



Let's Talk Housing: A Messaging Playbook

SEPTEMBER 2025

This guide has been developed by the Denver Regional Council of Governments to support partners in engaging local groups across the region in constructive conversations about housing. It is one part of DRCOG's work to develop a Regional Housing Strategy and explore ways in which we can work together to achieve shared goals.

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The guide builds upon all of the work that is already underway across the region to inform and facilitate important local conversations about housing. It draws upon and links to guidance from other resources and provides additional guidance for local planners.

There is no “one size fits all” approach to this work in terms of process, content, and timeline. What makes sense in each jurisdiction will depend on the work already done or underway. However, in the spirit of collaboration and shared learning, we hope that this Messaging Playbook in conjunction with its related tools and DRCOG’s work on the Regional Housing Strategy will support your local efforts in a meaningful way.

Visit [the Regional Housing Strategy project webpage](#) to learn more about the approach, timeline, and opportunities to get involved.

If you need digital accessibility assistance, submit a request at drcog.org/access or call 303-455-1000. Please expect a response within 72 hours (three business days).

In conjunction with the release of the draft Regional Housing Strategy framework an updated Messaging Playbook and additional communications resources will be released.



DRCOG Regional Housing Strategy: Let's Talk Housing

Housing costs are front of mind for people across the Front Range. It's a topic of conversation almost every day.

In our region, home costs have increased faster than incomes which means many people are paying a significant part of their household budget on housing, and many are living far from work or school to find a place they can afford. For some, the lack of affordable living choices has led them to move elsewhere, while others have lost their housing altogether.

For people who are fortunate enough to have secure housing, the conversation about creating more housing—and making changes in existing neighborhoods and established communities—can be threatening. They live in places that they love and are passionate about protecting them. For planners and policymakers, talking about housing and community change can be daunting. Conversations about change are often deeply emotional: for those who are advocating for more housing as well as those who are concerned about change.

This guide is meant for planners and other professionals who are tasked with leading housing conversations in their communities. It is intended to help you:

- Draw upon best practices for talking about housing
- Talk knowledgeably about the Regional Housing Strategy
- Be prepared for concerns that might be raised in community conversations
- Use communication tools developed by DRCOG to support engagement

Why do homes and apartments cost so much?

There are many reasons why housing has become more expensive. The core of the issue is that we have not built enough new homes and apartments to meet demand. More specifically, the types of homes being built are not in synch with the types of homes we need: by size, location, and cost. In addition, both the cost of building housing and the cost of land have increased: trends seen across the country.

Understanding the factors that contribute to high housing costs was the focus of DRCOG's work on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

You can read the assessment on the DRCOG website, including the number of homes we need, now and in the future, and the barriers that make new housing difficult.

Go to the [DRCOG Regional Housing Needs Assessment website](#).

Tips for Talking About Housing

Talking about housing is both emotional and technically complicated. If you're the person charged with leading a community conversation about housing, the most important tip of all is: be prepared.

Learn from Others

Read the Colorado Health Foundation's guide, ["The Good Neighbor: A Strategic Communications Approach to Strengthen Support for Safe, Stable, and Affordable Housing Policies."](#) The guide was published in July 2024 and is based on extensive research with Coloradans. It was developed as a resource for housing advocates seeking to persuade audiences to support inclusive housing policies. While local government planners might see their role as being more facilitative and objective (rather than advocacy), it is a useful resource for understanding and responding to the emotional nature of housing conversations.

Five key messaging recommendations from the Good Neighbor guide are:

- **Build Trust.** Start from a place of shared humanity. Position yourself as someone who wants what's best for the whole community
- **Acknowledge Complexities.** Don't dismiss concerns. Instead, name the tension and show empathy: "We know that change can feel risky—especially when it affects your home or neighborhood."



- **Calm Concerns.** Model how fears can be managed. Talk about what's working: "Communities like ours have added affordable homes without losing the things we love—like safety, open space, and neighborhood character."
- **Nurture Compassion.** Share stories of people who are being harmed by the status quo: "Too many families are one paycheck away from losing their home. That's not who we are as a community."
- **Activate Hope.** Inspire belief in change: "We've solved big challenges before. With the right policies, we can build a future where everyone has a safe place to live."

These recommendations are explored further in The Good Neighbor guide, and—along with other resources and experiences—help inform the guidance in the Let's Talk Housing playbook.

Lead with Shared Values

Connect with your community's vision. Start the conversation with a focus on what's important to community members, like safety, affordability, health, and vitality. Draw on language in your community's vision statement, comprehensive plan, and other adopted policies to talk about how creating more housing choices can help create the future we want.

Focus on people. Regularly remind folks that the conversation is about people and our future. We are building homes for people who live and work here today as well as for future generations, including our children and grandchildren.

Speak Plainly

Use language that's easy for everyone to understand. The Good Neighbor guide recommends presenting things in a way that your grandparents would understand. Avoid jargon and acronyms.

Talk about homes, not units. Homes are places where people live. Talking about “numbers of housing units” can make this sound like we're trying to meet a quota, rather than creating real homes for real people.

Emphasize that workers are part of our community. We are creating homes for the people who are a part of our community, and for future generations. That includes the people who are essential to our community: teachers, cooks, firefighters, electricians, and more. We all benefit when they can make their home here.

Provide in-language options. Create communication and engagement opportunities that are in the language that participants are most comfortable speaking. This can mean having an interpreter available at workshops; making websites, surveys and other materials available in multiple languages; or having standalone workshops that are in the language of the group you want to hear from.



Have the Facts Ready

Think about who will be in the room. You know your community. Before any engagement activity, spend time thinking about who will be there and what is important to them. Be prepared to engage them in a conversation that will be meaningful for them. The Good Neighbor guide has helpful guidance for engaging with “conflicted empathizers” and “concerned skeptics.”

Be Patient, and Persistent

Remind everyone that change is constant. Our communities evolve, and as a community, it is important to stay aligned with the changing contexts. It can sometimes feel like our communities have been the same forever, but that’s not true: they are constantly evolving. Even if we never change a single building, things will change, including the cost of housing and who is able to live here.

Connect the housing cost conversation with local wages and salaries. Be prepared with information about how much critical workers in your community earn, how much they can afford for housing, and what rents and home prices are like in your area.

Anticipate concerns and be prepared to respond. To the extent possible, make a list of issues and concerns that participants might raise, and develop draft responses, including data and examples where possible. See the section of this guide on Responding to Common Concerns as a starting point.

Remind everyone why we are having the conversation. The status quo isn’t meeting our community’s needs. Doing nothing won’t make things better. Focus the conversation on coming up with workable solutions and evaluating what will work best for your community. We have faced big challenges before and made big progress. With the right tools and partnerships, we can create the housing future our region needs. Communities across Colorado are already doing this in ways that reflect their unique character and values.

Connect (and reconnect) to the big picture and your community’s vision. Frame conversations with reminders that planning for housing is not just about creating a number of units or meeting a state requirement. This is an important conversation about building homes for neighbors, friends and future generations, and creating the future we want.

Crafting an Engagement Process

Conversations about the Regional Housing Strategy are taking place in a variety of venues. DRCOG is focusing its outreach and engagement with stakeholder groups as well as member jurisdictions, including city managers, community development directors, housing planners, staff from partner agencies, developers, community-based organizations, and others.

We know that local level engagement is best carried out by local partners who have ongoing relationships with community members and who can meaningfully connect community-specific conversations with community-specific planning and action. That's why the Let's Talk Housing messaging playbook and accompanying resources were created: to provide tools to support more constructive local conversations about housing.

We also know that every community is at a different place in its housing work. There is no “one size fits all” approach and no shared starting point. But what we all have in common is the need for well-designed and facilitated engagement processes that help to support shared learning, break down barriers, build trust, calm concerns, and inspire shared commitment to local and regional action.

The Institute for Public Participation has a wealth of information and training resources to support local government planners and policymakers in designing effective and inclusive community engagement. See the [Institute for Public Participation website](#) for more information.



Drawing on their frameworks as well as experience in designing and facilitating engagement in housing, a few key process design tips to keep in mind include:

- **Start with listening.** People need to feel that they've been heard about the issues they care about before they themselves can start to listen to others. Don't begin your process—or a meeting—with a lengthy presentation of staff findings and recommendations. People will not be ready to hear them.
- **Provide multiple ways to engage.** There should be ways for people to engage online (for live events as well as 24/7 platforms), in-person, and in individual, small group, and large group formats. Some people will have

only a few minutes to spare; others will want to spend a few hours diving into the specifics. Design your process to accommodate as wide a range of options as possible.

- **Meet people where they are at, at times that work for them.** If you're doing an in-person engagement event, hold it in a place that the people you are trying to reach are familiar with - a park, community center, library, school, or church and have it at a time that works for them. For some, engaging in a virtual meeting is easier than an in-person meeting.
- **Make a special effort to reach those you don't usually hear from.** Every community has individuals who regularly participate in civic conversations. Their input is valuable, but there are many groups that go unheard because they are not aware that the conversation is happening or don't feel that showing up to share their opinion will make a difference. Identify the groups you want or need to hear from, and brainstorm ways to reach them. Teachers and staff from the school district? Young people? Non-English speakers? Doing a targeted focus group, survey, or listening session with these groups can help provide a broader understanding of key issues and opportunities.

- **Facilitate a dialogue.** Public meetings are often one-way: people in the room telling city staff and decisionmakers what they think. Be sure to build in opportunities during the engagement process for people to be in conversation with each other and to find common ground as well as to understand and appreciate differing perspectives. Be sure those conversations are facilitated, and that people are encouraged to listen-to-understand rather than to judge and debate.
- **Ensure feedback loops.** To build trust, make sure people know how their input will be used, and report back to them about what was heard and how their input is shaping next steps.
- **Bring your Council along.** Most local government engagement processes are done to inform an eventual decision by the City Council or County Supervisors. Keep them up-to-date on the purpose, structure, and timeline of your engagement process, and provide regular updates on key themes and takeaways as well as efforts to ensure inclusive representation.

Key Messages about the Regional Housing Strategy

You know best what messages will resonate with the folks you work with, and what messages might be important but hard to hear. Following are some of the key messages we think are important in talking about the purpose and value of regional collaboration on housing. Use them as a starting point to hone the messages that will work best for you and your group.

We need more homes, and more diverse options, in the right places. Our region needs to repair and reimagine housing systems so that everyone can live in a thriving community. Our long-term success—regionally and locally—relies on having enough housing, of different types and price points, in locations where people can easily get to jobs and other daily needs.

Addressing our challenges will take time. This is a long-term work effort. We won't address our housing challenges overnight. Development cycles come and go, and many housing developments take multiple years to go from idea to reality.

The region is working together to help support local action. The regional strategy will not be requiring anyone to do anything. It will set out shared priorities and options about how local communities can take action. All decisions will be made at the local level.

State requirements related to housing are changing. Our housing challenges are one of the top issues affecting our state. We are working regionally as we have heard from local governments that they cannot take on housing challenges alone. We began the work long before state law changes; by continuing to work together, we can also address state requirements. Most importantly we are working to help everyone create more housing options to meet our region's changing needs.

This is a complex problem that requires coordinated solutions. Local governments have a key role to play in supporting the creation of more housing. The regional strategy is working to bring together everyone who has a role in creating, preserving, and managing housing that can meet our region's needs. This means home builders, housing finance experts, nonprofits, and community groups as well as government agencies and others.

Regional collaboration is critical to our future. Developing a regional housing strategy is a first step toward strengthening our regional collaboration to address shared housing challenges. We will learn from this process so we can continue to work together to achieve both regional and local goals.

Responding to Common Concerns

Below are nine common concerns raised during community engagement around housing, and potential responses.

Be sure to start from a place of appreciation for the passion and care people have about the place they live and focus on active listening to better understand their concerns and ideas. Then respond in a way that helps them see these issues through a broader lens and from the perspective of others, giving local examples to help illustrate key points.

Concern 1: The changes being proposed are going to destroy our community. We are losing our community character.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

We are having this conversation because the lack of new housing is making our community unaffordable. Our community is made up of the people who live and work here. Sticking with the status quo isn't going to make things better. In fact, inaction could actually undermine what we love most about living here.

If you have it available, cite local data about the lack of affordability, the number of households that are cost burdened, and/or other data that underscores how the status quo is not meeting needs.

Point to value statements in your comprehensive plan or other adopted policies about your community's vision and values.

Point to past changes that might have been initially contentious but are now seen as positive assets in the community.

We are looking for strategies for providing needed housing while protecting the things we love, like access to open space, diverse shopping opportunities and our great schools. In some cases we can actually make these things stronger by connecting them with new housing options.

We are committed to finding solutions that can make it possible for our families, friends and neighbors—as well as future generations—to afford to stay here. We want to hear your ideas about what could work.

Concern 2: We are built out. We don't have room for more housing.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

The amount that can be built in our community is a policy decision. The zoning and infrastructure we have in place today could actually support more development than what you see on the ground. We can make changes to support more, or to support different types of housing than we have today.

While we might not have many vacant properties to build on, there are places in our community where we could redevelop, add more housing, and make things better than they are today by supporting more walkable, vibrant, and people-oriented places. If possible, point to specific areas of the community that are underutilized (old strip malls or abandoned retail; surface parking lots; etc.) where redevelopment and the addition of housing could help revitalize the area.

Our communities were very different 50 years ago, and they will be different 50 years from now. While we might change some of our policies this year, the actual changes will happen slowly over time. This is especially true for redevelopment, where individual property owners might decide to change sell or change their properties at different times. In most communities, less than 1 percent of properties change in any given year.

Concern 3: The traffic is already terrible. More housing will make it worse.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

When people can't find a place to live close to their work, school, or other places they need to be, they end up having to travel more often and longer distances. The lack of housing in the right places actually increases congestion.

Creating new housing opportunities in walkable and transit-accessible places can actually reduce traffic by making it possible for more people to get around without a car.

Our region is investing in transit, bike facilities and other infrastructure to help address traffic congestion. All of us—newcomers as well as long-term residents—can help reduce congestion by taking advantage of alternative transportation options.

Concern 4: We are facing a climate crisis. Why are we talking about having more and more growth?

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

People are moving to our region. It's less a question about whether we will grow than it is about how we will grow. We want our growth to be as climate smart as possible.

Creating new homes within existing neighborhoods, instead of forcing new residents to live further and further away, can help reduce emissions and support more resilient communities. We want to encourage more homes in places where people can meet their daily needs without getting in a car, if possible.

When wildfires and other natural disasters strike, we want our first responders to be living close by, not far away. Having homes they can afford can make us more resilient.

In many communities, more homes have been created even as water use and emissions have dropped. That's because new construction is much more water-and energy-smart than it was in the past.

Concern 5: The new housing being built is way too expensive. We don't have a housing crisis, we have an affordability crisis.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

It is true that new housing is often more expensive than older housing. But the price of older housing has also been going up, because there is generally not enough housing to meet demand. If we can expand the supply and diversity of housing, then prices should become more affordable as the market becomes more competitive.

The costs to build housing—including materials, land, and labor—have been going up dramatically in recent years. We can look for opportunities to create some cost savings and efficiencies, but these market forces are mostly outside our control.

Even most nonprofit housing—where the developer is not taking any profit—are unable to provide affordable housing without some form of subsidy to help cover the costs of land, labor, and materials.

Developers are the ones who build our community's vision. We set the rules about how much can be built and where, as well as rules about how it will be built and what it should look like. They earn more—just like any other business—by building our vision.

Concern 6: This is a great place to live because we have limited growth. We can't provide housing for everyone who wants to be here.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

There are many things that make our community a great place to live, and we are working together as a community to make sure we remain a great place to live in the future. But if the people who make our community work—teachers, police officers, gardeners, waiters, and others—cannot afford to be here, we will have a hard time staying a great place.

Not everyone who works here wants to live here. We are fortunate to be part of a region that has a lot of great communities. We aren't looking to be a place for everyone. But we are looking to be a place where our local workers and our children (and our children's children) can find housing that meets their needs if they want to be here.

Many of the people who live here today will find it hard to find a new place to live within our community if they ever decide to downsize or need a different type of housing. We are looking to provide more diverse housing options that can better meet the needs of current and future residents.

Concern 7: Our community can't solve our region's housing shortage. It's bigger than us.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

We are all in this together. In collaboration with our regional partners we are exploring strategies and actions that can work in our community as well as other places. Not every solution will work here, but we hope to learn from others and to come up with options that can help meet our local goals as part of a regional solution.

Collaboration will be essential. Addressing our housing shortage will take time and require a set of strategies and ongoing attention and investment as well as collaboration with home builders, financial experts and others.

We are one part of the ecosystem that can move the needle on housing. By having more conversations like this, partnering with others, and having a shared strategy we can shape the future we want for our community, as one of many communities working to create better housing opportunities across the region.

Concern 8: Renters are not invested in their communities. We should focus on creating more homeownership opportunities.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

Most of us were renters at some point in time, until we could save money for a downpayment.

Creating more diverse and affordable rental housing options is part of how we can create opportunities for people to transition to homeownership.

The gap between what people earn and what it costs to buy a home has been growing.

While we want to create more opportunities for homeownership, the reality is that many people who work in good jobs will continue to rent.

Many renters are engaged in their community, but sometimes in different ways than homeowners.

For example, younger renters are often students and very engaged in their school community even if they are less engaged in the community's civic life.

As homeownership has become increasingly out of reach, many people are becoming long-term renters.

It is helpful for us to have both more and better rental housing as well as more and better homeownership opportunities.

Concern 9: Building affordable housing will bring down our property values.

POTENTIAL RESPONSES:

Research by groups such as the Urban Institute and The National Association of Realtors has shown that affordable housing, including lower income housing, does not generally have a negative effect on property values.

In fact, in some cases it has been shown to have a positive effect. This is in part because affordable housing developments are professionally managed to ensure property upkeep.

Identify a local affordable housing development that can help counter these concerns.

Often many people do not realize that housing that already exists in the community is "affordable" and subject to deed restrictions. If possible, have some facts about the housing and who it serves.

“Why Housing Matters” Slide Deck & Talking Points

The “Why Housing Matters” slide deck is designed as a customizable slide template that can be used by partner groups across the Denver region to introduce the need for housing and the value of working together at the regional level. It highlights challenges we face as a region and the purpose of a regional strategy in addition to taking local action. It can be used as-is or modified to add locally specific housing information.

Tips for Customizing the Template for Your Community

Highlighted text indicates that a part of the slide deck can or should be customized.

- **Add your jurisdiction’s or organization’s name and logo to the title slide** along with info about the time/date of your presentation.
- **Delete the first two slides** and any other slides that are not pertinent to your audience or your jurisdiction.
- **Modify specific terms, photos, and content** to ensure it reflects your jurisdiction/organization’s or audience’s perspectives and priorities. Replace the photos with images of places, people and housing that will resonate with your audience.
 - **To change photos:** right click on the image you want to change and select “Change picture.”
 - **To adjust image size:** right click and choose “Crop.”
- **Add slides that provide more information about local strategies and priorities** to address the housing challenges specific to your community.

Presentation Talking Points

Slides 1-2: Slides 1 and 2 explain the purpose of using this presentation and instructions for customizing the template. Make sure to delete these slides from your final presentation!

Why Housing Matters PRESENTATION TEMPLATE
DRCOG Regional Housing Strategy / Tools for Talking About Housing

DELETE THIS SLIDE FROM YOUR FINAL PRESENTATION

Purpose and Use

- Use the following slides to talk about housing issues and priorities in your community from both a local and regional perspective.
- The slides are intended for a general audience but can be customized for your specific group.
- Integrate with engagement activities to understand community perspectives and priorities. Refer to the accompanying "Tools for Talking About Housing" guide for ideas.
- Suggested talking points for each slide are also provided in the "Tools for Talking About Housing" guide.
- Customize this template slides to reflect local community context, strategies, and/or priorities.

Slide 3: Use this slide to welcome participants, explain the purpose of the presentation, and set expectations for what will be covered. Keep it high-level and conversational.



Why Housing Matters
Meeting Name / Date / Time

Title slide

Update with local seal/logo or remove

Slide 4: This slide lists some core reasons why having enough housing and diverse housing choices are important. Edit so that the points made resonate with your audience. You can replace the image with a photo of a family or local housing, or opt to leave it as it.

Why Housing Matters

-  Housing is where we live, raise our families, and grow old
-  Housing is one of the biggest investments of our lives (for owners *and* renters)
-  Safe, secure housing is critical to our health and well being
-  Housing is essential for our workforce and our community's economic health
-  When housing is close to jobs, schools and services, it helps reduce trips and traffic congestion



Slide 5: Use this slide to prompt conversation about shared community goals and values. To the extent possible, take notes in a way that participants can see you capturing their ideas. Depending on your set up, you can do that in a few different ways:

If your meeting is online:

- Take notes on participants' responses in a separate document and share your screen
- Use interactive tools like Menti or Mural to collect responses. Share your screen so participants can follow along as responses are posted.

If your meeting is in-person:

- Write down participants' responses on a flip chart as they share them aloud.
- Provide sticky notes for participants to write their individual responses, and have them place the notes on flipchart or butcher paper on the wall.
- Consider grouping responses on the board/paper into key themes after participants post their answers (e.g., safety, affordability, location, etc.).



Slide 6: This section explains the shared housing needs in our region, drawing from data collected from the DRCOG Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Consider adding slides with local data and discussing current and projected housing needs in your community.



Slide 7: Use this slide to provide a high-level overview of the key housing challenges the region faces.

Key messages to cover:

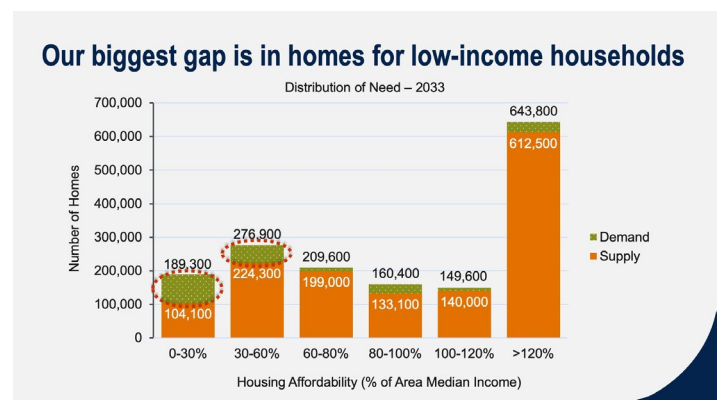
- **Introduce the big-picture problem and long-term trends we've seen** - Despite periods of increased construction, we haven't kept pace with population and job growth. We've built more homes, but not enough—and not of the right types—to meet our region's needs.
- **Explain why this matters** - Connect the data to real-life impacts on affordability and community members.
 - Emphasize that the shortage of homes drives up home prices and rents, making housing unaffordable, especially lower income households.
 - Highlight that it's not just about how many homes we build, but also what kind, where, and for whom they're built for.



Slide 8: Use this slide to highlight the mismatch between the supply and demand for housing in the region. Keep the tone informative and grounded in data, but focus on helping community members understand why these trends matter – not just what the numbers are.

Explanation of the chart:

- The chart on this slide compares the estimated number of homes needed by 2033 by income level to the current number of homes that affordable to households earning those incomes.
- The greatest shortfall is in homes that affordable to low-income households (0–60% Area Median Income categories).



Emphasize that we need to plan for housing that meets the needs of all income levels.

Slide 9: Use this slide to explain that home costs have been increasing more rapidly than people's incomes, and what that means for people who have to pay more for their housing as well as for communities overall, as people have to drive longer distances to get to work, school, shopping and other needs. If you have local data on trends in housing costs and incomes, either replace the information on this slide, add to it, or create an additional slide.

Many people are being priced out.

- The increase in home costs have outpaced growth in household incomes.
- More than half of renters in our region pay over 30 percent of their income on housing.
- Many people have to live far away from work or school to find homes they can afford.

Between 2010 and 2020, our region's median household income increased by 66 percent while the median home price doubled.



Slide 10: Use this slide to illustrate the relationship between what people in your community earn, and how much they have to pay for housing. The slide includes example occupations at different levels of income, and how much of their income has to go to housing. The table uses regional averages and the regional median apartment rent. Customize it to reflect your local community information.

Many workers have to pay a large percent of their income on housing

Occupation	Average Annual Income	Income Category	% of Income on Housing (for a \$1,600/mo apartment)
Store Clerk	\$38,000	Extremely Low-Income (less than 30% AMI)	50%
Barista	\$40,000	Very Low-Income (less than 50% AMI)	48%
Medical Assistant	\$53,000	Low-Income (less than 80% AMI)	36%
Teacher	\$60,000	Low-Income (less than 80% AMI)	32%
Firefighter	\$68,000	Low-Income (less than 80% AMI)	28%

Key messages to cover:

- Explain that when lower income people have to pay 50 percent of their income on housing, they do not have much left to meet other needs. A person earning \$40,000 would have only \$1300 a month to meet all their other needs after taxes. A big medical or car bill can throw them off for a long time, and even result in them losing their housing.

Slide 11: Use this slide to explain the projected housing needs for the region. Explain that housing needs will continue to grow, and without taking action, affordability issues will get worse.

Key messages to cover:

- Explain that the amount of housing needed in each community varies, but that the having unmet housing needs across the region affects us all. The Regional Housing Strategy is looking at ways in which we can work together to create more housing options, in our community and across the entire region.

And our housing needs will continue to grow...



- Recent analysis shows that our region is short 52,000 homes to meet current needs
- Plus we will need 216,000 more homes over the next ten years
- **By 2050 we will need 511,000 more homes in the Denver region than we have today**

Long-Term Target:	511,000 new homes by 2050
Short-Term Target:	216,000 new homes by 2033

Slide 12: Use this slide to explain how the needs of our population impact the types of homes we need to build more of. A key message here is that it's not just about the number of homes we need, but the types of homes and where they're being built. Call out that one of the most significant demographic shifts is an aging population, many of whom are wanting smaller homes that are in or close to the neighborhoods they already live in.

We will need more diverse housing, too.

- Our population is getting older, which will change the kinds of homes we need.
- For example, many older adults want to "age in place." They are looking for smaller homes in or close to the neighborhoods where they already live.



Key messages to cover:

- Explain that creating more diverse housing choices helps people find housing options that meet their needs without having to leave the community. For example, some older residents in Colorado are building ADUs—a small home behind their main home—so that they can move into it and rent out their main home, making it possible to stay in their neighborhood and have rental income.

Slide 13: Consider adding a slide here to highlight the current and projected housing needs in your community. Make sure to delete this placeholder slide from your final presentation.

NOTE TO USERS:

Consider adding a slide or two about the current and projected housing needs in your community

Slide 14: Use this slide to prompt participants to reflect on and share how their housing needs have changed over time. Then, as a group, brainstorm what types of housing participants think your community needs more of. Again, to the extent possible, take notes in a way that participants can see you capturing their ideas.

Facilitation Ideas:

If your meeting is online:

- Ask people to list the types of housing they have lived in using the “chat” function. Call out the many diverse types of housing that are listed.
- Call on a few people to share their “housing biography”– the different types of housing they have lived in from birth until the present.
- Prepare a series of poll questions or just ask people to raise their hands, listing different housing types and asking how many people have lived, at one time or another, in each.
- Use interactive tools like [Menti](#) or [Mural](#) to collect responses. Share your screen so participants can follow along as responses are posted.

If your meeting is in-person:

- Do a version of the poll question, asking for a show of hands, or call on different people to share their housing biographies.
- Write down participants’ responses on a flip chart as they share them aloud, listing out all the different housing variations that are shared.
- Provide sticky notes for participants to write their individual responses, and have them place the notes on flipchart or butcher paper on the wall, grouping them into categories.

Use the diverse examples that have been provided to highlight why diverse housing choices are needed to support each of us as well as family, friends and neighbors. Then ask people to similarly share their thoughts on what types of housing are lacking to meet community needs, including where those types of housing are and are not found.



Slide 15: This slide introduces participants to the idea of planning for housing as a region. It explains the importance of thinking beyond city boundaries when it comes to housing. Use this as an opportunity to encourage participants to start reflecting on how their daily lives and decisions – where they work, go to school shop, or visit friends and family – often extend beyond the city or town they live in.

We live regional lives

We don't choose our homes based only on city boundaries – we choose based on what matters to us:

- Being close to work
- What we can afford
- Good schools
- Amenities like parks, transit, or entertainment
- Access to childcare

And many of us work, go to school, shop, and visit friends and family across the region.



Slide 16: This slide explains how housing is connected to many of the issues people care about – traffic congestion, climate and air quality, equity, and economic vitality. Help participants see that housing is not an isolated issue, and that it impacts and is impacted by many other issues within our communities.

Where we live affects other issues we care about



Traffic – the less we have to drive, the less traffic congestion we will have



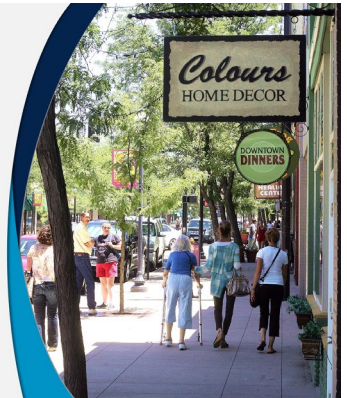
Climate and Air Quality – less driving also means fewer emissions



Equity – diverse housing options support more inclusive communities



Economic Vitality – homes close to jobs that workers can afford help our businesses and communities thrive



Slide 17: Use this slide to acknowledge that every community is unique, but many of the factors that shape housing are the same across the region.

Key messages to cover:

- Many of the things that make housing expensive are similar across the region.
- When housing isn't affordable, it affects us all.
- Shared challenges call for shared strategies.

All of the communities in our region face housing challenges

- While every community is unique, we are all facing challenges in meeting our housing needs
- The ways in which homes are financed and built is similar across our region, including things like labor and material costs
- Housing affordability is an issue that affects us all



Slide 18: Use this slide to explain that housing issues have become an important priority statewide, and that the state legislature has been actively working to address them through legislation and investment. Many of the new laws have had bipartisan support. Whether people agree with the new laws or have concerns about them, it underscores how critical housing issues are across the state.

Housing is a major focus for the entire state.

- The Colorado legislature has passed bipartisan bills in recent years to support the creation of more housing.
- The Governor's office and state agencies are providing incentives and assistance for local governments working to increase housing opportunities.



Key messages to cover:

- Explain that a key motivation for the state in addressing housing issues is the impact that it has on the cost of living for Coloradans as well as on the state's economic competitiveness.
- Explain that whether people agree or disagree with the specifics of the new laws, we know that we have work to do in addressing our housing needs.
- Consider adding more information on this or an additional slide if there are state laws that are of particular interest to your audience.
- Consider removing this slide if state housing laws are a hot-button topic for your audience, and focus instead on why housing matters and the ideas people in the room have for making things better (rather than engaging in a debate about new laws).

Slide 19: Use this slide to explain the importance of working together as a region. Explain how collaboration as a region can help us be more effective in addressing our housing challenges. By bringing together resources and learning from each other, we can explore new approaches, do more with less, and strengthen our regional ecosystem. Highlight how key partners like home builders, community groups, nonprofits finance experts, and local governments, are all important players in making this happen.

We can be more effective if we work together

- Learn from each other and explore new approaches to shared challenges
- Leverage resources and do more with less
- Bring together home builders, community groups, finance experts, nonprofits and local governments
- Strengthen our regional ecosystem to achieve the change we want to see



- Consider adding a slide that highlights ways in which your community is already collaborating with others in your area to address shared housing needs or related issues.

Slide 20: This slide acknowledges that local efforts matter, but when we align and coordinate regionally, our impact can be greater. The key message is that when communities work together, we can create better, smarter solutions.

A regional strategy can support local action and collaboration

- By working together, we can get more done and make a bigger difference
- Coordinating efforts allows us to plan for housing in ways that reflect the needs of our local community as well as the region
- When communities work together, we can share ideas and resources and create better, smarter solutions



Slide 21: Use this slide to talk about the work the region has already done to work towards a regional effort to address our housing challenges. Use this as an opportunity to share more about the Regional Housing Needs Assessment as a tool to understand the shared challenges we face. This slide also covers what we are working on currently and our plan to create a regional strategy.

Working toward a regional housing strategy



We completed a **Regional Housing Needs Assessment** to understand the shared housing challenges our region faces.



We are gathering information on housing efforts across the region to better **understand what is working, what isn't, and what's missing**



We are getting input to shape the outline of a **regional housing strategy**: what we want to achieve and how we can best work together

Key messages to cover:

- DRCOG's Regional Housing Needs Assessment webpage has a number of resources that you can use to add more detailed information, including a dashboard you can use to generate a customized Powerpoint about housing needs for your jurisdiction.

Slide 22: Consider adding a slide or two here about the recent, current, or upcoming initiatives your organization/jurisdiction is working on to address housing needs specific to your community. Make sure to delete this placeholder slide from your final presentation.

NOTE TO USERS:

Consider adding a slide or two about the recent, current or upcoming work you are doing to address housing needs in your community.

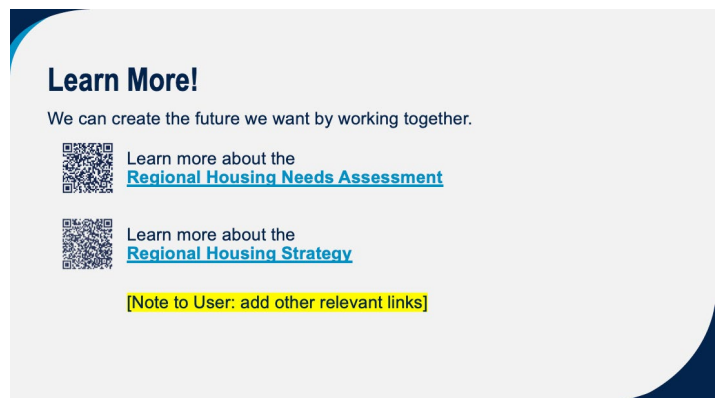
Slide 23: Use this slide to prompt participants to imagine what they want to region to look like 10 years from now. Ask participants to think about how housing could be different and what steps we took to get there.

Facilitation Tips:

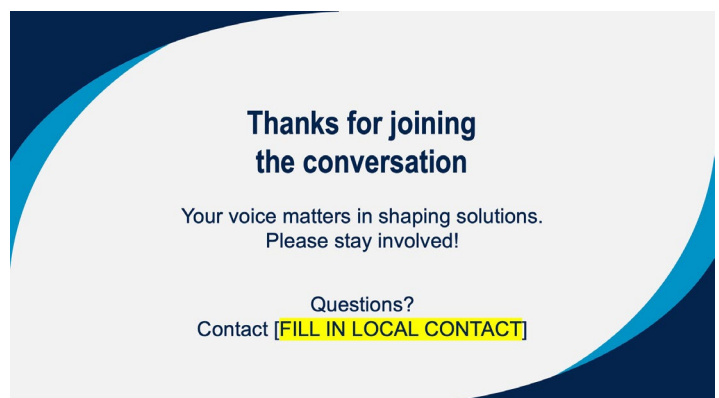
- Start the discussion in small groups (or breakout groups if online) to give everyone a chance to share. Encourage each group to take notes to report back.
- Afterward, bring the full group back together and invite a participant from each group to report back a highlight from their discussion.
- Take notes on a shared screen, white board, or flip chart so everyone can see the ideas being captured. Call out where there are shared values and how that can help shape our plans and investments to create more housing in the right places.



Slide 24: Use this slide to direct people to resources on housing efforts within the region and your community. Customize the slide with your organization/jurisdiction's contact information and add additional links.



Slide 25: Thank participants for sharing their time and insights, and encourage them to stay involved in the regional housing strategy process and/or your organization/jurisdiction's local housing efforts. Customize this slide with your organization/jurisdiction's contact information.



Additional Resources

Customize and use the Why Housing Matters Handout

Access the Handout at this link or by scanning this QR code. (COMING SOON)

- Customize it with your local information, share it online, and hand out at community meetings

Customize and use the Why Housing Matters social media toolkit

Access the toolkit at this link or by scanning this QR code. (COMING SOON)

- Customize it with your local information and use for your local social media posts to raise awareness about the Regional Housing Strategy and local housing engagement opportunities

Learn more about the Regional Housing Strategy

Visit the [Regional Housing Strategy online by using this link](#) or by scanning this QR code.



Learn more about the Regional Housing Needs Assessment

Visit the [Needs Assessment online by using this link](#) or by scanning this QR code.



- [Appendix B. Regional Housing Trends](#)
- [Appendix C. Regional Housing Needs Assessment Technical Methodology](#)
- [Appendix D: Barriers to Housing Production](#)
- [Regional Housing Needs Assessment Stakeholder Engagement Summary](#)
- [Regional Housing Needs Assessment Dashboard](#)

Resources for Talking About Housing

- [The FrameWorks Institute](#) for guidance on framing conversations about housing in your community
- [The Good Neighbor: A Strategic Communications Approach to Strengthen Support for Safe, Stable, and Affordable Housing Policies](#) from the Colorado Health Foundation
- [Let's Talk About Housing: Communications Guide for Local Government](#) from the Association of Bay Area Governments

Resources to Learn More About Housing

- [Colorado Division of Housing: Affordable Housing Toolkit for Local Officials](#)