

Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Plan



Regional Housing Open House #1 Follow Up

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission's first Regional Open House on May 24th was a big success! Thank you to everyone who participated in this event at the El Hefni Center on the Northern Essex Community College campus in Lawrence. We had over 50 people from around the region in attendance. Thanks to Lane Glenn, President of NECC and Clark Ziegler, Executive Director of MassHousing Partnership, for welcoming us and providing a great foundation for our discussion that evening.

This first Regional Open House focused on the housing needs in the Merrimack Valley now and in the future. MVPC organized self-guided activities for attendees, including a visual preference survey of housing types, and a Mad Lib-style exercise for people to fill in the blank: "Merrimack Valley Housing Needs to be: _____." The responses were compiled into a Word Art program and resulted in the graphic below. Feel free to use this graphic for your own housing plan work!

Stakeholders listened to two presentations on the current housing and demographic situation in the Merrimack Valley. Both of those presentations are available on [MVPC's Regional Housing Plan Project](#) website. In order to get to the true root of the housing needs, attendees were asked to participate in breakout groups. Each of the six tables

were asked to respond to a series of questions in three categories: 1) Who Lives

Here? 2) Where do They Live? 3) What is the Cost? Each of the categories was preceded by baseline data from the [second presentation](#) which focused on housing units, demographics, and the cost to live in the Merrimack Valley. The results of those discussions have been summarized and will be used to develop the Regional Housing Plan, including crafting goals and solutions that are specifically aimed at addressing the needs we heard on May 24th. To view that summary, visit MVPC's [project website](#), under *Regional Open House Events*.

If you did not attend the first Regional Open House, that's ok! There are several other opportunities to participate:

1. **Attend a Community Housing Needs Workshop:** 12 of the communities in the Merrimack Valley will be conducting individual community-based needs workshops. For a schedule of those workshops, please visit the [MVPC Regional Housing Plan](#) website and scroll down to Community Workshops.
2. **Join the Conversation on coUrbanize:** MVPC has partnered with coUrbanize to engage the entire Merrimack Valley in a virtual conversation about how to meet the housing needs of the region's residents today and tomorrow. We want to hear your ideas! Check out our coUrbanize project page by clicking on [Add Your Ideas](#) now.
3. **Stay tuned for the next Regional Open House:** The second Regional Open House will be on September 20th. The location is TBD, but will be finalized and communicated shortly.
4. **Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#):** we post regularly on social media, so follow us today to stay up-to-date.

We look forward to collaborating with you on this important housing plan for the Merrimack Valley!

