

Westminster Planning Commission

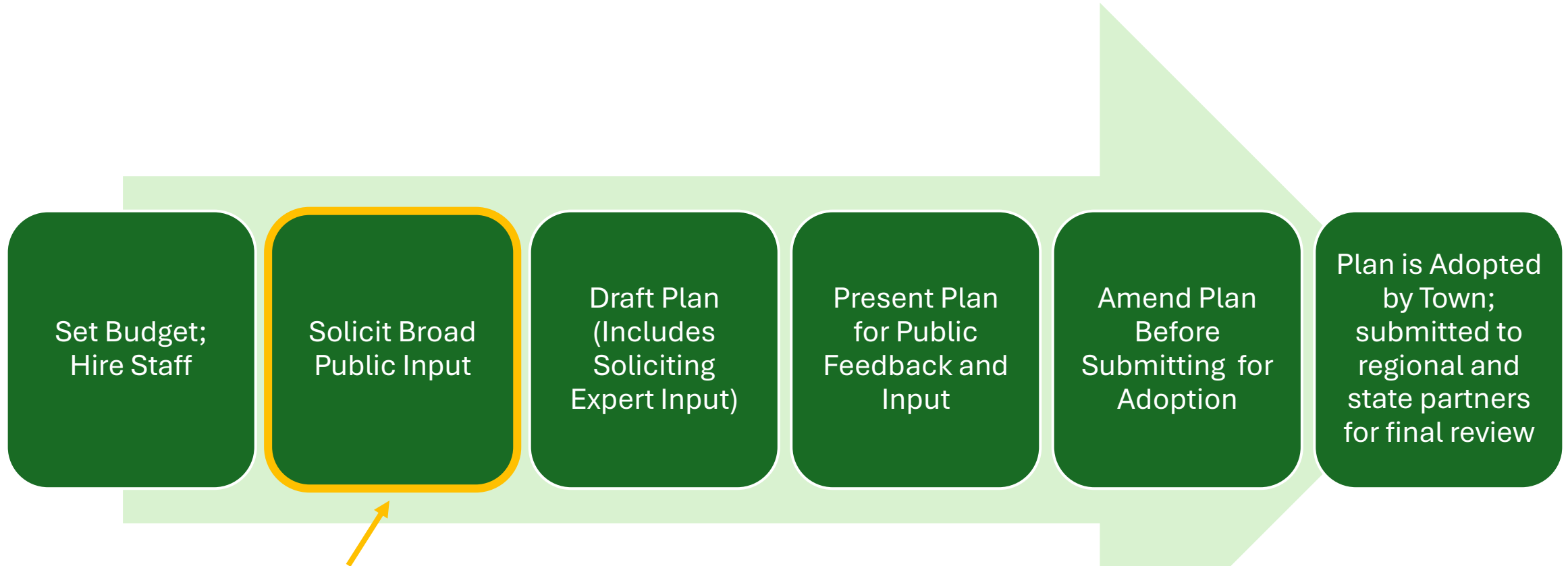
Town Plan Updates & Listening Session Overview



What is, and is not, a Town Plan?

What IS a Town Plan?	What is NOT a Town Plan?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A vision and guiding document adopted by a town’s planning commission and selectboard that expresses the community’s goals, values, and priorities for land use, housing, transportation, economic development, natural resources, and cultural assets.• A policy framework used to guide zoning bylaws, development review, and infrastructure investments; it provides the legal foundation for local land use regulations.• A statement of community intent, created through public input and updated at least every 8 years, ensuring it reflects residents’ values and long-term aspirations.• A tool for eligibility—having a valid town plan allows municipalities to access certain state grants, participate in Act 250 proceedings, and strengthen their influence in regional planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is not a zoning bylaw or regulation in itself—it sets the vision and policies, but separate zoning and subdivision bylaws are what legally control land use.• It is not permanent or unchangeable—plans must be reviewed and readopted regularly, and can be updated through community engagement and town votes.• It is not solely a government document—its legitimacy comes from community involvement and public hearings, not just official approval.• It is not a guarantee of outcomes—the plan guides decision-making but does not automatically fund or implement projects without further action and resources.

We are in the early stages of a lengthy public process; there will be many opportunities for input to shape YOUR town plan!



We are here! Please join one of our listening sessions:

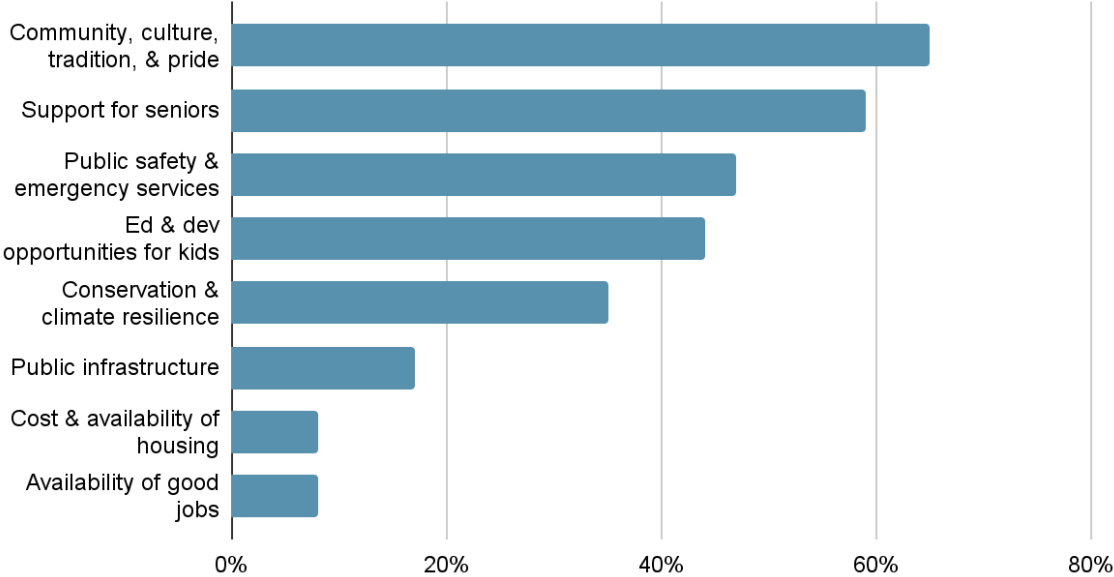
1. Monday, 9/29 @ Westminster Institute; 6pm-8pm
2. Thursday, 10/2 @ Studio Y; 6pm-8pm
3. Saturday, 10/25 @ BFUHS; 10am-Noon
4. Monday, 11/10 on Zoom; 5:30pm

What have we heard already?

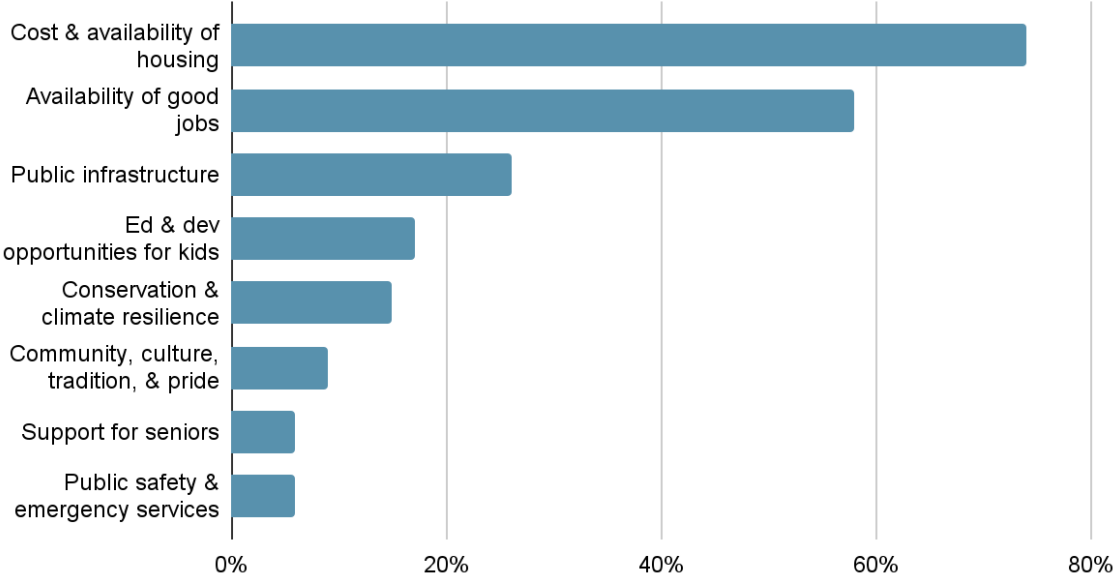
- **There is a lack of housing that regular people can afford, and our population is shrinking after decades of growth.**
 - Many seniors anecdotally say that they would be interested in downsizing, but don't feel like they have somewhere they could move to.
 - The lack of suitability for Westminster-specific water/sewer infrastructure development is a challenge.
- **Westminster prides itself on its rural identity, which is centered around both working agricultural land use as well as conserved natural resources, such as the Town Forest and other preserved land tracts.**
 - There is concern about how climate change will impact both the productivity and usability of working lands as well as the ecosystems, natural resources, and infrastructure of our Town.
- **Westminster has many positive assets that people are proud of!**

2024 Survey Results

What is going WELL in Westminster? (Select all that apply)

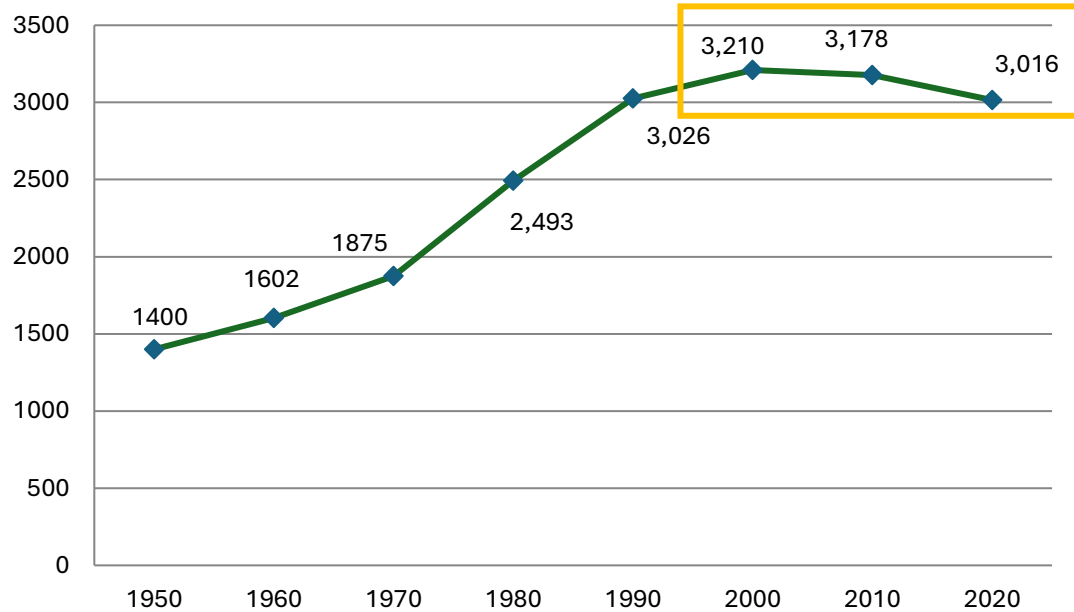


What is going POORLY in Westminster? (Select all that apply)



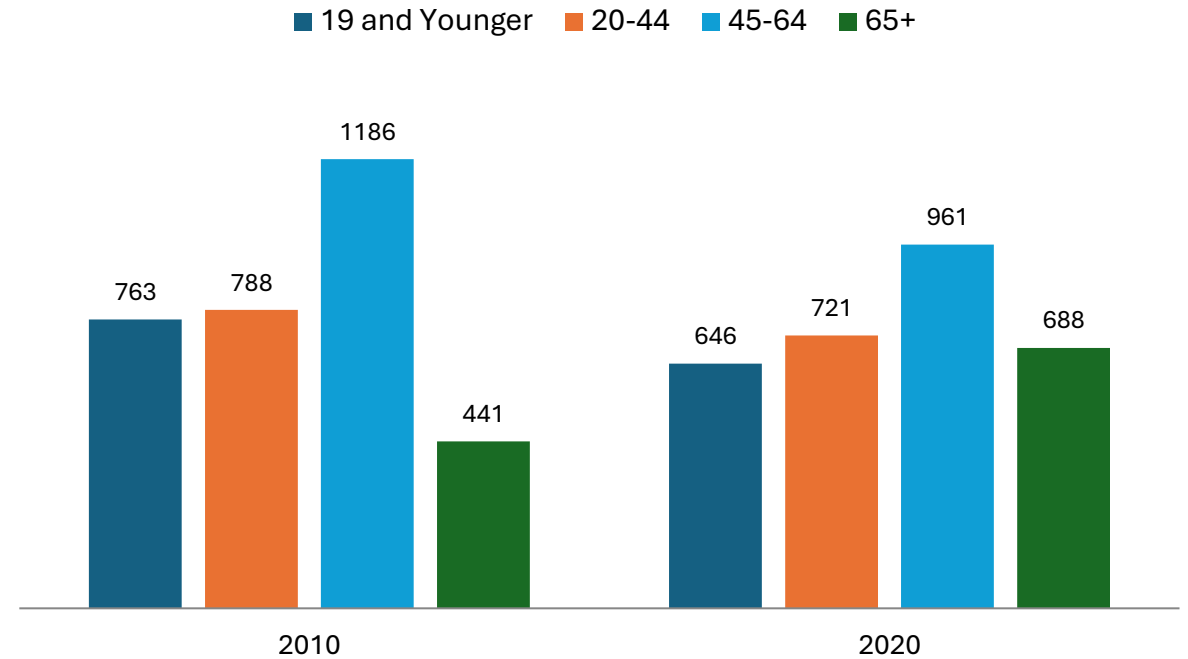
What Census Data Tells us About Westminster: Population

Town Population



After the population more than doubled from 1950-2000, Westminster's population has declined by 6.2% since.

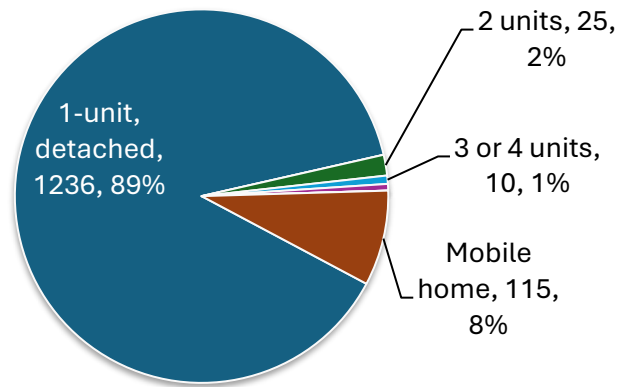
Population Distribution by Age Group



Westminster is quickly aging, with the number of residents over age 65 having increased by over 50% between 2010 and 2020, while the number of those 19 and younger declined by 15%.

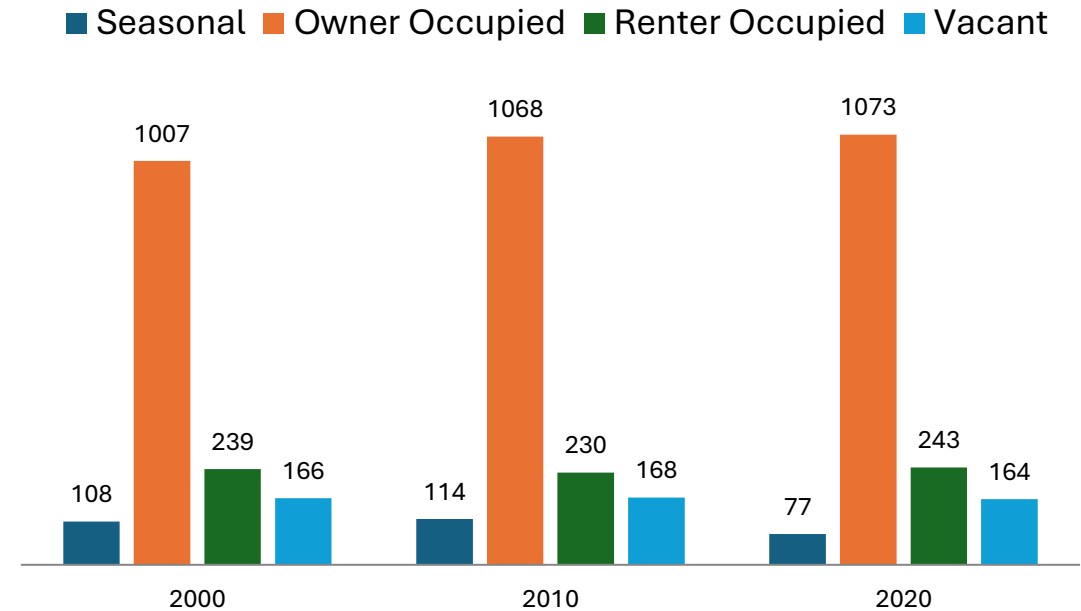
What Census Data Tells us About Westminster: Housing

Housing Structures



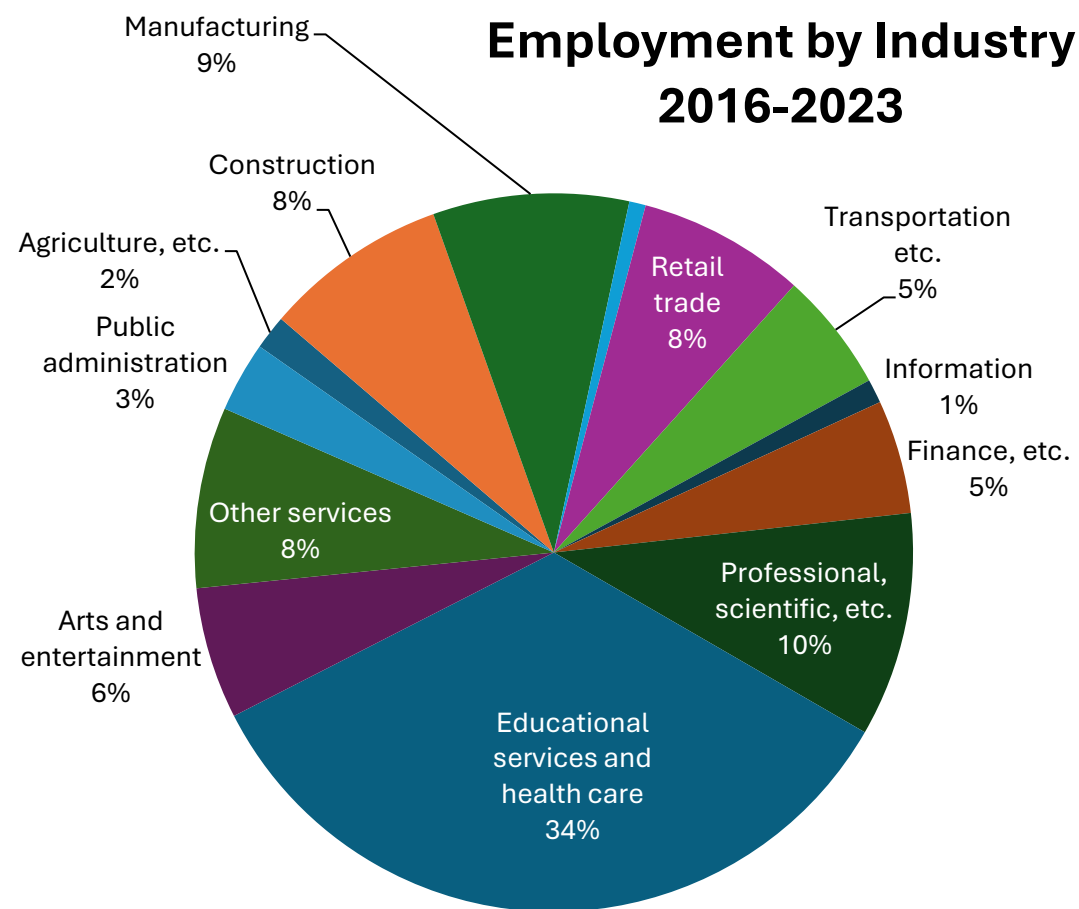
97% of all housing in Westminster is single-unit.

Housing Units



From 2000 to 2020, Westminster added an average of just 3.4 units of housing per year.

What Census Data Tells us About Westminster: Income



97% of all housing in Westminster is single-unit.

Town	Change in Median Household Income		
	1999 to 2023	2009 to 2023	2019 to 2023
Athens	147.7%	80.6%	61.5%
Brookline	81.2%	36.9%	21.1%
Putney	82.4%	60.5%	42.0%
Rockingham	120.5%	62.5%	57.9%
Westminster	62.0%	35.0%	20.4%
Windham County	78.0%	7.5%	30.8%
Vermont	91.0%	51.3%	25.9%

Income growth in Westminster has lagged behind other communities in our region and the state as a whole.

Listening Session Agenda:

- **Split into small groups; introduce yourselves. Each group will need one moderator who can help make sure everyone is involved, and one reporter who will take notes and report out the discussion points to the full group.**
- **Small group discussion – we'll cover a number of topics, with 5-10 minutes of discussing each.**
- **Report out – the assigned reporter of each group will report back their findings to the full group, and we'll discuss the key themes that emerge across groups.**
- **What did we miss? You tell us! We've saved time at the end for folks to speak up about what's most important to them, whether covered otherwise or not.**