

# HOW TO READ THESE BOARDS

## Planning Elements

This section identifies the planning topics we are evaluating during this process. These are based on Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, Section 81D and are modified to address the possible focus areas of this planning process.

-  Land Use
-  Mobility
-  Economic Development
-  Housing
-  Cultural and Historic Resources
-  Open Space and Natural Resources
-  Recreation
-  Town Infrastructure

# VALUES + GOALS

This area is for reviewing the draft values and goals related to this topic that the Steering Committee is testing both here and in the first questionnaire.

If you have not taken the questionnaire yet, it is available online (link below or QR code to the right) or in paper form tonight and at the Leverett Library or Town Hall.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LeverettSurvey>

# DATA

This area contains data for you to review, including maps, charts, and tables.

Some stations may have a second board with more information.

# COMMENTS

This area is for posting comments and questions or additional values or goals about the topic of the board and the data shown.

Some boards may provide questions for you to consider, but your responses do not need to be limited to those questions.



# THINKING ABOUT...

## THE LINKS BETWEEN HOUSING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND QUALITY OF LIFE

### Planning Elements

-  Land Use
-  Mobility
-  Economic Development
-  Housing
-  Cultural and Historic Resources
-  Open Space and Natural Resources
-  Recreation
-  Town Infrastructure

## VALUES + GOALS

### Draft Values

- » Maintaining rural character is important.
- » Affordable housing is important.
- » Convenience and ease of living are important.
- » Peaceful serenity and quiet living are important.

### Draft Goals

- » Increase housing stock.
- » Improve housing stock.
- » Make housing more affordable.
- » Encourage economic development in town.
- » Foster arts and culture.
- » Adapt historic buildings for new purposes.

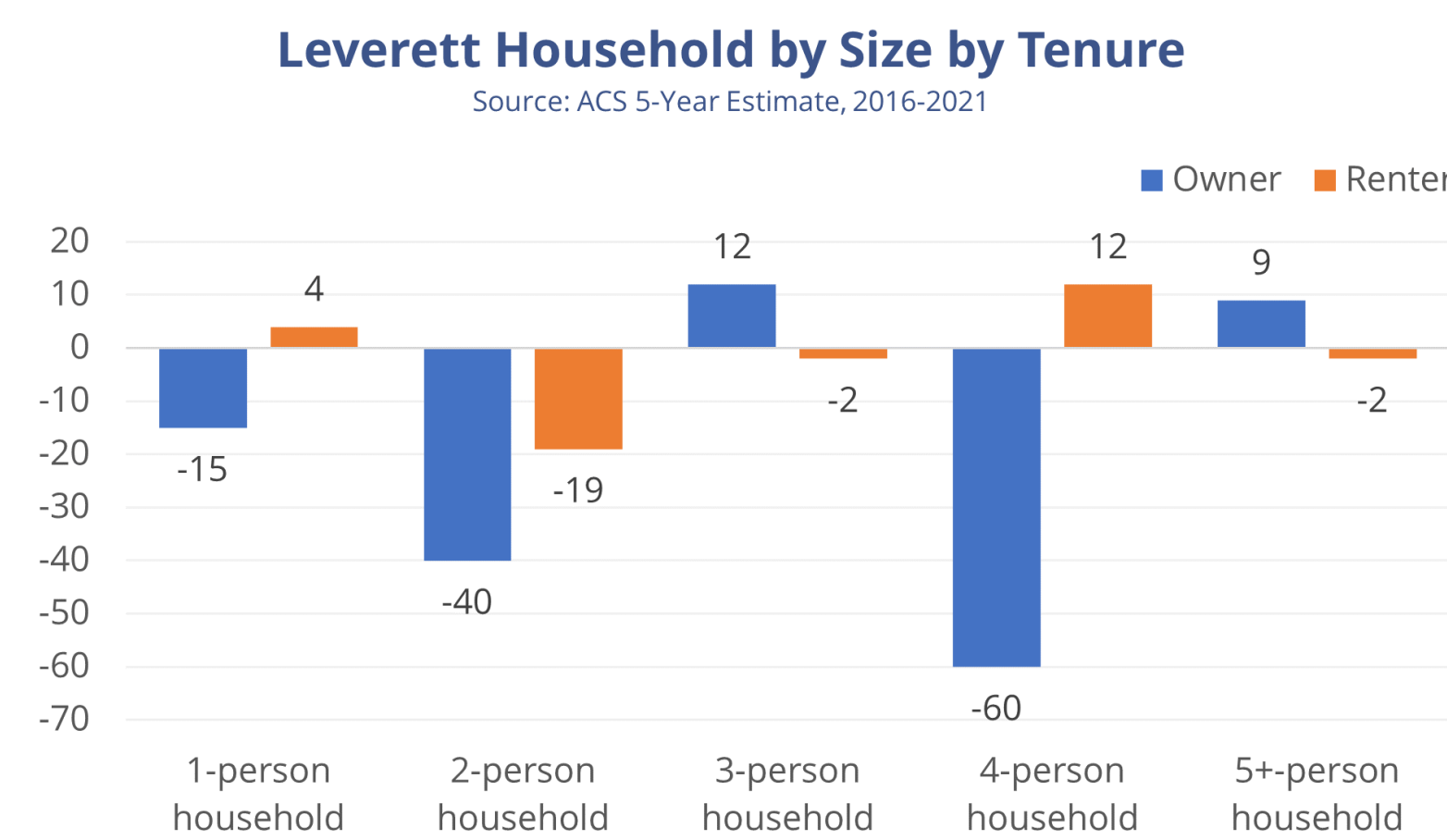
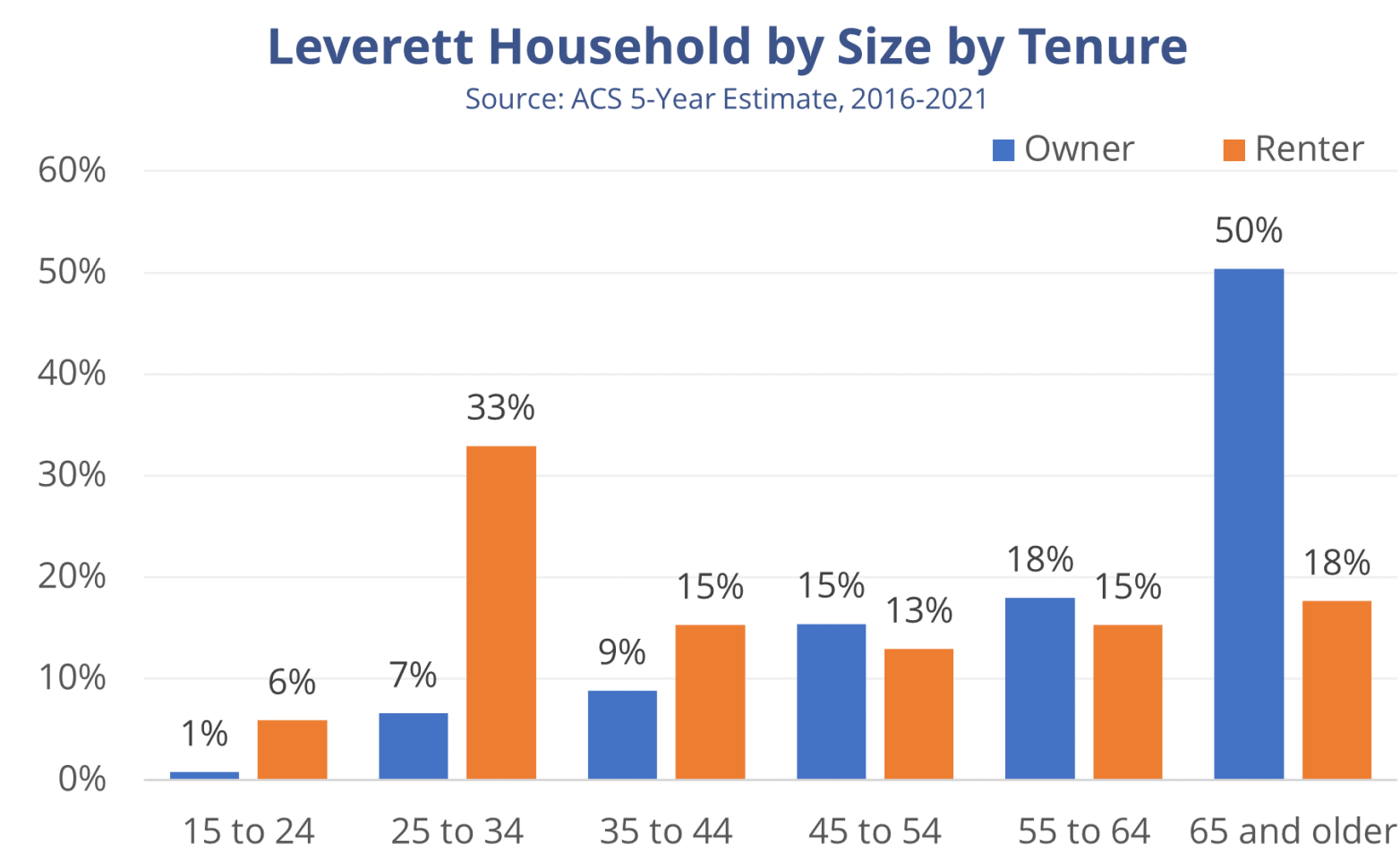
Do you agree or disagree with the draft values and goals we are testing?  
Would you like to add additional values and goals? Put your comments in the section below!

## HOW AND WHERE DO LEVERETT RESIDENTS LIVE?

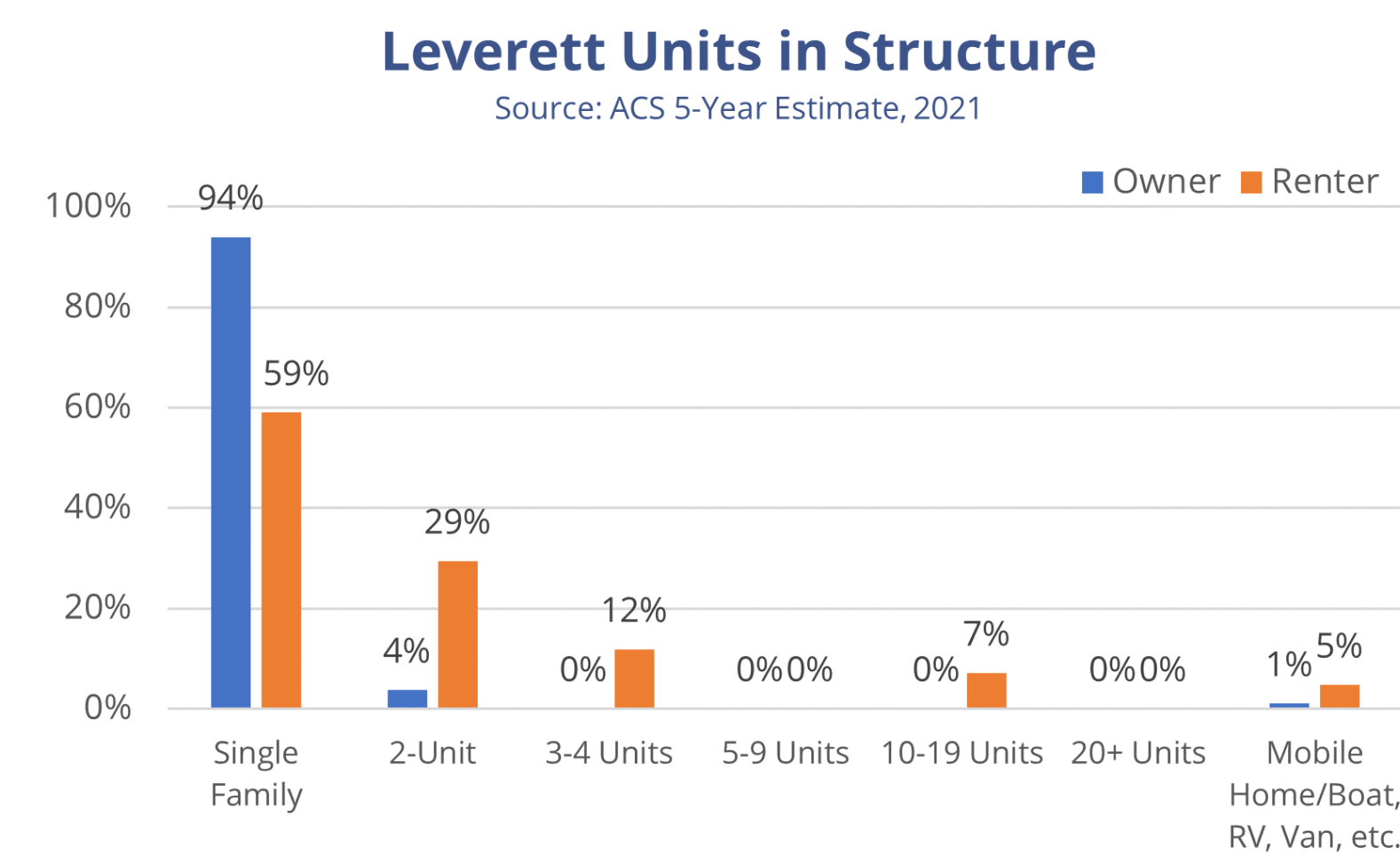
The ratio of renter occupied and owner occupied households has stayed consistent.

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.

Housing Tenure, Comparable Communities				
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2016-2021				
Town	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%



Ownership units are concentrated in single unit structures.



Ownership units in Leverett tend to be older than rental units.

Leverett's median year built (1973) for housing is similar to surrounding communities.

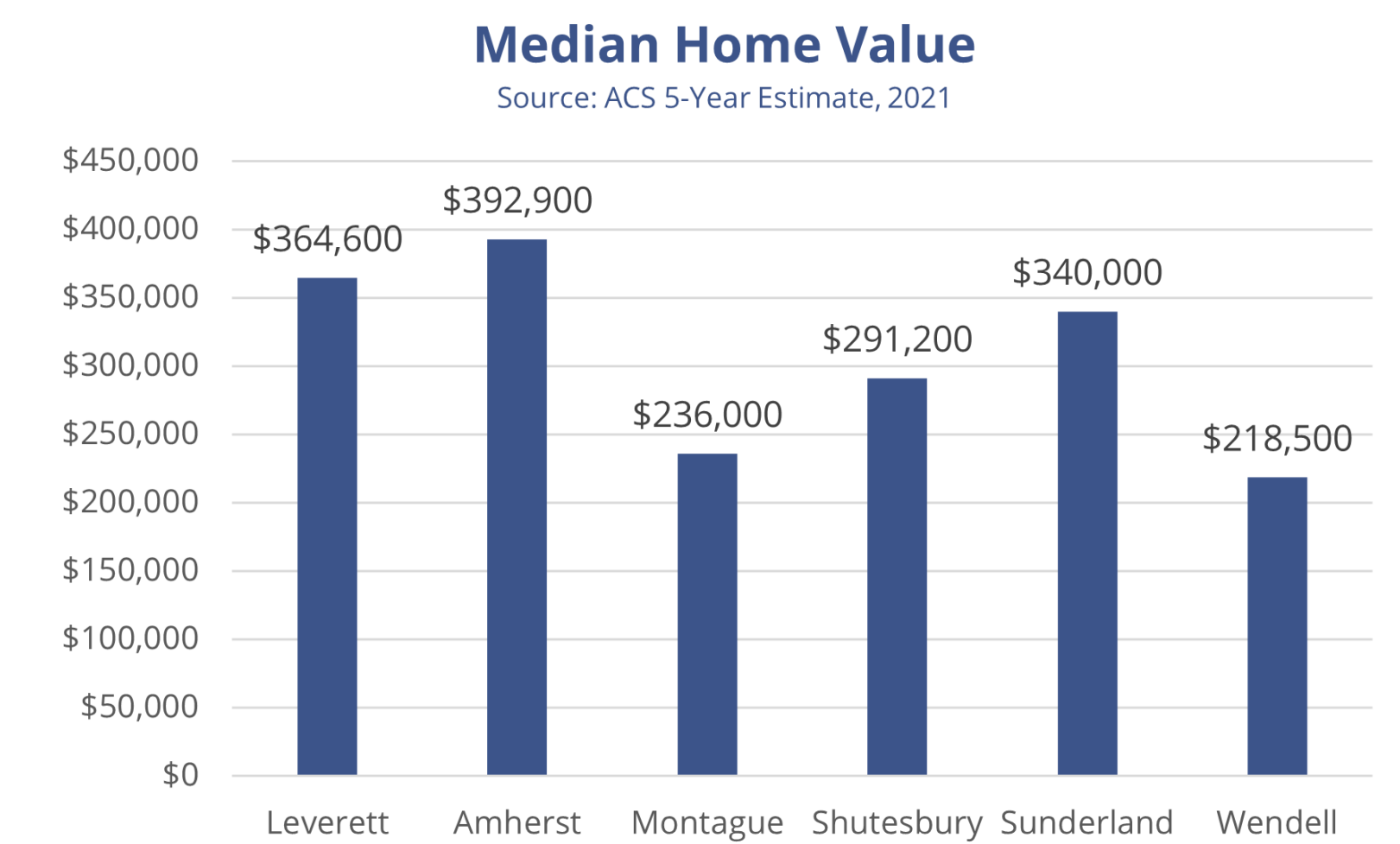
Leverett Structures by Year Built				
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021				
Town	Owner-Occupied		Renter- Occupied	
	#	%	#	%
Built 2000 or later	55	9%	4	4.7%
Built 1980-1999	189	30%	42	49.4%
Built 1960-1979	169	27%	15	17.6%
Built 1959 or earlier	210	34%	24	28.2%

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

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.



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.

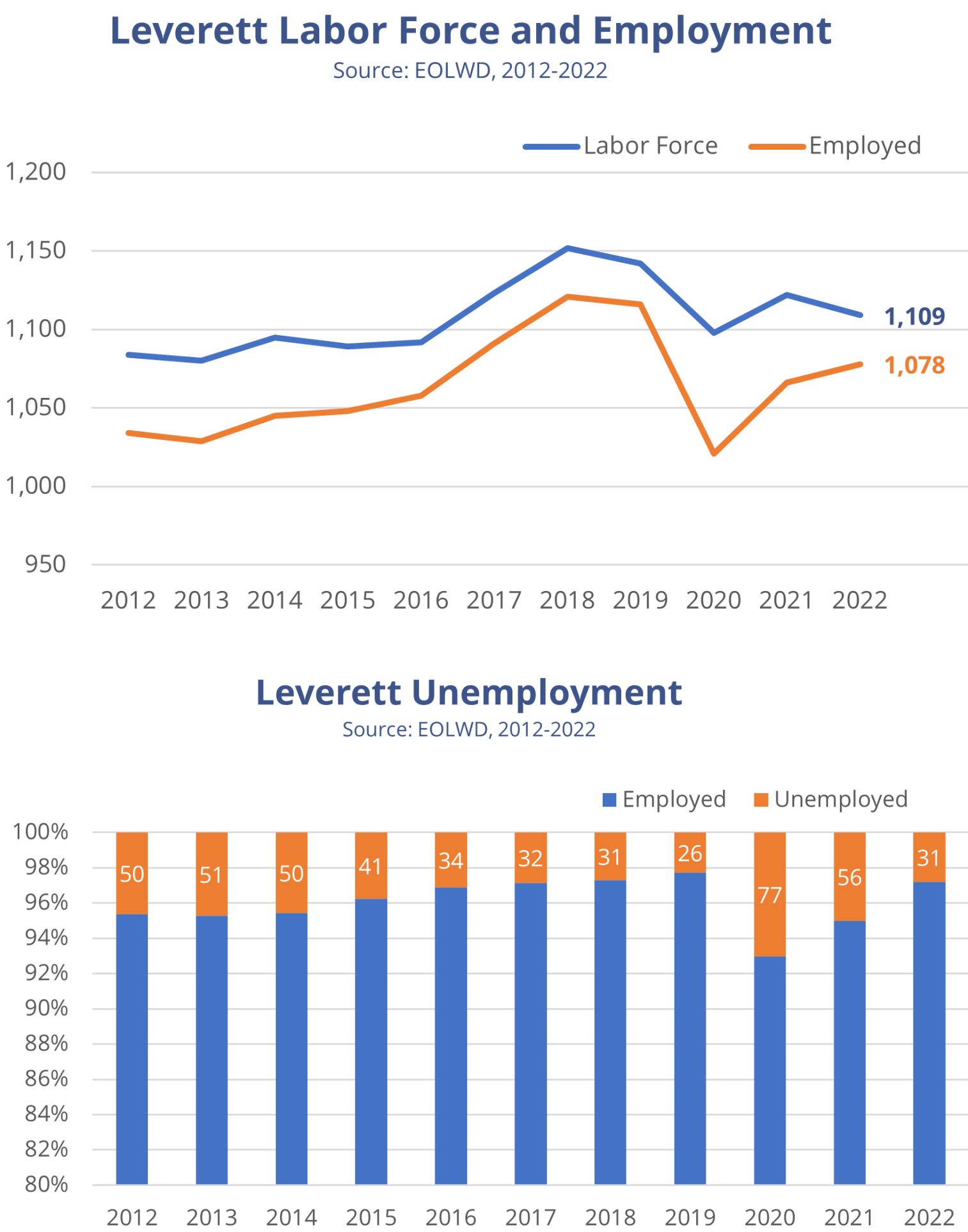


# THINKING ABOUT...THE LINKS BETWEEN HOUSING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND QUALITY OF LIFE

## HOW AND WHERE DO LEVERETT RESIDENTS WORK?

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. 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.



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.

Top Ten Work Destinations of Leverett Residents		
Source: OnTheMap 2020		
Place	Job Count	Share
Amherst	152	16.70%
Northampton	61	6.70%
Springfield	48	5.30%
Greenfield	43	4.70%
Worcester	38	4.20%
Boston	21	2.30%
Easthampton	12	1.30%
Gardner	11	1.20%
Holyoke	11	1.20%
South Deerfield	11	1.20%

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.

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

## COMMENTS



# THINKING ABOUT... WHAT THE LEVERETT COMMUNITY SHARES.

## Planning Elements

-  Land Use
-  Mobility
-  Economic Development
-  Housing
-  Cultural and Historic Resources
-  Open Space and Natural Resources
-  Recreation
-  Town Infrastructure

# VALUES + GOALS

## Draft Values

- » Social justice, promoting equity, and including everyone is important.
- » Self-sufficiency is important.
- » Strong community ties are important.
- » Self-determination and liberty are important.
- » Acceptance of others is important.
- » Getting involved in Leverett is important to me.

## Draft Goals

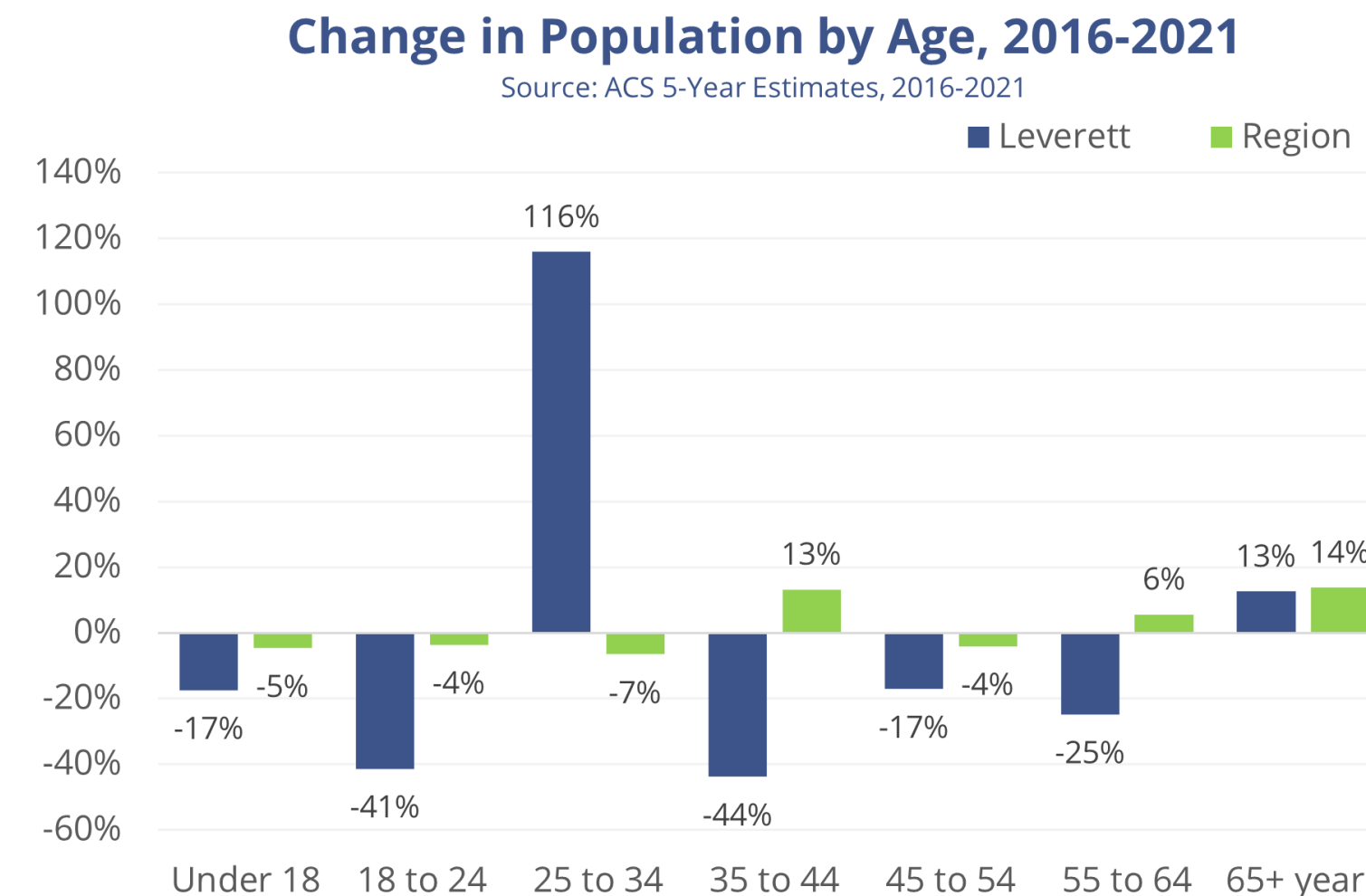
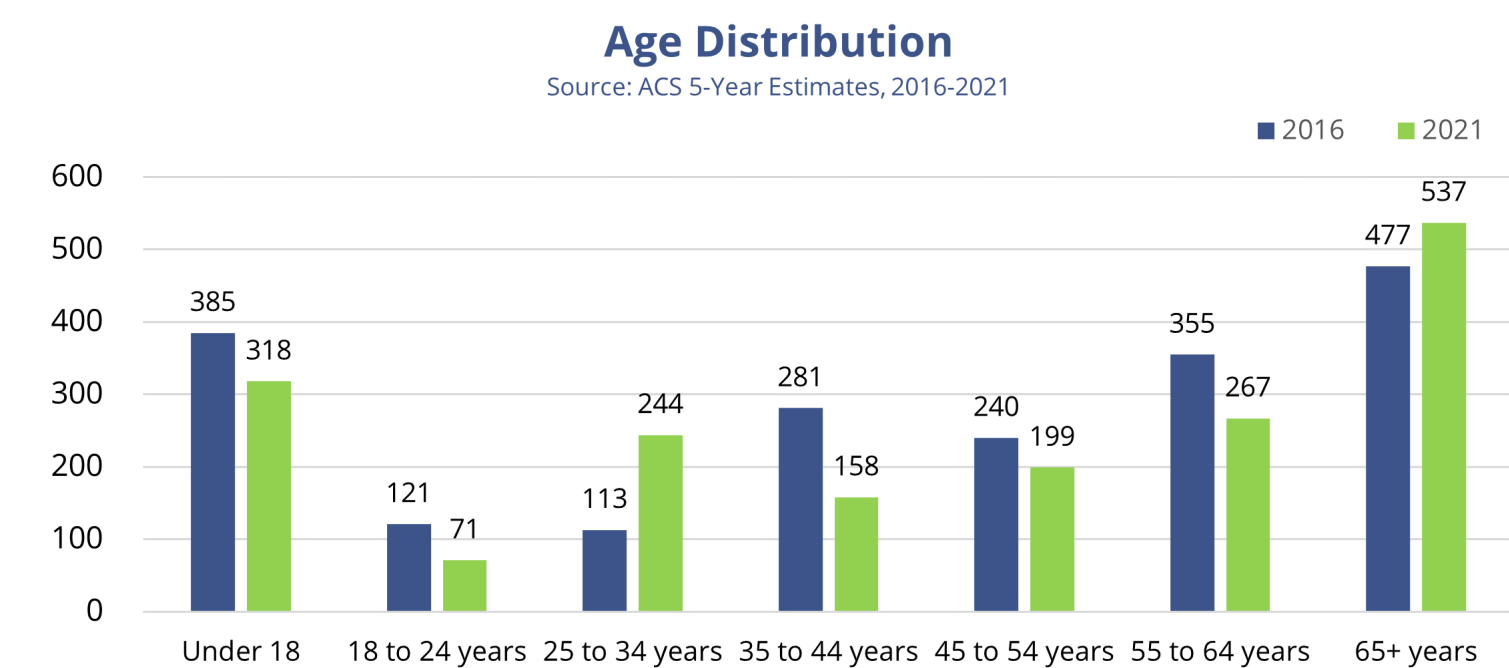
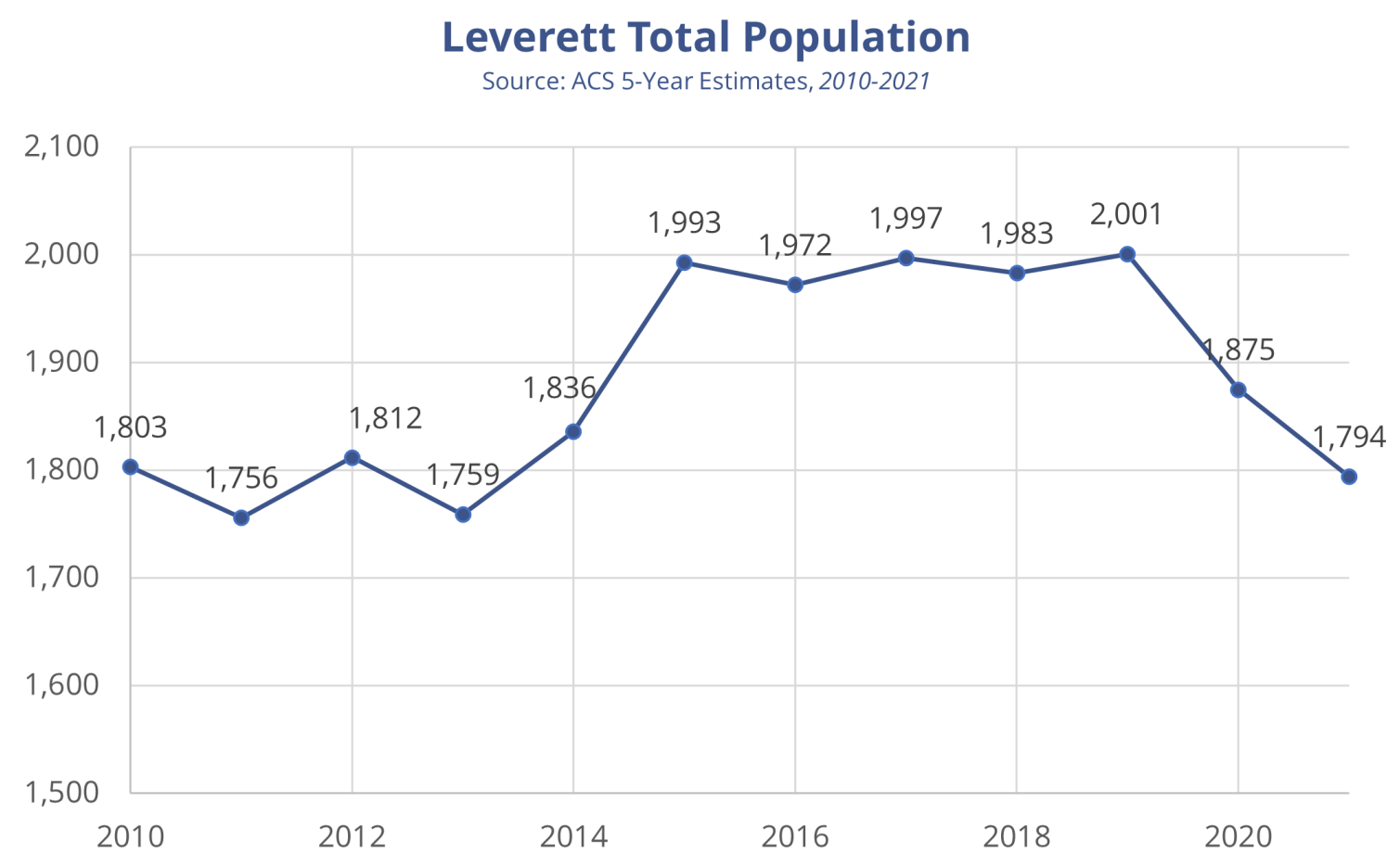
- » We have no draft goals for this section. What would you recommend?

Do you agree or disagree with the draft values we are testing? Would you like to add additional values and some suggested goals? Put your comments in the section below!

# WHO LIVES HERE?

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%.



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

Leverett's median age of 50.1 is similar to two nearby communities. 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%.

Keeping current younger residents and continuing to attract new younger residents to Leverett will be important for the workforce, household spending, and the Leverett Elementary School.

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

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).

# COMMENTS



# THINKING ABOUT...

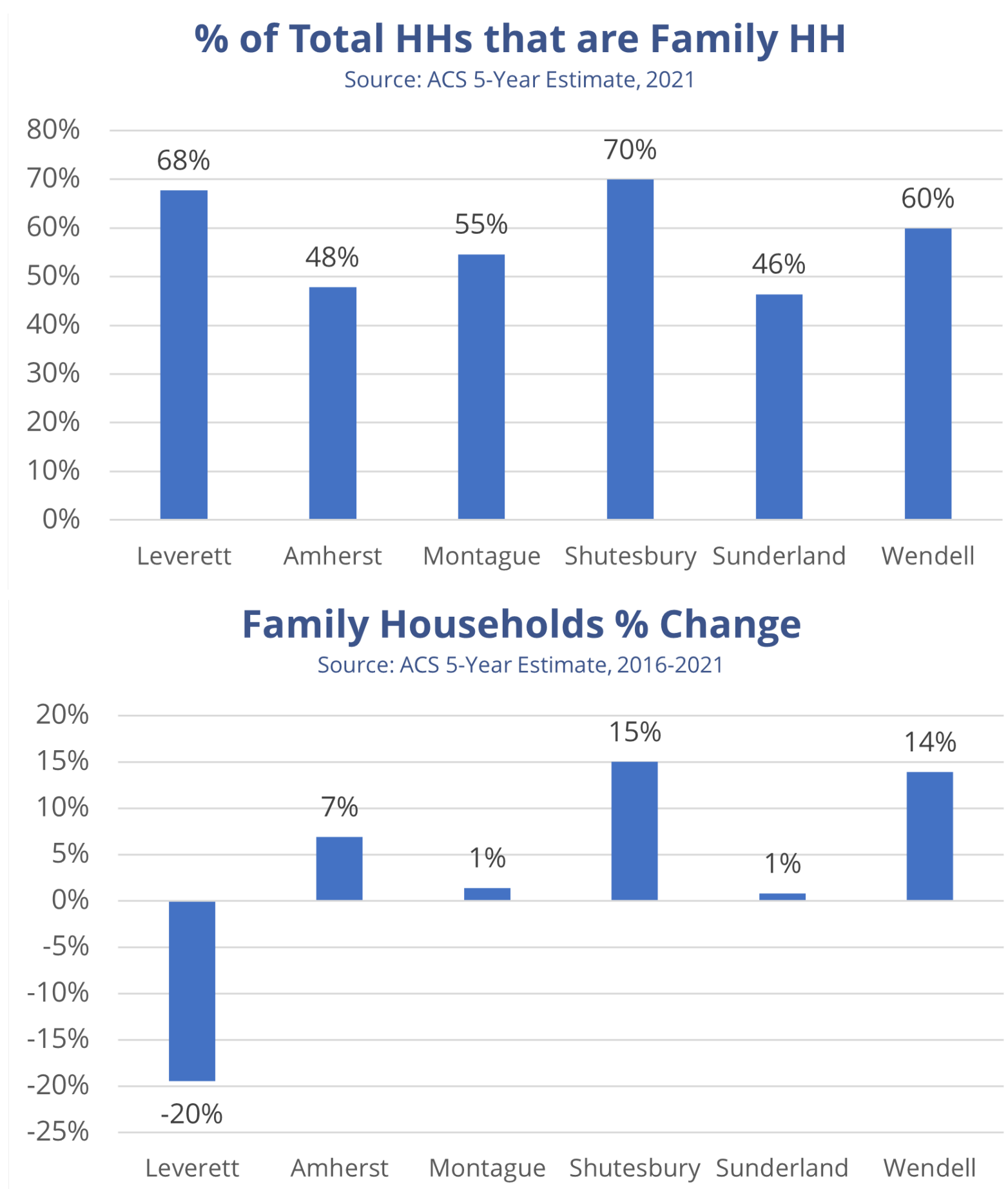
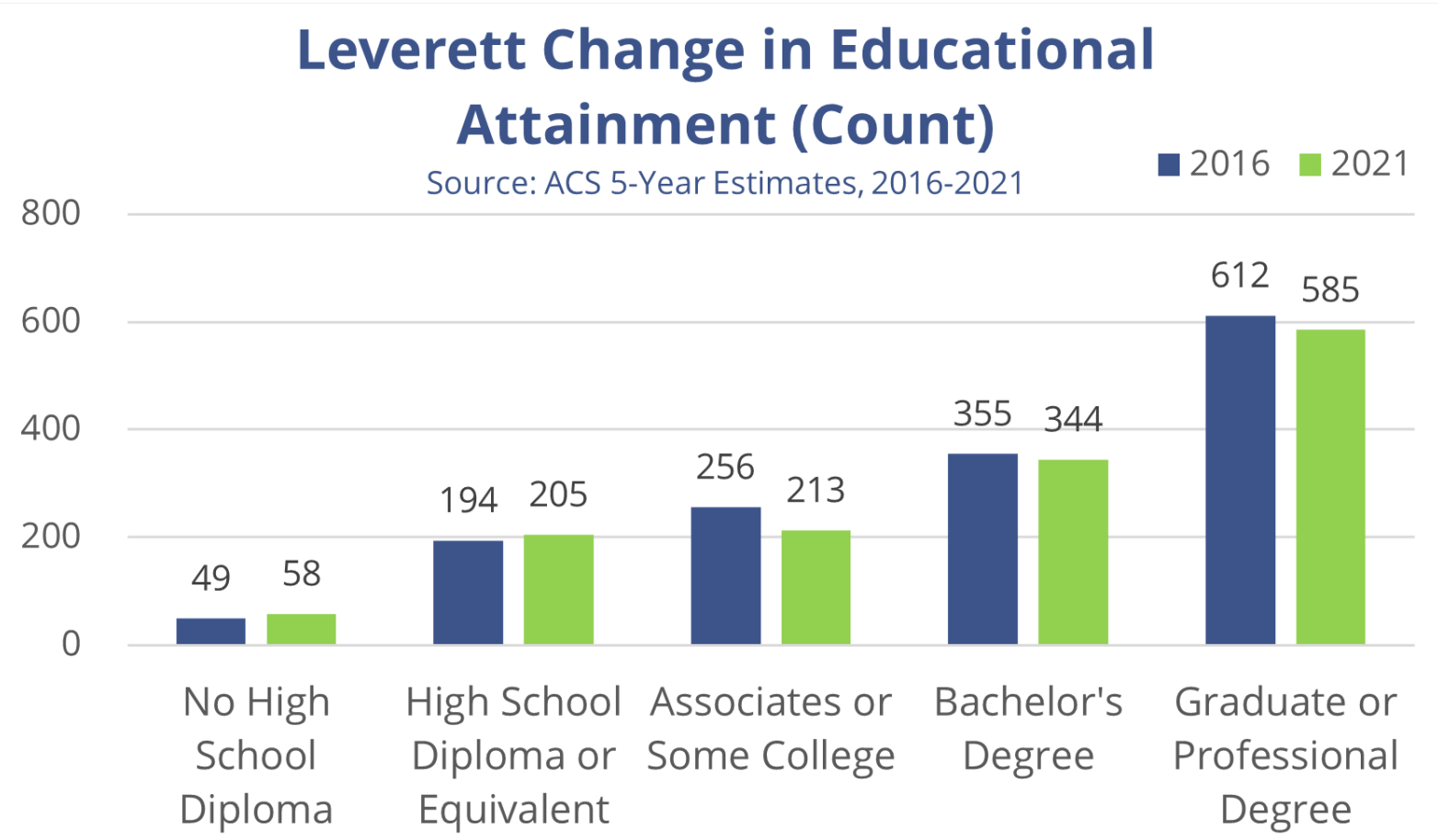
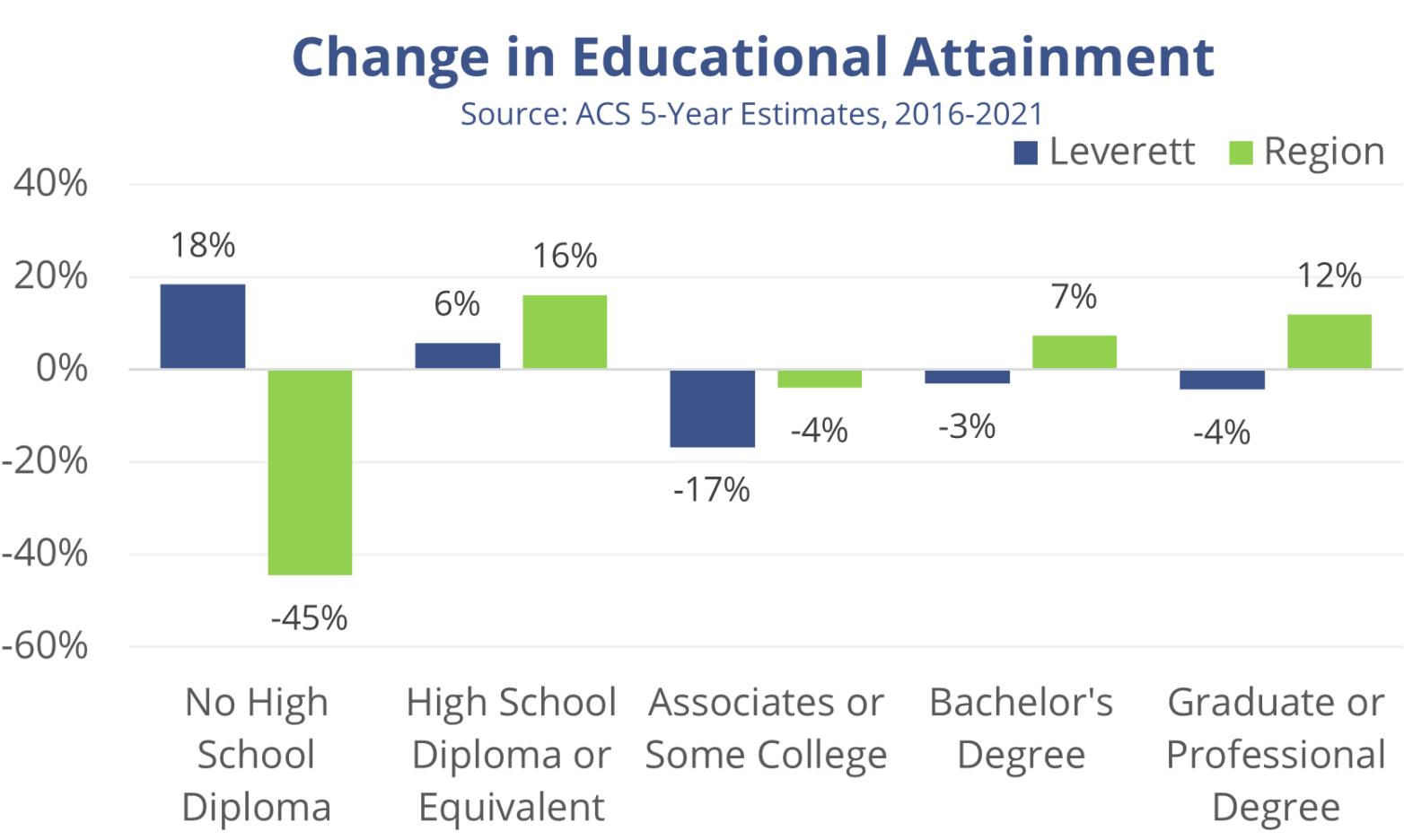
## WHAT THE LEVERETT COMMUNITY SHARES.

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.

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.



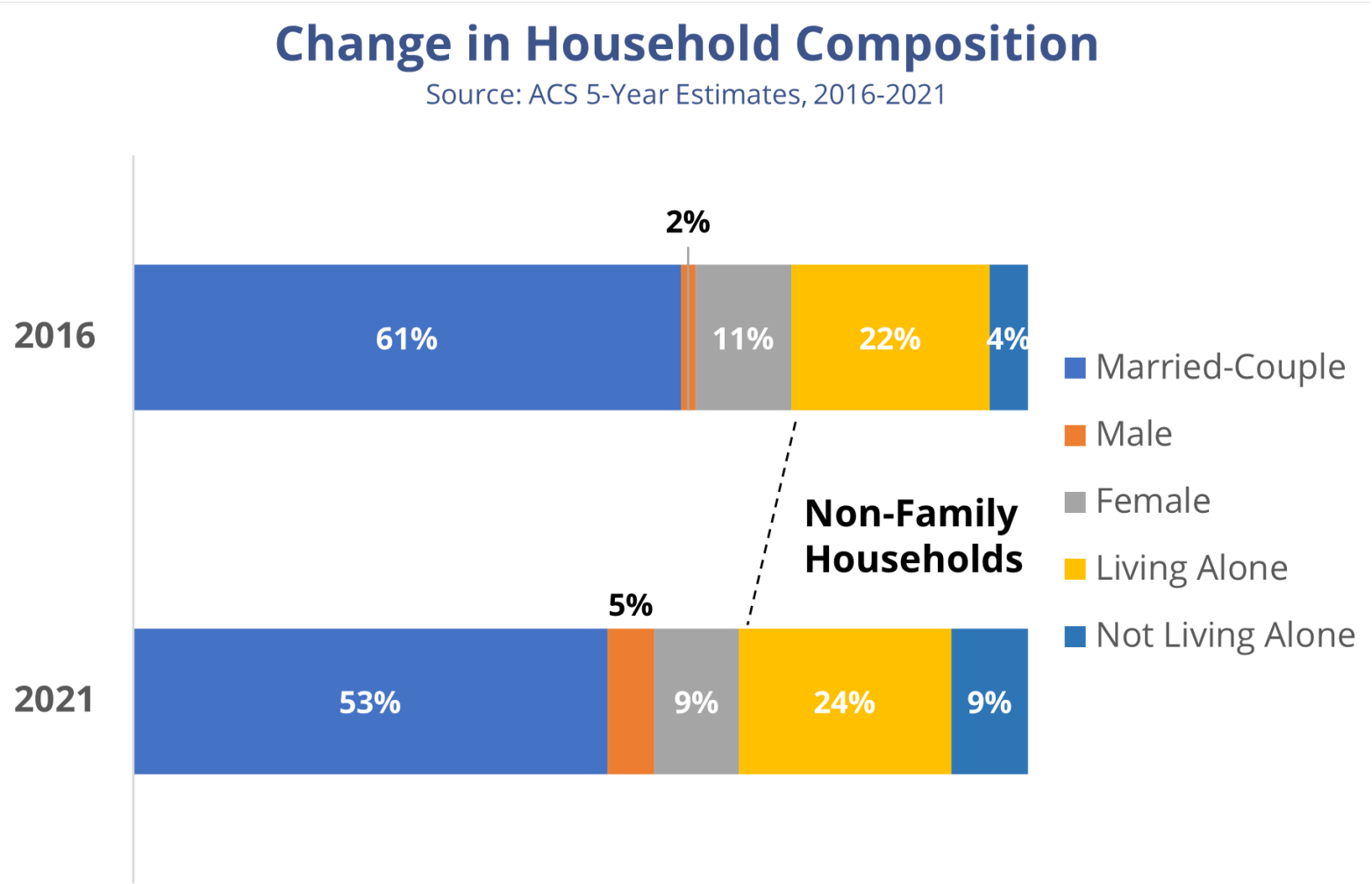
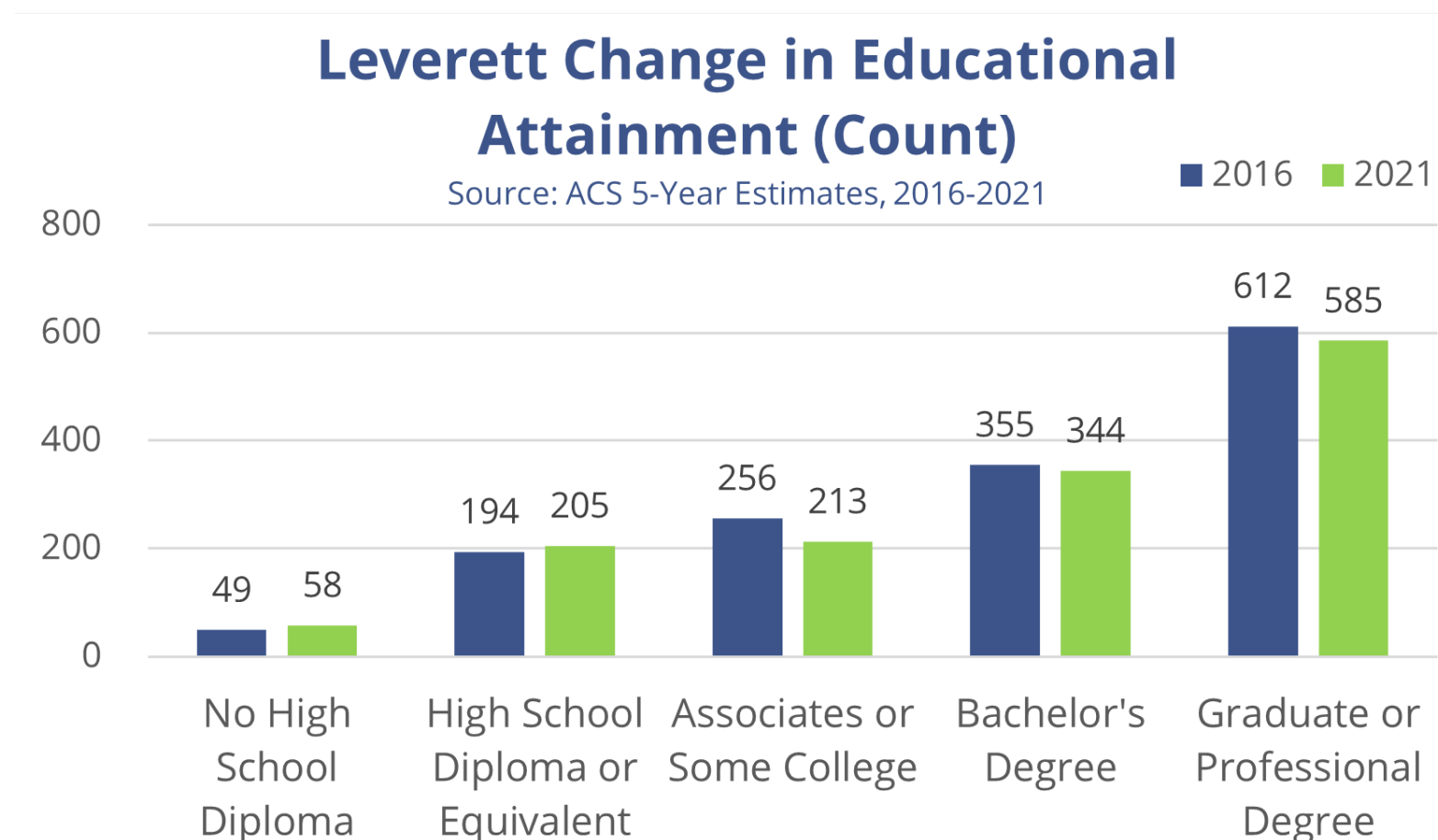
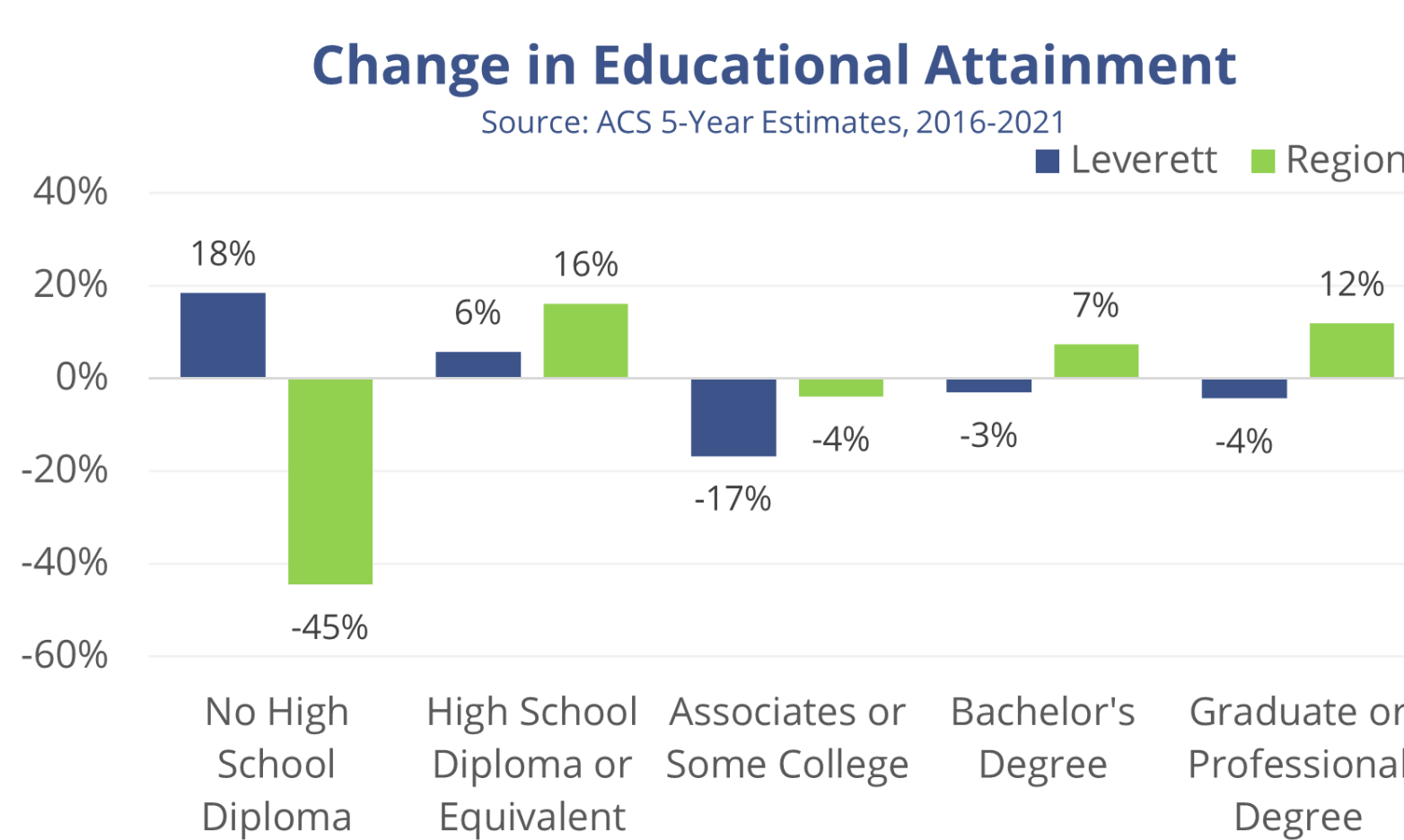
Household incomes are increasing in Leverett.

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.

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.





# THINKING ABOUT...

## HOW TOWN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY NOW AND IN TEN YEARS.

### Planning Elements

- |   |                      |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Land Use             |  | Cultural and Historic Resources  |
|  | Mobility             |  | Open Space and Natural Resources |
|  | Economic Development |  | Recreation                       |
|  | Housing              |  | Town Infrastructure              |

## VALUES + GOALS

### Draft Values

- » Hazard Planning is important.

### Draft Goals

- » Provide additional options for public transportation.
- » Pave dirt roads and clear edges of roads to prevent run-off and erosion.
- » Improve or maintain town infrastructure and Town Hall.
- » Support improvement of Leverett Elementary School
- » Support improvement of Leverett Library.

**Do you agree or disagree with the draft values and goals we are testing?**  
**Would you like to add additional values and goals? Put your comments in the section below!**

**The public water supply is limited; most residents and businesses are dependent on private wells.**

The public water supply system serves the Library, the Public Safety Complex, and the Elementary School

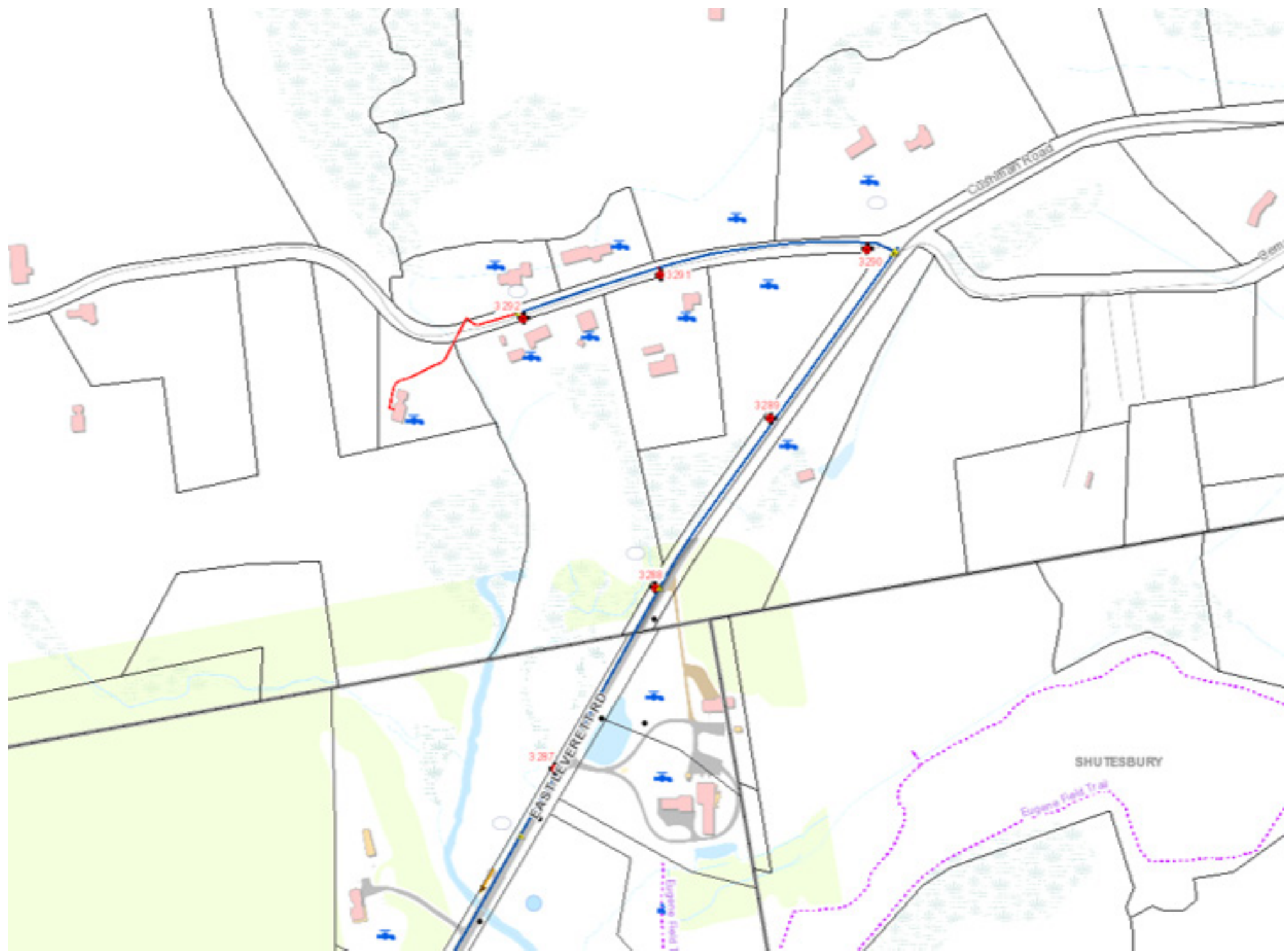
Expanded service from Amherst to Cushman and Teawaddle Hill Roads could address contaminated wells

Per the Hazard Mitigation Plan, groundwater is susceptible to contamination due to flooding hazards due to widespread septic systems in Town.

**Wastewater is a constraint on new development.**

- » Amherst is the closest municipal wastewater system and is over a mile from the Leverett border.
- » All uses in Leverett are dependent on on-site treatment of wastewater.

## COMMENTS





# THINKING ABOUT...

## HOW TOWN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY NOW AND IN TEN YEARS.

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

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 most of the 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.

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

\*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.

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	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

# COMMENTS



# THINKING ABOUT...

## HOW LAND IS USED IN LEVERETT AND HOW IT SHOULD BE USED.

### Planning Elements

-  Land Use
-  Mobility
-  Economic Development
-  Housing
-  Historic Resources
-  Open Space and Natural Resources
-  Recreation
-  Town Infrastructure

## VALUES + GOALS

### Draft Values

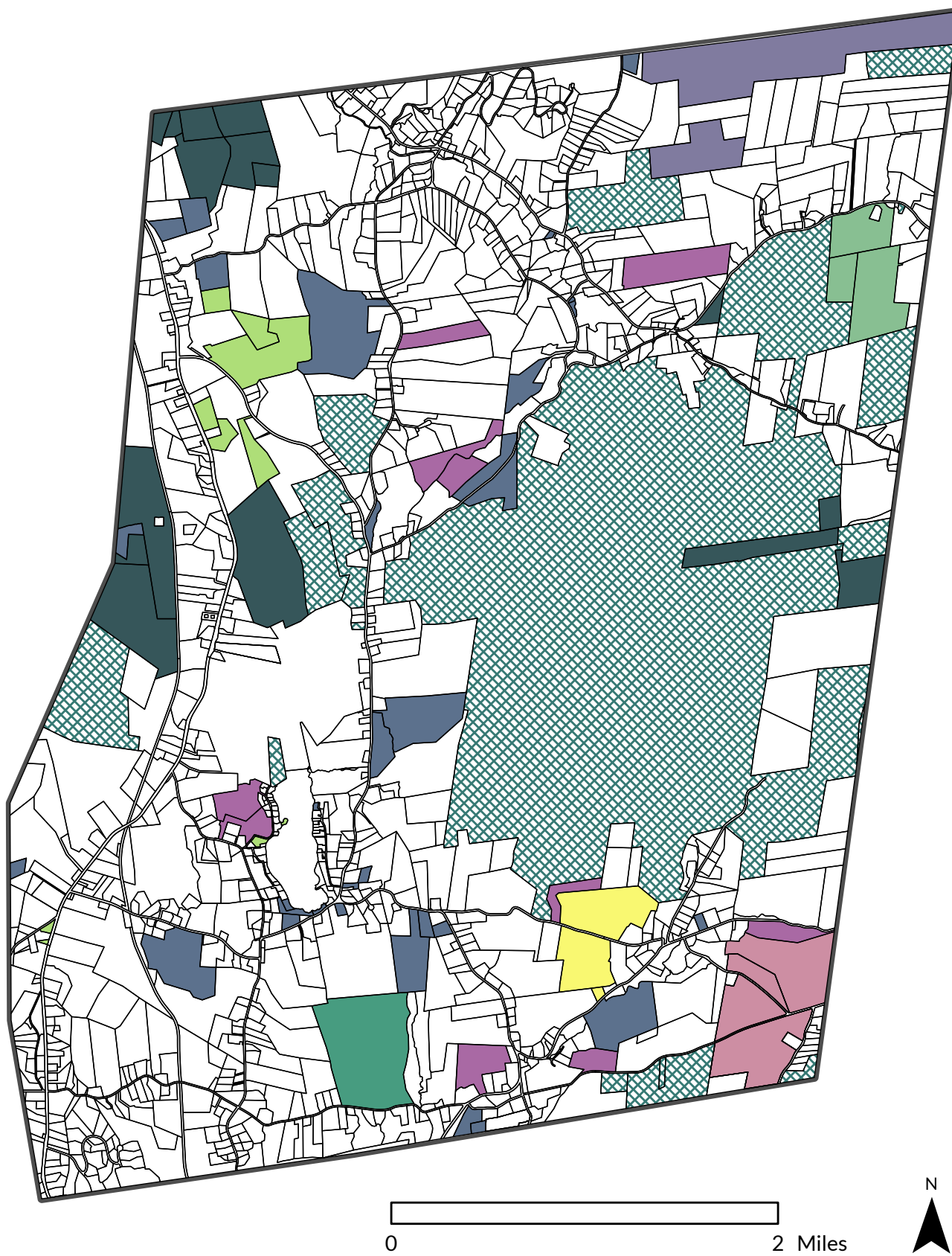
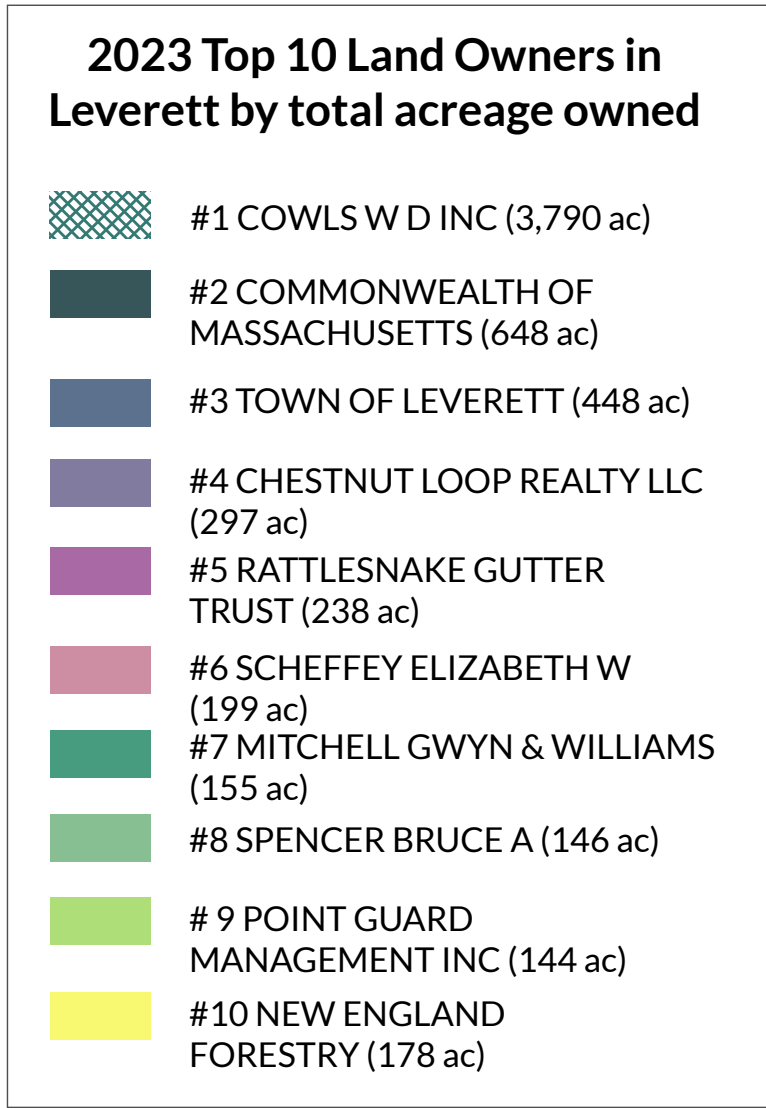
- » Planning for climate change is important.
- » Less restrictive zoning is important.
- » Historic preservation is important.
- » Nature and conservation is important.

Do you agree or disagree with the draft values and goals we are testing? Would you like to add additional values and goals? Put your comments in the section below!

### Draft Goals

- » Promote energy conservation and efficiency.
- » Prevent sprawl of development by focusing on growth near town center.
- » Limit development.
- » Protect farmland.
- » Protect drinking water.
- » Protect soil health.
- » Protect forests and nature.
- » Preserve historic buildings.

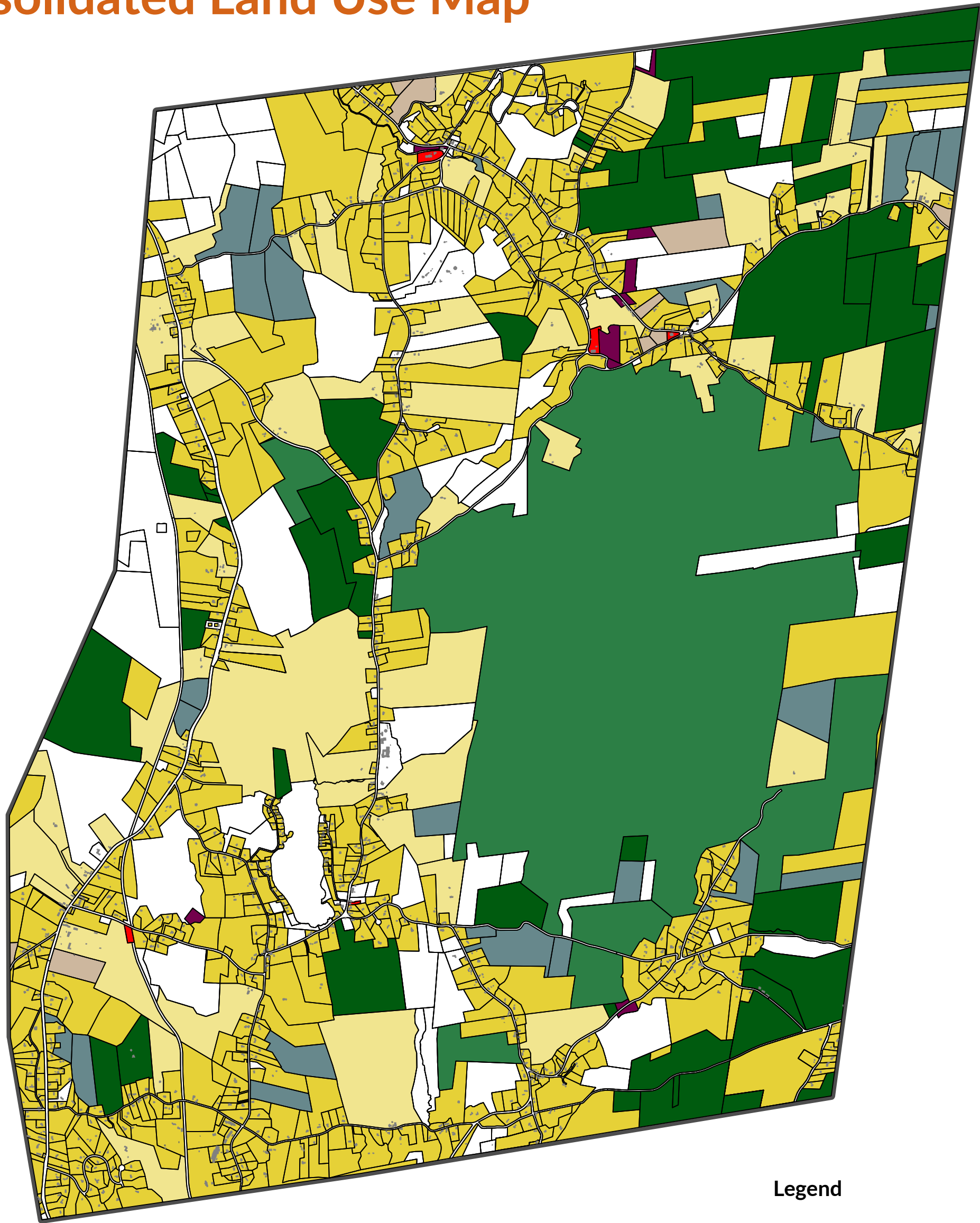
## DATA



### Land Use Notes

- » Ch. 40A, Section 3 uses are also known as exempt or Dover amendment uses and include educational and residential.
- » Chapter 61, 61A and 61B are Forest, Agricultural, and Recreational land, which are taxed differently.
- » Mixed-use, primarily [X] is an assessors classification for land with more than one use.

### Consolidated Land Use Map



- Legend
- |                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Commercial          | Chapter 61B                     |
| Industrial          | Chapter 61A                     |
| Residential         | Mixed-Use Primarily Residential |
| Chapter 40A, Sec. 3 | Mixed-Use Primarily Forest      |
| Chapter 61          |                                 |

## COMMENTS



THINKING ABOUT...  
HOW LAND IS USED IN LEVERETT  
AND HOW IT SHOULD BE USED.

Current Zoning Districts and Standards

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

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).

Town of Leverett  
Official Zoning Map

March 11, 2008

