



Appendix

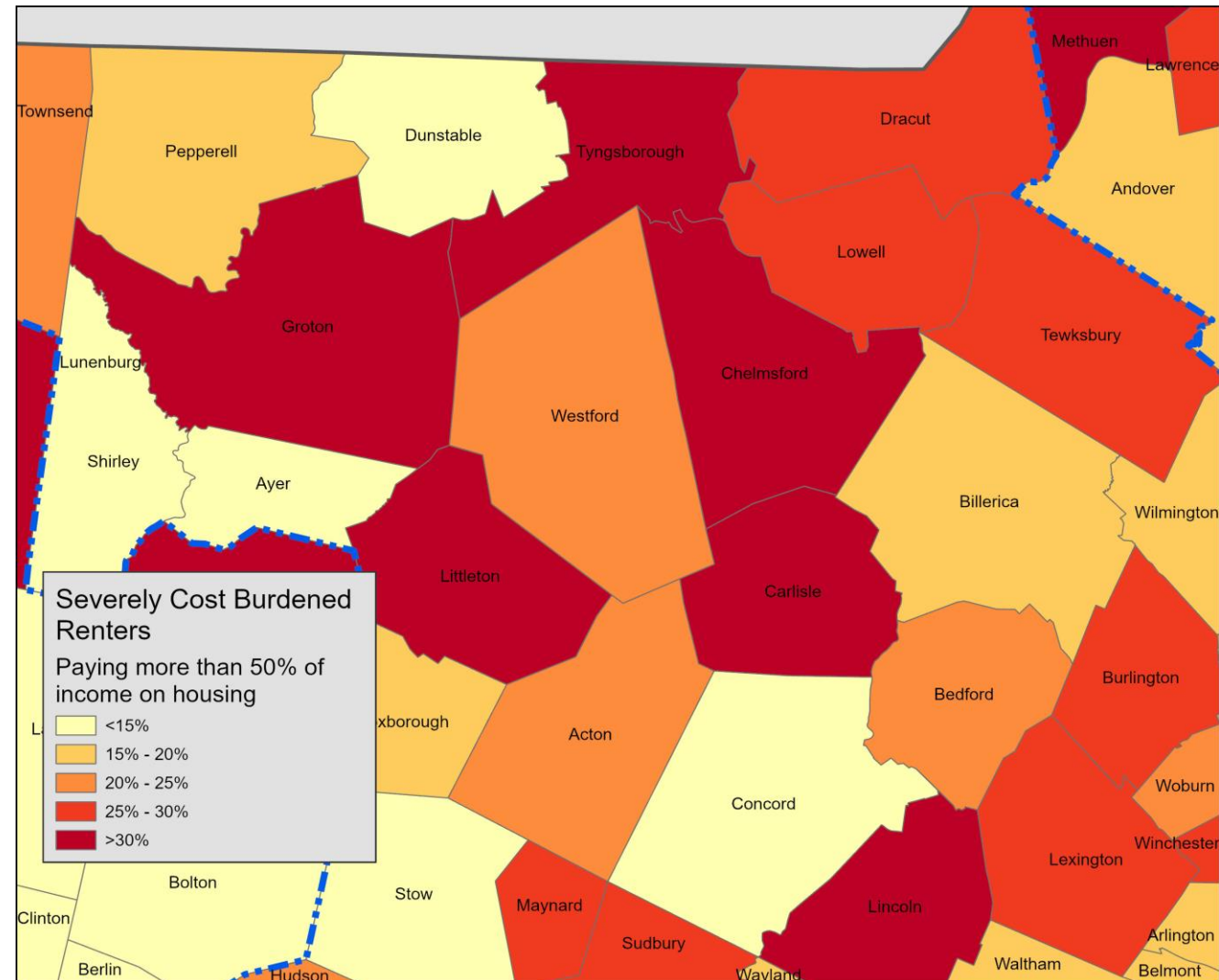
Data from Regional Listening Sessions

Merrimack Valley Regional Listening Session

Many Northern Middlesex households are cost-burdened by housing prices; the housing cost crisis hits renters particularly hard¹



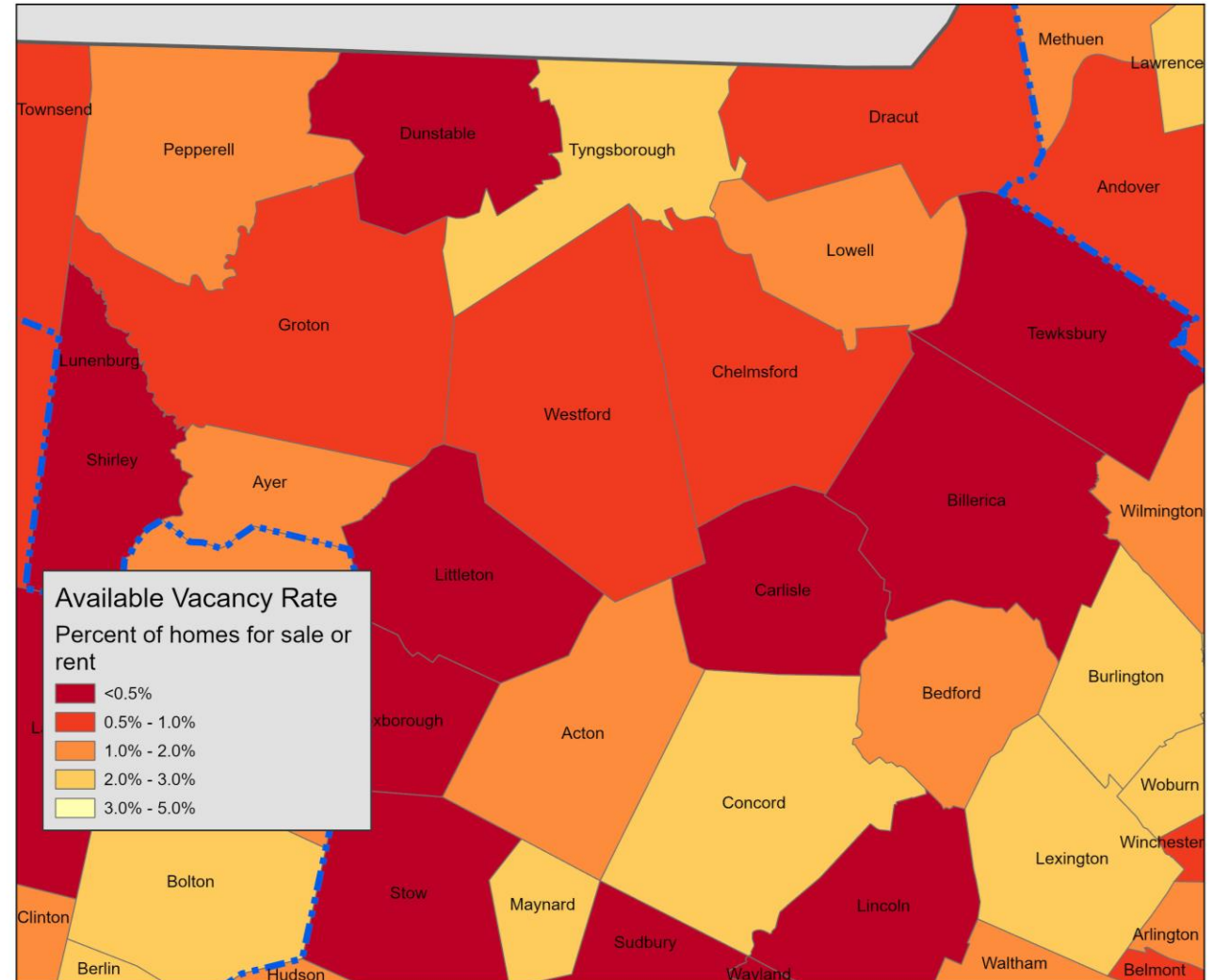
- In the Northern Middlesex region, 1 out of 4 renter households is "severely" cost burdened, spending more than half their income on rent and utilities.
- Another quarter of renters pay between 30% and 50% of their income on housing, making them "moderately" cost burdened.
- In Lowell, more than 5,800 renters are severely cost burdened, paying more than half of their income on rent.
- Homeowners also struggle with housing costs: one quarter of owners in Northern Middlesex are cost burdened, with 10.5% paying more than half their income to mortgage and utilities.



Many Northern Middlesex cities and towns are experiencing historically low vacancy rates²



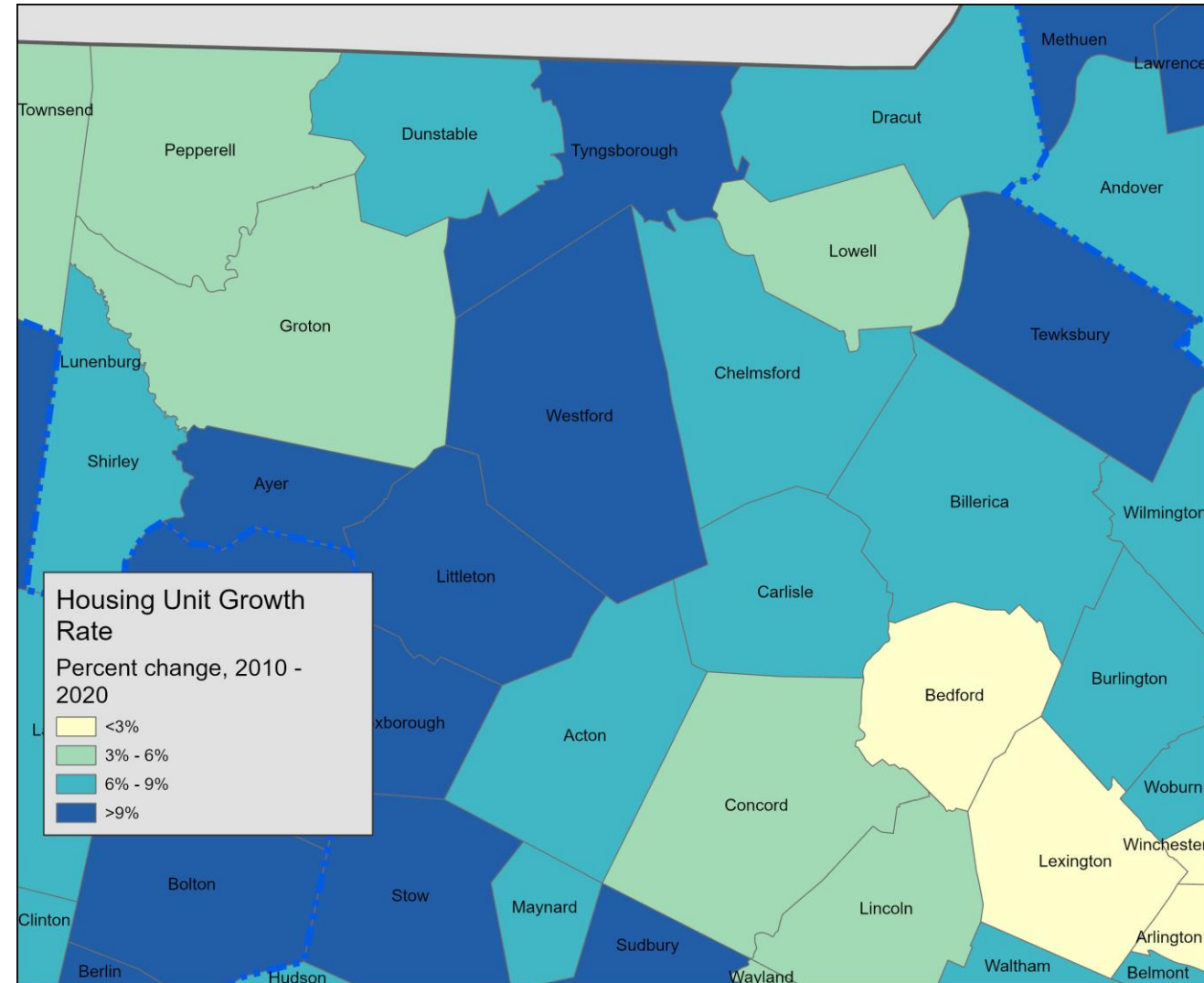
- In the Northern Middlesex region, only 1.1% of homes are available for sale or rent.
- There were only 8,500 homes for sale in the entire Boston metropolitan statistical area in June 2023 – half as many as were for sale in June 2019
- This means there is intense competition for the few units that are available.
- **In many Northern Middlesex cities and towns, the effective vacancy rate is less than 0.5%.**



Northern Middlesex communities have experienced disparate patterns of growth that will need to be considered when designing policy solutions³



- From 2010 – 2020, the population of Metro Boston grew by 8.1% and the number of households grew by 8.4%, but the housing stock grew by only 7.7%.
- Some communities grew rapidly, adding 10% or more to their housing stock (generally without any correlated school enrollment increases.)⁴
- Other communities added relatively few units, growing by 3% or less over ten years.
- Due to declining birth rates and the growth of one- and two-person senior households, housing demand is projected to grow faster than population in the coming decades.



Sources



1. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2018 – 2022, Tables B25091 and B25070, accessed via <https://datacommon.mapc.org/browser/datasets/199>
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2018 – 2022, Table B25004, accessed via <https://datacommon.mapc.org/browser/datasets/460>; Zillow, “For-Sale Inventory (Smoothed, All Homes, Monthly), Boston MSA,” <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>
3. US Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Census PL-94 Redistricting data, accessed via <https://datacommon.mapc.org/browser/datasets/425>
4. Metropolitan Area Planning Council, “An Update on Housing Production’s Affect on Public School Enrollment,” <https://www.mapc.org/learn/research-analysis/enrollment/>