

## SECTION 4. HOUSING

### INTRODUCTION

Housing characteristics within a community is an important consideration of the comprehensive plan. The documentation of housing development trends, availability of housing, its affordability and condition are important planning considerations. This information will allow decisions to be reached concerning additional provisions for affordable housing and the need for a mixture of housing types.

### CHANGES IN HOUSING STOCK

A twenty percent increase in the year-round housing units occurred between 1990 and 2000, followed by a sixteen percent increase from 2000-2010. The number of new housing units constructed in Poland were lower in the 2000-2010 period than in many of the eight surrounding communities examined.

#### Regional Housing Growth: 1990 - 2010

	1990 Housing Units	2000 Housing Units	2010 Housing Units	2018 Housing Units estimated	# of New Housing Units 2000 - 2010	Percent Growth Rate 2000 - 2010
<b>Poland</b>	1,582	2,316	2,679	2,704	363	15.7%
Auburn	10,229	10,377	11,016	11,220	639	6.2%
Casco	1,136	1,385	2,944	3,159	1,559	112.6%
Mechanic Falls	1,114	1,237	1,299	1,385	62	5%
Minot	565	820	1,056	959	236	28.8%
New Gloucester	1,271	1,806	2,295	2,345	489	27.1%
Otisfield	456	619	1,169	1,218	550	88.9%
Oxford	1,365	1,597	2,170	2,053	573	35.9%
Raymond	1,223	1,675	2,852	2,971	1,177	70.3%

Source: 1990, 2000, 2010 U.S. Census, and 2018 American Community Survey

**HOUSING TRENDS** - Section still to be updated. Discuss with committee importance of data as the town's building permit reporting system doesn't provide reports that easily adapt to this chart.

#### Housing Starts (Based on Fiscal Year) 2000 - 2007

Year	Stick Built	Modular	Mobile Home	Total
2000	28	9	27	64

<b>Year</b>	<b>Stick Built</b>	<b>Modular</b>	<b>Mobile Home</b>	<b>Total</b>
2001	30	7	27	64
2002	40	10	18	68
2003	41	7	18	66
2004	47	8	8	63
2005	48	3	4	55
2006	30	1	3	34
2007	37	1	3	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>455</b>

Source: Town of Poland

**TYPE OF DWELLING UNIT**

Based on information from the US Census the traditional single-family home is the predominate housing type in Poland. The number of multi-family units has only increased by one since 2020. The Census information on mobile homes for 2000 and 2018 is suspect in that it reported a reduction in mobile homes but town records show a strong increase in building permits for this home type.

**OWNER/RENTER PATTERNS**

Renter occupation rates have steadily increased since 1990. In 2018, renters accounted for 18% of all occupied dwelling units, which is up from 11% in 2000.

**Housing, by Type and Occupancy, 1990-2010**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b># Change 2000 - 2018</b>	<b>% Change 2000 - 2018</b>
Total Housing Units	2,316	2,679	2,704	388	16.8%
Single-Family	1,785		2,195	410	23%
Multi-Family	74		75	1	1.4%
Mobile Homes	446		434	-12	-2.7%
Occupied Housing Units	1,845	2,140	2,315	470	25.5%
Owner Occupied Housing	1,636	1,859	1,893	257	15.7%
Renter Occupied Housing	209	281	422	213	101.9%
Vacant Housing Units	471	539	389	-82	-17.4%

Seasonal Housing Units	420	426			
Median gross rent	\$585		\$817		
Median gross rent as percent of household income in prior year	20.6%		N/A in that format		
Median home value	\$103,700		\$182,500		

*Source: 1990, 2000, 2010 Census & 2018 ACS*

## **OCCUPANCY RATES**

Poland's average household size, or the number of people per dwelling units, has been declining sharply in recent decades, going from 3.12 persons per dwelling unit in 1990 to 2.63 in 2000 to 2.4 in 2018 (2.51 for owner-occupied and 1.87 for renter-occupied housing). Despite the opening of the Poland Regional High and Bruce M Whittier Middle Schools in 1999, household size has continued to decline. This trend is also happening regionally and nationally and reflects social changes like smaller families, lower birth rates, single adult households, and elderly independent living.

The decrease in household size has a real impact on housing needs and availability, because more houses are necessary to accommodate the same number of people. For every 1,000 homes in 1980, there were 3,120 occupants. In 2018, 1,000 homes only contained 2,400 occupants. Single person households are growing, therefore there is strong demand for smaller homes. These figures become important as we project the population and the housing demand for the future. If the number of people per home continues to drop then the community will demand not only more houses, but likely smaller ones as well.

## **Occupancy Rate Change Comparison**

	1980	2000	2018
<b>Poland</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>2.40</b>
Auburn	2.65	2.28	2.19
Casco	2.99	2.58	2.40
Mechanic Falls	2.97	2.67	2.36
Minot	3.07	2.82	2.80
New Gloucester	3.01	2.71	2.66
Otisfield	2.82	2.61	3.13
Oxford	3.03	2.66	2.79
Raymond	2.94	2.66	2.41
Androscoggin Co.	2.73	2.38	2.29
State of Maine	2.75	2.39	2.33

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 and 2000, ACS 2018.

## **HOUSING CONDITIONS**

The condition of a community's housing stock is an indicator of its economic vitality. Several methods are available to assess housing conditions including analysis of Census information, questionnaires and physical inspection of individual dwelling units. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. The best being the physical inspection of each dwelling unit. This analysis of the condition of Poland's current housing stock does not rely upon a complete physical survey of all of the Town's dwelling units. It does, however, consider ACS data.

One indicator of housing conditions is the age of the dwelling units. The American Community Survey (2018, 2015) shows 57% of Poland's housing stock as constructed since 1980, this compares to 25% of the total housing stock of Androscoggin County constructed after 1980. If it is assumed that age of a community's housing stock reflects physical condition, then Poland's housing stock should be in better condition than that of overall Androscoggin County because of its younger age.

## **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

Hi committee – this next chart while accurate to what the census and census surveys show, does not appear to provide data we can extrapolate into a pattern. See comments below chart as to where this data comes from. I suspect that asking homeowners what they “think” their home value is has resulted in some fairly inaccurate results. My thought is to not show this data and just use the affordability information provided in the following charts by Maine Housing who under takes in their own survey to get the data they use.

### **Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units**

	2000	2010	2018	Change
Median Value* of Specified Housing Units	\$103,700	\$177,600	\$182,500	
Number of Units Valued at:				
Less Than \$50,000	30	267	206	
\$50,000 - \$99,999	444	219	247	
\$100,000 - \$149,999	291	231	314	
\$150,000 - \$199,999	137	478	327	
\$200,000 - \$299,999	85	432	585	
\$300,000 – 499,999	22	245	200	
\$500,000 - \$999,999	0	59	14	
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0	0	

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2010 and 2018 American Community Survey

\*/ “Value” is the census respondent’s estimate of how much the property would sell for if it were for sale.

Increase in land costs and construction costs, coupled with market conditions, have created a significant affordable housing problem in much of Maine. The general rule for affordability states that housing should be able to be rented or purchased for a reasonable percentage of a household's income. These generally accepted percentages are 28% of gross monthly income for mortgage payments and 30% of gross income

for rental payments (including utilities).

Estimating the amount of affordable housing units required is difficult. A major factor in determining affordable housing need is the income of current or perspective households residing or wishing to reside in Poland. It is clear in the below charts that for many families and individuals already residing in Poland the cost of home ownership or renting is unaffordable. The overall number of housing units at the average household size suggests that there is enough housing for the existing population of Poland, but housing may not be what people desire in terms of its age, size, type of housing, or the price affordable for those who wish to live there. These factors may prevent not just those who live in Poland from continuing to reside there but also those desiring to move to Poland from doing so.

### 2019 Homeownership Affordability Data, Poland

Median Income, annual	\$64,864
Income needed to afford median home price, annually	\$76,888
Income needed to afford median home price, hourly	\$36.97
Home price affordable to median income	\$224,676
Median Home Price	\$266,325
Affordability Index	0.84
Households unable to afford median home, percent	61.2%
Households unable to afford median home, number	1,387

Source: Maine Housing

### 2020 Rental Affordability Data, Lewiston-Auburn Housing Market

Renter Household Median Income, annual	\$34,545
Income needed to afford median 2 BR rent, annual	\$51,177
Income needed to afford median 2 BR rent, hourly	\$24.60
2 BR rent affordable to median income, monthly	\$864
Median 2 BR rent, monthly	\$1,279
Affordability Index	0.68
Households unable to afford median home, percent	69.8%
Households unable to afford median home, number	15,454

Source: Maine Housing.

Notes: Poland specific data was not available for renters. Rents adjusted to include the cost of utilities (heat, hot water, and electricity). The rental affordability index is the ratio of 2-bedroom rent affordable at median renter income to median 2-bedroom rent. An index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable – i.e., a renter household earning area median renter income could not cover the cost of the median 2-bedroom apartment (including utilities) using no more than 30% of gross income.

Based upon information prepared by Maine Housing, the median home price in 2019 is out of reach for 61.2% of households living in Poland, and the median rent of a two-bedroom apartment is unaffordable for 69.8% of the Lewiston-Auburn Housing Market where Poland is located. The Maine State Housing Authority assigned a 2019 affordable housing index for Poland's homeownership at 0.84 and for the regional rental market an index of 0.68. An index of greater than 1.0 indicates the availability of affordable housing in a community, where an index below 1.0 is generally unaffordable. An income of approximately \$76,888 is needed to afford the median sale price of a home in Poland. In 2006, 68% of homes sold in Poland were sold above affordability guidelines. (Shelley is still looking for a place to get this kind of sales data from so this hasn't been updated).

### **FUTURE HOUSING DEMAND**

The Office of the State Economist published a projection of population changes to the year 2036 (they prepared it in 2016). Based on these forecasts, the population will increase to approximately 6,116 by 2031, and using the current household size of 2.4 there will be demand for 2,548 housing units by that population. This exceeds current housing units, but the type of housing desired by a continually shrinking household size and aging population may not be available.

### **FUTURE HOUSING MIX**

Not only is an estimation of total new housing necessary in the comprehensive plan but also the type of year-round housing, owner and rental. While demand for single-family housing remains strong, anecdotal evidence suggests that smaller homes and homes with limited maintenance responsibilities are in demand, and an increase of interest in alternatives to single family homes will increase as the population ages. Town house development under condominium ownership, other low-maintenance home ownership options, and smaller homes will likely be of interest over the planning period.