



SRPC ^{CALENDAR YEAR} '20

ANNUAL BUILDING PERMIT INVENTORY

INTRODUCTION

The Annual Building Permit Inventory provides a look at new development and growth in the Strafford region. Through contractual agreement with the NHDOT, Strafford Regional Planning Commission collects and analyzes building permit information from each municipality. This data will be used to update the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation and Land Use Model and for municipal development planning purposes.

The current permit inventory includes new construction from January 1 to December 31, 2020. This report contains a summary analysis of activity within the region, a table of permit totals for 2020 by municipality, a chart illustrating permit allocation, line graphs showing changes in residential and commercial construction since 2008, and a map of new building locations in the region.

CONTACT US!

150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, NH 03687

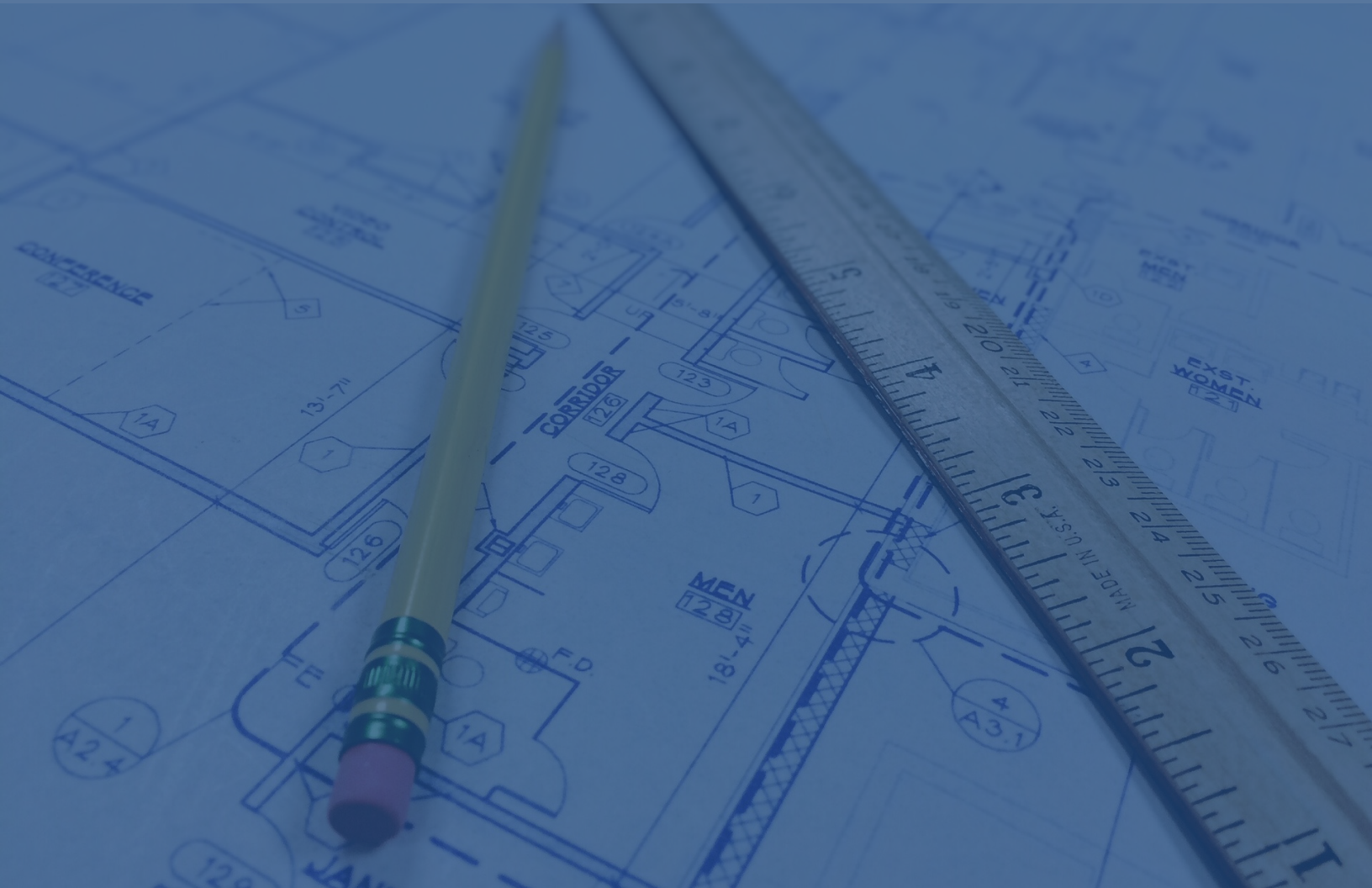
Tel: (603) 994-3500 E-mail: srpc@strafford.org

Website: www.strafford.org

[f](#) @StraffordRegionalPlanningCommission [t](#) @StraffordRPC [@](#) @strafford.rpc

MUNICIPALITIES

Barrington	Newmarket
Brookfield	Northwood
Dover	Nottingham
Durham	Rochester
Farmington	Rollinsford
Lee	Somersworth
Madbury	Strafford
Middleton	Wakefield
Milton	
New Durham	



Building Types

Single-Family Residential:

Traditional and modular single-family homes on permanent foundations. Seasonal homes are also included.

Multi-Family Residential: Also referred to as “Multi-unit,” this is housing with two or more living units such as conventional apartments or condominiums, duplexes, triplexes, attached townhouses, and independent living communities. This category excludes hotels, motels, and nursing homes.

Manufactured: Structures created as single units in a factory and shipped to the building site. Also known as “mobile homes” or “trailers.”

Mixed Use: Buildings with multiple units that include both residential and commercial space.

Commercial/Industrial: Retail and manufacturing spaces. Retail spaces include storefronts, restaurants, grocers, offices, and hotels, while industrial spaces include parts factories, machine shops, and buildings used for the processing of raw materials such as timber or scrap metal.

Other: Structures that do not fit into the residential or commercial categories, for example municipal, county, state, and federal buildings; churches, schools, and Scout facilities; and other non-profit facilities.

Dwelling Unit (Living Unit or Family Unit): A residential unit that provides independent living facilities for one or more persons.

THE PROCESS

In April 2021, the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) sent letters to each municipal building inspector in the region requesting their building permit information for the previous year, 2020. The information requested included structure type, permit number, map and lot number, number of units, date of issuance, and address.

We saved the documents we received from each municipality in their original format and input the data from each document into a single Microsoft Excel file. SRPC staff members standardized the information such that each permit fell into one of several structure types and that only new construction was recorded. For the purposes of this report, “new construction” includes development that results in a net gain of living units and excludes renovations, replacements, structural additions, repairs to fire damages, and supplemental structures such as car garages and sheds. Once the data was reviewed and organized, it was used to determine the types of development within the region and create a map illustrating new construction patterns.

REPORT UPDATES

In 2014, SRPC updated the formatting and reporting of building permit data in the annual report. Building permits are now classified according to a standard list of six building types (see figure on left). In the past, making comparisons across years and communities was difficult due to differences in the level of detail provided by each community. This new list of building types offers broader categories that enable you to uniformly organize each community’s permits.

2014 also saw a transition to a more regional approach to reporting building permit information. A

table of the previous year's data for each community was replaced with a line graph illustrating changes over time for the entire region (Figure 2).

Each line represents a different building type. In addition, the summary is now accompanied by a map of regional building activity (Figure 3). An interactive version of this map is available on the SRPC website, and instructions for accessing the map are at the end of this report. SRPC compiles building permit data to track development, model anticipated growth and traffic impacts, and identify changes in land use.

REGIONAL SUMMARY

In 2020, a total of 406 building permits were issued in the Strafford region, a six percent increase in permits issued from the year before. Seventy-five percent of the total number of permits issued were for single-unit residential buildings.

The Strafford Region added 617 residential living units in 2020, a one percent decrease from the 624 units added the year before. These projects were primarily single family and multi-family construction in Somersworth, Dover and Rochester.

Dover issued the second most building permits (58) and added the second most living units (101) of the Strafford Region Communities. Four of the total 58 permits were multi-family residential permits which added 65 units to the community. Among these projects were the apartment building at Princeton Way (15 units) and the Pointe Place townhouses on Northfield Road (16 units). In total, multi-family units made up 65 of the 101 overall dwelling units approved by Dover in 2020. Dover's development rate has declined since a peak in 2017 (See Appendix B).

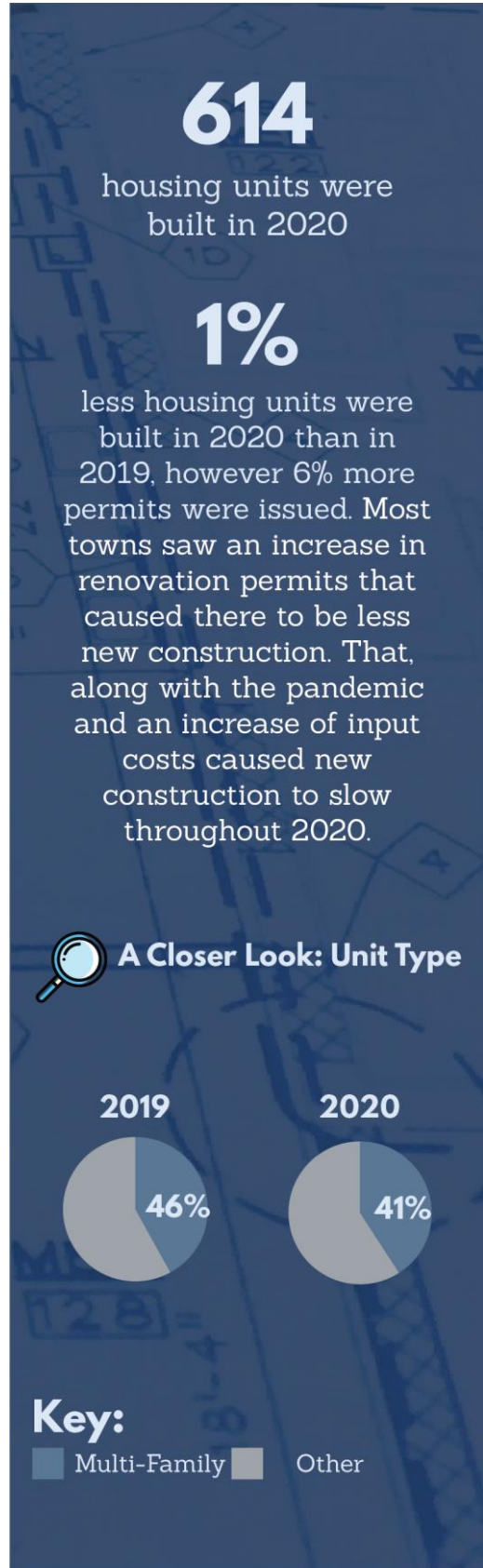
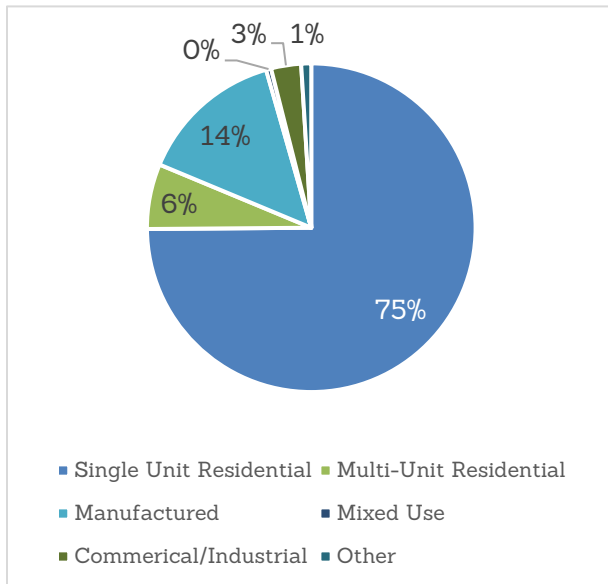


Figure 1. 2020 Building Permit by Type in the Strafford Region



Rochester issued the highest number of building permits (78) and added the third most living units (74) in the region. There was one new multi-family unit constructed in 2020. This is likely due to high construction costs and the inability to construct during the COVID pandemic. Single family units were fairly dispersed with no more than 5 units added to any given street in 2020 other than Big Bear Road (7). Rochester also added more manufactured housing than any other municipality (20), nearly a third of the region's permits of that type.

Somersworth issued the third-greatest number of building permits (56) but had the most living units (194) added in the region in 2020. 144 of the total units were at the Thomas Apartments on Royal Drive. These

buildings were approved in 2019 and construction began in 2020, being one of the only large-scale apartments created during the pandemic in the region. Due to its approval in 2019, this project was able to build during the pandemic. Other areas of development included Stillwater Circle (16 units) and Cattail Circle (7 units).

Single unit residential buildings represented 75 percent of new construction permits in the Strafford Region while only encompassing 50 percent of the total units added in 2020. This was followed by Manufactured residential permits (14 percent) and for multi-family residential permits (6 percent) (see Table 1). 2020 saw less construction than most recent years due to the pandemic but were still able to build about the same number of units as recent years primarily driven by Somersworth's Thomas Apartments. These apartments were primarily accomplished due to building starting in 2020 and approvals were made during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1 shows the total number of building permits by category for each municipality.

Table 1. 2020 Building Permits Totals by Community and Type

Municipality	Single Unit Residential	Multi-Unit Residential	Manufactured	Mixed Use	Commercial /Industrial	Other	Total
Barrington	24	0	0	0	0	0	24
Brookfield	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Dover	32	17	4	1	4	0	58
Durham	3	2	0	1	0	0	6
Farmington	20	0	7	0	1	0	28
Lee	12	0	1	0	0	0	13
Madbury	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Middleton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Milton	16	0	5	0	0	3	24
New Durham	11	0	2	0	0	0	13
Newmarket	8	1	0	0	0	0	9
Northwood	11	0	4	0	0	0	15
Nottingham	25	1	0	0	0	0	26
Rochester	50	1	22	0	5	0	78
Rollinsford	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
Somersworth	41	3	9	0	2	1	56
Strafford	8	1	1	0	0	0	10
Wakefield	28	0	3	0	0	0	31
Total	304	26	58	2	12	4	406

Other permitting types had varying growth rates. Commercial and industrial permits decreased 45 percent, while manufactured housing permits increased nearly 300 percent from 2018 (Figures 1 and 2). This substantial increase from the year before is very similar to 2015 when Rochester also lead the region in manufactured housing development.

Figure 2 shows building permit issuance trends since 2008. There is a break in the axis to account for single-unit residential values that far outpace other building types. The bridge occurs on the Y axis between 70 and 180 permits issued.

The input costs of construction rose drastically in 2020 because of the pandemic and nationwide supply chain strain. Dover and Rochester experienced their lowest output of living units, particularly multi-family units, since 2016 due to these increased costs and low labor availability in late 2020.

Figure 2. Regional Change in Permits Issued for New Construction (2008 to 2020)

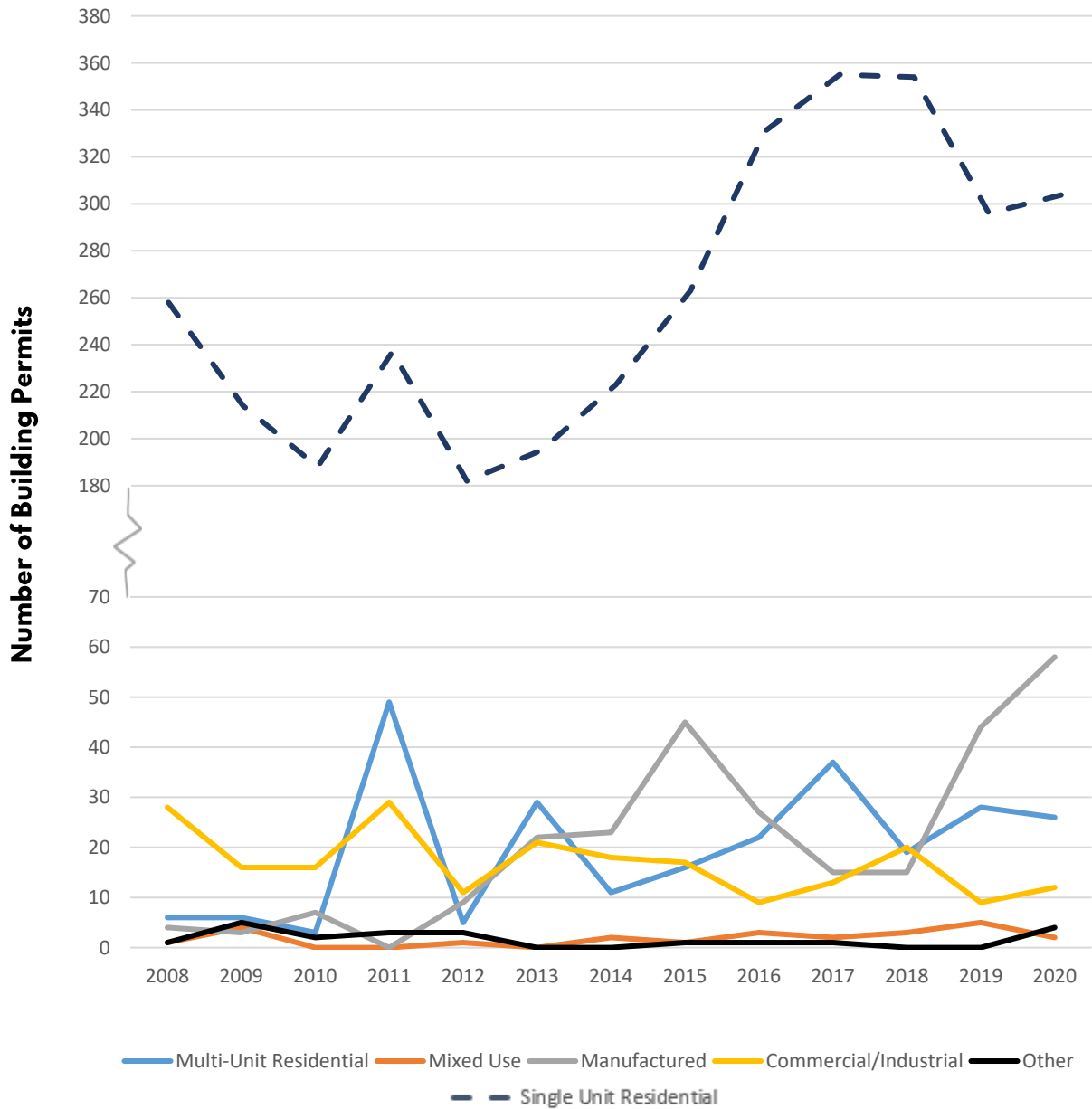
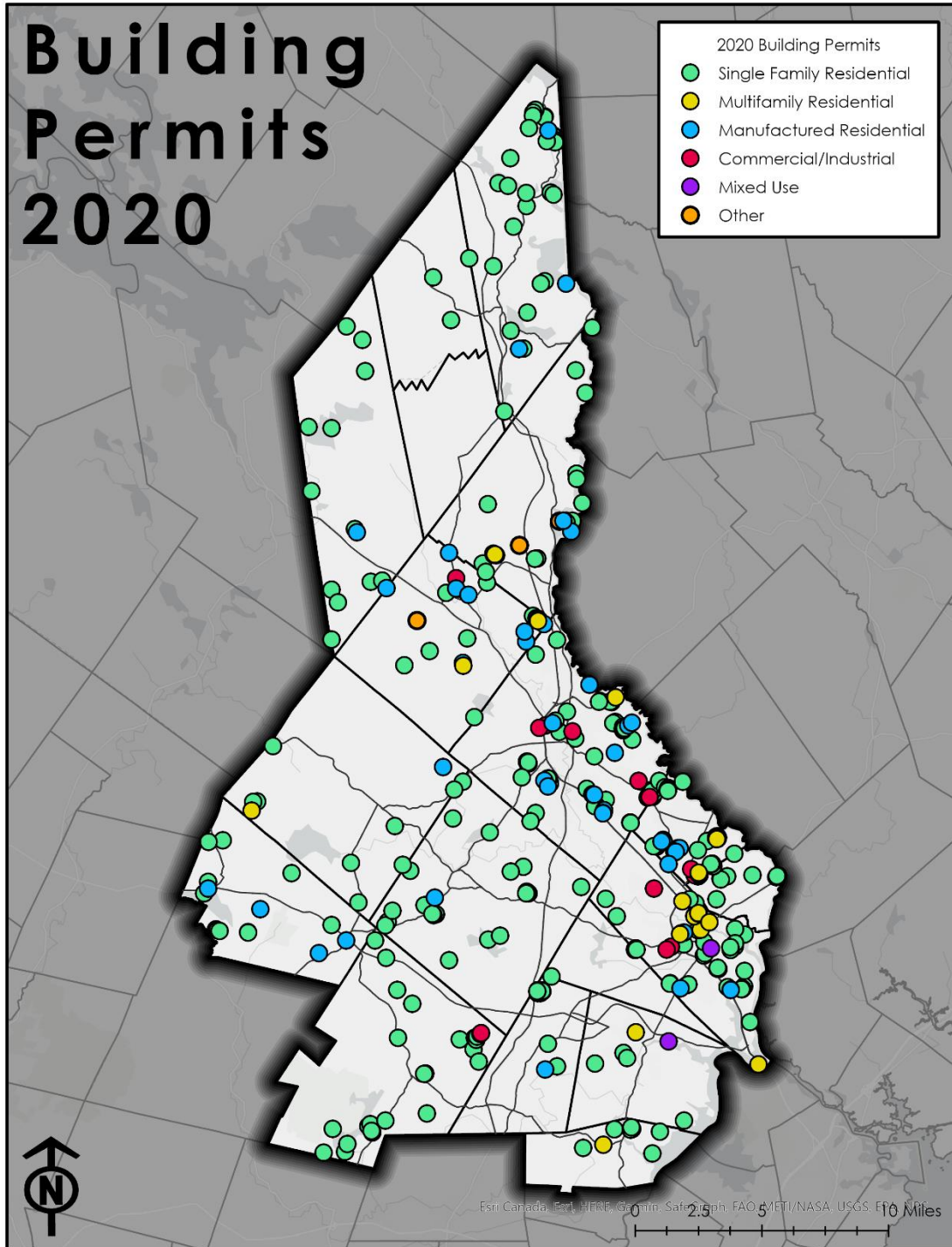


Figure 3 shows the locations of all new building projects in 2020. Please note that points represent only the location of new projects and do not indicate project density.

Figure 3. New Construction in the Stafford Region by Building Type (2020)



A CLOSER LOOK

As previously noted, municipalities in the Strafford region issued 406 building permits during 2020. Multi-family housing units saw a further decline in 2020 compared to last year, likely due to the pandemic's effect on building. The region now has seen a 46 percent decrease of new multi-family units compared to 2018 leading to 40 percent of the total units built in region in 2020 labeled as "multi-family" compared to 57 percent in 2018. Region-specific data is presented in Figures 4 and 5. For information on housing units by municipality and year, see the appendix below.

Figure 4 shows the number of multi-family units added to the Strafford region each year between 2011 and 2020 while Figure 5 shows municipalities that added multi-family units in 2020.

Figure 4. Number of Multi-Family Housing Units in the Strafford region (2011-2020)

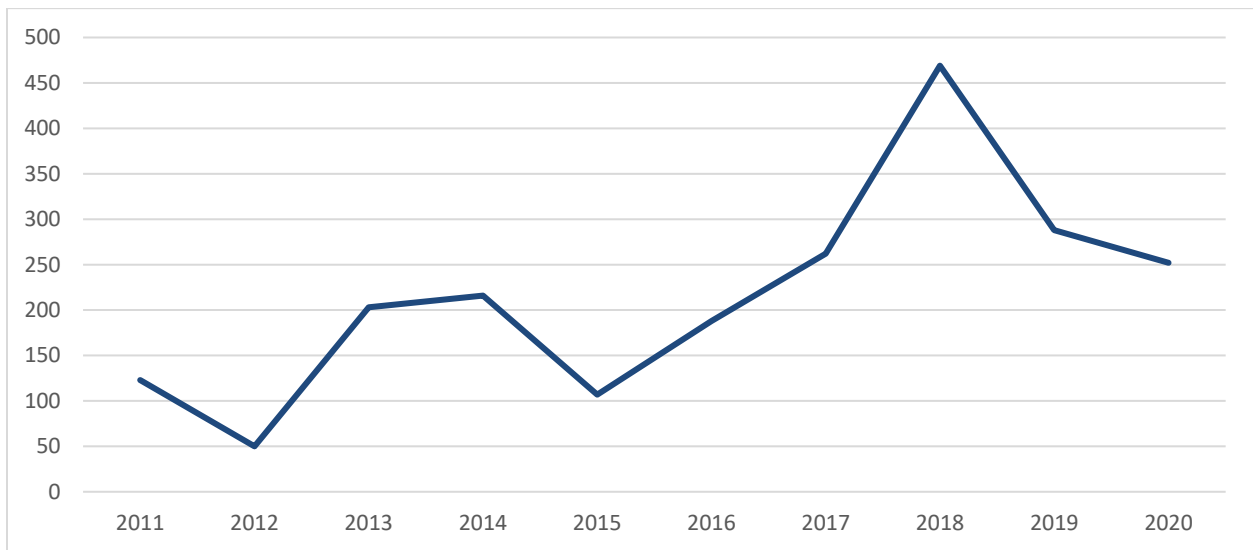
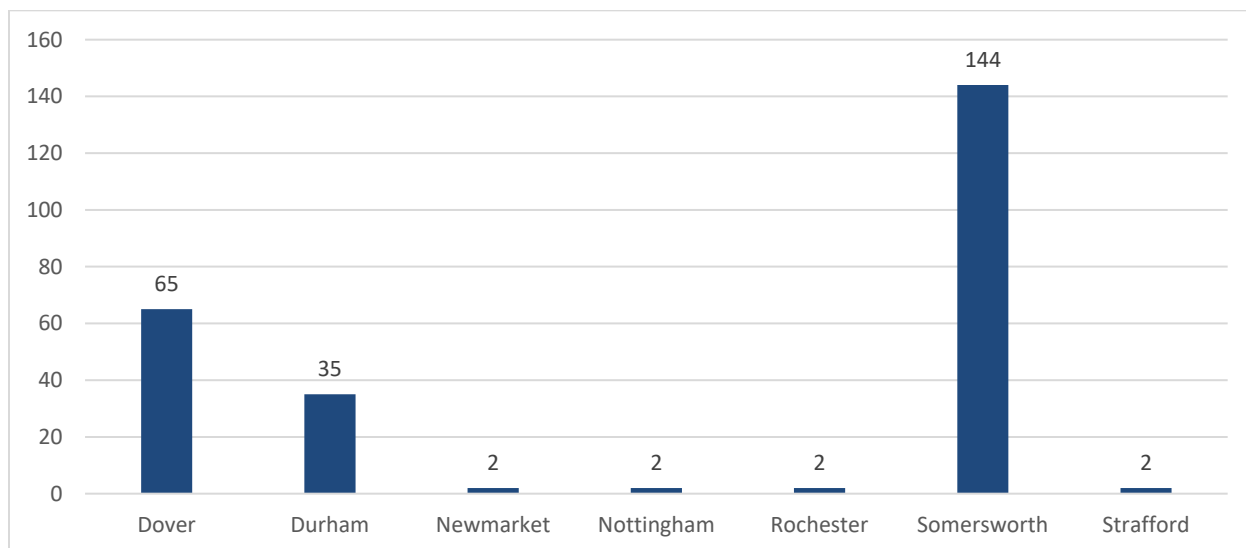


Figure 5. Number of Multi-Family Housing Units in the Strafford region (2020)



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Between 2008 and 2010, single-family home construction decreased by approximately 27 percent and commercial/industrial construction decreased by approximately 40 percent. Construction of other building types remained relatively unchanged during this period. Data on building permits issued in 2010 was not available for all communities, so estimates were calculated from annual municipal reports.

Single-family and multi-family residential construction rose significantly in 2011 and again in 2013. The period saw a string of new multi-family developments in Durham, including the Cottages of Durham (2011), The Lodges at West Edge (2013), and two additional developments in its downtown (2014). These projects were built by private developers to provide off-campus housing options for University of New Hampshire (UNH) students. Between 2011 and 2014, Durham added 480 living units, 430 of which were in the immediate area surrounding UNH. Regionwide, new construction has risen steadily since 2012; manufactured housing spiked in 2020. In years when Durham did not see large growth in multi-unit developments, Dover and Rochester made comparable strides. Dover added 601 multi-family units between 2015 and 2020, while Rochester added 402. Somersworth has also contributed very recently adding 144 units in 2020. This is in direct contrast to 2011, a year where no multi-family units were added (see Appendix A).

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Our data collection efforts have uncovered a growing trend in home conversions, alterations, and addition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as well as new development. 2018 was the first year that SRPC asked municipalities to report ADUs, conversions, and demolitions in addition to the standard data collected. This information is still being collected and reporting will begin when a statistically significant baseline of historic context can be built. By reporting on this data, SRPC

will be able to provide a more accurate snapshot of the existing housing stock in the Strafford Region, as well as track new development trends. ADUs have been cited as a way for municipalities to increase their housing stock without ceding large tracts of land to apartment blocks and encouraging citizen participation. Common examples of ADUs include above-garage living units (both attached and unattached), finished basement apartments, and “in-law” suites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Past collection of building permit data has been hindered by low levels of detail in structure descriptions, missing locations, and delayed receipt of permit data from municipalities. In order for this data to remain comprehensive, useful, and timely, SRPC encourages the following for building permit reporting:

- Keep permit data file in a digital format, such as an Excel spreadsheet. This creates continuity in the event of staff turnover as well as easy file submission.
- Ensure that the address on the building permit is accurate and complete. The address **must** include either the house number and street name **and/or** the map and lot number.
- Be as accurate and detailed as possible in the description of the structure. For residential permits, specify the type, such as manufactured, modular, duplex, or condo.
- Include both the previous and future land use if the permit is for a conversion or demolition.
- Include building square footage or change in square footage in the case of a demolition or conversion.

USING SRPC MAPS

An interactive version of 2008-2020's building permits can be found [online](#). Clicking on any point will reveal information such as permit type, number of units, municipality, and zip code. You can query by year and municipality by clicking on the bar graphs on the right-hand side of the dashboard. Permit addresses are geocoded to the building locations provided by each municipality and color coded based on building type.

CONTACTING SRPC

SRPC is always looking to improve data collection and delivery. For reporting building permit data, SRPC files the original document sent by each municipality's building inspector, an excel of permit data by community, and a copy of this report. If you would like access to this data or have any questions or suggestions about how this report could better help you or your community, please contact the SRPC office at 603-994-3500 and ask for the transportation staff, or send an email to srpc@strafford.org.

APPENDIX:

Appendix A: Table 2. Strafford Region Multi-Family Units Added

Appendix B: Table 3. Strafford Region's Number of Living Units Added

Appendix C: Pictures of Large New Construction

APPENDIX A

Table 2. Multi-Family Units by Municipality including mixed-use

Municipality	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Barrington	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brookfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dover	7	19	40	18	27	3	138	223	145	65
Durham	112	19	133	178	6	61	0	150	0	35
Farmington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	2	0
Lee	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Madbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Middleton	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	-
Milton	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
New Durham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newmarket	0	0	4	0	14	46	4	4	19	2
Northwood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nottingham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Rochester	2	12	20	18	58	62	110	55	115	2
Rollinsford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0
Somersworth	0	0	4	0	0	14	0	0	0	144
Strafford	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	2	2
Wakefield	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	5	0
Total	123	50	203	216	107	188	262	469	288	252

APPENDIX B

Table 3: Strafford Region's Number of Living Units Added

Municipality	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Barrington	22	19	26	31	36	47	49	47	19	24
Brookfield	1	0	2	0	0	2	4	5	6	3
Dover	58	91	106	82	72	73	203	268	189	101
Durham	172	25	154	186	15	66	2	158	7	38
Farmington	8	3	9	7	6	7	8	30	9	27
Lee	5	2	4	3	6	13	19	5	25	13
Madbury	2	5	0	3	4	3	8	9	2	1
Middleton	3	0	1	0	8	5	2	6	0	-
Milton	8	1	3	3	2	14	10	13	12	24
New Durham	2	4	0	0	8	9	0	14	16	13
Newmarket	5	6	5	10	35	81	28	29	38	10
Northwood	10	10	6	7	20	26	23	17	17	15
Nottingham	9	8	12	26	30	25	21	26	37	27
Rochester	32	43	70	70	143	114	186	116	174	74
Rollinsford	0	3	1	2	8	7	10	25	4	11
Somersworth	3	3	11	6	11	39	22	13	28	194
Strafford	11	8	6	10	8	12	18	20	17	11
Wakefield	10	10	7	14	12	16	19	26	23	31
Total	361	241	423	460	424	559	632	827	624	617

APPENDIX C

Photos:

















