

AGRICULTURAL & FORESTRY RESOURCES

Keeping Hancock’s working lands productive

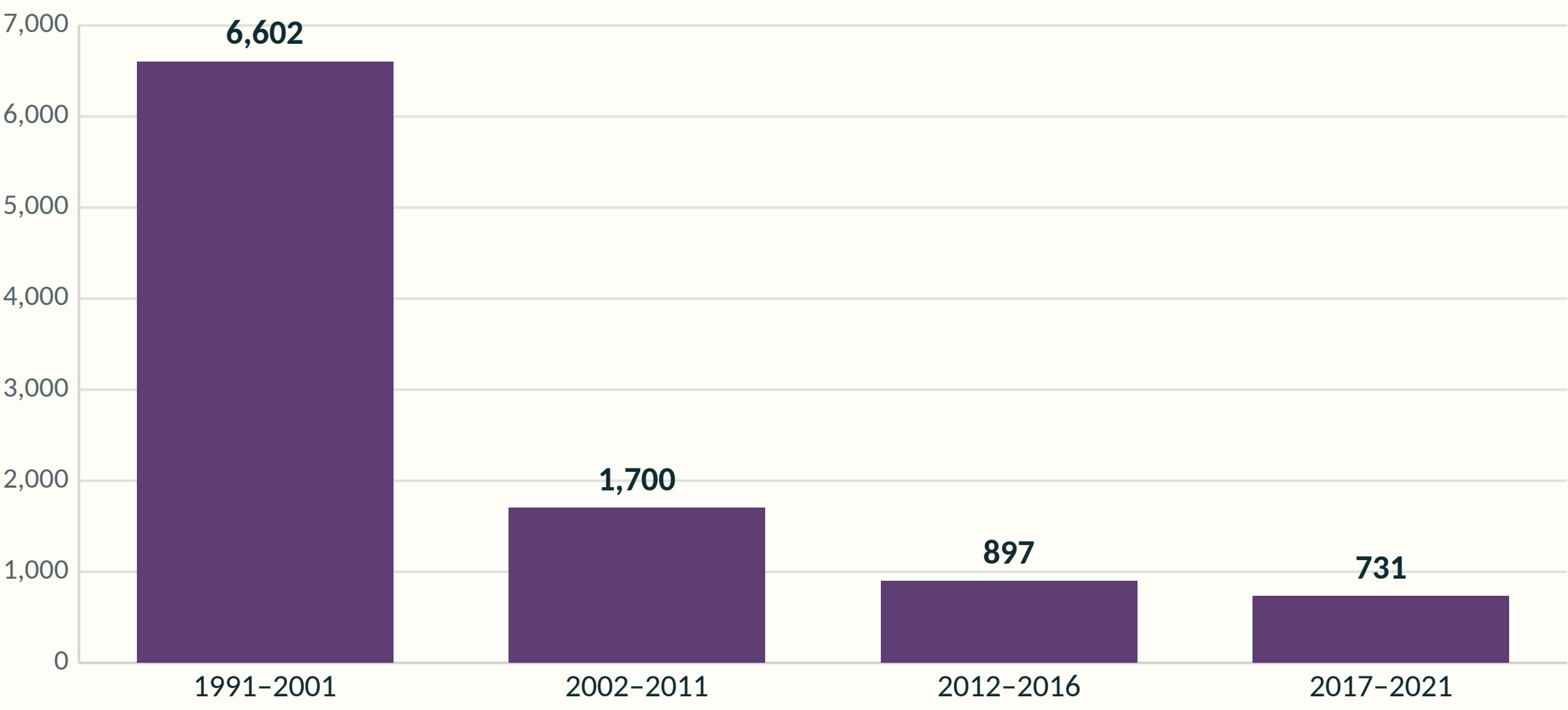
Blueberries remain an economic anchor, while commercial forestry and farmland enrollment have contracted sharply.

KEY FINDINGS

- **–89%**
timber harvest acreage across reporting periods
- **–375.25**
Tree Growth acres, 2022–2025
- **1 → 0**
Farmland Program lots, 2022–2025

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

TIMBER HARVEST ACTIVITY HAS FALLEN SHARPLY

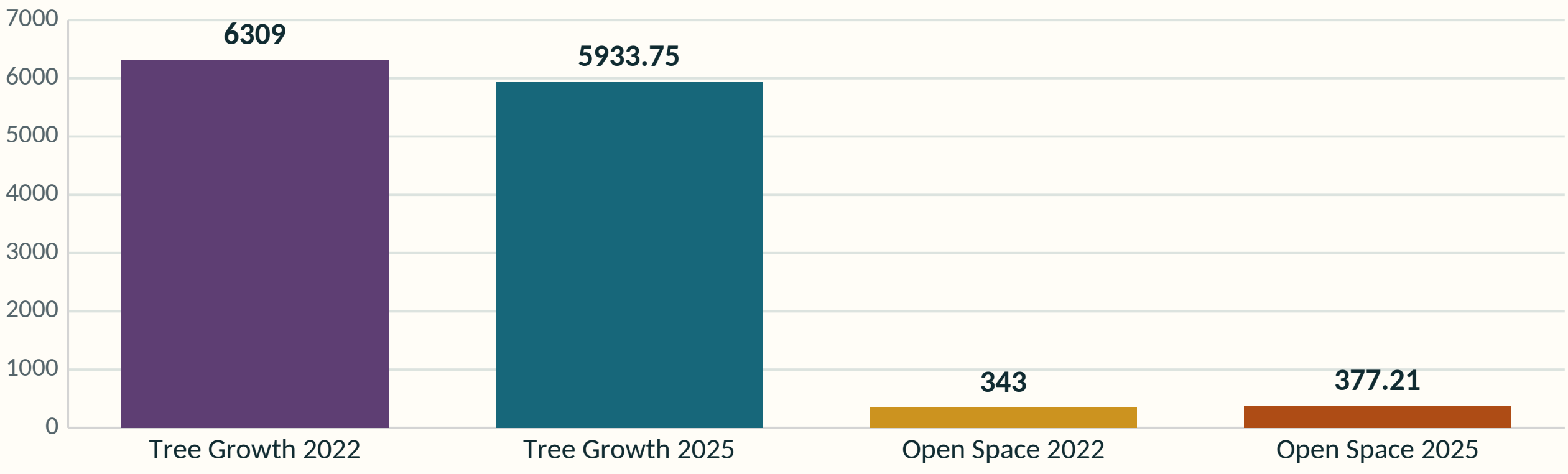


Transportation costs, fewer mills, and the Crobb Box closure weakened commercial harvesting. Firewood is now the main local timber market.

THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

- 2nd** Hancock County’s rank in Maine wild blueberry production
- 2** major blueberry processing operations in Hancock
- 0** mapped agricultural blocks

CURRENT-USE PROGRAMS ARE MOVING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS



WHY THIS MATTERS

Tree Growth still covers about 30% of Hancock, but enrollment declined. Open Space grew modestly while Farmland enrollment fell to zero.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1** Retain productive soils and working forest parcels
- 2** Support blueberry producers, small farms, and local markets
- 3** Encourage sustainable forestry and current-use participation

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Which finding should most influence Hancock’s priorities over the next ten years?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Preparing today for changing conditions

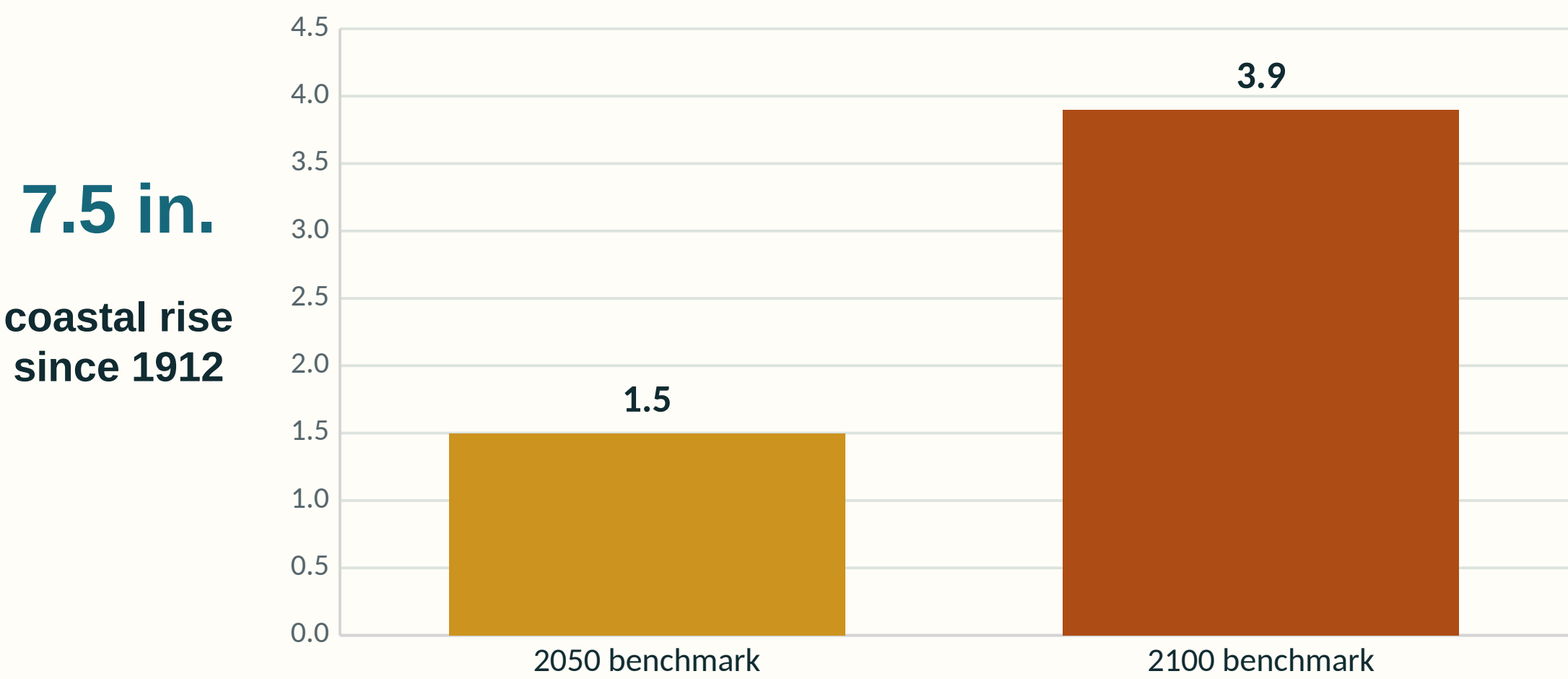
Resilience means reducing future damage by integrating climate risk into land use, infrastructure, emergency readiness, and capital investment.

KEY FINDINGS

- >3°F**
increase in Maine’s average temperature since 1900
- +6 in.**
annual precipitation increase over a century
- 1.5 ft**
sea-level planning benchmark for 2050

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

SEA-LEVEL PLANNING BENCHMARKS RISE OVER TIME



Maine’s intermediate scenario recommends managing for 1.5 feet by 2050 and 3.9 feet by 2100, relative to 2000.

THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

- 2–4×** more extreme-heat days by the 2050s
- 2 weeks** longer growing season than historically
- 2023–24** severe winter-storm damage years

CLIMATE RISK MOVES THROUGH CONNECTED SYSTEMS

CHANGING CONDITIONS

heavier rain • stronger storms • drought • rising seas

EXPOSED SYSTEMS

culverts • coastal roads • wells • facilities • shorelines

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

service disruption • repair costs • water risk • access loss

LOCAL SIGNALS

Wells ran dry in 2025. A Thorsen Road culvert is mapped at high flood risk. Carter’s Beach Road washed out in 2024.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1** Screen capital projects and land-use decisions for future climate risk
- 2** Upgrade vulnerable culverts, drainage, coastal roads, and backup power
- 3** Protect wetlands, forests, shorelines, groundwater, and lower-risk growth areas

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Which resilience investment should Hancock prioritize first?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding a changing community

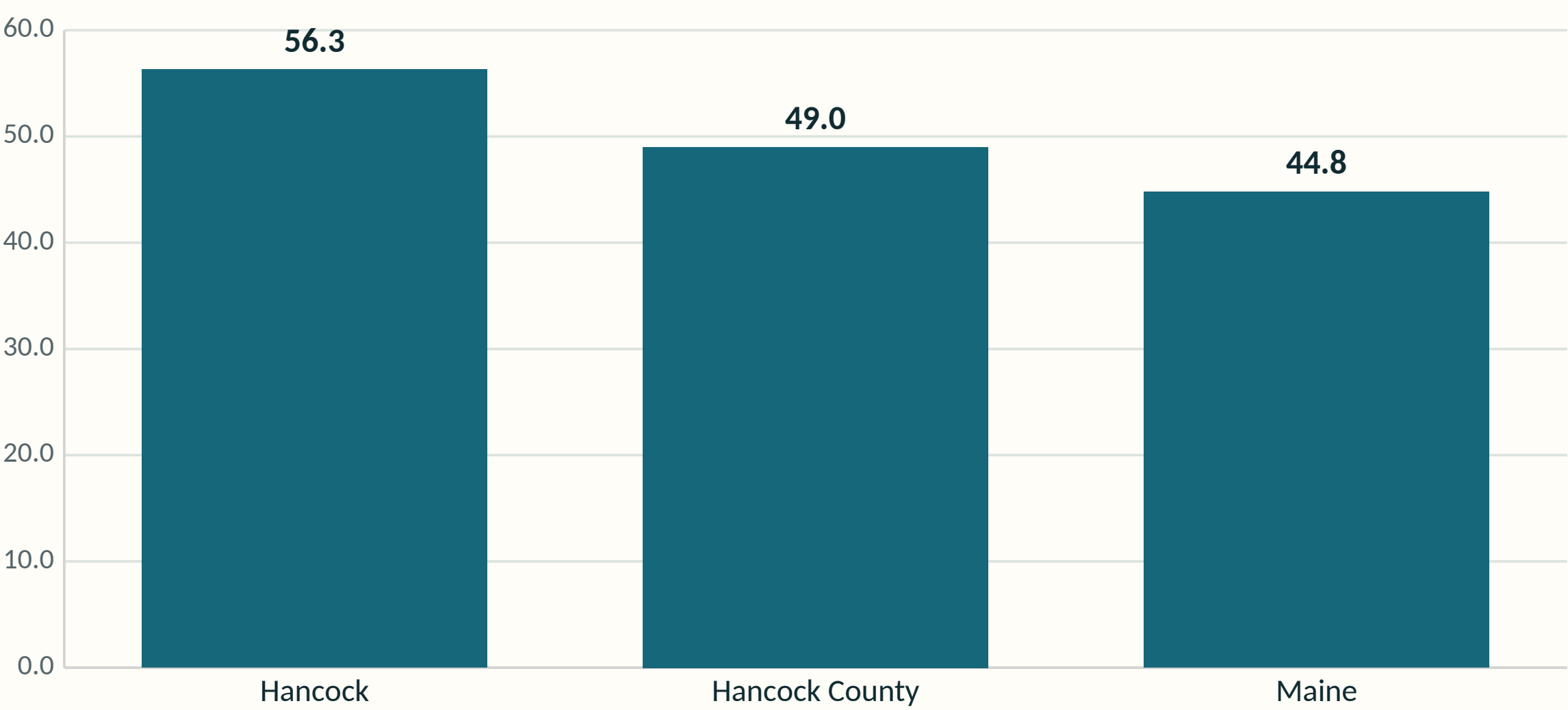
Hancock’s population is stable today, but it is older and increasingly dependent on in-migration.

KEY FINDINGS

- **56.3**
median age—11.5 years above Maine
- **30.2%**
of residents are age 65+
- **+466**
estimated net migration, 2011–2024

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

HANCOCK IS OLDER THAN THE COUNTY AND STATE



Residents age 65+ increased 47.2% from 2014 to 2024, affecting housing, health services, recreation, and volunteer capacity.

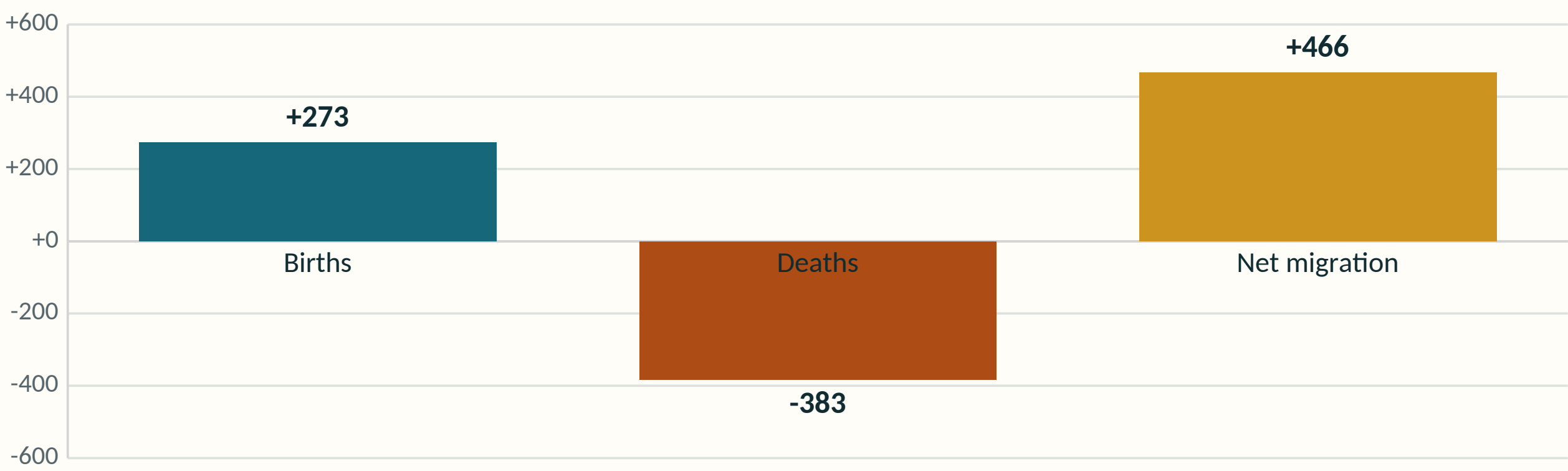
THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

2,518 year-round residents (2024)

205 → 188 school enrollment, 2019–2025

1,079 estimated seasonal population

MIGRATION MORE THAN OFFSET NATURAL POPULATION LOSS



WHY THIS MATTERS

From 2011–2024: 273 births – 383 deaths + 466 net migration = an estimated net gain of 356 residents.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1** Attract and retain working-age residents and families
- 2** Plan housing and services for an older population
- 3** Prepare institutions for seasonal demand and long-term decline

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Which finding should most influence Hancock’s priorities over the next ten years?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

ECONOMY

Connecting local strengths to regional opportunity

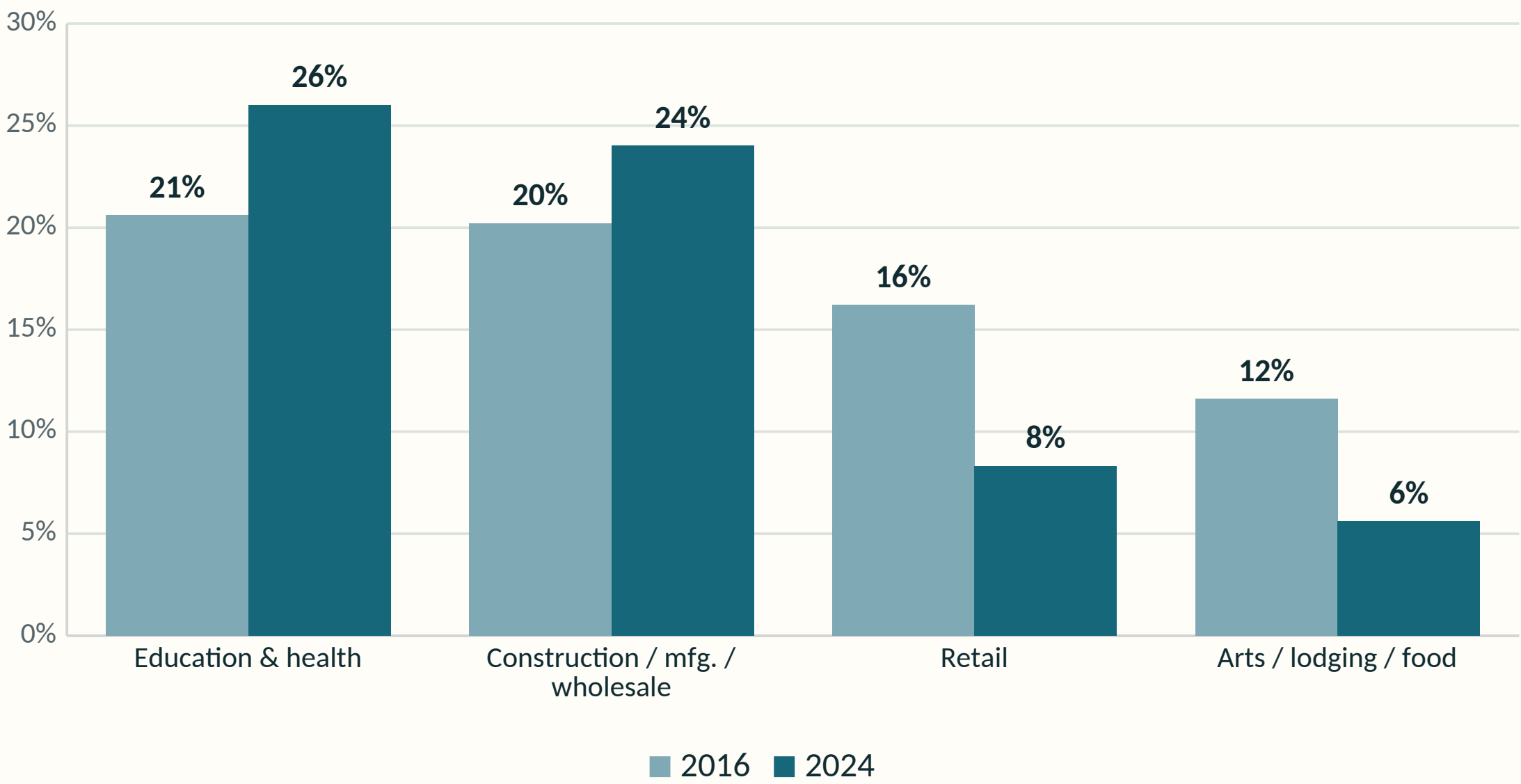
Hancock’s economy is anchored by education, healthcare, construction, and building supplies—while most residents depend on jobs across the county.

KEY FINDINGS

- **50%** of 2024 workers were in the two largest sector groups
- **\$41.47M** in taxable retail sales in 2024
- **71.2%** of employed residents worked in Hancock County (2023)

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

EMPLOYMENT SHARES SHIFTED, 2016–2024



Education and healthcare gained 5.4 percentage points; retail lost 7.9.

Shares of employed civilians; ACS 5-year estimates. Sector labels condensed.

THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

\$24.38M building-supply sales in 2024—58.5% of town taxable sales

\$72,285 median household income in 2024 (not adjusted for inflation)

+4.6% change in employed civilians, 2016–2024

HANCOCK’S WORKFORCE IS PART OF A REGIONAL JOB MARKET



Share of employed Hancock residents by workplace, 2023

WHY THIS MATTERS

Only 5.7% worked in Hancock itself. Reliable connections to Ellsworth, Bar Harbor, and other county job centers are part of local economic opportunity.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1** Support established and emerging year-round businesses
- 2** Connect residents to regional jobs, training, and services
- 3** Reserve suitable commercial and industrial land for compatible growth

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

What type of year-round business or employment opportunity should Hancock work to support?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

EXISTING LAND USE

Guiding growth while retaining Hancock’s rural landscape

Most land remains undeveloped, while homes and businesses are concentrated along Route 1, Route 182, and the Ellsworth edge.

KEY FINDINGS

88.18%

of mapped land cover is undeveloped

6,311

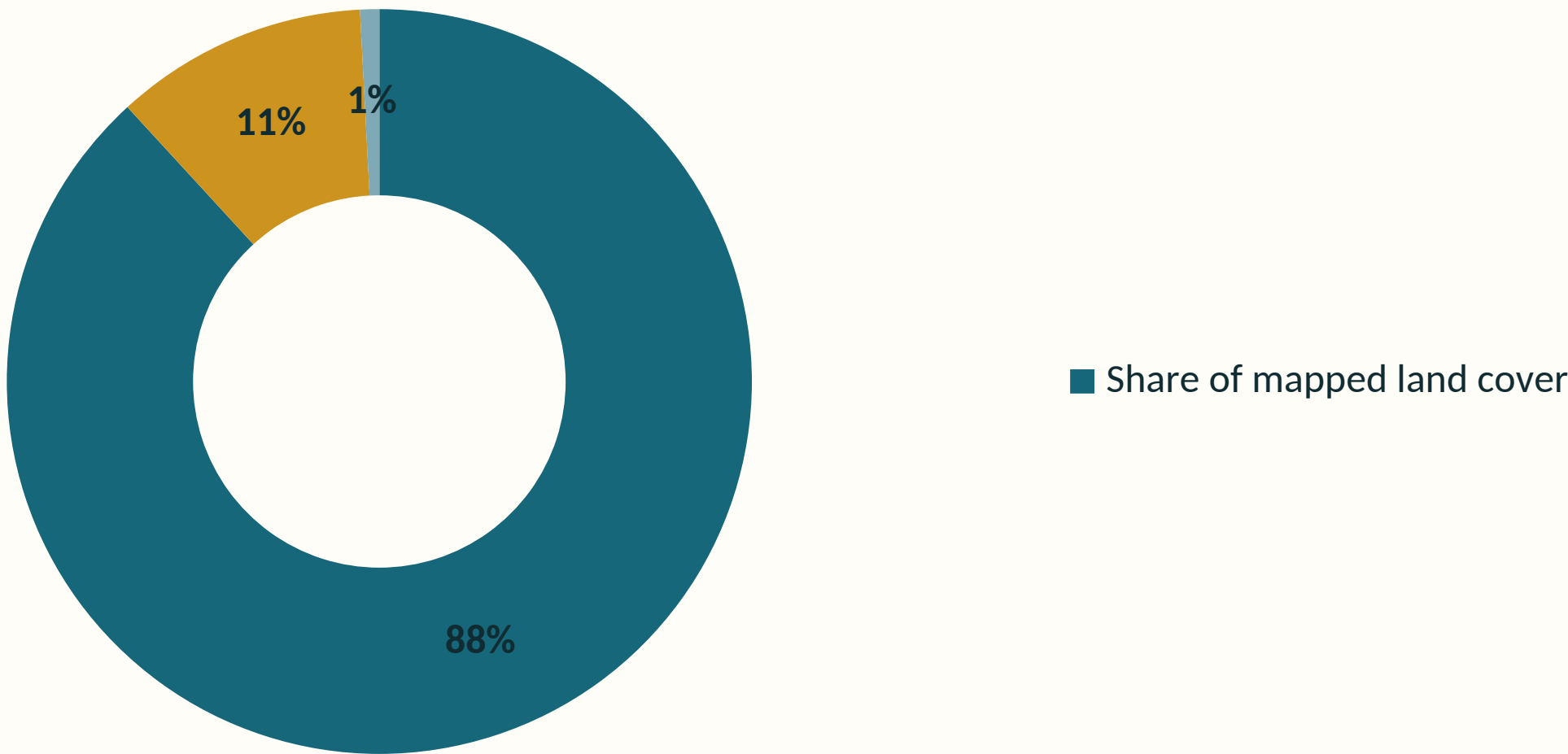
acres in Tree Growth or Open Space programs

1994

year the current zoning map was adopted

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

MOST OF HANCOCK’S MAPPED LAND COVER IS UNDEVELOPED



LAND COVER: 88.18% UNDEVELOPED | 10.99% DEVELOPED | 0.83% OPEN WATERCOURSES

Source: USGS National Land Cover Database, as presented in the draft chapter.

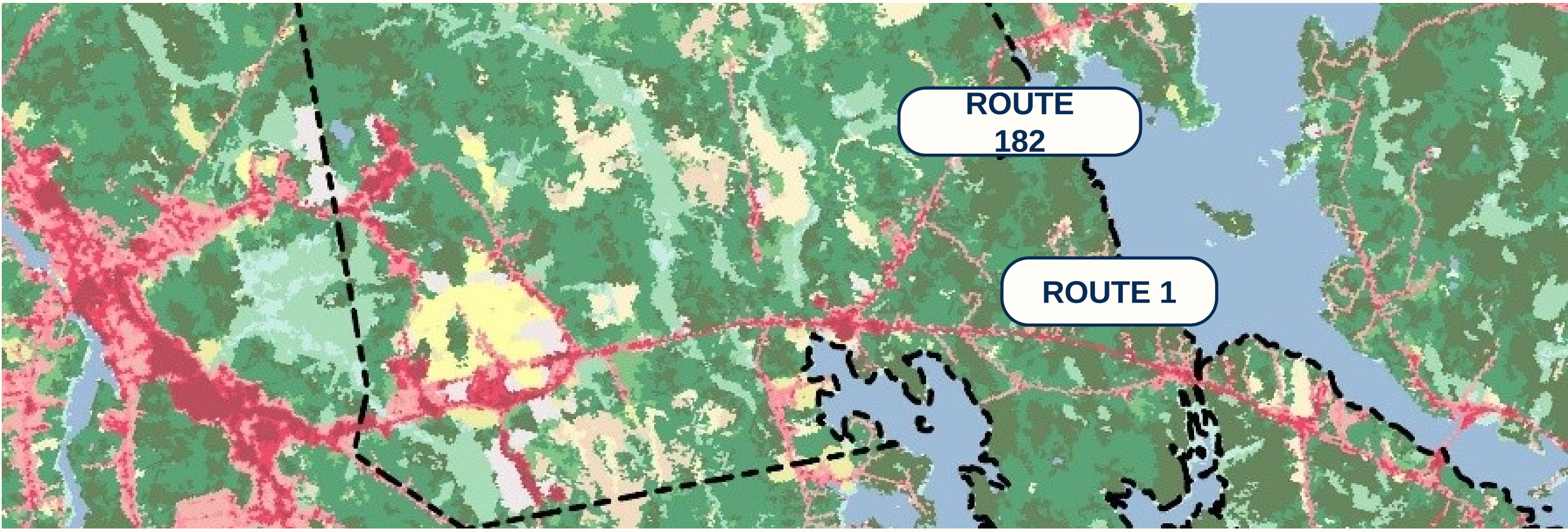
THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

38.87 total square miles

30.04 square miles of land

8.83 square miles of water

DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWS ROUTE 1 AND ROUTE 182



Focused USGS land-cover map from the draft chapter; town boundary shown with a dashed line.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Route 1 and Route 182 carry most visible development. Future zoning can direct compatible growth toward established corridors while protecting rural areas and sensitive resources.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1 Update the zoning map and resolve unclear or unmatched district designations
- 2 Modernize ordinances for state compliance, consistency, and user friendliness
- 3 Direct compatible growth toward established corridors and suitable serviced areas

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Where should Hancock accommodate future growth—and which rural areas should remain largely undeveloped?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Responsible stewardship for a resilient town

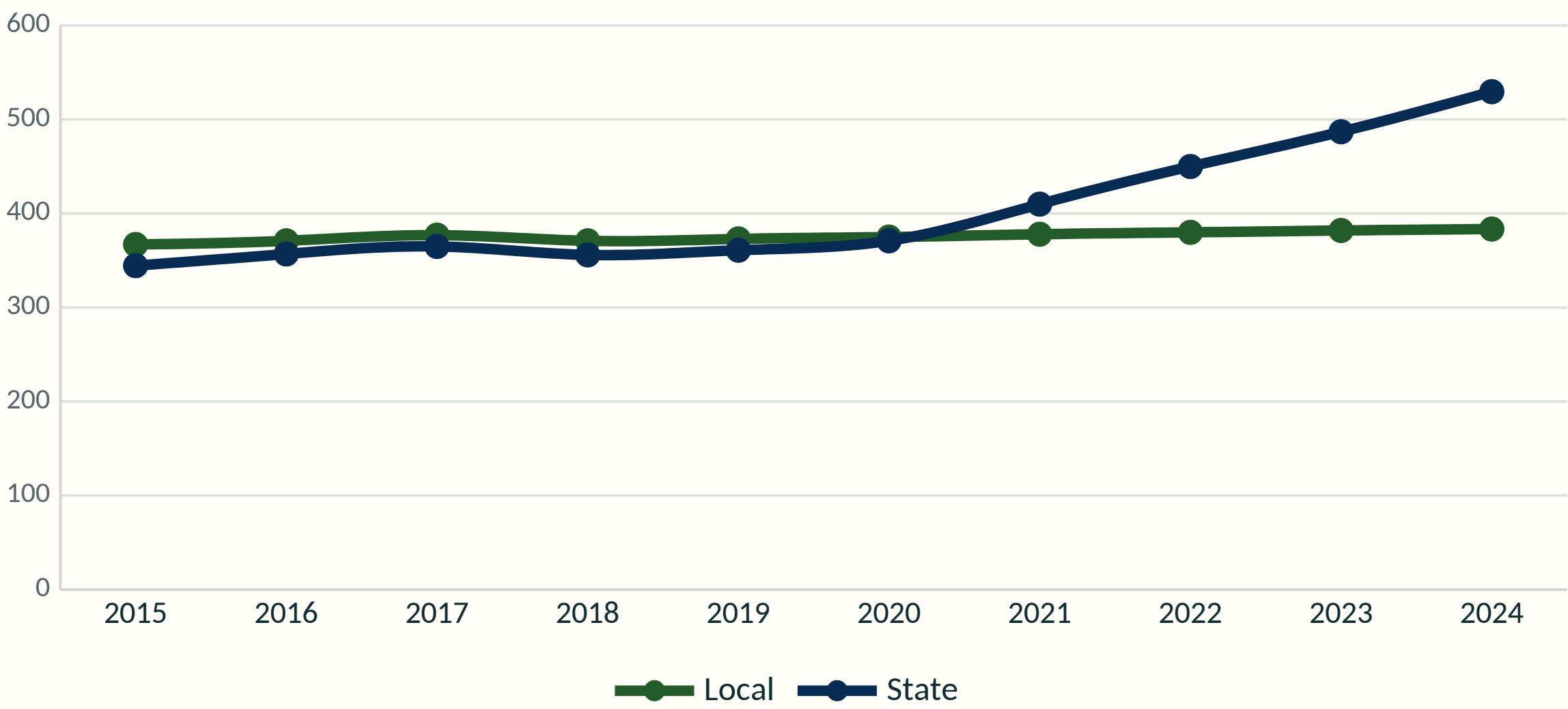
Hancock’s central fiscal challenge is not simply spending—it is aligning fast-changing costs and state valuation with slower local valuation growth.

KEY FINDINGS

- +4.48%
local valuation growth, 2015–2024
- +53.71%
state valuation growth, 2015–2024
- \$146.1M
state–local valuation gap (2024)

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

STATE VALUATION HAS PULLED AWAY FROM LOCAL VALUATION



Local valuation exceeded state valuation through 2017, then lagged consistently. The gap widened dramatically in 2023 and 2024.

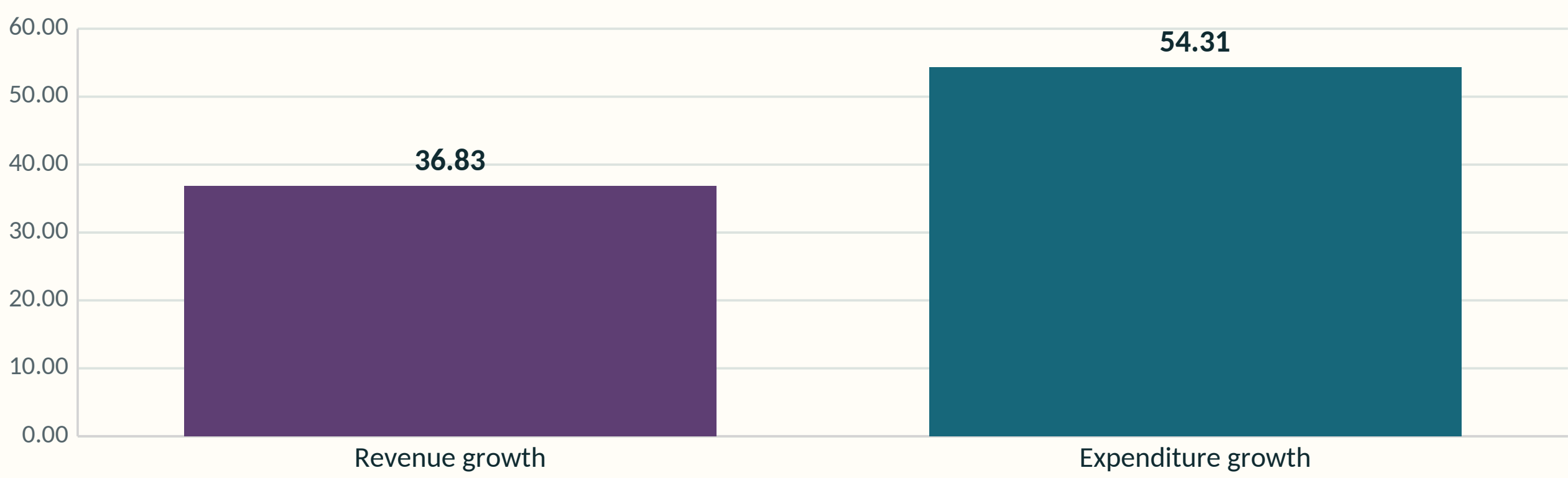
THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

>75%
share of 2024 expenditures attributed to education

0.85–1.25%
property-tax-rate range, 2015–2024

+23.34%
increase in Hancock’s property-tax commitment, 2015–2024

EXPENDITURES HAVE GROWN FASTER THAN REVENUES (%)



WHY THIS MATTERS

From 2018–2024, revenues rose from \$5.43M to \$7.43M while expenditures rose from \$5.04M to \$7.77M.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1 Maintain a multiyear capital improvements program
- 2 Reconcile valuation, revenue expectations, and service costs
- 3 Show residents how fiscal choices connect to services and resilience

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Which finding should most influence Hancock’s priorities over the next ten years?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Preserving heritage while shaping the future

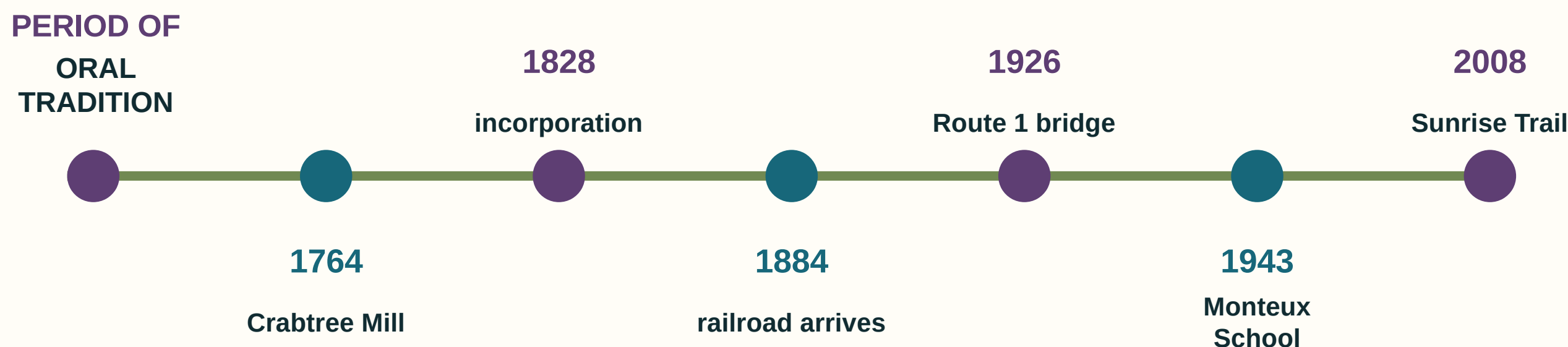
Hancock’s heritage is a living continuum—from Wabanaki homeland to maritime settlement and today’s cultural institutions.

KEY FINDINGS

- 21 documented historic archaeological sites (2024)
- 1828 year Hancock incorporated
- 1943 Monteux School founded

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

A TIMELINE OF HANCOCK’S CULTURAL STORY



WABANAKI PLACES IN HANCOCK

Taunton Bay shell middens • Burying Island • Carrying Place canoe route

Local milestones selected from the chapter and historical inventories.

THREE THREADS OF HANCOCK’S HERITAGE

WABANAKI

homeland extending back thousands of generations

MARITIME

fishing, shipbuilding, lumber, and sailing trade

LIVING CULTURE

music, libraries, trails, churches, and community groups

THE 21 DOCUMENTED SITES REFLECT MANY PARTS OF HANCOCK’S HISTORY

- FORTIFIED SETTLEMENT**
Crabtree Fort
- MILLS**
Crabtree Mill • Kilkenny Stream Grist Mill
- INDUSTRY**
Cline gold-and-silver mine • brickyard
- SHIPWRECK**
Crabtree’s Ship
- MARITIME ACCESS**
Frazer’s Landing • Kilkenny Cove wharves
- TRANSPORTATION**
Carrying Place Canal • railroad bridge

WHY THIS MATTERS

Examples from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission inventory illustrate settlement, domestic life, maritime activity, industry, and transportation. A broader townwide inventory remains a planning need.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1 Recognize Wabanaki history accurately and protect sensitive sites
- 2 Survey buildings, landscapes, sites, and oral histories
- 3 Support adaptive reuse and connect heritage with education and arts

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Which finding should most influence Hancock’s priorities over the next ten years?

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Housing

Homes for every stage of life

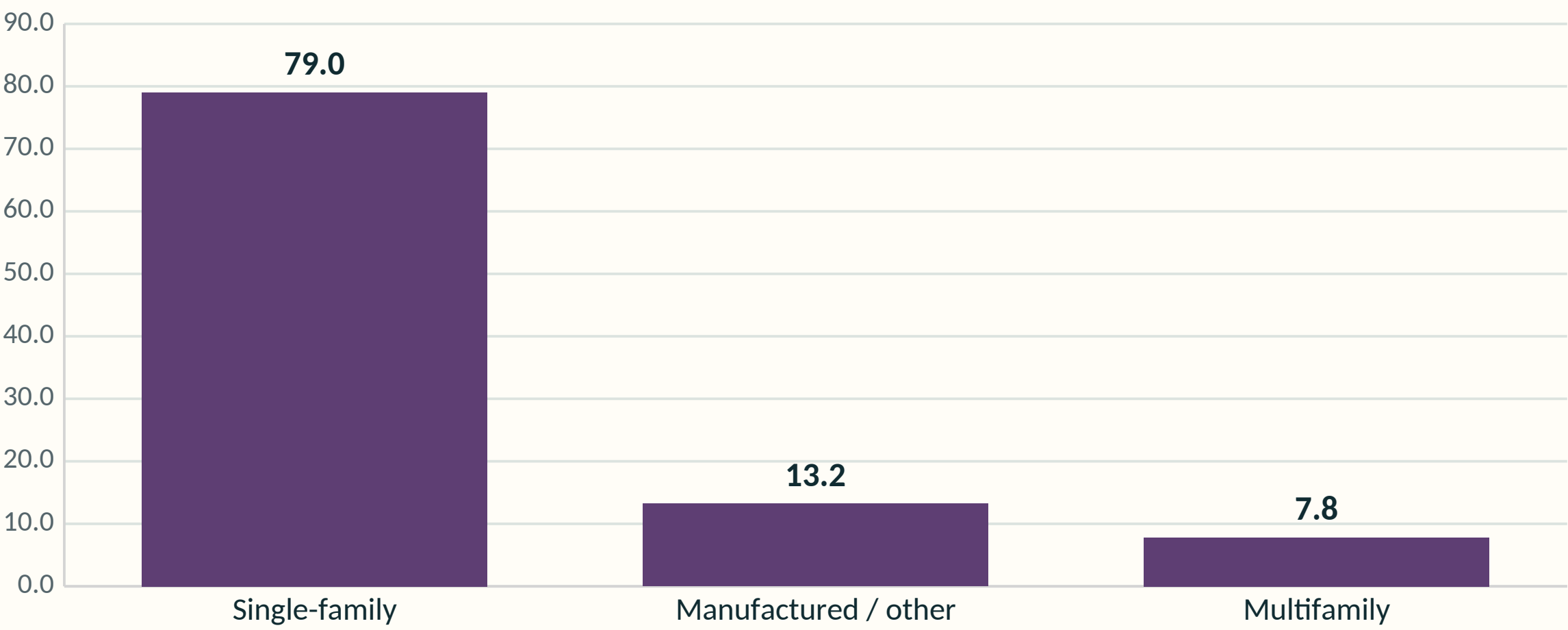
Hancock’s housing stock offers limited year-round choices, while seasonal use and rising costs constrain access.

KEY FINDINGS

- 0 vacant homes classified as for rent or sale (2023 ACS)
- 22.4% of all homes seasonally vacant
- +50.6% average rent increase over a decade

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

HOUSING SUPPLY IS DOMINATED BY SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES (%)



THE SUPPLY MISMATCH

- 11% studio or one-bedroom
- 91 occupied multifamily homes
- 20.5% built before 1940

THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

\$353,000 median home value (2023)

\$1,158 average monthly rent

3,700 additional Hancock County homes needed by 2030

VACANT DOES NOT MEAN AVAILABLE

1,500 TOTAL HOMES

1,117

OCCUPIED • 74.5%

929 owner | 188 renter

383

VACANT • 25.5%

87.7% seasonal | 0 classified available

WHY THIS MATTERS

Of 383 homes classified as vacant, 87.7% were seasonal; none were classified as available for rent or sale in the 2023 ACS.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1 Diversify small, multifamily, and manufactured housing
- 2 Support year-round rental and ownership opportunities
- 3 Locate growth where infrastructure and resources can support it

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Which finding should most influence Hancock’s priorities over the next ten years?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

NATURAL, WATER & MARINE RESOURCES

Protecting the systems that sustain Hancock

Hancock’s forests, wetlands, groundwater, streams, and coastal waters form one connected resource system.

KEY FINDINGS

- **A largely undeveloped landscape**
88.18% of Hancock’s land remains undeveloped.
- **Large habitat blocks remain**
13 mapped areas over 100 acres total roughly 31,138 acres.*
- **Water quality is strong—but vulnerable**
Hancock’s five named streams meet Class B standards; drinking water relies almost entirely on private wells.
- **The coast faces rising pressure**
Sea-level rise, shoreline development, septic failures, and runoff threaten habitat and water quality.

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

88.18%

of land is undeveloped

31,138

acres in 13 large habitat areas*

2,050+

mapped habitat acres conserved

3

major coastal bays

5 + 1

named streams + Simmons Pond

1 LIVING LANDSCAPES

TWO DISTINCTIVE COMMUNITIES

BLACK SPRUCE WOODLAND

Open-canopy boreal forest on thin, rocky soils—habitat for warblers and woodpeckers.

SALT-HAY SALTMARSH

Tidal cordgrass meadow supporting sparrows, herons, terns, and other shorebirds.

Six wetland types provide flood control, groundwater recharge, shoreline stability, and wildlife habitat.

2 WATER RESOURCES

PRIVATE WELLS ARE ESSENTIAL

Nearly all drinking water comes from bedrock wells. A significant sand-and-gravel aquifer lies along the western edge of town; most other areas have moderate-to-low groundwater yield.

GOOD SURFACE WATER

Kilkenny, Egypt, Spring, Card, and Martins Brooks are Class B streams with good water quality and unimpaired habitat.

3 COAST & MARINE LIFE

A PRODUCTIVE TIDAL ECOSYSTEM

Taunton Bay, the Skillings River, and the eastern Mount Desert Narrows/Frenchman Bay contain mudflats, eelgrass, mussel bars, and clam flats.

17 commercial shellfish licenses (2025)

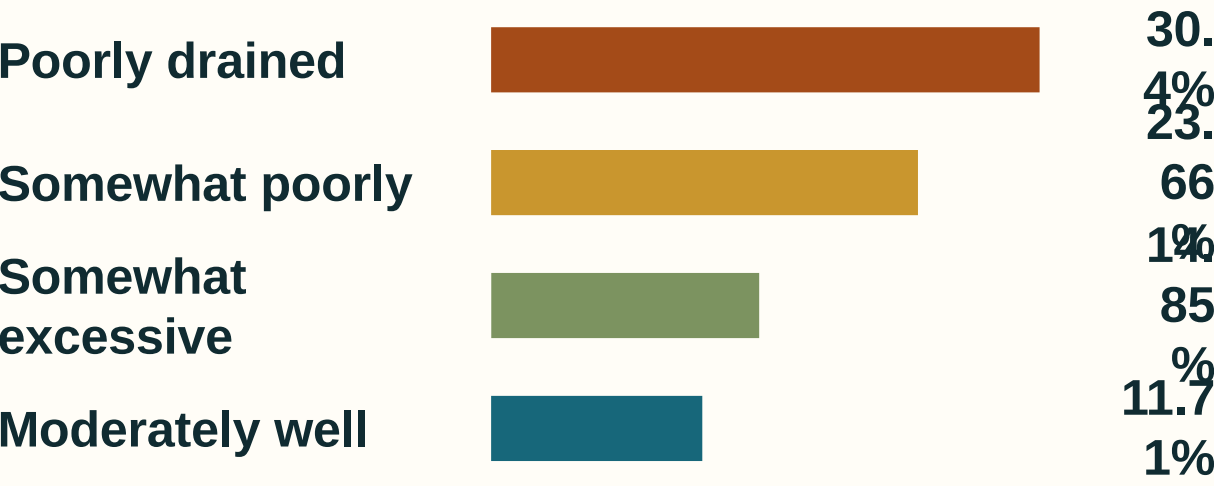
7 towns share regional shellfish management

Egypt Bay remains closed to shellfish harvest due to pollution.

4 LAND & DRAINAGE

Hancock is relatively flat; its highest elevation is 95 feet. Drainage limitations shape both habitat and development.

SOIL DRAINAGE



Route 1 development has altered runoff patterns locally.

5 PROTECTION IN PLACE

LOCAL TOOLS

- Shoreland zoning
- Subdivision review
- Floodplain management
- Aquifer protection overlay
- Water & mineral extraction rules

STATE + FEDERAL

MESA • ESA • Natural Resources Protection Act • Maine Natural Areas Program

6 PRESSURES TO WATCH

- **Development pattern**
Growth outside existing corridors can fragment habitat and increase runoff.
- **Groundwater stress**
Drought, contamination, and saltwater intrusion can reduce well reliability.
- **Coastal change**
Sea-level rise, storm surge, erosion, and habitat migration reshape the shoreline.
- **Pollution sources**
Failing septic systems and runoff threaten streams, wells, and shellfish areas.

LOOKING AHEAD: STEWARDSHIP THAT KEEPS THE SYSTEM CONNECTED

PROTECT

Maintain wetland, stream, shoreland, and habitat buffers as growth occurs.

SAFEGUARD

Use development review, well testing, septic maintenance, and spill prevention to protect groundwater.

ADAPT

Plan for sea-level rise and allow coastal wetlands and wildlife habitat room to migrate inland.

CONNECT

Support regional shellfish restoration and explore broader public and commercial shoreline access.

WHY IT MATTERS

Healthy natural systems protect drinking water, reduce flooding, sustain wildlife and marine livelihoods, and preserve the landscape residents value.

*Mapped habitat areas may extend beyond Hancock’s boundary. Figures and findings are drawn from the draft chapter.

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Connecting people to land, water, and community

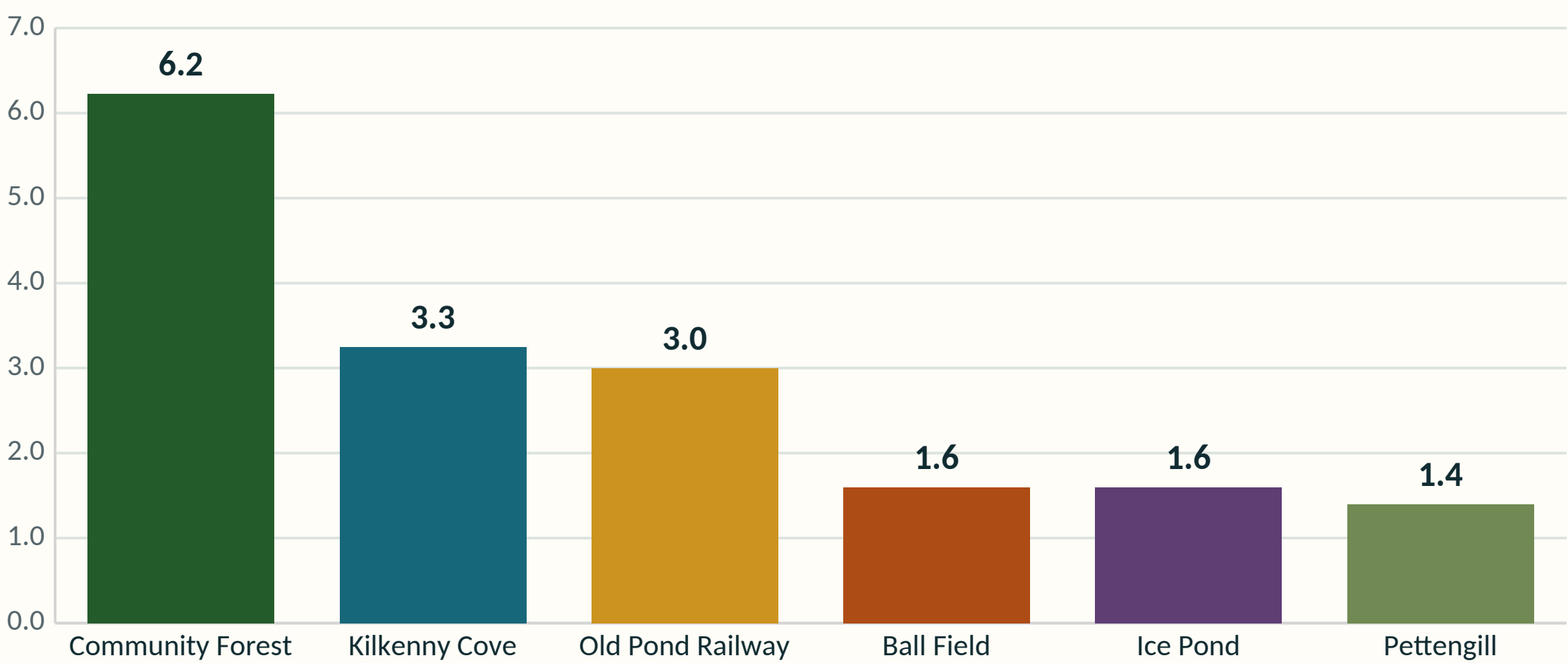
Hancock has extensive conserved land and a varied trail network, while shoreline access remains uneven and sometimes informal.

KEY FINDINGS

- **26%**
of Hancock’s land is conserved to some degree
- **14**
recreation and open-space sites cataloged
- **1,400**
acres acquired as part of the 4,500-acre Frenchman Bay Community Forest

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

DOCUMENTED TRAIL MILEAGE AT SELECTED PRESERVES



Land trusts maintain multiple year-round trail systems for walking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing, hunting, and nature access.

THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

4,987 conserved acres in Hancock

38 community-garden plots

87 miles Downeast Sunrise Trail

HANCOCK OFFERS BROAD RECREATION ACCESS—WITH OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE SHORELINE

LAND

4,987 acres conserved to varying degrees

TRAILS

multiple year-round systems maintained by land trusts

WATER

several access points are informal, limited, or private

WHY THIS MATTERS

Access to the Skillings River, Hancock Point, McNeal Point/Grant Cove, Kilkenny Cove and Stream, Youngs Cove, and northern Taunton River should be improved or secured.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1** Secure and expand public shoreline and water access
- 2** Maintain trails, fields, playgrounds, and conservation partnerships
- 3** Provide recreation and gathering opportunities for all ages

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Where should Hancock prioritize new or improved public recreation access?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Delivering essential services through local capacity and partnership

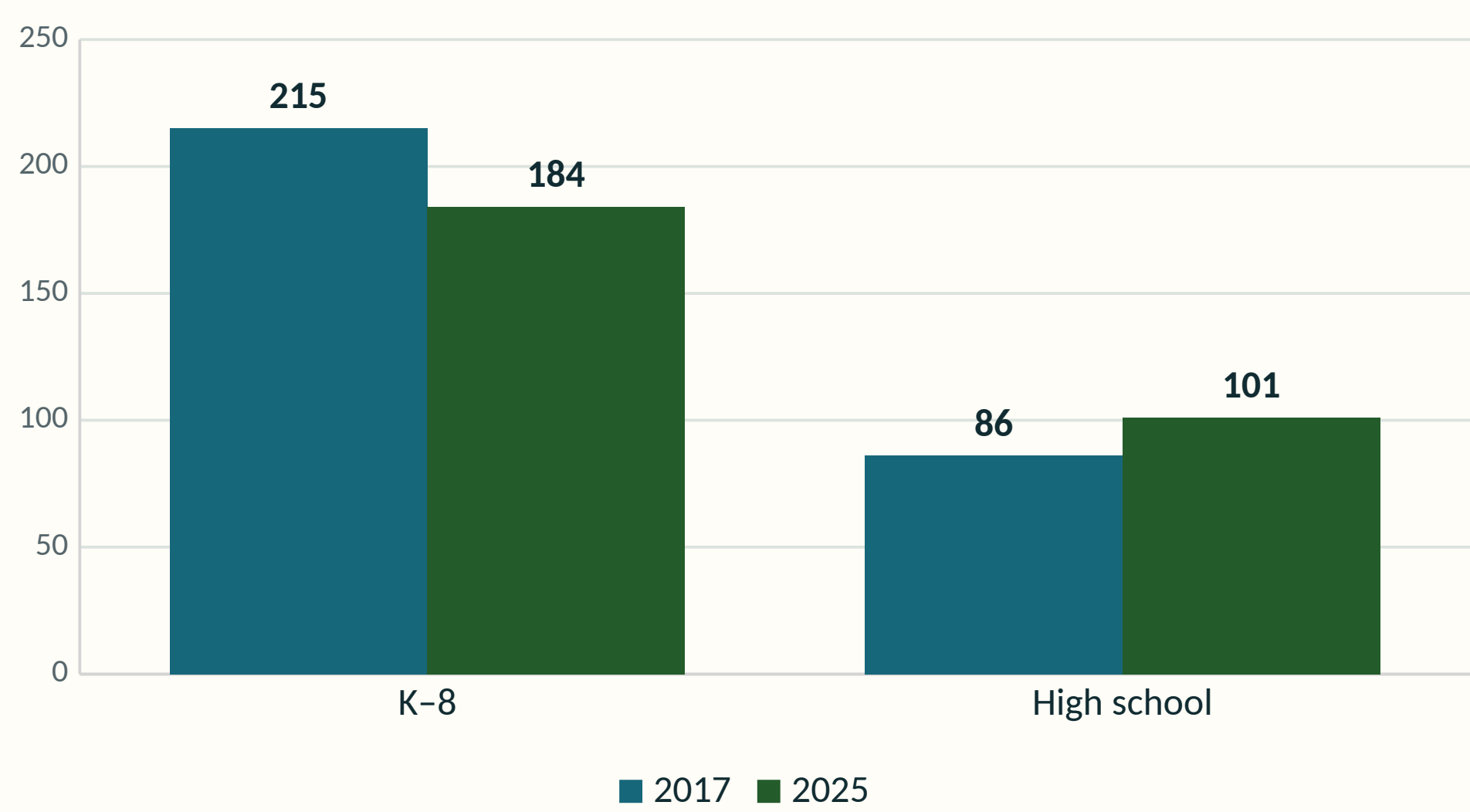
Hancock’s service network is broad, but major facilities and several service gaps require coordinated planning.

KEY FINDINGS

- 604 combined fire and medical calls (2025)
- 18 volunteer firefighters serving the town
- 8th in the state queue for school funding

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

ENROLLMENT SHIFTED BY AGE GROUP, 2017–2025



TOTAL: 301 → 285 | NET CHANGE: –16

K–8 fell by 31, while high-school enrollment increased by 15.

Pre-K added 15 students in fall 2025 and is not included in these totals.

SERVICE CAPACITY AT A GLANCE

604 combined fire and medical calls (2025)

18 volunteer firefighters serving the town

52 school positions serving Pre-K–8

SERVICES EXTEND WELL BEYOND TOWN GOVERNMENT



WHY THIS MATTERS

A new school, town-office upgrades, broadband reliability, and waste-disposal gaps will require capital planning and continued intergovernmental coordination.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1

Plan and fund the new school and town-office improvements
- 2

Sustain volunteer response, mutual aid, and contracted services
- 3

Improve broadband reliability and close solid-waste service gaps

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Which facility or service should Hancock prioritize over the next ten years?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.

TRANSPORTATION

Safer connections along a highway-centered network

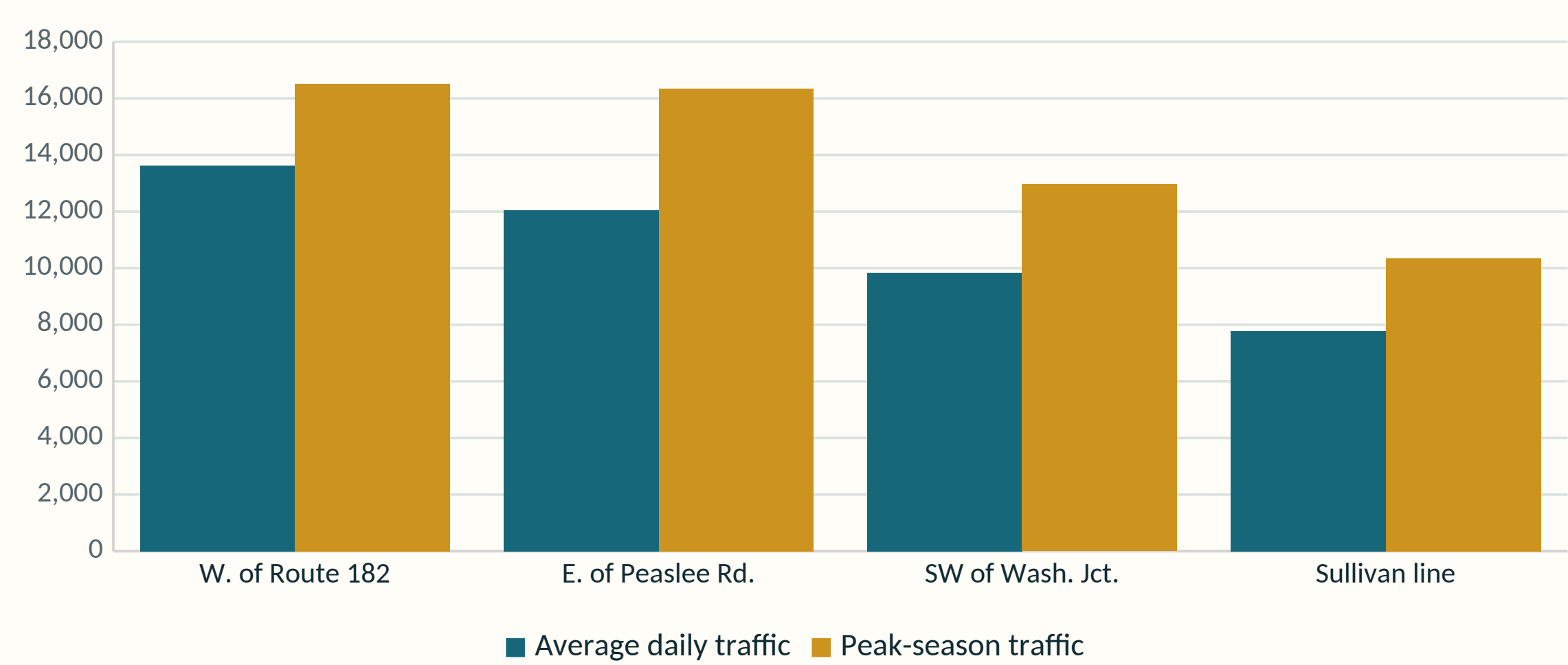
Hancock depends on state highways and personal vehicles, while seasonal traffic and limited walking, biking, and transit options increase vulnerability.

KEY FINDINGS

- **548**
crashes on Hancock roads, 2018–2024
- **93%**
of commuters travel by car or van
- **0**
sidewalks or designated bicycle lanes

DATA SNAPSHOT AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

PEAK-SEASON TRAFFIC ADDS PRESSURE TO ROUTE 1



At major Route 1 count locations, peak-season traffic was 21%–36% above the 2024 daily average.

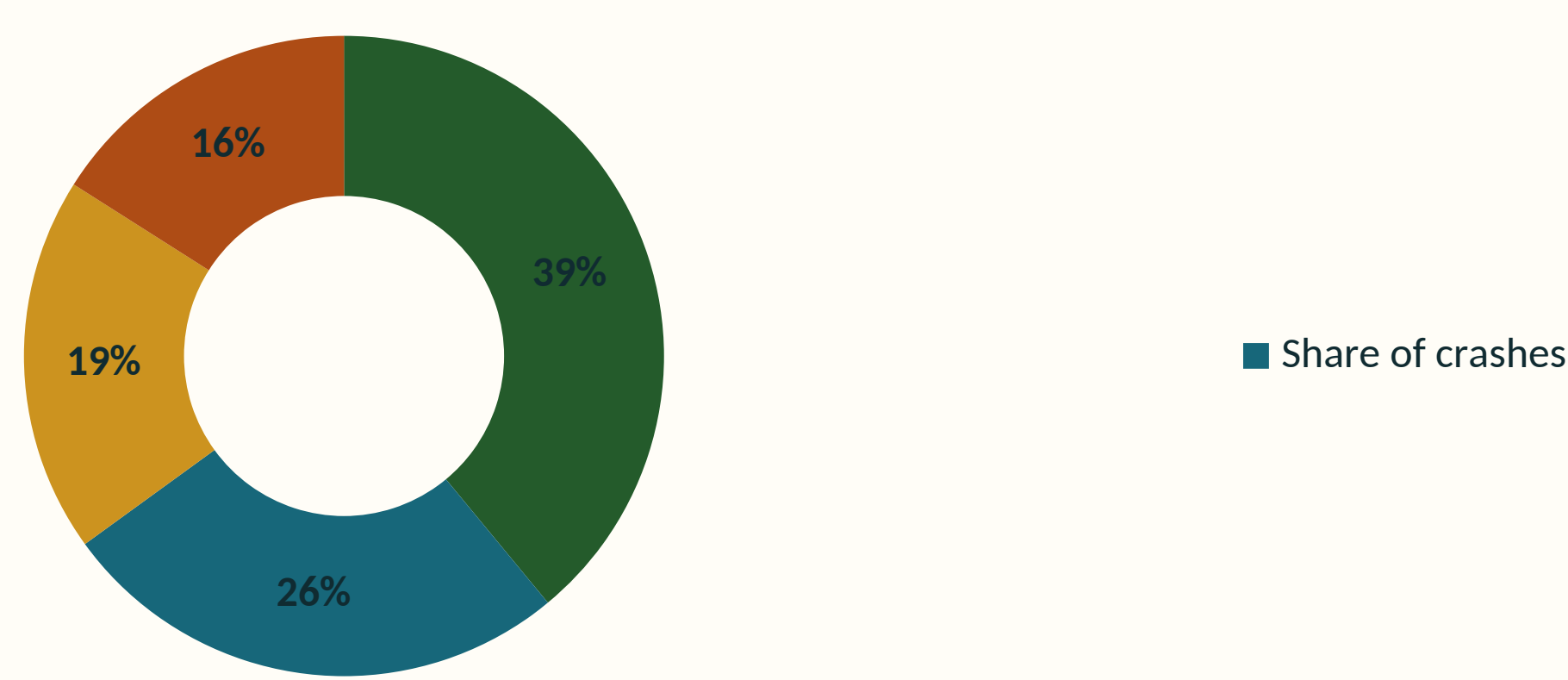
THREE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

5 traffic fatalities, 2018–2024

2 pedestrian fatalities

\$916,386 2024 road-maintenance budget

WHAT THE CRASH RECORD SHOWS



WHY THIS MATTERS

Route 1 combines high speeds, seasonal traffic, major destinations, and no dedicated pedestrian or bicycle space. Safety planning must address people as well as vehicles.

WHAT THE PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS

- 1** Coordinate Route 1 safety and access improvements with MaineDOT
- 2** Create safer walking and bicycling connections near services
- 3** Maintain local roads and improve regional transit connections

OPEN-HOUSE QUESTION

Where should Hancock focus its highest-priority transportation safety improvement?

Figures are condensed from the draft chapter; see the chapter for full methods, qualifications, and sources.