Composition

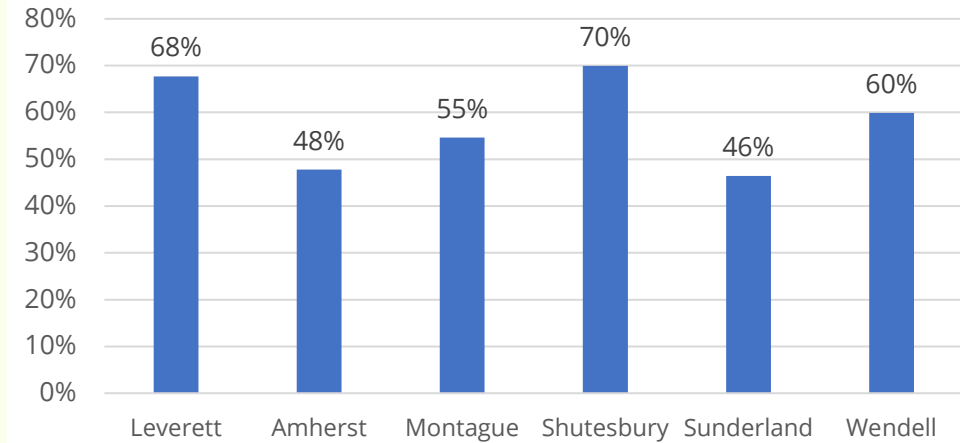
Leverett has a higher percentage of family households compared to surrounding towns/cities.

Leverett has 479 family households, which makes up about 68% of their total population.

However, Leverett is the only town that is decreasing in the proportion family households, while all other surrounding towns are increasing in family household proportions of total households. Shutesbury and Wendell have the most positive percentage change in family households.

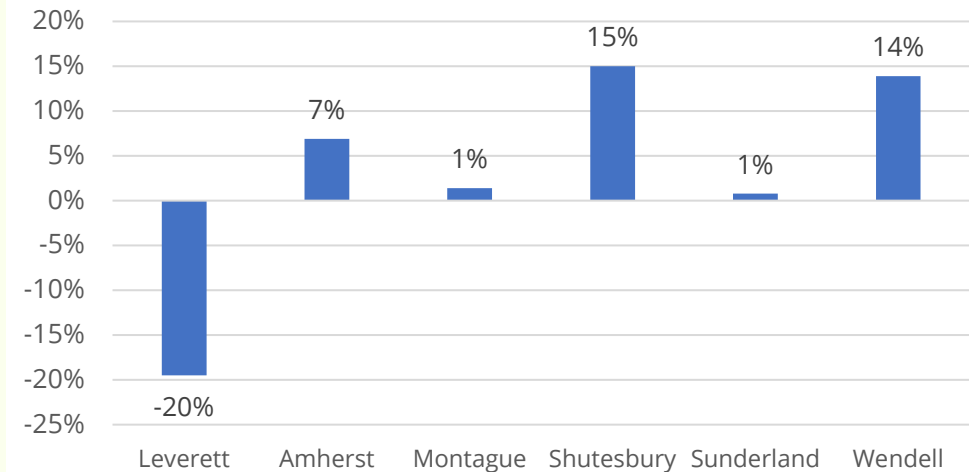
% of Total HHs that are Family HH

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021



Family Households % Change

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021



Household Tenure

Leverett Housing Tenure

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

88% Owner Occupied

12% Renter Occupied

Housing Tenure Comparable Communities

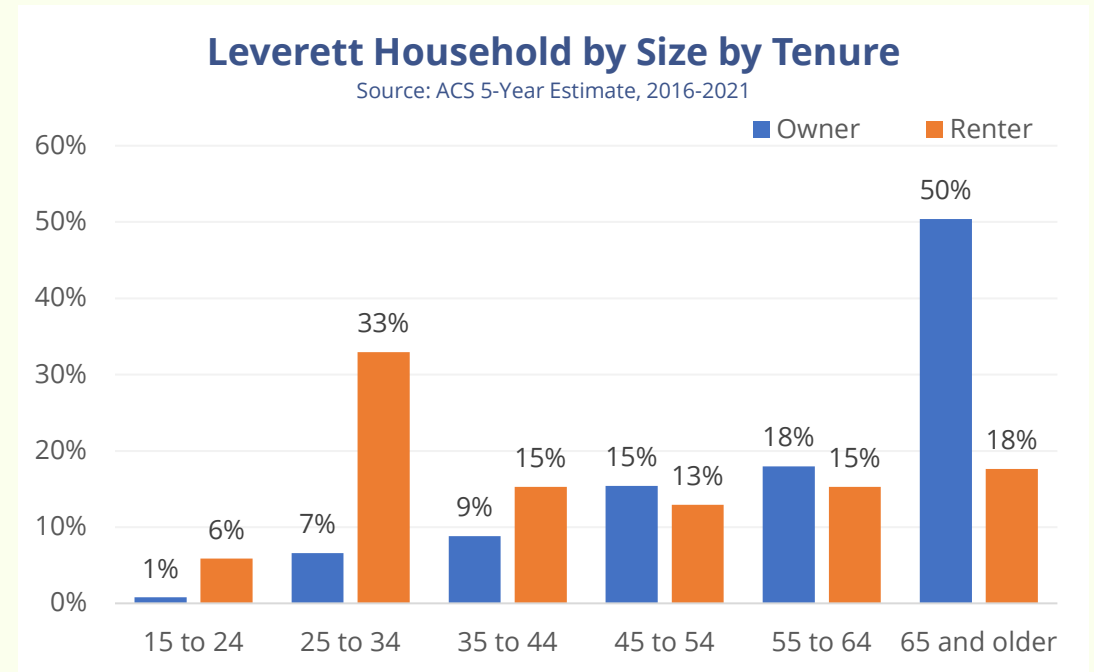
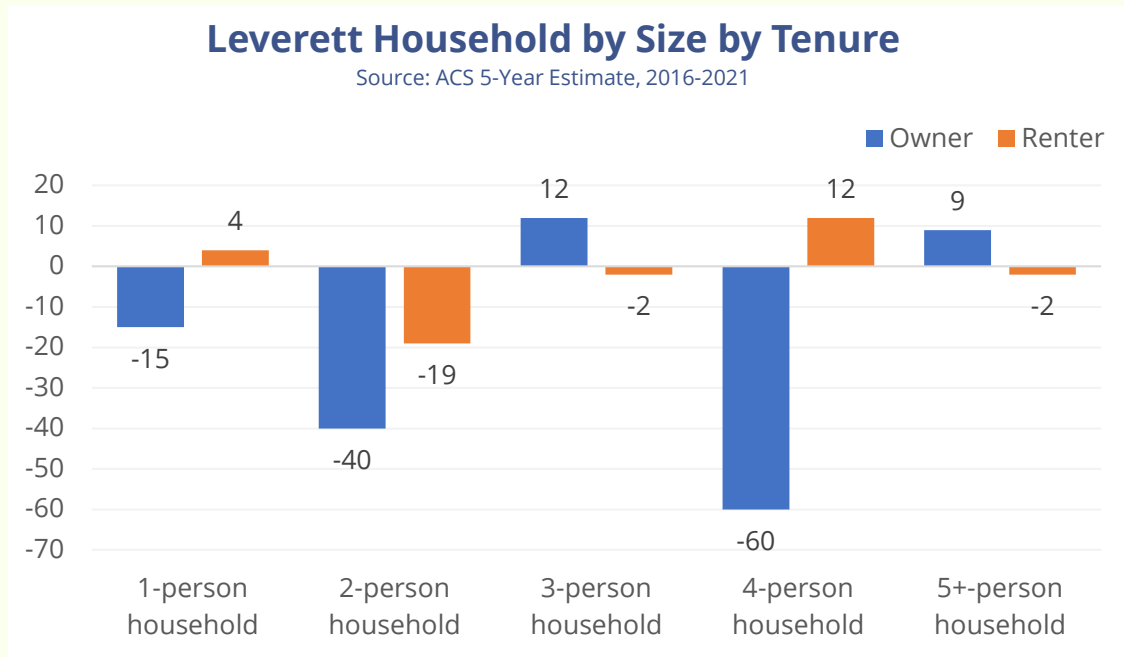
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021

	2016		2021	
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Leverett	89%	11%	88%	12%
Amherst	44%	56%	46%	55%
Montague	59%	41%	63%	37%
Shutesbury	89%	11%	91%	9%
Sunderland	43%	57%	44%	56%
Wendell	86%	14%	80%	20%

The ratio of renter occupied and owner occupied households has stayed consistent.

Leverett's owner occupied tenure has decrease by only 1% over the past five years. However, following population trends, households have decreased overall, with owner-occupied households decreasing by 94 households and renter occupied households decreasing by 7 households. Across comparable communities, housing tenure has stayed relatively similar since 2016, with the percentage of renter occupied units decreasing slightly in Amherst, Montague, Shutesbury, and Sunderland. Wendell was the only town to have an increased ratio of renter occupied units.

Household Tenure



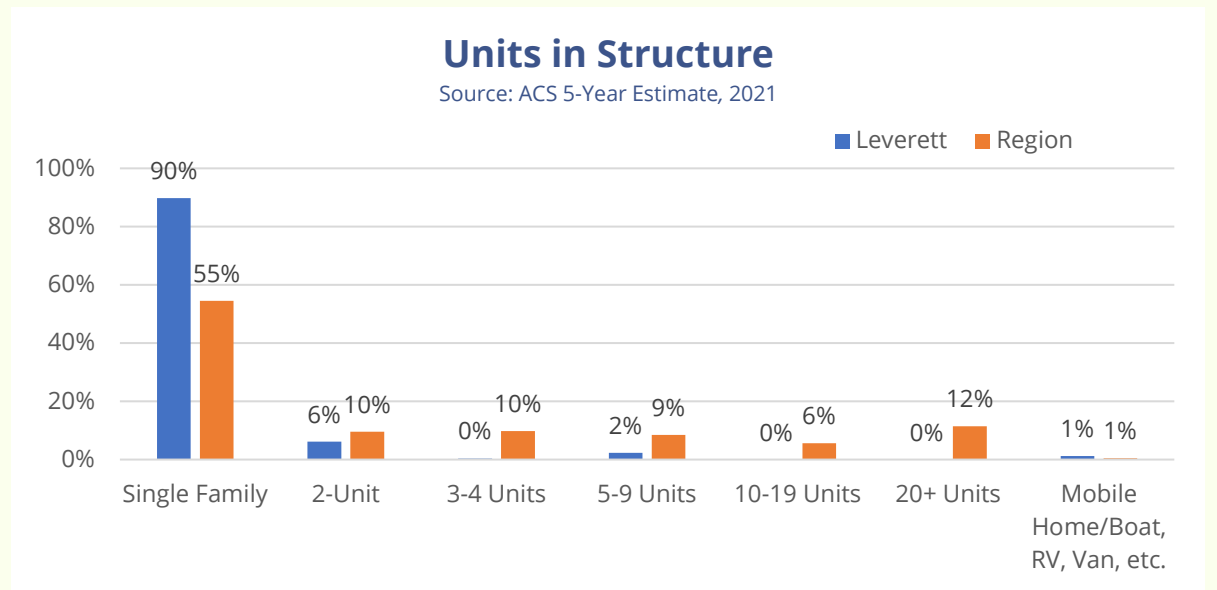
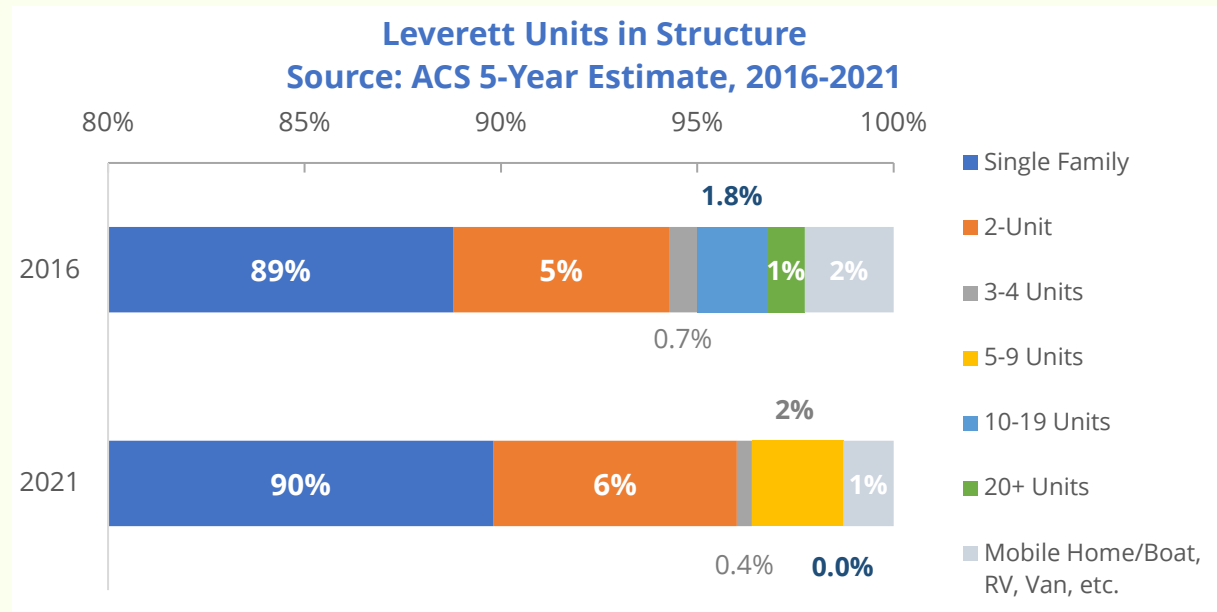
- Over the past five years, Leverett saw a total decrease of 7 renter households and a decrease of 94 owner households. There was a loss of approximately 60 4-person owner households.
- Leverett owner households skew older, with those 65 and older making up 50% of owner households in Leverett (314 households), while the largest cohort of renter households are aged 25-34 (28 households). This is similar to trends in other communities, but shows the affordability

Housing Stock

Leverett's share of single-family housing has decreased.

The number of total units in Leverett has decreased since 2016 from 839 units to 776 units (a decrease of 63 units). The number of housing units that are single-family detached decreased by 58 units. The most significant shift in housing unit composition was in the increase of 5 to 9 units (18 units).

Most of Leverett's housing stock is concentrated in single family units, while the region has a more diverse spread of structures.



Housing Stock

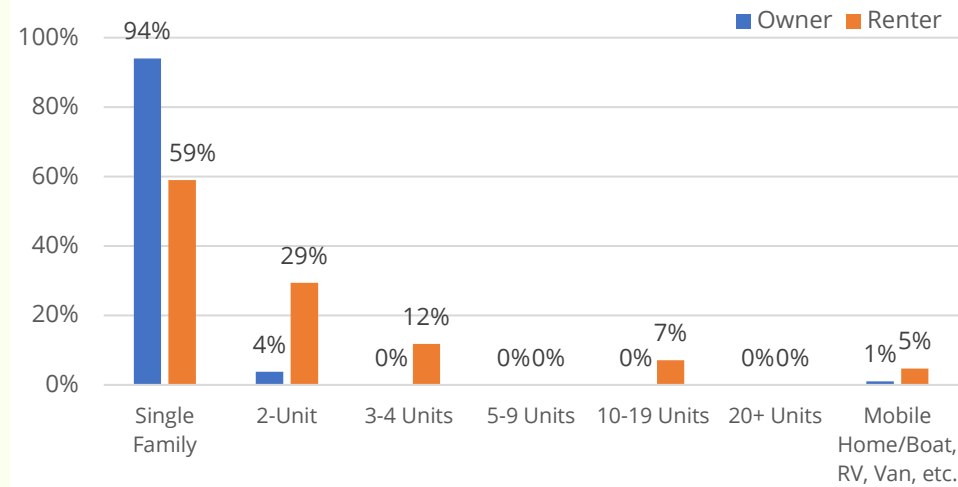
Ownership units are concentrated in single unit structures.

The majority (92%) of owner-occupied units are found in single unit structures, most of which are single family detached homes. The town has very few ownership units across all other building types. Renter-occupied units are more spread out, though almost half are single unit structures.

In the region, renter-occupied units have a much higher proportion in structures with more than three units.

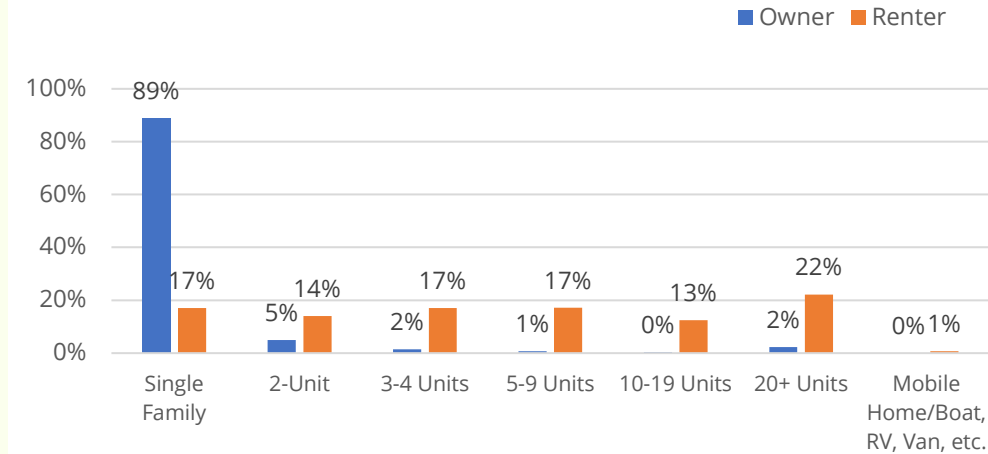
Leverett Units in Structure

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021



Region Units in Structure

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021





Housing Stock

Leverett Structures by Year Built

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

Owner	Count	Percentage
Built 2000 or later	55	9%
Built Between 1980 and 1999	189	30%
Built Between 1960 and 1979	169	27%
Built 1959 or earlier	210	34%
Renter		
Built 2000 or later	4	4.7%
Built Between 1980 and 1999	42	49.4%
Built Between 1960 and 1979	15	17.6%
Built 1959 or earlier	24	28.2%

Median Year Built

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

Leverett	1973
Amherst	1973
Montague	1953
Shutesbury	1978
Sunderland	1976
Wendell	1977

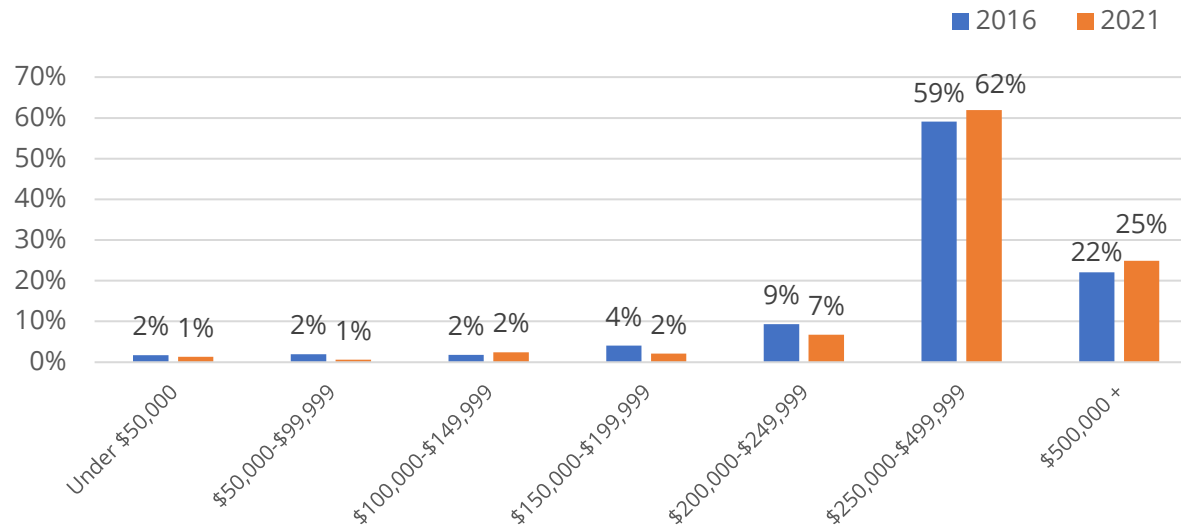
Ownership units in Leverett tend to be older than rental units. Leverett has a similar median year built for their housing stock to surrounding communities.

Almost 60% of ownership units were constructed over 40 years ago, while about 46% of rental units were constructed over 40 years ago. Between 1980 and 1999, about half of the rental stock was built. Since 2000, the number of structures built has decreased significantly. Older homes can have more maintenance issues and requirements compared to newer homes, something the Town may want to keep an eye on going forward.

Home Values

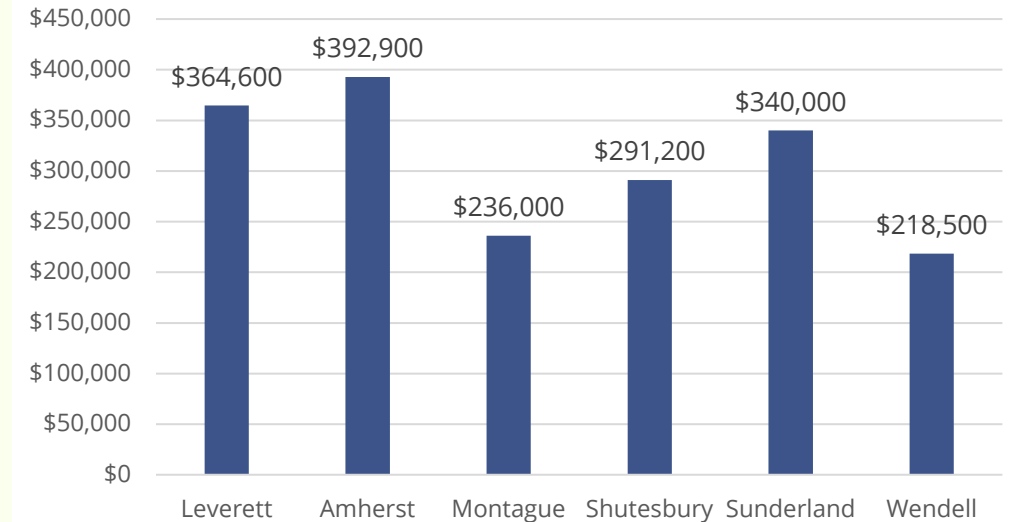
Change in Home Value Distribution

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021



Median Home Value

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

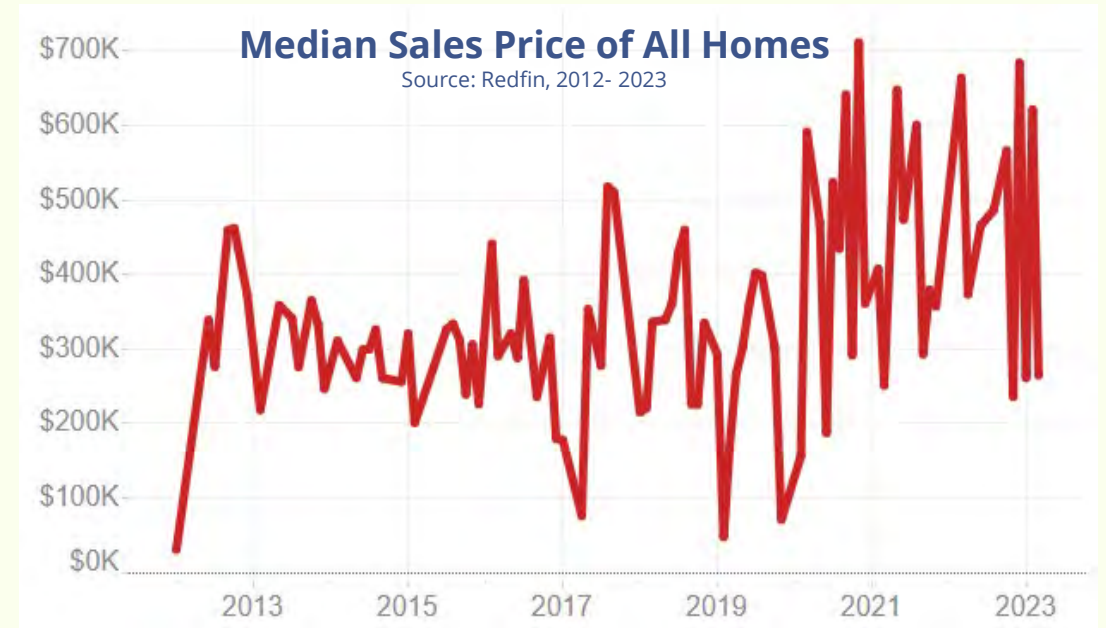
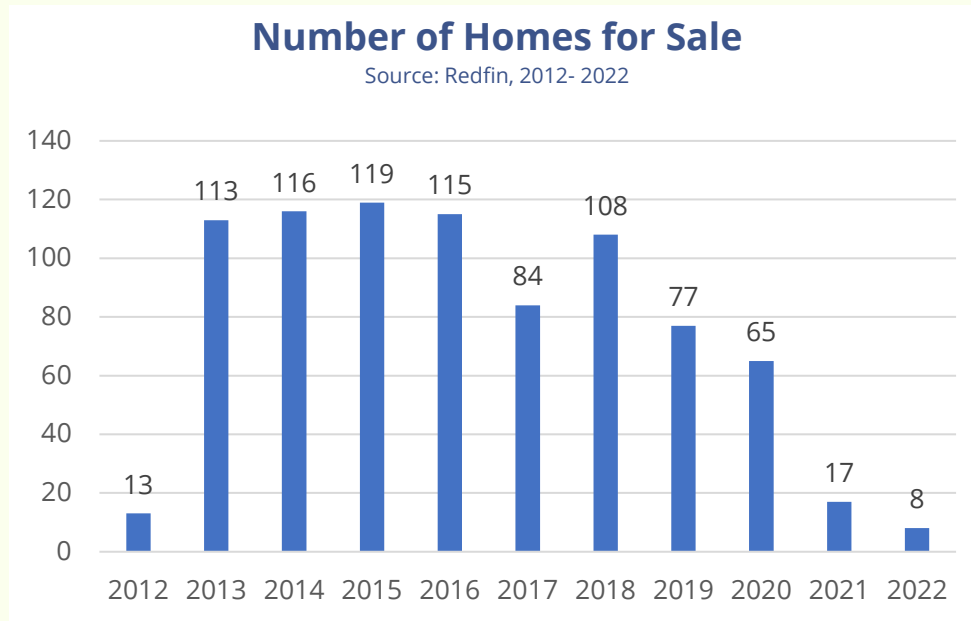


The median home value increased by \$20,400 over the past five years.

The share of housing units valued at or above \$250,000 increased from 81.2% of the total housing stock to 86.8%.

Since 2016, the median home value in Leverett increased by 5.9% with the median home value increasing from \$344,200 to \$364,600. This is above most of the median values in surrounding communities.

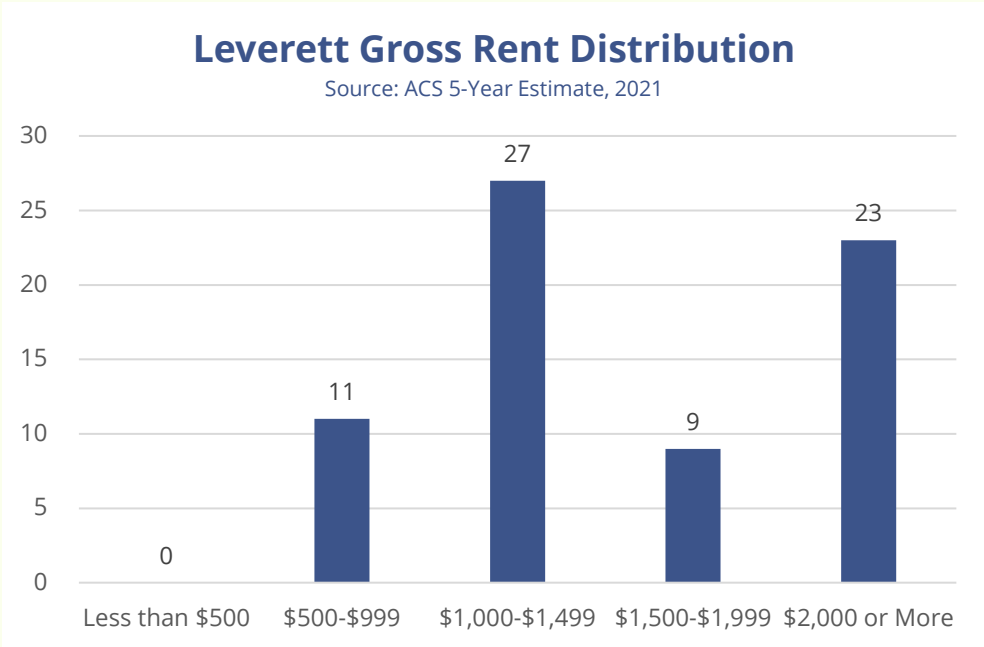
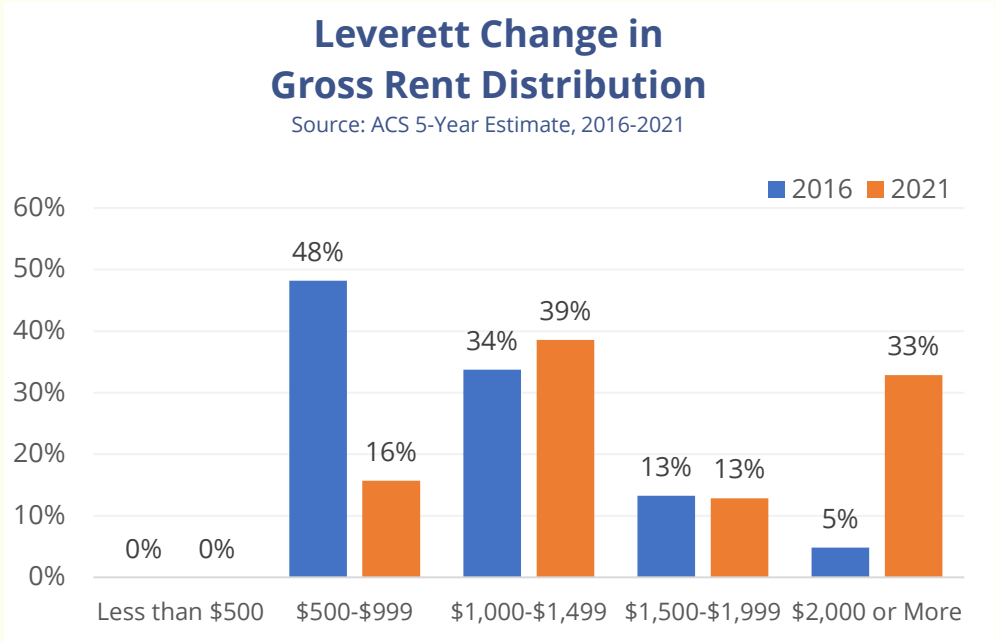
Housing Market | For Sale



Median home sale prices have fluctuated in the last decade but have reached their highest peak in the past two years.

- In November 2020, Leverett had the highest median sale price at \$710,000. Since then, there has been fluctuations of prices ranging from \$235,000 to \$646,000.
- The number of homes for sale has decreased drastically in the past two years, with 17 sold in 2021 and 8 sold in 2022.
- Between 2013 and 2016 had the most consistent number of homes sold, between 113 and 119 homes sold annually.

Housing Market | Rental

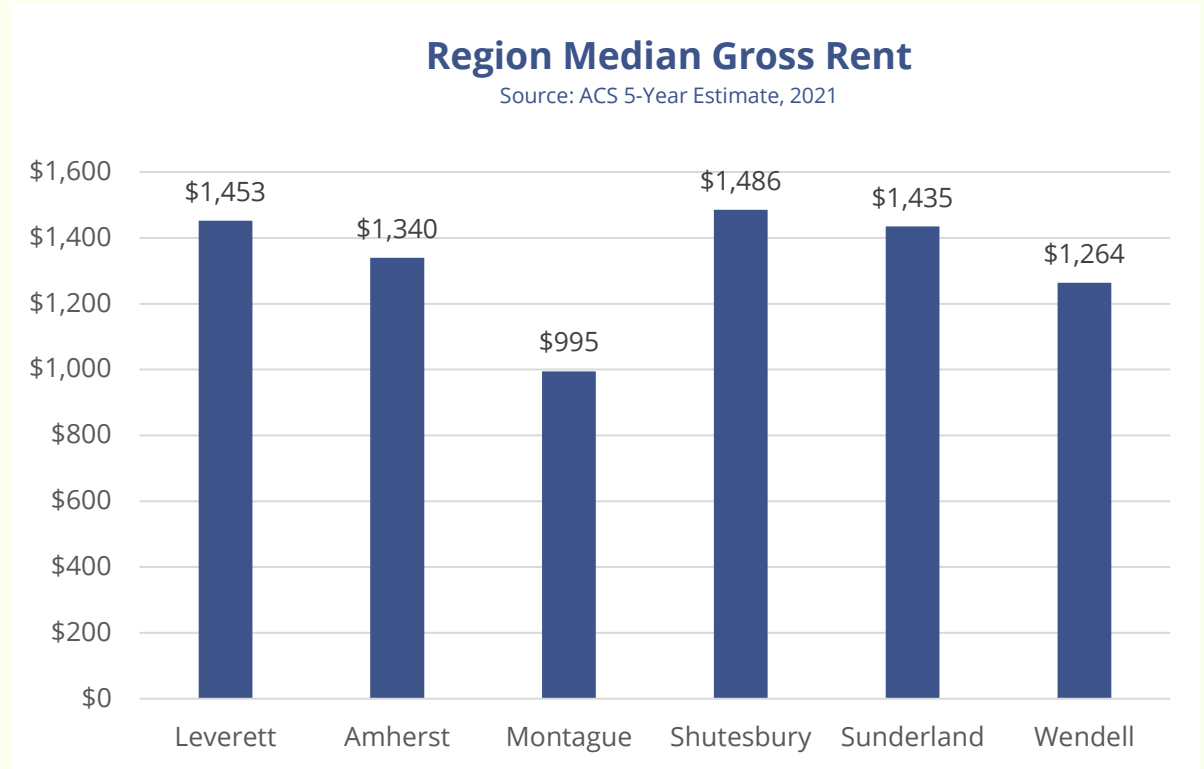


46% of Leverett’s rental units are priced at or above \$1,500 per month.

The share of rental units with rents of more than \$1,500 increased from 18.1% to 45.7% of the rental stock in the past five years (17 units). There were large decreases in units priced below \$1,000 with a loss of 29 units.

Housing Market | Rental

Leverett has a similarly high median gross rent in comparison to the region as the second highest. Increasing rents place a financial constraint on many low to moderate income households and make it harder to for businesses to attract and retain employees who may want or need to live in the community where they work.



Housing Affordability

Residential vacancy in Leverett is low for available units.

In 2021, Leverett's total vacancy was around 8.8%, with 68 vacant units out of 776 total units. The Census records vacant units a few different ways to comprise the total vacancy count for a particular geography. Housing vacancy is captured in four different categories by the Census, which includes: vacant available, vacant unavailable, seasonal, and vacant other.

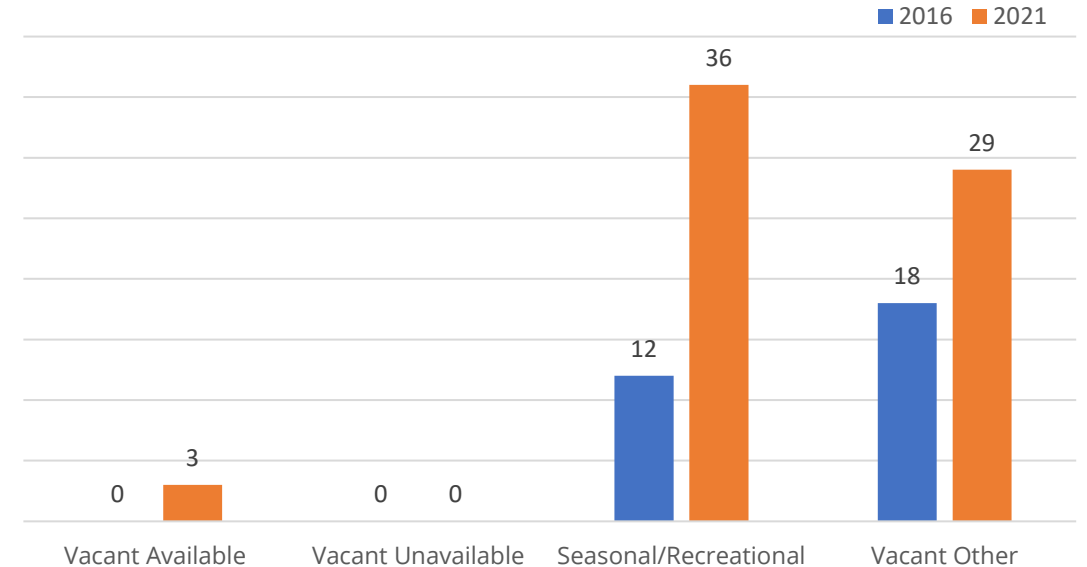
- Vacant available refers to unoccupied units that are currently for sale or for rent.
- Vacant unavailable refers to off market for sale and for rent units.
- Seasonal and recreation refer to housing units that are not occupied year-round such as second homes, beach houses etc.
- Vacant Other which refers to units that are not available for rent or sale and are off the market for different reasons. These include undergoing substantial rehab, uninhabitable units, foreclosure, among others.

In 2021, Leverett's vacancy rate for units actively listed as for sale or for rent was 0.4%.

A healthy vacancy rate for a community is typically between 4% to 6%. Maintaining a healthy vacancy level is important, because the available for sale and for rent units allow households to move in and out of the community and across housing types within the market. This dynamic typically offers some degree of insulation for owners and renters to fluctuations in regional prices because an available supply of units can help buffer against sharp rises in price that a tighter market could experience as has been the case in communities across the state.

Vacant Housing Units by Category

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021





Key Findings | Demographics & Housing

- Leverett's population has decreased over the past decade, and data suggest that that trend is likely to continue under current conditions.
- The older population in Leverett (those 65 years old and above) has become a larger share of the total population over time, and the number of people in that age group has increased. Leverett has a high median age at 50 years.
 - This mirrors trends seen across the region and indeed much of the state. However, there are nearby communities that are significantly younger.
- The number of households is also decreasing, by a total of roughly 100 between the 2016 and 2021 5-year ACS's.
- Ownership units dominate Leverett's housing space, with 1-unit detached structures representing the vast majority of housing for both owners and renters.
- Leverett's home sales have decreased, but prices have increased indicating more demand for less stock. Compared to surrounding towns, Leverett's home value and gross rent lies on the higher end.

Economic Development

Introduction

Various elements contribute to a town's economic well-being. Household incomes, educational attainment, labor force composition, commercial and industrial building stock, and zoning decisions all impact the economic output of a town.

The allocation of land for non-residential uses and the physical development of commercial and industrial space paired with economic development initiatives can help a town attract businesses. This creates an opportunity Leverett to increase employment opportunities and reduce the tax burden for residents by capturing a larger share of tax revenue from commercial and industrial operators

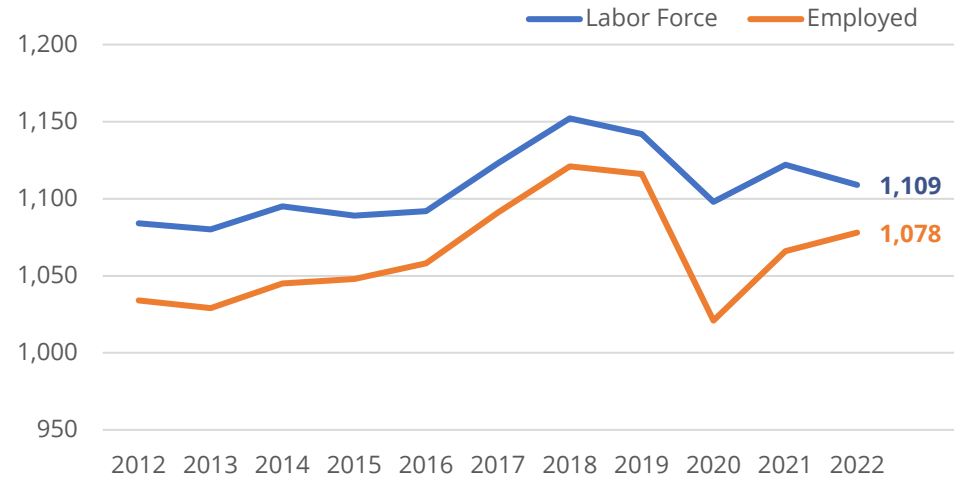


Source: New York Times

Employment Base | Labor Force Participation & Unemployment

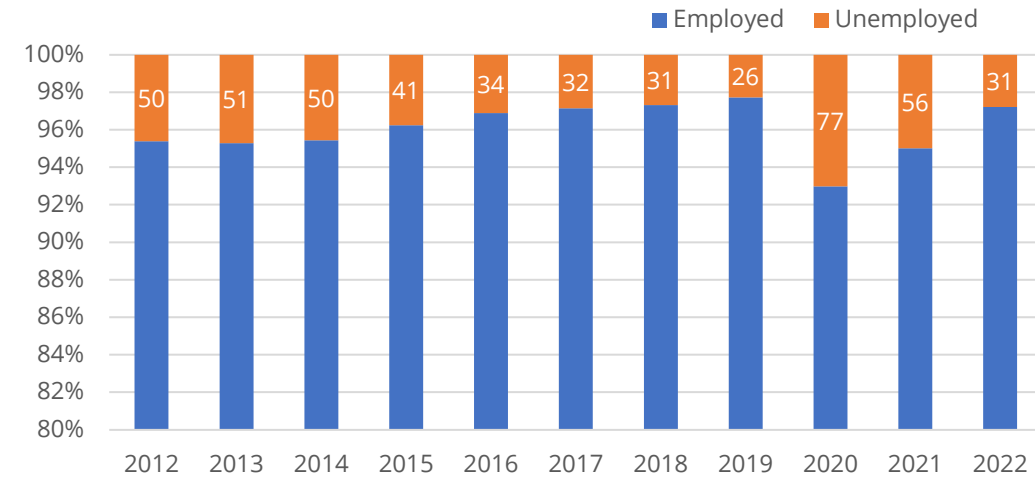
Leverett Labor Force and Employment

Source: EOLWD, 2012-2022



Leverett Unemployment

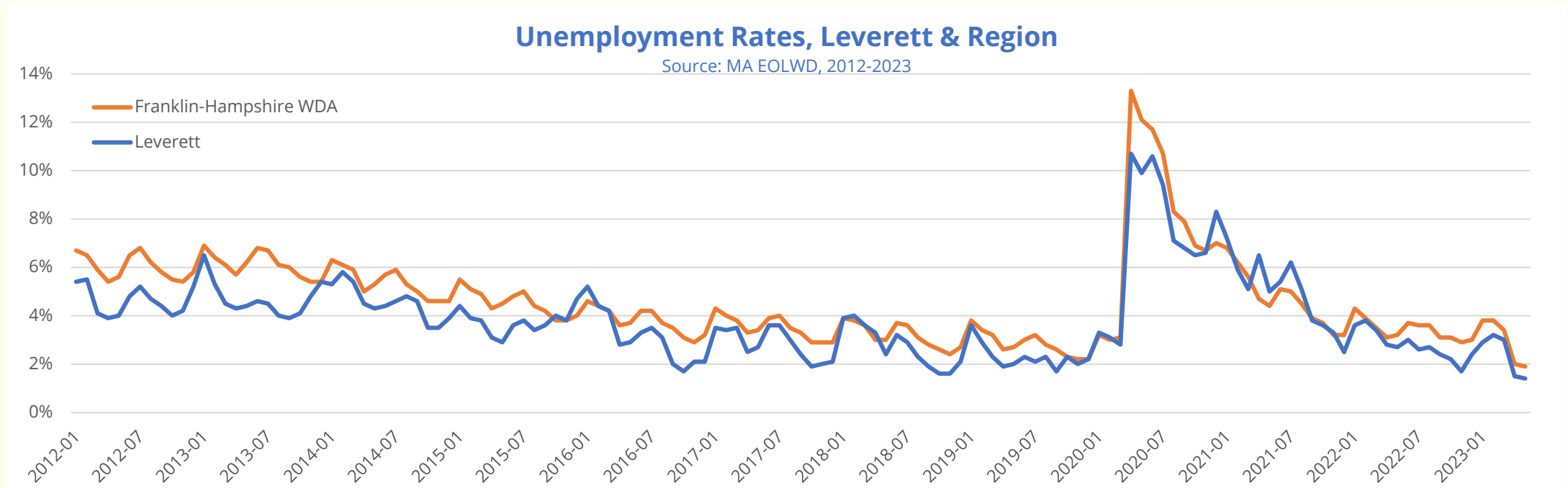
Source: EOLWD, 2012-2022



Leverett's labor force dropped during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic but has started to rebound.

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, **1,109** people make up Leverett's labor force. This is an increase of **1,084 people** from 2012. In 2022, Leverett has an average unemployment rate of 2.8%, a return to pre-pandemic numbers.

Employment Base | Labor Force Participation & Unemployment



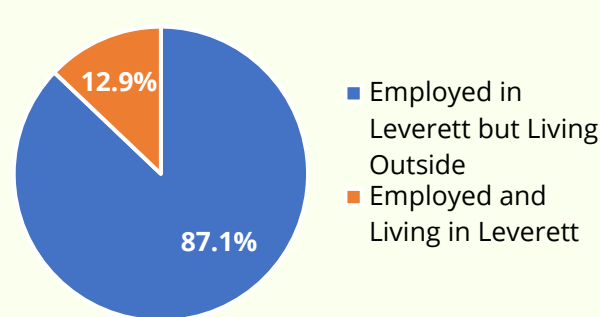
Leverett and its Workforce Development Area had similar trends in labor force, employment, and unemployment.

After notable disruption during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment levels have once again decreased to historic lows. With unemployment both locally and regionally hovering around the 2% mark, Leverett and its neighbors are at what economists call “full employment” – essentially, nearly everyone who wants a job has already found one.

Employment Base | Commuting Patterns

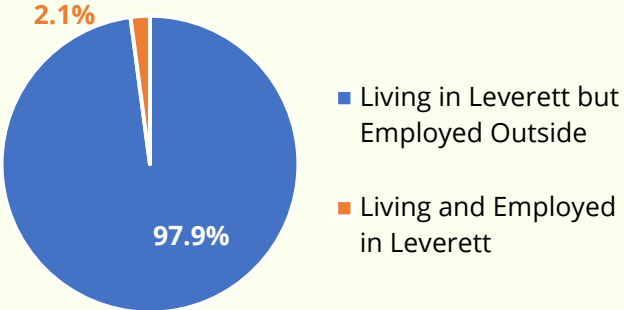
Employment Efficiency (All Jobs) Among
People Employed in Leverett

Source: OnTheMap 2020



Labor Force Efficiency (All Jobs) Among
People Living in Leverett

Source: OnTheMap 2020



Top Ten Work Destinations of Leverett Residents

Source: OnTheMap 2020

City	Job Count	Share
Amherst Town city, MA	152	16.7%
Northampton city, MA	61	6.7%
Springfield city, MA	48	5.3%
Greenfield city, MA	43	4.7%
Worcester city, MA	38	4.2%
Boston city, MA	21	2.3%
Easthampton Town city, MA	12	1.3%
Gardner city, MA	11	1.2%
Holyoke city, MA	11	1.2%
South Deerfield CDP, MA	11	1.2%

Leverett had a high volume of residents traveling outside of Leverett for work.

128 workers enter Leverett from other communities each day and about 893 residents leave Leverett each day for work. Only around 19 working Leverett residents remain in town for work. Commuting patterns suggest that Amherst is the most popular destination for residents who are leaving town for work (152 residents), and overall, most outbound commuters travel South for work. The number of residents leaving Leverett for work each day compared to the number of commuters coming into town for work suggests Leverett serves as more of a residential community than a job center for the region.

Employment Base | Employment by Industry

Leverett's Top Six Largest Employment Sectors

Source: Lightcast 2023

NAICS	Description	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2012-2022 % Change	2022 Average Annual Earnings
23	Construction	30	41	36%	\$66,904
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	19	23	21%	\$56,005
90	Government	56	17	-70%	\$64,285
31	Manufacturing	25	17	-33%	\$72,611
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	25	16	-37%	\$16,694
44	Retail Trade	11	10	-5%	\$59,842

Leverett's Construction and Health Care industries show stability and some growth.

Leverett's employment base consists of just 142 jobs, a 24% decrease from 2012. The largest employment industry in Leverett is the Construction sector, which increased by 36%. Some industries saw declines, like Government and Manufacturing.

Region's Top Six Largest Employment Sectors

Source: Lightcast 2023

NAICS	Description	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2012-2022 % Change	2022 Average Annual Earnings
90	Government	10,676	11,379	7%	\$86,407
61	Educational Services	3,897	4,077	5%	\$38,366
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,796	2,336	30%	\$56,121
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,020	1,325	-34%	\$46,437
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,396	1,244	-11%	\$26,010
44	Retail Trade	1,074	1,079	0%	\$42,460

Across the region, government and educational services have seen the most growth and remain the top two sectors.

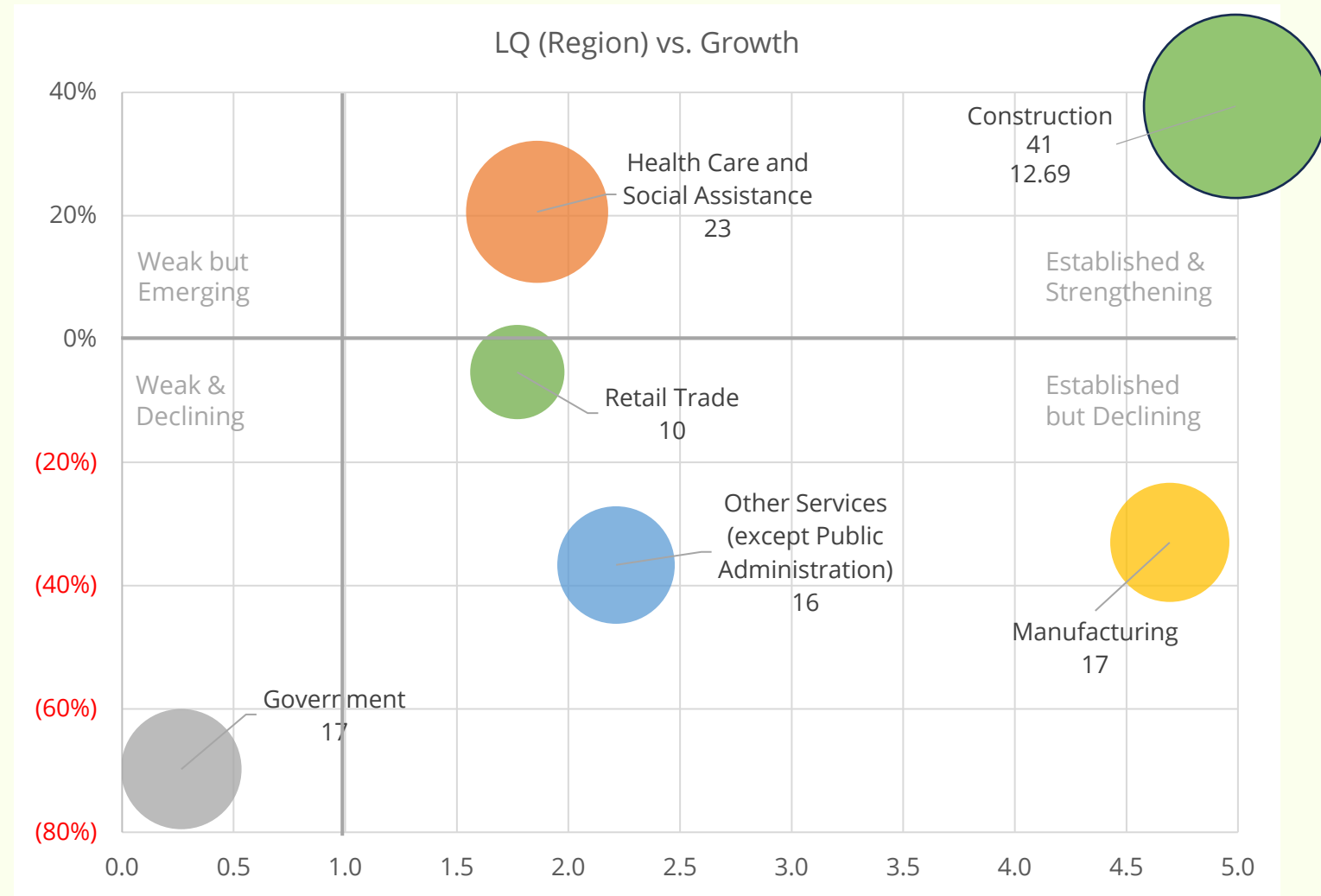
The Health Care sector has grown the most across the region, with a growth of 30%. Government remains the largest employment sector, with the highest average annual earnings. Other Services and Accommodation & Food Services have decreased over the past decade.

Employment Base | Location Quotients

Leverett's Construction industry is unusually prevalent when compared to the region.

Location quotients (LQs) compare employment by industry in two or more geographic areas. The location quotient is a ratio of the percentage of an industry's employment in one geography to that of a larger comparison geography. If the ratio is less than 0.80, then the identified industry sector is thought to be under-represented in the local economy. Conversely, a ratio greater than 1.20 can show a specialty within the local economy as compared to the larger geography. The location quotient can be useful in pointing out opportunities for certain industry sectors to gain a larger share of the employment base or a specialty area in the local economy. The comparison geography used for Leverett was the surrounding region.

The graph on the right shows the location quotients of the top six industries compared to the region. The industry sector with the highest location quotients is Construction, followed by Manufacturing, Other Services, and Health Care & Social Assistance.



Commercial & Industrial Landscape | Major Employers

The table on the right shows the top ten largest employers in Leverett

Leverett's largest employers fall within the educational services and public administration sector of the economy. Leverett Elementary School is the leading employer in Leverett, with an estimated 20-49 employees. Most employers are located along Montague Road or Long Plain Road.

Top Employers in Leverett

Source: MA Department of Economic Research, 2023

Organization Name	Location	Number of Employees	2-Digit NAICS
Leverett Elementary School	Montague Rd	20-49	Educational Services
Leverett Fire Dept	Montague Rd	20-49	Public Administration
Leverett Village Co-Op	Rattlesnake Gutter Rd	20-49	Retail Trade
Mudpie Potters	Montague Rd	20-49	Educational Services
Bourke Builders	Long Hill Rd	5-9	Construction
Coolcap Fund Inc	Shutesbury Rd	5-9	Other Services
Hampshire Franklin Children's	Long Plain Rd	5-9	Health Care and Social Assistance
L & F Construction	Long Plain Rd	5-9	Construction
Leverett Police Dept	Montague Rd	5-9	Public Administration
Local Harmony Inc	Jackson Hill Rd	5-9	Other Services



Commercial & Industrial Landscape | Property Assessment Records

These tables show the existing land use composition of parcels in Leverett including acreage of land, building and land values, average building area, and average year built. Tables also break out residential uses.

Residential uses comprise the majority of land in Leverett, with a total of 4,471 acres. The average size of a residential unit in Leverett is 1,759 square feet, driven mostly by single family homes. The average year built for residential structures in town is 1975.

Of the non-residential uses, mixed use land has the highest total valuation at approximately \$13.5 million.

However, on a per-acre basis, Commercial land is nearly twice as valuable as Residential land, and within Residential uses multi-unit housing

General Land Use

Source: Town of Leverett Property Assessment Database, 2023

Land Use Type	# of Parcels	Total Parcel Area (Acres)	Total Assessed Value	Total AV per Acre	Avg Square Footage	Median Year Built
Commercial	5	11	\$1,203,000	\$109,763	3,856	1970
Industrial	2	3.1	\$110,400	\$35,613	-	1780
Mixed Use*	60	4,670	\$20,941,564	\$4,484	2,183	1952
Residential**	929	4,471	\$259,426,800	\$58,028	1,759	1975

Residential Breakdown

Source: Town of Leverett Property Assessment Database, 2023

Land Use Type	# of Parcels	Total Parcel Area (Acres)	Total Assessed Value	Total AV per Acre	Avg Living Area (SF)	Median Year Built
Single Family Residential	655	2,822	\$228,642,900	\$87,910	2,184	1975
Multi-Unit Housing	39	138	\$12,144,700	\$81,031	2,574	1983

*Nearly all of Leverett's "Mixed-Use" lands are residential and agricultural or residential and forest uses

**Includes single-family, multi-family, and other – mobile homes, multiple houses on one parcel, and vacant residential land.

Property Taxes

Leverett has a residential tax rate in the middle range compared to surrounding communities, but the second lowest commercial and industrial tax rate.

The only community with a split tax rate (residential property owners charged a different tax rate per \$1,000 value than non-residential owners) is the Town of Montague. The fiscal implications of property taxes are an important consideration that businesses, and even individuals, evaluate when making choices about where to locate.

While low property taxes can help attract businesses and residents, limited funding can result in insufficient provision of public services and amenities, inhibiting a town’s ability to remain competitive with its neighboring communities.

Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Classification

Source: Mass. Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, 2023

Tax Classification	Assessed Value	Tax Levy	Tax Rate
Residential	\$333,213,800	\$5,338,085	16.02
Commercial	\$3,584,768	\$57,428	16.02
Industrial	\$758,500	\$12,151	16.02
Personal Property	\$35,114,320	\$562,531	16.02
Total	\$372,671,388	\$5,970,195	

Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Rates by Class

Source: Mass. Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, 2023

Community	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property
Amherst	\$20.10	\$20.10	\$20.10	\$20.10
Leverett	\$16.02	\$16.02	\$16.02	\$16.02
Montague	\$15.65	\$23.78	\$23.78	\$23.78
Shutesbury	\$18.44	\$18.44	\$18.44	\$18.44
Sunderland	\$12.80	\$12.80	\$12.80	\$12.80
Wendell	\$21.41	\$21.41	\$21.41	\$21.41



Key Findings | Economic Development

- The labor force has continued its recovery from the disruption of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While neither the total labor force nor the number of residents who are employed has fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, unemployment rates continue to be at historic lows.
 - Although low unemployment rates can help drive wage growth, Leverett's rate is so extraordinarily low that it make hiring extremely difficult for businesses.
- Nearly everyone who lives in Leverett commutes outside of town to go to work. More than 7 times as many people leave town as arrive every day to go to work. The decrease in daytime population can make it harder to sustain retail and personal services enterprises.
 - The five most common work destinations for Leverett residents are Amherst, Northampton, Springfield, Greenfield, and Worcester.
- This is consistent with the very low number of existing jobs in Leverett, with fewer than 150 people working in town.
 - The largest industries by employment include Construction, Health Care & Social Assistance, Government, Manufacturing, and Other Services (except Public Administration). Of these, only Construction and Health Care & Social Assistance have grown over the last decade.
- Leverett only has a small number of parcels and acreage dedicated to commercial and industrial uses, though these uses (along with multi-unity housing) also represent some of the properties with the highest assessed values on a per-acre basis.

Q&A

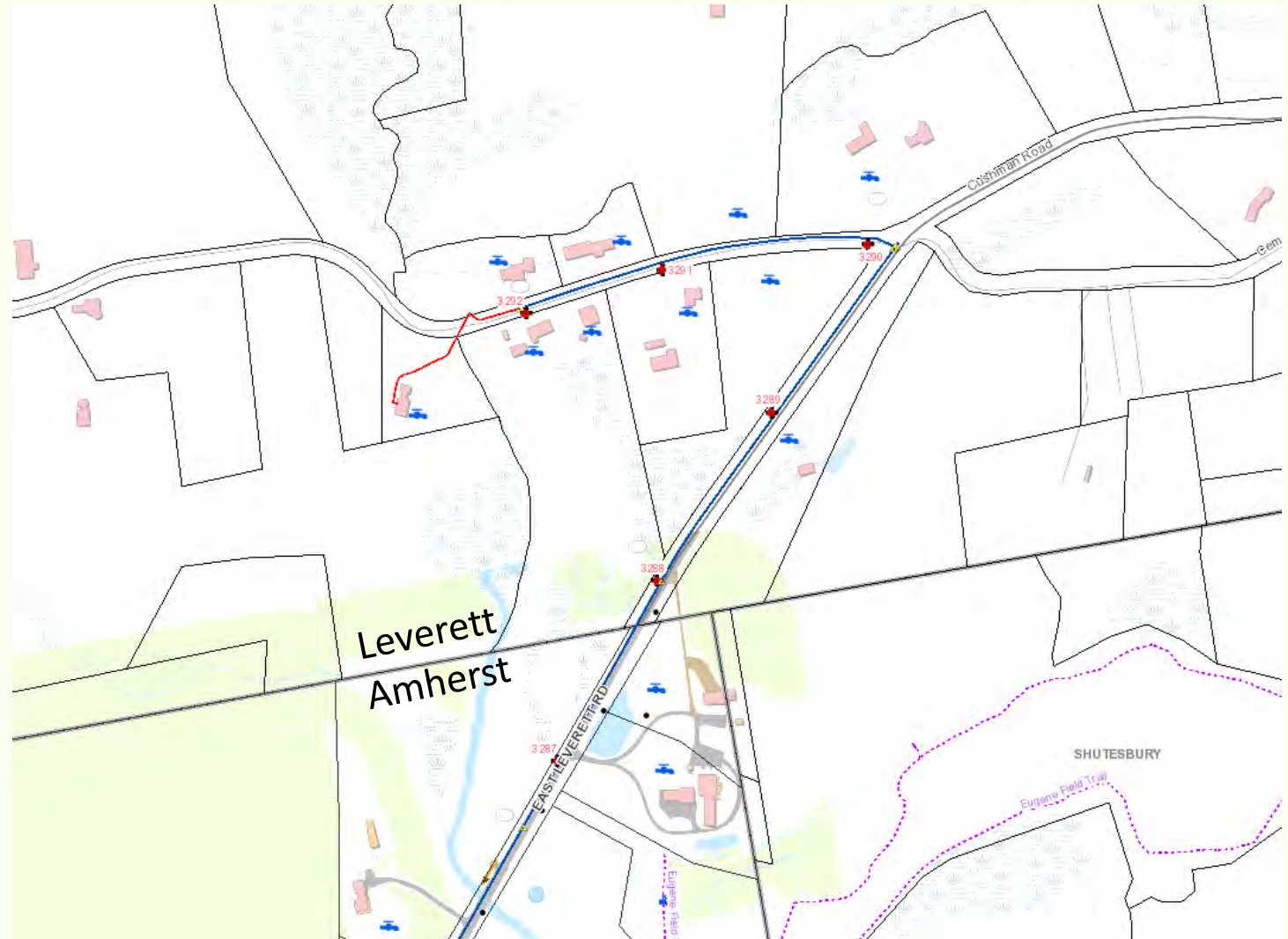
Infrastructure

Tracy Adamski, AICP

Tighe & Bond

Water Supply

- Public water supply system serves the Library, the Public Safety Complex, and the Elementary School
- Private wells / water supplies
- Non-Transient Public Water Supplies:
 - Willow Blossom Learning Center
 - Mt. Toby Meeting of Friends Church
 - Leverett Elementary School
 - Leverett Village Co-Op
- Service from Amherst to Cushman and Teawaddle Hill Roads to address contaminated wells
- Per the HMP, groundwater is susceptible to contamination due to flooding hazards due to widespread septic systems in Town

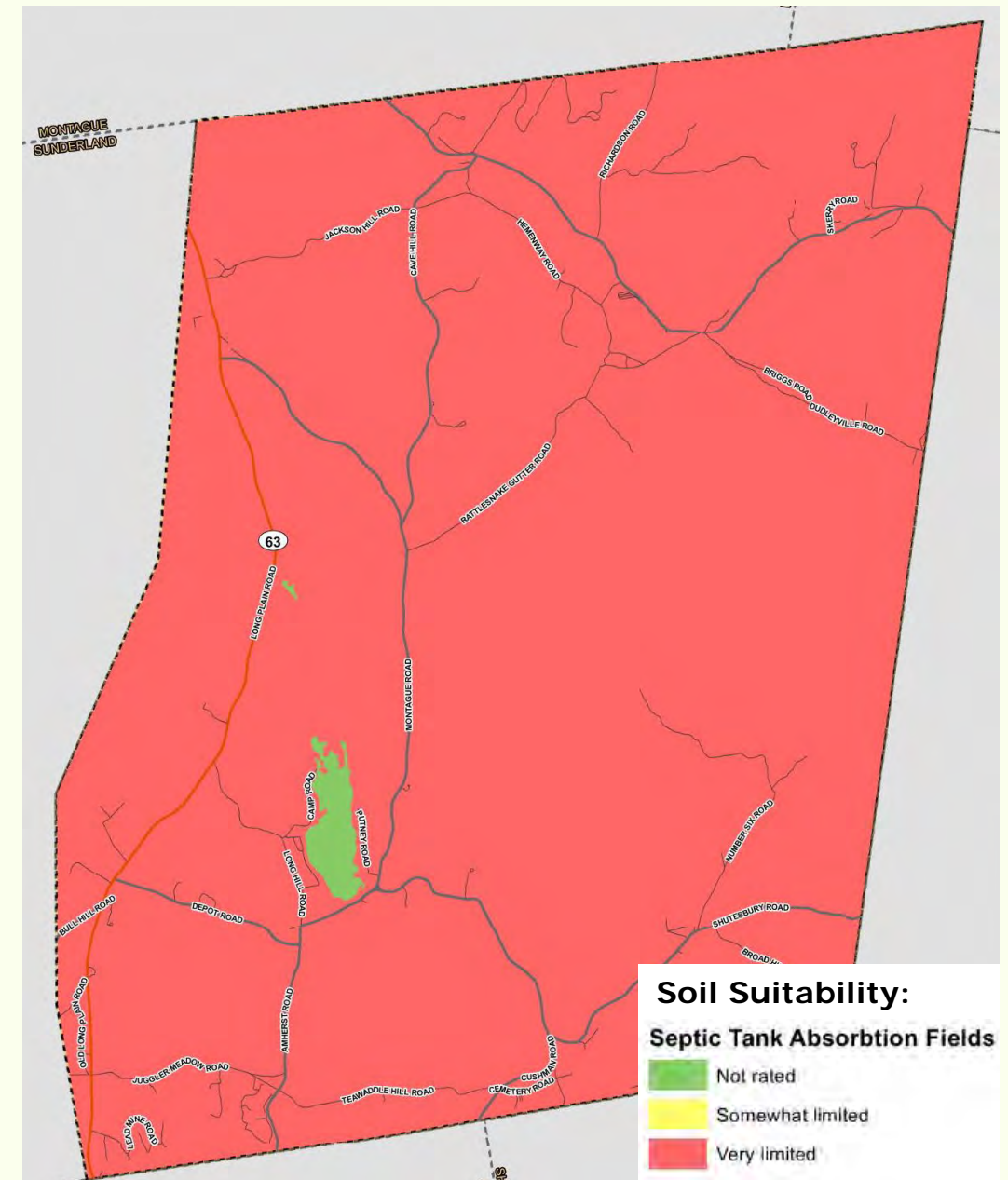


Septic

- On-site subsurface sewage disposal systems
- Poor soil conditions for on-site systems
- Wastewater is a development constraint

Constraints for Expanded Development

- Amherst is the closest municipal wastewater system
 - ~1 mile from the Leverett border
- Soil conditions are not favorable for groundwater discharge associated with wastewater treatment plant





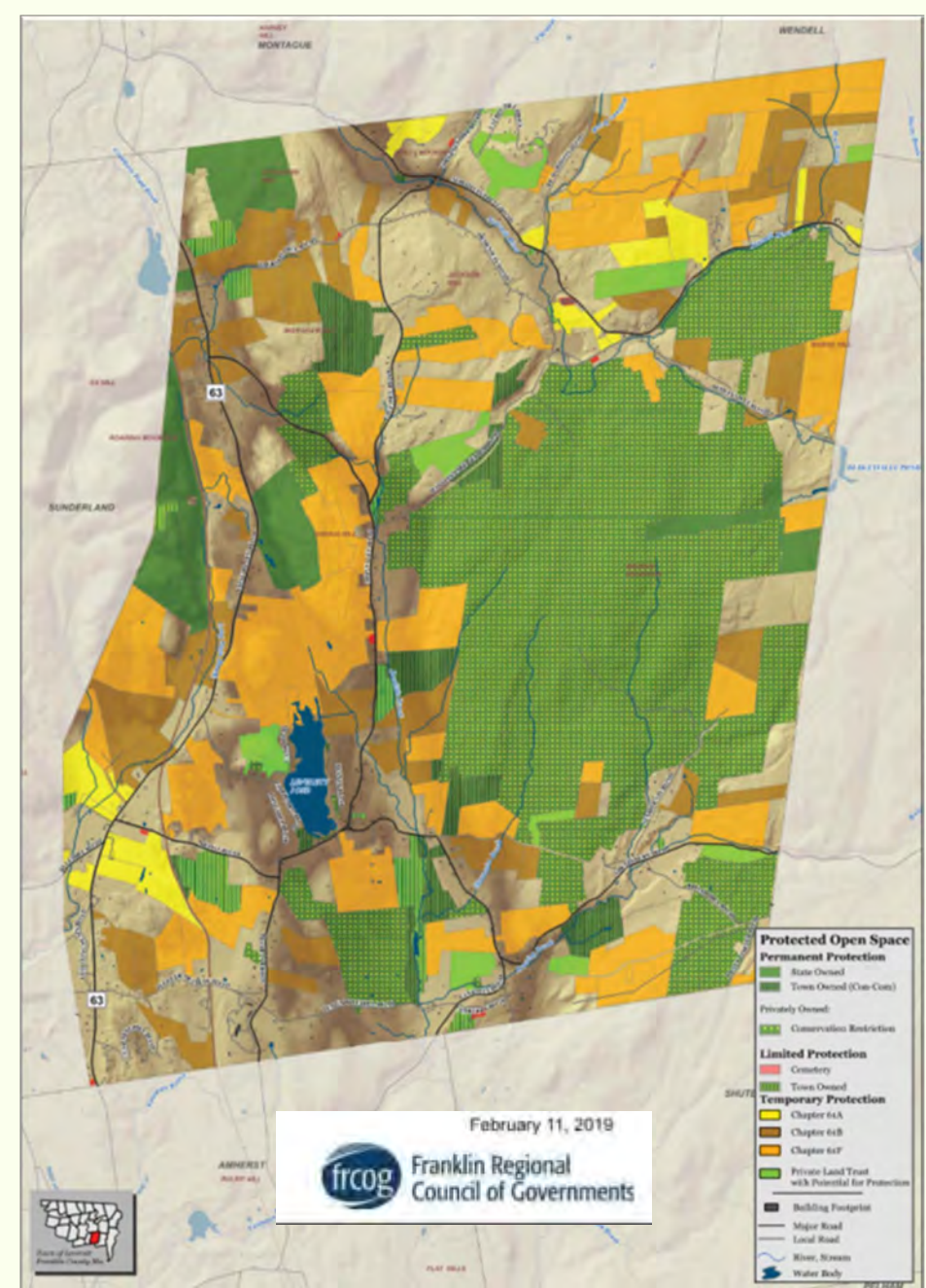
Roadways

- 43 miles of total roadways
 - 16 miles gravel
 - 27 miles paved
- Major north-south corridors
 - Route 63
 - Shutesbury Road / Montague Road / Cave Hill Road
 - Amherst Road / Cave Hill Road
- Major east-west corridors
 - Cushman Road / Shutesbury Road / Leverett Road
 - North Leverett Road
- Shutesbury Road culvert improvements are underway
- Funding received for Dudleyville Road restoration



Open Space

- 977.7 acres permanently protected by state agencies and Town
- 3,858.8 acres protected by Conservation Restrictions
- 179.6 acres limited protection (under authority of Board of Selectmen)
- 4,289.1 acres limited protection (Ch 61 programs)
- Key Parcels
 - East Leverett Meadows
 - Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation Area
 - Doolittle Brook Conservation Area
 - Beaver Pond Conservation Area
 - Ruth McIntire Conservation Area



Q&A

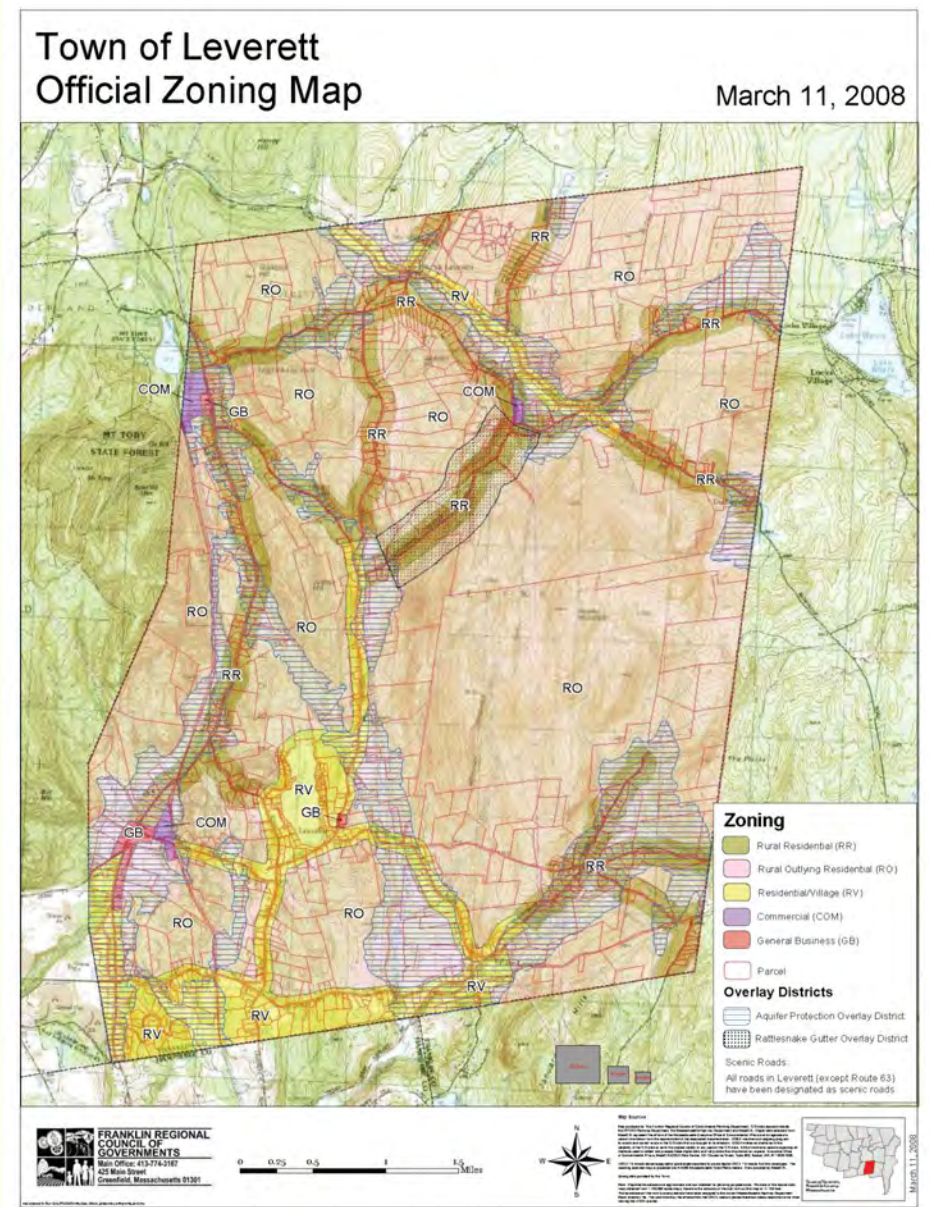
Zoning Analysis

Emily Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND

Innes Associates

EXISTING CONDITIONS: EXISTING ZONING

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size	Yards	Coverage
Rural Residential (RR)	60,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 10% L 35% OS --
Residential/Village (RV)	40,000 SF	F 40 ft S 20 ft R 30 ft	B 15% L 35% OS --
Rural Outlying Residential (RO)	200,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 10% L 25% OS --
Commercial (COM)	40,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 20% L 50% OS 40%
General Business (GB)	40,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 20% L 50% OS 40%



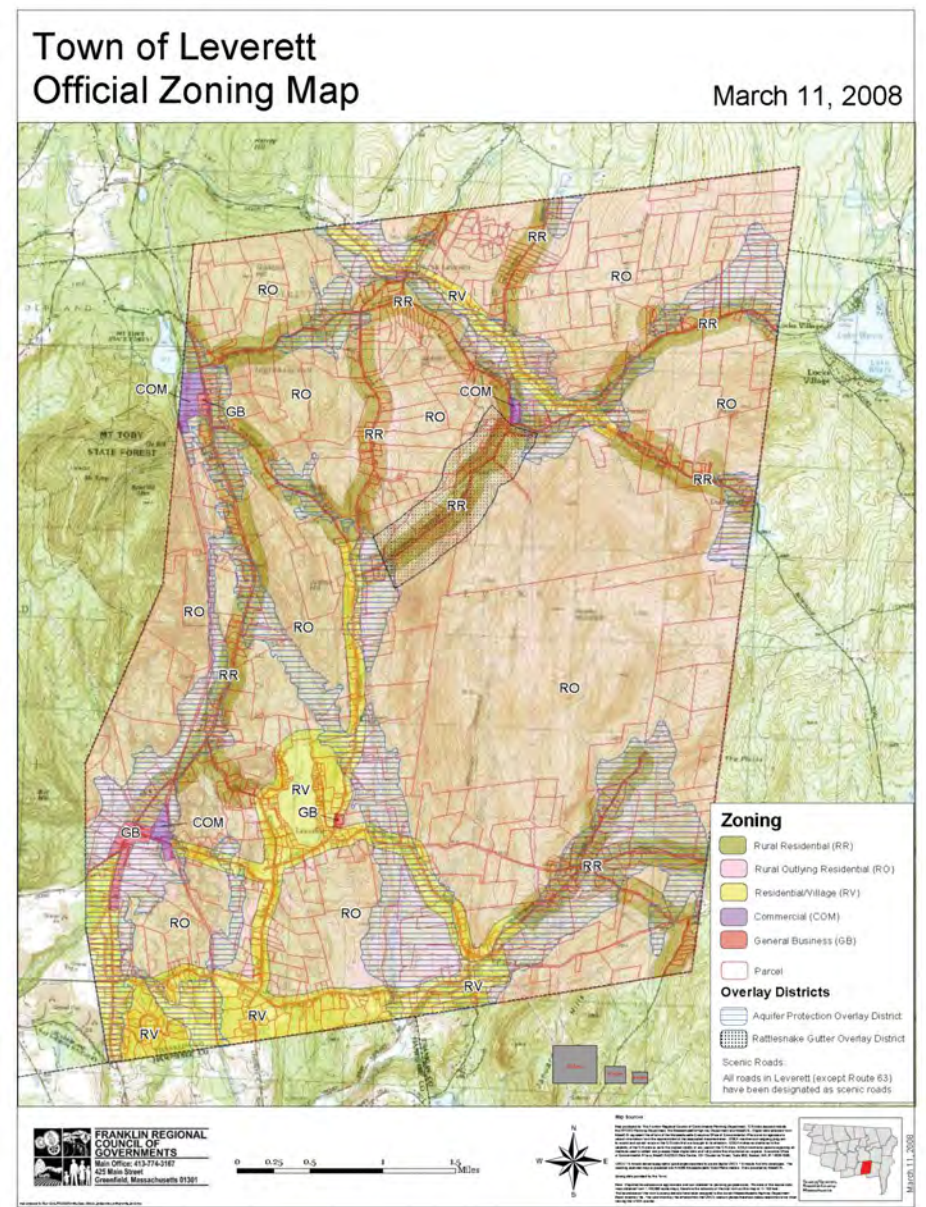
EXISTING CONDITIONS: EXISTING ZONING

Selected Uses: All districts

- Single and two-family allowed as-of-right.
- Small Home Occupations are allowed as of right.
- Home Occupations, Small-scale Craft Production, Bed & Breakfasts and Inns, Restaurants require a **special permit**.
- Multifamily (3+ units) is **not allowed** in any district.

Selected Uses: GB and CO Districts

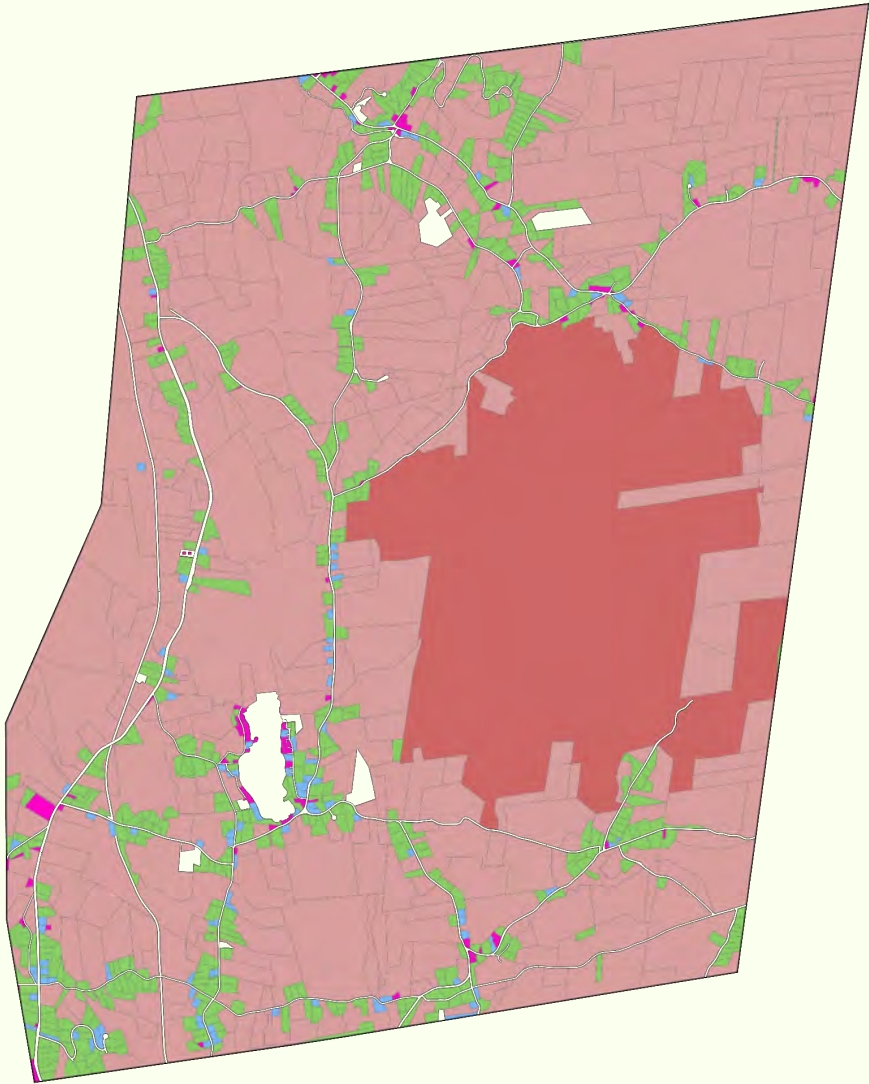
- Retail grocery or general store up to 3,000 SF is allowed **as-of-right**; by special permit if larger.
- All other retail stores and services are by **special permit**.
- Banks and professional offices, Research facilities, Manufacturing/Production/Processing require a **special permit**.
- Conversion of non-residential historic buildings requires a **special permit** (short list of uses, including office, residential, microbrewery, restaurant, artisan studios, or sawmill).



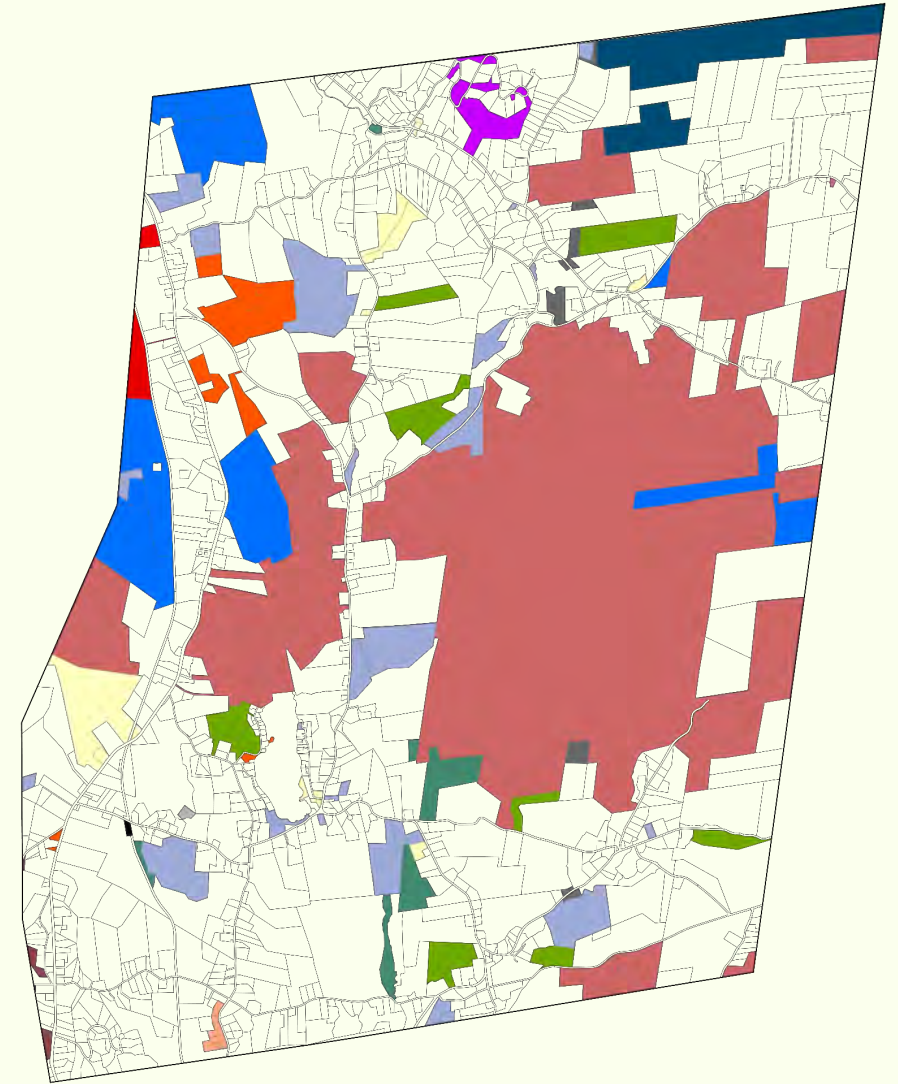
EXISTING CONDITIONS: PARCEL SIZES

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size
Rural Residential (RR)	60,000 SF
Residential/Village (RV)	40,000 SF
Rural Outlying Residential (RO)	200,000 SF
Commercial (COM)	40,000 SF
General Business (GB)	40,000 SF

- Under 40,000 SF
- > 40k SF; < 60 K SF
- > 60K SF; < 200 K SF
- > 200 K SF
- 2,819 acres



EXISTING CONDITIONS: OWNERSHIP



Q&A

Existing Goals and Actions

Emily Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND

Innes Associates



EXISTING GOALS: Draft MVP Resiliency Plan (2020)

Leverett's Top 5 Hazards:

**Drought | Invasive Species |
Severe Storms | Extreme
Temperatures**

Leverett's Top 5 Strengths:

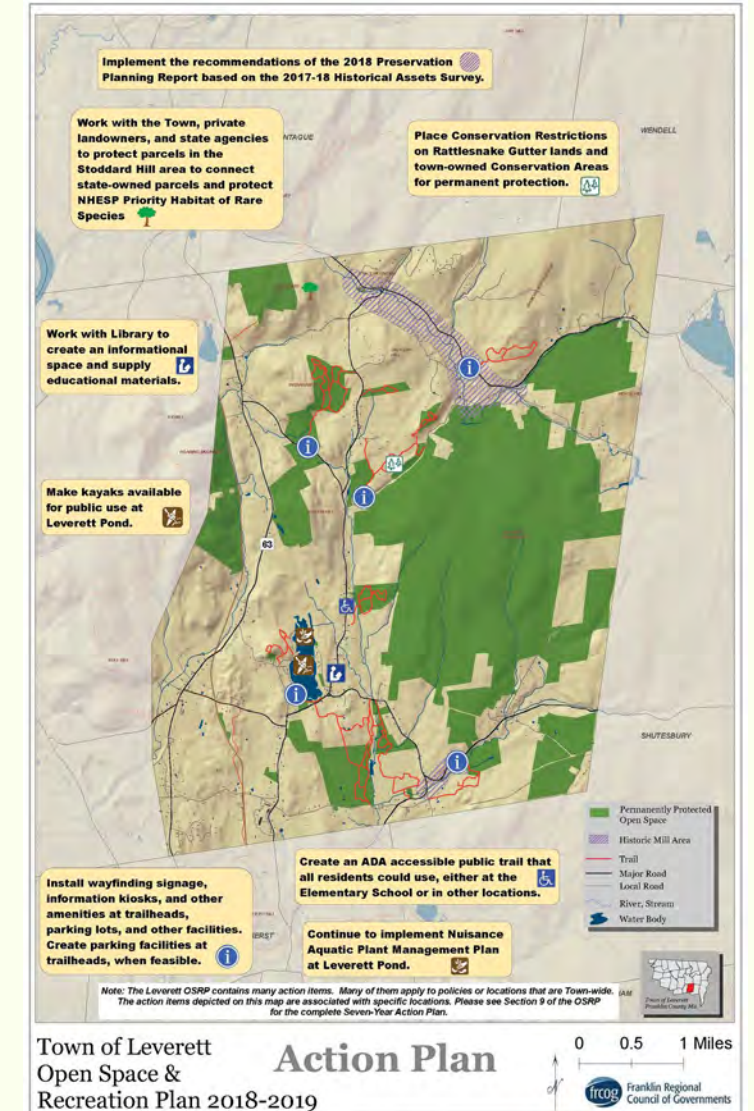
**Emergency Management Teams
| Dispersed Infrastructure |
Zoning Bylaws | Diverse Natural
Resources and Conservation
Groups**

Leverett's Top Priority
Recommendations:

- **Develop an energy resiliency plan.**
- **Improve gravel roads and drainage.**
- **Prioritize culvert repairs and replacements.**
- **Develop a communications plan.**
- **Develop a potable water resiliency plan.**

EXISTING GOALS: Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019)

- Goal 1: Preserve the rural character of the Town.
- Goal 2: Protect and preserve natural resources.
- Goal 3. Improve and maintain public engagement related to open space.
- Goal 4. Promote wide recreational use of Leverett's natural resources.





EXISTING GOALS: Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019)

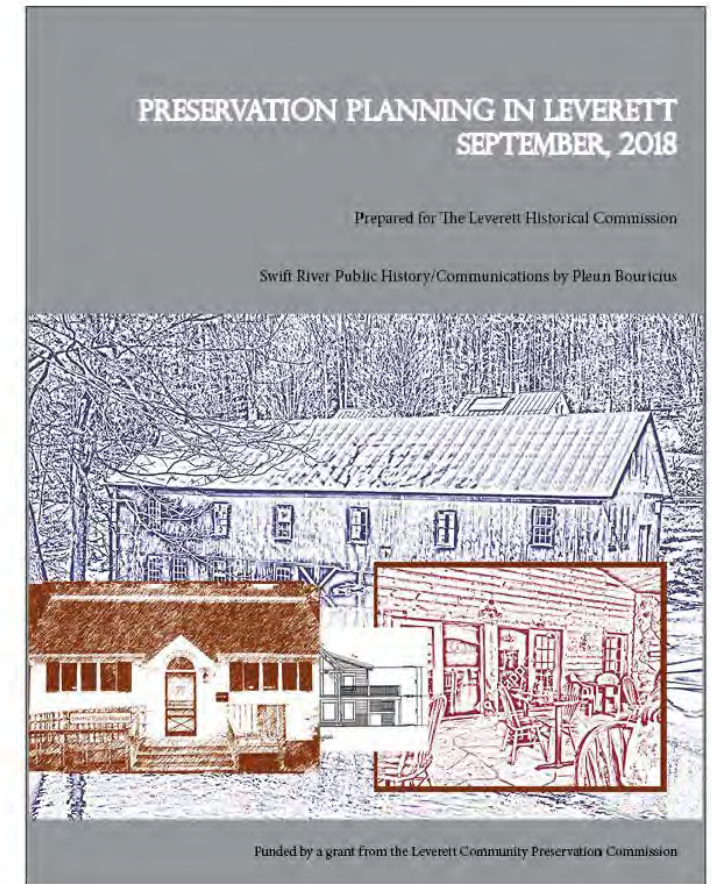
“People choose to live in Leverett because of its abundant natural resources, rural small town character, variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, and the community’s focus and awareness of climate change and sustainability. Residents value the town’s scenic beauty; the clean water of its Leverett Pond, streams, and wetlands; the large expanses of uninterrupted forest; diverse wildlife; and peace and quiet. The survey results also show that a majority of town residents feel that the history of Leverett is important and worth protecting.

A future ideal Leverett will have conserved the majority of its uninterrupted forest, the purity of its air and water, and the mosaic of its remaining farmland. In addition, the effects of climate change will inform open space and recreation decisions in town. To help create this vision, the town will increase its education and outreach efforts to better inform residents about land use practices and recreational opportunities in town, as well as apply the latest Massachusetts guidelines on climate change resiliency planning.

These achievements will enhance biodiversity and provide improved access to trails that connect both public and private open spaces. Leverett will also have protected its water resources and preserved and shared the stories and physical remains of its historic sites. Recreation pastimes will include both active and passive activities such as hiking, walking/running, nature/birdwatching, boating, and bicycling. These pastimes are made available by the conservation areas in town, extensive trail systems, safe roads for pedestrians and bicyclists, and other recreational amenities.”

EXISTING GOALS: Preservation Planning Report (2018)

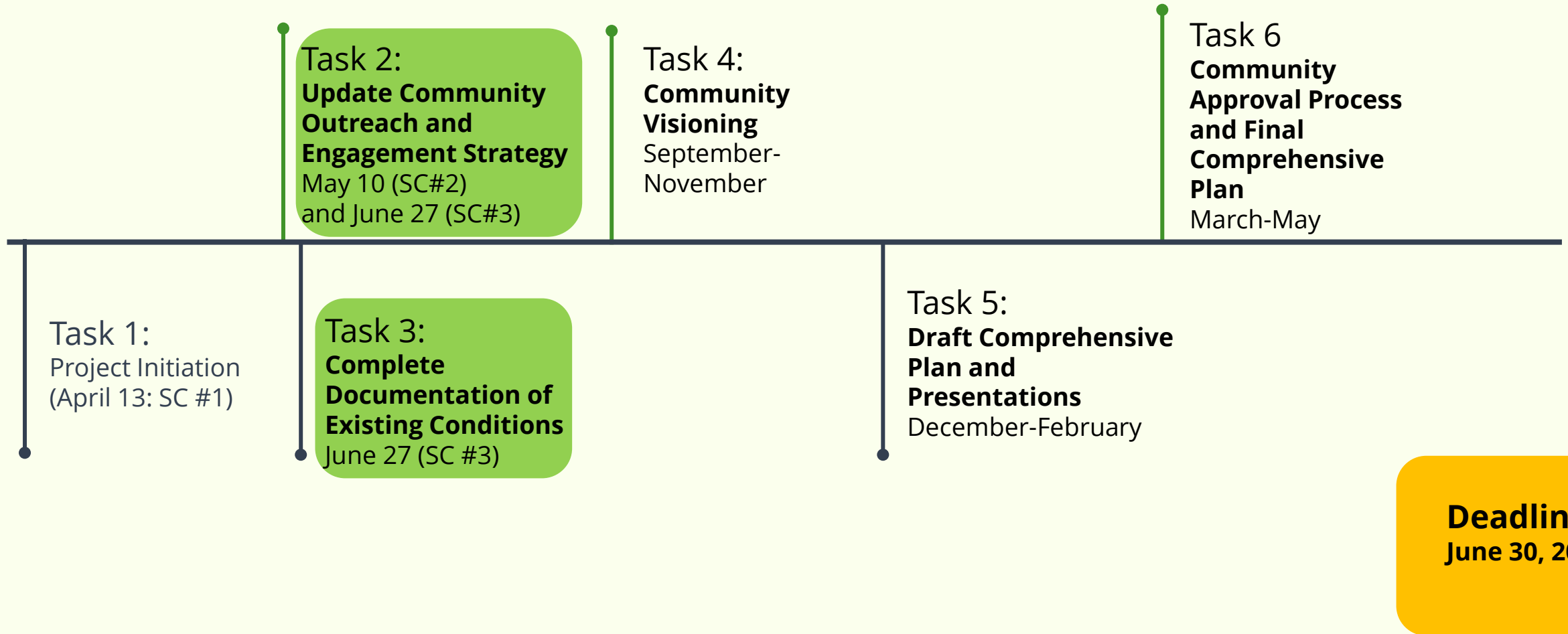
- Start a historic preservation planning process.
- Included educational planning that includes research and programming.
- The Town has a role in preservation, including limited financial commitment.
- Use CPA funds as seed money to fund enabling activities.
- Investigate how to preserve archaeological assets.



Q&A

Discussion

REVISED SCHEDULE



PROPOSED OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Month	Option 1	Option 2
June	Complete Task 3: Existing Conditions	
July	Complete Task 2: Updated Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy Consultant team completes interviews	
August	Task 4 begins.	
	Consultant team prepares materials for community meeting #1.	Consultant team prepares materials for small group meetings.
	Steering Committee meeting #4 – review materials and facilitation training. Steering Committee members begin outreach.	
September	Community-wide meeting #1, led by consultant team. Consultant team prepares materials for community meeting #2.	Small group meetings, led by Steering Group facilitators or other volunteers.
	First questionnaire launched.	
October	Community-wide meeting #2.	Small group meetings continue.
	Steering Committee meeting #5 – discuss engagement and input to date.	

PROPOSED OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Month	Option 1	Option 2
November	Consultant team works on draft plan.	Small group meetings (if needed). Consultant team works on draft plan.
	Second questionnaire launched.	
December	Task 5 begins. Consultant team works on draft plan	
January	Initial Plan due for committee, staff, and Planning Board comment. Steering Committee #6	
February	Consultant team addresses comments.	
March	Revised Draft Due; Team presents revised draft at Community-wide meeting.	
April	Annual Town Meeting; Public comment period	
May	Task 6 begins. Planning Board Review and Adoption	
June	Team prepares final plan. June 20, 2024 – Grant Ends	



TOPICS FOR COMMUNITY/SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

- Confirm community goals from *Sustainable Franklin County Franklin County's Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (2013)* and confirmed in the Town of Leverett's *Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019)*
- Confirm that goals, actions, and recommendations from *2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, *2022 Community Preservation Report and Plan*, and the *2020 MVP Plan* are still valid.
- Discuss Areas of Concern Map identified in Phase 1 report (page 24). What should/should not happen in each area? Where are there opportunities for preservation and where are opportunities for growth?
 - Open space/recreation areas
 - Town Center
 - North Leverett
 - Moore's Corner
 - Route 63
 - East Leverett



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Decide on Option 1 or 2.
- Decide on schedule. When do meetings start/end/how many per week?
- Use software to manage sign-ups? (especially for Option 2).
- Need:
 - Coordinators (3-4 people to manage logistics)
 - Facilitators (4-5 people who will facilitate meetings)
 - Outreach volunteers (4-5 people who will distribute flyers and encourage people to send notices (email and social media))



NEXT STEPS

- Next meeting dates: August and October
- Assignments – who is taking which role?

