



**Central Virginia Regional  
Housing Partnership**  
2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan & Final Reports

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**spark mill**  
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# Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership Strategic Plan Overview 2022-2025

## VISION

A 100% alignment of supply and demand of housing opportunities throughout the region so that every resident can find access to safe, decent, affordable housing in communities of their choice.

## MISSION

The Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership facilitates regional coordination to ensure access to housing for all.

## OUTCOMES

- Localities, builders, and nonprofits have abundant access to tools, models, and resources to support and increase affordable housing options in their communities
- Local government, NP Agencies, Community, businesses consistently engage to share ideas and collaborate on productive local and regional housing initiatives
- Real-time data/metrics are available so that all can see the “state” of housing affordability in the region and local communities
- Community members have a deeper understanding of the impact of housing affordability in their locality and the region.

## IMPACTS

- More residents can find access to safe, decent, affordable housing in communities of their choice
- Housing affordability is supported by an effective and sustainable regional network
- Other sectors see a healthy/positive impact from gains in residents finding housing stability

# GOALS AND STRATEGIES

## **GOAL #1 Equip/Resource housing stakeholders for success in addressing affordable housing**

OUTCOME: Localities, builders, and nonprofits have abundant access to tools, models, and resources to support and increase affordable housing options in their communities

### STRATEGIES:

- 1.1. Create a toolkit of affordable housing policies, models, and case studies that stakeholders can use in their planning and zoning process
- 1.2. Research and collate a list of resources and relationships that support/fund affordable housing initiatives
- 1.3. Develop and deploy real-time regional housing dashboard
- 1.4. Complete a feasibility study for a regional land bank

## **GOAL #2 Strengthen the affordable housing ecosystem in the region through education and advocacy**

### OUTCOME:

- Community members have a deeper understanding of the impact of housing affordability in their locality and the region.

### STRATEGIES

- 2.1 Develop and deploy an education strategy to address common community barriers
- 2.2 Develop and share a community library of resources that strengthen affordable housing
- 2.3 Amplify messaging that illustrates the positive impact of strong affordable housing in the region
- 2.4 Leverage a housing dashboard to engage the community in affordable housing conversations

### **GOAL #3 Deepen and sustain collaboration between AH stakeholders**

OUTCOME: Local government, NP Agencies, Community, businesses consistently engage to share ideas and collaborate on productive local and regional housing initiatives

- 3.1 Engage stakeholders around a shared regional vision
- 3.2 Leverage a calendar of events to address timely/pressing issues and build connections
- 3.3 Facilitate meaningful cross-sector connections
- 3.4 Deploy robust messaging with all stakeholders to inform, invite, and engage

### **GOAL #4 Create a sustainable infrastructure for the RHP to support the region's affordable housing goals**

OUTCOME: A sustainable infrastructure to support regional collaboration and progress in regional and local affordable housing initiatives

- 4.1 Revise bylaws/membership to encourage diverse and dynamic participation
- 4.2 Ensure diverse funding streams with a focus on sustained investment from stakeholders
- 4.3 Recruit, equip, and retain staff for capacity to support RHP's strategic goals

# Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership

2022 - 2025

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

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# INTRODUCTION

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The plan was researched and developed by a strategic planning team that met in late-2021. Its task was to identify current and future environmental, programmatic, and operational opportunities and challenges; review input from community members, key stakeholders, and staff; and shape the final plan.

The primary goals of the plan are:

- Equip/Resource housing stakeholders for success in addressing affordable housing
- Strengthen the affordable housing ecosystem in the region through education and advocacy
- Deepen and sustain collaboration between affordable housing stakeholders
- Create a sustainable infrastructure for the RHP to support the region's affordable housing goals

The strategic plan reflects these four goal focus areas and is accompanied by strategies to achieve those goals.

The organization used the services of The Spark Mill, a Richmond, Virginia-based strategic planning firm, to facilitate the process. Consultants from The Spark Mill used the following methodologies to gather input during the information-gathering portion of the planning process:

- Nine stakeholder interviews
- Four stakeholder focus groups
- A retreat with the CVRHP executive committee
- A retreat with the CVRHP members
- Review of client-provided documents

# BACKGROUND

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The Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership (RHP) serves as an official advisory board, created by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, in partnership with the public, private, nonprofit, and citizen stakeholders. Composed of an overarching consortium of housing interests, the Partnership enhances regional coordination and effectiveness to address the housing needs of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District's region, with a focus on housing production, diversity, accessibility, cost, location, design, and increasing stability for the region's residents.

# OUR MISSION

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The Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership facilitates regional coordination to ensure access to housing for all.

# OUR VISION

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A 100% alignment of supply and demand of housing opportunities throughout the region so that every resident can find access to safe, decent, affordable housing in communities of their choice.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- Affordable housing is best achieved through a regional approach
- Collaboration around and advocacy for affordable housing
- Community members can live where they want
- Affordable housing solutions must include the four pillars: government, nonprofit housing, for-profit housing, and people served

# STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS(SWOT)

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## Strengths

- Convening regional housing stakeholders
- Prominent stakeholders in each area
- Networking between board members
- Information sharing between members/partners

## Weaknesses

- Lack of actions that directly increase affordable housing
- Not all localities actively participate and contribute
- Community lacks awareness and clarity of RHP
- Limited staff capacity

## Opportunities

- Establish role in regional housing
- Create a regional picture of housing needs
- Create a consensus on what "affordability" means and looks like
- Increase the public sectors attention to affordable housing

## Threats

- Cost to create affordable housing
- Rising housing costs; lack of inventory
- Community resistance to affordable housing projects
- Availability of funding for affordable housing projects
- NIMBYism



# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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- CVRHP is a neutral entity that has a strong track record for collaboration with nonprofits, for-profits, local government, and community members.

# OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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## LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE 1

### 1. Equip/Resource housing stakeholders for success in addressing affordable housing

#### SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Create a toolkit of affordable housing policies, models, and case studies that stakeholders can use in their planning and zoning process
- 1.2. Research and collate a list of resources and relationships that support/fund affordable housing initiatives
- 1.3. Develop and deploy a real-time regional housing dashboard
- 1.4. Complete a feasibility study for a regional land bank

## LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE 2

### 2. Strengthen the affordable housing ecosystem in the region through education and advocacy

#### SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

- 2.1. Develop and deploy an education strategy to address common community barriers
- 2.2. Develop and share a community library of resources that strengthen affordable housing
- 2.3. Amplify messaging that illustrates the positive impact of strong affordable housing in the region
- 2.4. Leverage a housing dashboard to engage the community in affordable housing conversations

## **LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE 3**

### **3. Deepen and sustain collaboration between AH stakeholders**

#### SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Engage stakeholders around a shared regional vision
- 3.2 Leverage a calendar of events to address timely/pressing issues and build connections
- 3.3 Facilitate meaningful cross-sector connections
- 3.4 Deploy robust messaging with all stakeholders to inform, invite, and engage

## **LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE 4**

### **4. Create a sustainable infrastructure for the RHP to support the region's affordable housing goals**

#### SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Revise bylaws/membership to encourage diverse and dynamic participation
- 4.2 Ensure diverse funding streams with a focus on sustained investment from stakeholders
- 4.3 Recruit, equip, and retain staff for capacity to support RHP's strategic goals

## **SCORECARD TOOLS**

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**Please see the Implementation spreadsheet. This includes Action Items and measures of success.**

# FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

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**See the implementation spreadsheet.**

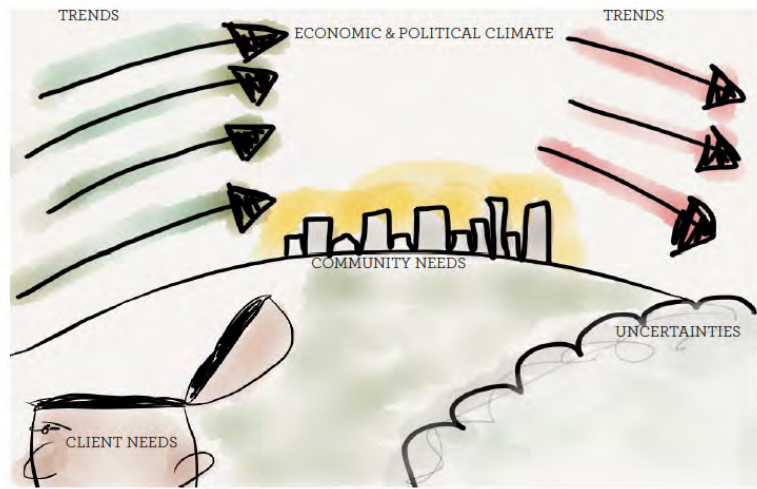
# Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership **Executive Committee Retreat Report**

January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

# MAP OF OUR LANDSCAPE

## Contextual Opportunities

- UVA Affordable housing  
Recognition that affordable housing is a need for the region/support/funding
- Significant financial and legislative commitments (in housing and transportation) from UVA, local governments
- Positive development of supplemental/ancillary services that support housing



## Economic & Political

- Huge uncertainty when it comes to construction, construction costs
- Great potential for federal funding
- Locally: possibility of forward motion in Charlottesville.
- Broad support for addressing affordable housing
- NIMBY-ism is more nuanced than just anti-affordable housing - but there is still some difference between rural/urban localities
- Different definitions of affordable housing in different parts of the region

## Contextual Restraints

- Lack of specificity of affordability
- COVID-19
- No consensus on "affordability"
- Rising housing costs

## Client Needs

- Need for housing at the 30% AMI and below especially
- Definition of affordable housing/NIMBYISM/housing terms

## Community Needs

- Flexible definition of affordable housing
- Housing subsidies

## Uncertainties

- New State government as to how it affects affordable housing
- Uncertain about federal funding.
- New state leadership - how does that affect support for affordable housing?
- Future economic circumstances

## SIX WORDS

“**The Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership** exists to...”

Complete this prompt with a sentence or phrase that is only six words (or less) long.

### INDIVIDUAL

- collectively work to create deeply affordable housing.
- to leverage partnerships that yield better housing for all.
- support localities in providing affordable housing.
- support collaborative affordable housing initiatives
- collaboratively meet regional housing needs
- develop, coordinate, and increase affordable housing
- facilitate creation of increased affordable housing

### GROUP

- collaboratively support affordable housing needs.
- facilitate increased regional affordable housing.

## STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

### Stakeholder: Community

What they expect or need from us:

- Regional Collaboration - advocate on behalf of residents
- Action - see change
- Education - what does the RHP do? What can people expect for us to do?
- Solutions & affordable housing
- Advocacy\* for solutions

What you expect or need from them:

- Engagement - what form does that take?
- From groups that represent the community
- An understanding of the organization's role
- Hear from folks who need affordable housing (instead of advocates)

Level of Influence: Growth Needed

## **Stakeholder: Nonprofit Organizations**

### **What they expect or need from us:**

- Regional support for more funding opportunities/action
- Advocacy\* for solutions (i.e., funding)

### **What you expect or need from them:**

- Data/Identification of gaps/needs
- Ideas or solutions
- There are a lot of strong NPO's in the region

Level of Influence: Growth Needed

## **Stakeholder: Developers**

### **What they expect or need from us:**

- Regional support for more funding opportunities/action
- Advocate\* need efficient processes

### **What you expect or need from them:**

- Varied representation/engagement
- Proposed solutions (ie: what incentives matter most)

Level of Influence: Growth Needed

## **Stakeholder: City/County Staff**

### **What they expect or need from us:**

- Create roadmap/plan for opportunities/strategies for more affordable housing (playbook)
- Provide added capacity
- Economies of Scale
- Proof of Impact/Measurable
- Leverage for State/Fed/Private \$

### **What you expect or need from them:**

- Participation/Engagement
- Serve as Liaison between Partnership/Membership/Elected Official
- Efficient processes to get through an affordable housing development (i.e., a means making sure carry out the entire project)
- More help (i.e., do we have the # of staff needed for success to approve site plans)

Level of Influence: Growth Needed (demystifying the redevelopment process)

## Stakeholder: Elected Local Government

### What they expect or need from us:

- Proof of Impact/Measurable
- Leverage for State/Fed/Private \$
- solutions/different ideas (i.e., best practices)
- Clarity on highest needs

### What you expect or need from them:

- Level of engagement
- Commitment to policy change and/or funding commitments
- Report back to fellow electeds
- Political support, commitment to affordable housing, funding for projects

### Level of Influence: Growth Needed

\*Advocacy: taking ideas from the collective to our networks

## HEDGEHOG

### Best in the World

- Bringing set of housing stakeholders together
- Stakeholder identification - defining a common goal
- Convening, bringing together diverse thought to identify solutions
- Education
- Inclusivity
- Information sharing between partners

### Most Passionate

- Refining and ensuring true practice of the model
- Housing and affordable housing
- Actionable items to create more affordable housing
- Collaboration and advocacy

### Economic/Resource Engine

- Prominent stakeholders in each area
- Networking between board members

## Hedgehog Principle

Jim Collins in Good to Great talks about the Hedgehog Principle. Why does the hedgehog succeed? What makes you successful?

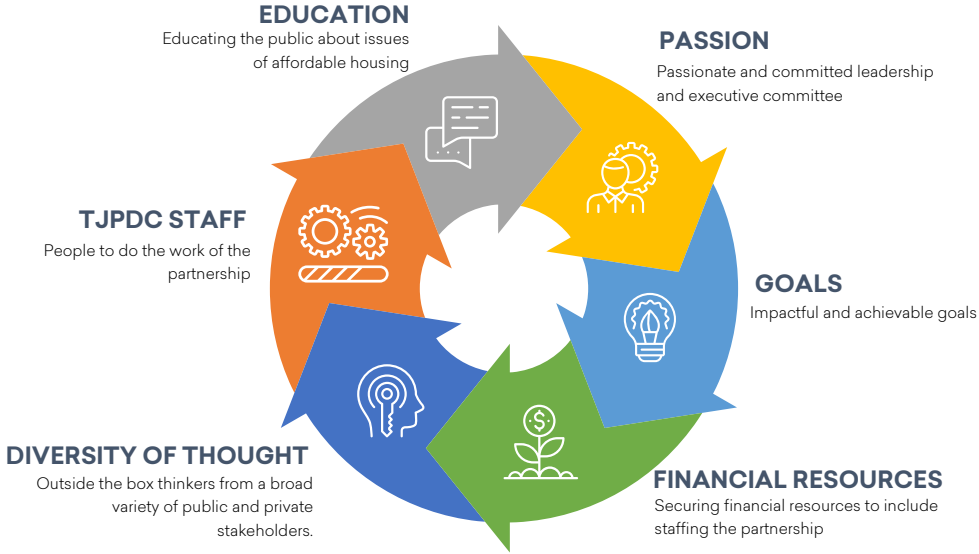


- housing 'ladder' - ability for residents to have choice
- Increasing stock of housing (affordable)
- "Silver buckshot vs. Silver bullet"
- Identifying action items/getting results

- Trust between board members
- Human Capital



# DRAFT CVRHP FLYWHEEL



BHAGs
• Create affordable housing for all
• Regional Housing Trust Fund/Regional Land Bank - Being a funding source for the creation/subsidization of affordable housing
• Grow our Region - membership
• Make the current region affordable for those who live outside but work within - can live where they work
• Playbook of solutions - high return
• Humanizing the work (connected to education)
• Housing for all
• Affordable housing ladder - a path to move forward - rentals to ownership as a means to build wealth
• Land Bank
• Move from “influencer” to “doer” - measurable impact in development of affordable housing and ordinances/legislation (facilitate development, not develop housing)
• Educated public who values affordable housing and sees the need



# Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership

Strategic Plan: Preliminary Findings Report  
February 2022

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**spark mill**  
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## Description of The Spark Mill

We are a regional strategic planning firm based in Richmond, VA. Serving clients throughout Virginia, we offer services in strategic planning, organizational development, nonprofit sustainability, board facilitation, and community engagement. We've been helping a wide variety of clients, including nonprofits, government agencies, associations, and businesses flourish and live into their mission and vision since 2009. Our seven-member staff prides itself on recommending cost-effective and practical solutions with tangible action steps that can be implemented by the organization and/or agency.

## The Process

We use creative methods to refine strategy and end with an actionable plan that is immediately useful to guide decisions. We work together with clients to design a process that meets the overall goals of the project. The exact steps and timeline are adaptable to your organization, culture, and expectations. We rely on a wide variety of resources and tools during our engagement, including interactive facilitation techniques, group-process dynamics, strategy development models, conflict resolution, financial modeling, and board governance best practices.

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# Project Overview

## Charge & Goal

In 2021, The Spark Mill was hired to guide the Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership (CVRHP) in the development of its strategic plan. The project began with the Gather phase, gaining input and feedback from key stakeholders about the role of the CVRHP in the affordable housing space.

This report is the summary findings of all the data collected during the Gather phase. The project now pivots to the Soak phase, where The Spark Mill guides the Strategic Planning Team in listening to stakeholder data and discerning how it will shape the organization's plan.

The last phase, and the ultimate goal of this project, is to transform all of the knowledge gained into goals and strategies that guide the organization as it looks to increase affordable housing in the region.

## Process

We began the project in November 2021 with a kick-off meeting with Executive Director Christine Jacobs, Board Chair Keith Smith, and CVRHP staff Ian Baxter. We discussed an overview of the process at this meeting and began establishing key dates for the project. To move us forward, we established a strategic planning team to support the development of the strategic plan by promoting board engagement, staff engagement, and offer definitive inputs throughout the process.

Strategic planning team members included:

- Ian Baxter
- Margret Clair
- Ned Galloway
- Anthony Haro
- Christine Jacobs
- Stacy Pethia
- Greg Powe
- Collette Sheehy
- Keith Smith
- Gretchen Thomas

During our November strategic planning team meeting, we determined which key stakeholder voices we needed to engage and how best to talk with them. Once the team created the stakeholder list, The Spark Mill began engaging stakeholders and gathering data.

## Strategic Questions

We also asked the planning team what questions they want the strategic plan to answer during this planning meeting. These questions served as a guide to the information we collected in interviews and focus groups. The following list summarizes the strategic planning team's questions:

- What actions can we take to facilitate the increase in affordable housing throughout the region?
- What is needed in the community around affordable housing?
- What is the role of the partnership in education? What education should we provide?
- Who is our core audience? Who do we exist to serve?
- How do we exist in the ecosystem of housing?
- Do people know about us?
- What is our vision and focus? What are other things can we do?

## Stakeholder Overview

We gathered data from approximately 28 people using one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and a retreat with CVRHP executive committee. We also reviewed internal documents, including previous strategic and financial documents, annual reports, and other important organizational data. In the appendix, at the end of this report, you will find a list of stakeholders, as well as interview and focus group questions, and a list of the most important things to consider from the executive committee retreat.

Upon gathering data from internal and external stakeholders, we began sifting through data and identifying key themes to create this Preliminary Findings Report.

# Inside the Report

## Themes

This section articulates the themes that emerged from the stakeholder data. A theme is a topic or idea we heard in multiple stakeholder conversations. For each theme, you will find a brief narrative along with supporting quotes. Items in quotes are direct quotes from interviews, focus groups, and surveys. We identified the following five themes in our data-gathering:

- A Desire for A Clear Regional Picture of Affordable Housing
- Agreed Upon and Consistent Barriers in Housing
- The Challenge of Regional Differences
- Many Conversations, Not Enough Action
- You Have An Opportunity To Clarify Your Role

## Pathways

This section identifies potential opportunities for the organization to consider as it works toward implementing learnings from this report's findings. We identified four key pathways for you to consider as you create your strategic plan:

- A Shared, Unified, Regional Vision
- A Vision With Influence - Help Localities Manage The Tension Between Local And Regional Focus
- Focus Advocacy On Vision Which Drives Policy (Not The Other Way Around)
- Provide Tools For Localities Affordable Housing Toolboxes (And That Support A Regional Vision)

# Themes

## A Desire for A Clear Regional Picture of Affordable Housing

When engaging stakeholders and asking about a regional approach to affordable housing, we heard a resounding, “Yes! We need that.” When asked about what they would want from the RHP, they stated they wanted real-time regional affordable housing data and research and support as localities work through their comprehensive plan and zoning updates. At the same time, as we dug deeper into our conversations, there was less consensus on what affordable housing is or what it means. Moreover, there was agreement that housing doesn’t exist in a vacuum but as part of a complex system of interrelated sectors (jobs, transportation, health, education, etc.) As we probed these conversations, there was a desire to see a regional network connecting with and including all stakeholders in the conversations and the work towards solutions.

*“Beyond that, there’s the complimentary question of how to do find the demographic that you want to support, and it depends on where you draw a line on the income charts. Targeting the people appropriately is also challenging.”*

*[Keeps you up at night?] “In the context of the problem, the enormity of it. It’s hard sometimes to be optimistic that you can make a large meaningful dent in that when in truth it’s bigger than all of us. If affordable housing wasn’t nearly impossible we wouldn’t be talking about it we would have done it. What it takes to happen isn’t there and there’s not a way to get it. You can be overwhelmed by it if you start down that slippery slope.”*

*“A lot of times people think affordable means subsidized.”*

*“Be advisory to the region. I think it’s useful to start to solve the challenge. There needs to be a regional approach.”*

*“Is there potential for the group could do more research and more support? Regional research on lack of diversity outside of Charlottesville city, others that were successful, creating case studies, something to support why you need to do this (resources and tools). Right now, the image of affordable housing is it brings crime and only creates low-paying jobs.”*

*“The resources and tools to help the localities see the importance of solving the problem.”*



*“Funding that is accessible to people that isn’t burdened by paperwork. [We need] Local funding that is available and flexible. That can be used to leverage other funding to match opportunities and leverage larger funds. You have to flip the script from ‘funding looking for programs’ to ‘programs looking for funding.’”*

*“I think [a regional approach or framework] would be hugely helpful. An advisory committee in a vacuum with someone from the county and the university; decisions get made in that vacuum. They don’t have the benefit of a regional partnership with everyone at the table thinking about the best solution, the best location. Begin to take a regional approach to density and location. Think holistically.”*

*“The other challenge we have is the presence of UVA. The students and professors and workforce they’re taking up available housing and that is putting a lot of strain on housing availability.”*

*“I think people have a misunderstanding of the true cost of building housing.”*

*“Something weird happens with our for-sale units. Your for-sale price is, maximum, at 80% AMI level. Someone buying it cannot be above 80% AMI to purchase it but in order to get the loan and other things, there’s an income qualifier. The units don’t get sold as affordable, then people remodel and make it more expensive.”*

*“Define affordable housing; look at the cross-section of the community, what are people earning and for those people to be affordable it can’t be more than 30%. Do we have housing available at those levels and the answer is no. 60% below there’s nothing. Even if you’re at 80% it’s slim pickings. A big mismatch between what housing costs and what people in the region can afford to pay.”*

*[Missing from Conversations] “Latino voices potentially, there is growing low income and seasonal labor. There’s a reason some people stay in shadows. That might be an opportunity to invest in targeted outreach.”*

*“I like the idea of regional funding. I think there needs to be a conversation on how you will determine where the money goes and how’s that done.”*

*“If you look at the data, there are two places with the biggest gap, 50% and below and \$1 million housing. It’s a barbell effect. Because gaps ultra-low and ultra-high both pushing into the middle sectors. There are no \$1 million condos to buy. It’s the 30-80% with acute need – working-class and significantly working class in counties.”*

*“We do have a problem across the spectrum in regards to affordability. For people who make 100% of AMI, you don’t have options in Albemarle County and there’s no subsidy. There are no incentives for private developers to build to that price range because they can’t make money.”*

*“Homeownership is a lot more than writing a check to the mortgage company.”*

*“Not just ease of use, but confidence that system will continue to fund it. Some reasonable consistency that way as operators we can plan ahead. A little more stability would go a long way.”*

*“[To get affordability], someone going to have to make a sacrifice and rich folks don’t have to make that sacrifice.”*

*“The reality is police and teachers can’t afford housing here but can’t access the workforce housing. So there needs to be another level of community members, community service-oriented people. It’s a missing component.”*

*“Rehab stopped because it wasn’t worth it. Help make the case to the state to bring rehab into people’s priorities. Rental housing development has an industrial complex behind it. Big players are trying to push that. That interest group does not exist for rehab.”*

*“Housing is where jobs go to sleep at night – still true but with the advent of remote work, you don’t have to be in a community where your job is; It’s increasingly an option. The type of growth that economic developers are pursuing are primary sector jobs, jobs that drive revenue to the community and they tend to have less issues with the housing situation. They can afford to live close to a job they if want to but the service side gets put out.”*

*“Affordable housing has six definitions for a reason. Affordable for entry-level vs CEO. We don’t have affordable housing for different definitions.”*

*“There’s no mobility. That’s the biggest challenge that people get stuck in housing and it manifests in many ways; a long list for housing vouchers. They hold on and won’t take chances because it’s risky. Public housing has a long list. We have 300 people coming to find housing. We need housing solutions for anybody where ever they are so they can move up the housing ladder.”*

## Agreed Upon and Consistent Barriers in Housing

While differences in perspective did emerge in our conversations (see below), there was striking agreement among stakeholders across sectors and geography about the barriers to housing affordability in the region. Below are the five barriers stakeholders consistently named. While several intersect, we list them all because stakeholders explicitly stated them.

**Land Costs.** Regardless of the locality, land cost came up consistently in the top three barriers to housing affordability. Included with land costs were development costs for infrastructure (i.e., tap fees or running infrastructure in rural areas.)

**Building Costs.** Stakeholders named that the cost to build housing is expensive due to materials. And regardless of the type of unit, the cost to build is the cost to build.

**Inventory.** Stakeholders stated that there is low inventory at all levels of housing affordability throughout the region. Moreover, the lack of housing at both the lower-income and the higher-income end of the spectrum tends to cannibalize the middle.

**Zoning Costs/Process.** While stakeholders celebrated the possibility of zoning law changes in Charlottesville and Albemarle, they all pointed to the costs and bureaucracy of the zoning process. While these costs overlap with land cost, zoning was called out by just about every stakeholder.

**Need for subsidy to make affordable housing work.** Lastly, the lack of subsidy was seen as a significant barrier to housing affordability in the region. Several stakeholders suggested that while subsidy is essential to housing affordability, it had to be combined with other cost mitigation steps to be able to increase affordable housing in the region.

*“We have a broken housing system.”*

*“Money to make housing affordable for people we’re concerned about requires a subsidy to do so. Raising money to provide the natural support they need. There is no end of good ideas and creativity, but the resources aren’t there to make it happen.”*

*“Resources we scrap together in Louisa are not the same as what you could do in Charlottesville.”*

*“[It’s a challenge] Trying to find housing for someone with an FHA loan or 100% financing when competing with someone with the ability to escalate.”*

*“The inability to build higher density is a huge issue. I would also say many development sites in the county restrict the types of homes you build.”*

*“A big problem is the timing involved if any grant money is used. It’s an egregious process. In this market, no one is going to wait for someone to check and see if the money will be available. Cash buying is at a huge advantage for leveraging money.”*

*[What keeps you up] “People that want to buy and worked so hard to get approved for what they have and not being able to find something. This thing with the bubble and enormous prices, some people can’t afford to wait it out. At one time, with \$250,000, they would have their choice of places but now I don’t feel good about what they’re getting.”*

*[Challenges in Housing] “Land prices which are related to zoning the second issue, third funding.”*

*“We’re always looking for grants to do different things from repairing foundations to leaking oil tanks. It takes a lot of time to find those grants if you’re not looking. I just don’t want to look for stuff.”*

*“Increased land values, land cost, particularly in the city.”*

*“Lack of funding to support projects. Part of the high cost is the tap fees, used to connect to water and sewer, are \$15,000-\$19,000 per unit in the county.”*

*“Land values are out of control in the city; the city is now creating good-paying jobs. This is driving up areas that used to be affordable.”*

*“If we can add density in the city then we should.”*

*[Challenges of Work] “The bureaucracies of the affordable housing world. The bureaucracy of UVA and so many stakeholders in the community with different views of how things should go. The necessity to include everyone in the conversation makes it a long process.”*

*“The political side wants as many deeply affordable housing units for as many people as possible. That’s great to want that too but you can’t ask private developers to shoulder that entire responsibility.”*

*“The housing market is out of control. To our benefit, they’re building stuff and it’s selling for outrageous prices. They’re having banner years because nothing is available in Charlottesville. So once they have a lot for sale, it’s being snatched up for crazy prices.”*

*[Barriers to housing affordability?] “Zoning, land prices, and people being afraid of density.”*

*“Each year the LIHTC pools are more crowded and no guarantee that funding will be available and that’s what makes the project work. Need to include flexibility but shouldn’t force the private sector into that realm. Have other incentives to make it possible to have a successful project.”*

*“We don’t have enough housing for people who want to live in this region.”*

*“Affordable housing in proffering to a particular AMI and try to get as close to 80%. The lower it goes the more expensive it gets.”*

*“Difficulties we run into with the city--creates stress in the system that gets us thinking, ‘I don’t want to have to go through this to build something!’”*

*“Too many strings attached to down payment assistance programs. Capped at 20-30% funding and you can’t lay other funding on top because it is not allowed. Finding more ways to help with down payment assistance.”*

*“In Greene County, water and sewer tap fees for a single-family house is \$20,000, and Albemarle \$13,000 which is still high. Getting relief would be huge.”*

*“Even prior to [the pandemic], we had a housing crisis in Greene County. Before [the pandemic], we counted 200 jobs of entry-level positions. People cannot live in the county.”*

*“In the city, the affordable housing community is anywhere from zero to 60% to 80% below AMI are the targets. There’s a demand and appetite for super-subsidized housing and it’s hard to imagine how that works long term.”*

*“We’ve been trying to get in the CDBG program but it’s competitive, why? There’s just as big a need. It’s not an easy process and it’s not guaranteed.”*

*“For us finding land has been a challenge, construction cost, land cost which is pushing people out of affordability range, finding the contractors.”*

*“We run the Housing Choice voucher program for two counties. The program is stuck. The waiting list hasn’t been open since 2014; it’s an epidemic in serious need of an overhaul. We have rental units but we need more lower to mid-level range rentals.”*

*“We deal with zoning issues because many are still zoned as agricultural. Getting funding together to have multifamily units in a packed area.”*

*“There is anti-growth built into water and sewer fees.”*

*“The lack of public infrastructure. It’s hard to keep construction down if you also have to put in water and sewer lines.”*

## The Challenge of Regional Differences

When talking with stakeholders, many stated the differences between rural, urban, and suburban housing. Their comments ranged from the realities around topography to the stereotypes and perceptions about rural communities. Several mentioned the uneven participation between all the localities in regional conversations. Likewise, localities differ on the priority they give to affordable housing in their policy and funding mechanisms. Stakeholders recognize the challenges of coalescing a regional perspective, given these differences across the region.

We also noted a subtle thread running through all of our conversations: NIMBYism is present in many forms across the region. While it is consistently present, it shows up differently across the region. There is overt resistance to rezoning or higher density

proposals in some settings. In others, it may show when it comes to funding decisions, zoning decisions, and other ordinances.

*“Louisa is a relatively less populated if not rural or farming community. The needs are the same in both areas. How you do it and what you have to work with is different. My concerns about regional efforts are if they look at the whole geographic area as a homogenized problem, it’s not. I think they would face the challenge of how to tailor programs and tools to urban and rural. Recent experience has left me with the impression that area [rural] is not being considered..”*

*“People feel passionate or they wouldn’t be there. So, they have their own world view which informs the things they’ll get interested in. It’s getting disparate groups together to think about the problem. The difficulty is welding things together that don’t want to be.”*

*“The current comprehensive plan and zoning rewrite is going to be a real radical departure from existing practice.”*

*“People think it’s less expensive to live [in a rural area] but it’s not necessarily. It’s also helping people get past of perception of rural.”*

*“People are very vocal about what happens in Charlottesville; it stifles us from being able to accomplish much. We’re not great at implementing in the city.”*

*“Get in sync with VDOT and their goals. On the front end, [Albemarle] County talks about what impact does this have for schools, or do they need a water tower.”*

*“How can you pull together to find innovative solutions? It’s going to solve quickly if you find nuanced ways of getting everyone to think about solutions.”*

*“[Other areas are] easier to work with, more supportive, more problem solving oriented. Hopeful they will get better with new [local] leadership and council. There are certain people that need to move and bring new blood in; in an effort to change culture need to change people.”*

*“They want everything to be perfect, green space, walkways, and trees. Certain architectural styles. Developers say everything you add, adds to the final cost. Streamlining and relaxing process will help. I think maybe localities need to prioritize what they want to focus on.”*

*“There’s a struggle with how do you weigh relative benefits in cost vs location. How do you weigh, if you built at market rate, could you build twice as much for the same money, and is that fair or equitable? Finding resources in and around where they live is a priority but it’s not there today.”*

*“Greene County supervisors don’t want more affordable housing. They’re not doing a thing to promote affordable housing and turn down projects. On the other hand, if you think about pooling resources, Greene might be more receptive if the money is coming from Charlottesville. The problem demands regional support.”*

*“Understanding the differences between codes and how they can be better together. One county has contradictory codes to another county. Code continuity.”*

*“People still want to be here. The pandemic is leading to people coming here with remote opportunities.”*

*“It’s difficult to find ways to coordinate or partner on a project from a regional level. If we can partner on projects that serve everyone or has a regional nature but it’s hard to organize.”*

*“There’s also the neighborhoods that are problems. Not only do the planners and developers hash it out about the final plan but in cases especially when you need to rezone to make the project happen, that can take forever. Then you go to the planning commission and the board of supervisors and they both want to make changes to the plan. You have communities coming out that seem totally against development. So, then we go back and try to adjust for those things. They had a plan for 400 affordable units and it was reduced to 200 because of the neighbors. There is that community resistance.”*

*“We’ve been trying to build a home in Greene and we have a partnership with a local school. Without the 25% match from the government, we can’t build and I can’t get onto the supervisor’s agenda.”*

*“People come out for affordable housing, but the low-end middle is a missing component.”*

*“In the category of good problems, the reason we have an affordable housing issue is there are more people who want to live here than units available. The corollary to that is, everywhere that is desirable is having the same issue and it’s not easy to solve. It’s hard to solve here because we value quality of life; other places don’t value the aesthetic as much. We got rivers and mountains topography that causes issues, including government regulations in county areas that are protected for good reason but takes areas out of play and developers get blamed. Ultimately, it makes it a challenge for others to build here.”*

*“Fluvanna and Louisa are having an argument over water. Both have a corridor they would like to see developed further. Both struggle to balance a rural environment, which the community wants, and having jobs that are close by.”*

*“We have a lot of families that live in Charlottesville because they can’t live in Louisa because of lack of transportation and lack of affordable housing. There are probably people in Louisa who want to move to Charlottesville but Housing Choice vouchers are not applicable across municipal lines. The supervisors are looking at how do we spend money on our own folks,*

*instead of the region When we think of ourselves regionally, I think we get closer to creating housing for all types of people.”*

*“Charlottesville is recognizing the importance of affordable housing on different levels. Greene County has not done its role in my mind. I think Albemarle and Greene County can look at how can we step up more to meet this need. For me, it’s understanding diverse housing.”*

*“Regionally, there should be an intervention tool at every level so we can plan. This would allow to line up funding, staffing, and land. Without future planning as a region, it’s not going to happen.”*

*“This is a system that hasn’t been invested in for over a generation. When you look at the first layers of the onion some of it is regional cooperation.”*

## Many Conversations, Not Enough Action

The good news is that throughout the region, people are having conversations about affordable housing in different arenas and on different levels. Stakeholders desire the conversations about affordable housing to lead to impactful action. They want to see localities take meaningful steps to address the housing crisis. In addition, stakeholders also want a regional perspective or vision on affordable housing to help guide that conversation and inform localities’ work. Lastly, stakeholders recognize many regional conversations are happening around other sectors like transportation and economic development, and they wonder how those conversations interact in ways that shape future action.

*“If the partnership is to develop an integrated view of what should be done would be a great objective. Having a community-wide plan in principle would be valuable.”*

*“There’s very little grant money for Greene County and that’s because the Board of Commissioners in Greene Count. They have not wanted to participate in grant money like others. They say they care about affordable housing but won’t put skin in the game.”*

*“Align yourself with the right people. Be productive and don’t just sit around and talk about it.”*

*“People want to be involved and want to say something. Takes up air time and slows things down.”*

*“Always be aware of the political ramifications of the statements you make because the people with the money to build more affordable housing may not share all your political*



views. Sometimes advocates can be so passionate that they sometimes can offend even if they don't intend to...they're well-meaning people who want to do the right thing."

*[Role of CVRHP] "Teeth – get agreements from localities to pursue [affordable housing]. Getting in front of localities as they do plan reviews. Engage in the discussion early on with folks doing the comprehensive plan to ensure it's in the plan. It's easier to point to the comprehensive plan."*

*"If there's a regional solution, we need to know the problem and have data behind it. The solution, if shared, becomes more manageable for everybody. Communication is also key. We are strong because we communicate between and among ourselves. Keeping the conversation going, keeping some good tools in the toolbox so we can all have good strong, consistent language and messaging to elected officials and those making decisions."*

*"I'm looking forward to the outcome of the process and what's recommended. Some of the actionable items that will be a part of it."*

*"[Our nonprofit is] the housing department [for the county]; they send everyone to us. People think we're part of the government, which we are not. They should have people for this and a budget for it."*

*"Economic opportunity and transportation. What I have noticed if you can spend an extra amount of time to talk about economic opportunity, I think it goes hand and hand with housing affordability. Economic opportunity to make a living wage and then maybe an effective and efficient public transportation. The presence of those would reduce some of the challenges."*

*"Balance of region vs local: I think you have to show them the benefits. The economic scale and economic development benefits."*

*"Transportation and funding mechanism are top two. When it comes to regional planning, who pays for what comes up often."*

*"Continue to bring everyone together. Convening the various parties with an interest in housing to make sure no duplication of effort."*

*"There also needs to be someone to manage those conversations. Nonprofits use activist language which is not helpful in any way or form and makes officials upset and makes it harder for me to do the job. So CVRHP mediated the conversation and use less of that language."*

*"I would like to see RHP double down on what it's done. It created a sound housing plan in the counties but those. Things have to be implemented now and I want to see RHP push towards implementation."*

## You Have An Opportunity To Clarify Your Role

Most, but not all of the stakeholders we spoke with, know about the RHP. Additionally, we did not hear any negative sentiments about you. Instead there was a lack of clarity or understanding about what you do and what you offer. Many of them are aware of a connection with TJPDC. Several thought you were a program of the PDC. Many who know you suggested that others in the housing space may not recognize or understand you. This points to an opportunity to use the strategic direction that comes out of this process as a springboard to clarify your role, articulate your identity, and define your impact.

*“Hard to say because I don’t know what the partnership is. Trying to suggest what they should be doing without knowing who they are and what they are doing. Some sort of campaign or effort to make these parts visible and apparent so we understand what the range of activity is out there and what versions of it can they be a part of. Not knowing who they are and what they’re trying to achieve makes me hesitant to provide input on what they’re doing.”*

*“Try to reach everyone.”*

*“I don’t know much about the partnership.”*

*“To the extent that they can pull everyone together and get consensus on what best projects and where public resources can be spent. I think it’s a valuable organization.”*

*“Our relationship with the partnership is really evolving. Our history has been with the planning district commission. We are happy to help sponsor those regional conversations. Its been a budding relationship.”*

*“Getting more state money. Partnering with state government is most important and for more housing in general.”*

*“Keep for-profits at the table.”*

*“I believe this is a group of TJPDC.”*

*“Having a group that has expertise in housing, it would be really helpful for them to be that. Have great case studies from around the country that they feed to the localities while they’re going through planning processes. Resources available, funding streams out there, making private developers aware. Say ‘We know you have to provide affordable housing, here’s where you can find more funds.’ In the past, no affordable housing was provided or people did one or two units. Now we see that it will be a huge part of the landscape going forward. We need resources and incentives available to make it work or we’ll go elsewhere and develop somewhere else.”*

*“I would like a data depository. We generally don’t know what’s happening everywhere else. It’s hard to keep track of what’s going on everywhere. There are a lot of grants to apply for from a regional perspective and we’ll need to pull the data together for someone else. Not sure what data specifically. I like the idea of a dashboard but I don’t want it to be used to compare regions.”*

*“The partnership is a sign that things are going well. Regional planning is not set up to succeed unless you have a strong trusty group together and I think RHP is set up to be that honest broker that can bring people together.”*

*“It’s the one coalition with elected and appointed and that’s what makes it different from others.”*

# Pathways

## A Shared, Unified Regional Vision For Affordable Housing.

A clear regional vision for a healthy housing system doesn't exist. Without a clear, unified vision, all the localities and groups will create their vision of what they think things should look like (or not give it the attention it deserves.) RHP has the opportunity as a neutral and regional body to help craft a shared regional vision for affordable housing. This requires ensuring that all voices are part of the conversation with a goal to thrive as a region and with flourishing residents.

## A Vision With Influence - Help Localities Manage The Tension Between Local And Regional Focus

To craft that shared vision, the RHP will need to help localities see how what is good for the region is good for their community. The goal is to find ways to shift the narrative and perception that participation in a regional approach to affordable housing is a zero-sum game. The challenge will be to help localities see how affordable housing is a benefit to their community *and* the region.

## Focus Advocacy On Vision Which Drives Policy (Not The Other Way Around)

Which leads to the type of role that RHP can play. In our meetings with the executive team, the question arose several times about what kind of advocacy the RHP should participate in. It seems like you are best positioned to help co-create and champion a shared regional vision and resource localities to see how they can realistically participate in that vision through concrete tools and approaches. Which leads to the final pathway -

## Provide Tools For Localities Affordable Housing Toolboxes (And That Support A Regional Vision)

Stakeholders, especially local government, want the RHP to provide tools and resources that help them in their planning and affordable housing conversations. The RHP, as a neutral body, can be the go-to resource for local government and staff to show clear tools for addressing their affordable housing challenges in a way that helps them participate in a regional vision. This includes combining real-time data with compelling narratives and offering case studies of affordable housing innovations and successes from other areas.

# Appendix A:

## Key Stakeholders Interviewed and Questions

### One-On-One Interviews

- Ginny Barefoot, Greene County Resident
- Emily Dreyfus, Albemarle County Resident
- John Hanna, Louisa County Resident
- Pace Lochte, Assistant Vice President for Economic Development, UVA
- Sheila Mae, Nelson County Resident
- Gina Merrit, Lead Consultant, UVA Affordable Housing Initiative
- Jim Murray, Former UVA Rector
- Rebecca Ragsdale, Fluvanna County Resident
- Chris Thompson, Director of Strategic Housing, Virginia Housing

### Base Interview Questions

1. How are you connected to CVRHP and/or the housing space?
2. What are the top three challenges to housing affordability in your area?
3. What are the top three biggest challenges for you in your role?
4. What role do you think CVRHP should play in the region?
5. What is preventing them from doing that?
6. What is one thing CVRHP could do over the next three years to make the greatest impact on the region's housing?
7. Who should CVRHP partner with to make the greatest impact for the region, and why?
8. When thinking about the work to be done for housing affordability in the region, what keeps you up at night?
9. What are the best ways for CVRHP to communicate with your about future initiatives and ways to partner?
10. As CVRHP works on its strategic plan, what advice would you give them?
11. If you could pass CVRHP a secret note, what would it say?

# Appendix B:

## Focus Group Questions

### Focus Group Participants

- Ashley Davies, Vice President, Riverbend Development
- Chris Engel, Director of Economic Development, Charlottesville
- Kim Hyland, Director, Fluvanna/Louisa Housing Foundation
- Alex Ikefuna, Director of Department of Neighborhood Development Services, City of Charlottesville
- Jennifer Jacobs, Executive Director, Albemarle Housing Improvement Program
- Maureen Kelley, Director of Economic Development, Nelson County
- Stacy Pethia, Housing Policy Manager, Albemarle County
- Dan Rosensweig, Director, Greater Charlottesville Habitat for Humanity
- Frank Stoner, Principal, Milestone Partners
- Alan Yost, Director of Economic Development, Greene County

### Focus Group Questions

1. *What do you love about the region? What's going well?*
2. *What is going well in terms of land development right now? What is challenging?*
3. *What are your/your firm's top three goals for land development in the region?*
4. *What is going "right" currently in regard to economic development?*
5. *How do you see housing impacting economic development right now?*
6. *What is your definition of "affordable housing"?*
7. *In regards to housing, what is going on in your locality (zoning, masterplan/comp plans) are you most enthusiastic about? Where would you like to see changes?*
8. *What are the biggest tensions or polarities you face in your role when it comes to housing?*
9. *Tell us about regional planning efforts, do they exist? What does that look like? If not why not?*
10. *What voices or perspectives are missing from affordable housing today?*
11. *The affordable housing crisis isn't taking place in a vacuum. What are the other factors that impact housing? Is there one that has a greater impact than all the others?*
12. *From your perspective, what are the top three challenges to housing affordability in the region?*
13. *What role do you want to see CVRHP play in housing affordability in the region?*
14. *If CVRHP could only focus on one thing over the next three years to make the greatest impact on the region's housing, what would you want it to be?*
15. *What could CVRHP do to help you in your role? How could they support your work as you address housing your locality?*

# Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership **Partnership Retreat Report**

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022



# Expectations

- Summarize accomplishments
- Consensus on next steps
- Structure – are organized in the best way?
- Define the relevance of the group to make a difference in the affordable housing shortage

# Map of Our Landscape

## Contextual Opportunities

- Government/public organizations attention to issue
- \$ available
- Zoning improvements
- Regional awareness
- Confirmation of the problem
- Coordination and collaboration
- Momentum
- Political awareness/accountability

## Economic & Political climate

- NIMBY
- Political climate by locality
- Resources

## Contextual Restraints

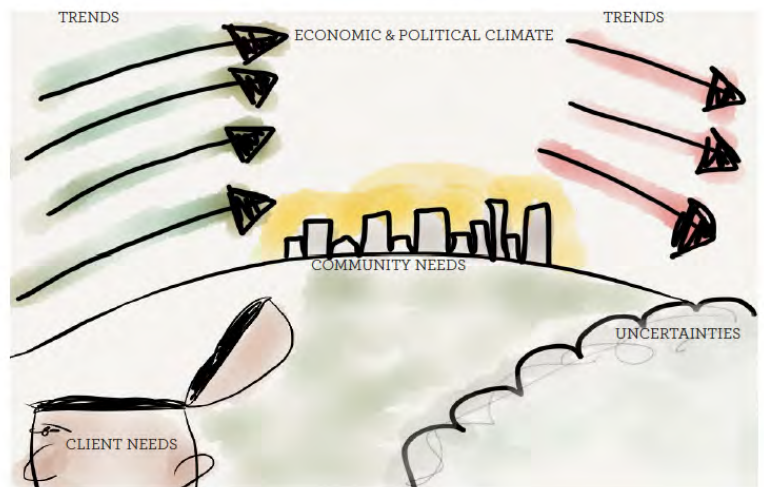
- Construction costs
- Supply chain
- Labor shortage
- Inflation
- Inventory: land; existing

## Client Needs

- Access/less barriers
- More homes
- Transportation

## Community Needs

- Attention to environment/climate
- Transportation



- NIMBY
- Infrastructure stress
- Supply chain & increase costs
- Lack of inventory
- Cycle time due to loss of labor

- Access to services
- Proximity

- Safe, affordable, rate of inventory
- Mixed use

## Uncertainties

- Political climate
- War/conflict in Ukraine
- Long-term impact of COVID
- Resource sustainability
- Future workforce
- Rising interest rates

## Six Words

### “The Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership exists to...”

Complete this prompt with a sentence or phrase that is only six words (or less) long.

## Group

- Support region stakeholders: data, toolkits, knowledge
- Provide housing solutions addressing regional challenge
- Facilitate community-orientated housing solutions
- Implement regional strategies for affordable housing

## Individual

- Support the community in meeting affordable housing needs
- Support stakeholders in solving housing challenges
- Advocate for affordable housing in our community
- Connect communities as a fortified front
- Facilitate methods/conversations for making housing affordable
- Create and disseminate affordability plan and access to housing
- Stimulate and coordinate housing access and supply
- Facilitate coordination to address housing affordability
- Facilitate creation of more affordable housing

## Impact

- We will research/model policy, in order to see change in policy (comp. plans, zoning, etc.)
- We will grow RHP, so that it reflects the multiple communities
- We will education/inform (framing), in order to decrease opposition to development
- We will provide a toolkit, so that there is more housing choice —units, community— and more housing stock—all affordable
- We will host a safe space in order to stimulate collaboration (bridge—city and rural
- We will create a report card, so there is a measure of progress/success of tools or strategies
- We will provide best practices so that localities can achieve success
- We will provide consulting for localities so they can implement the strategies/tools

- We will educate the community for advocacy so that the community can advocate for housing— improved, increased, vocal, community-based
- We will provide resources to localities so they can reform comprehensive plan and update zoning — planning and zoning alignment
- We will uncover opportunities for funding and assist stakeholders so that everyone has a home.

## Start, Stop, Keep, Need

For continued strategic growth:

- What do we START doing?
- What do we KEEP doing?
- What do we STOP doing?
- What do we need?

### Start

- Dashboard – metrics
- Become liaison
- Integrate housing
- TJPDC program to benefit RHP
- Bylaw/membership review
- Networking
- Identify \_ take specific actions
- Create toolkit for local government —resource guide

### Stop

- Meeting for meetings sake
- Strategizing, start doing
- Silos

### Keep

- Webinars – educations
- Summit
- Community outreach
- Convening
- Listening
- Advocating for affordable housing
- Increase advocacy

### Need

- Stable money
- Bylaw review
- Membership review

# Most Important

## Strengthen RHP

- Develop sustainable funding plan
- Identify stable funding
- Communicate RHP purpose/mission
- Communicate our value proposition so we can secure resources to sustain the RHP
- Stabilize RHP organization and funding
- Review impact/efficacy
- Define RHP membership

## Educate/Influence

- Educate community about advocacy and model policies
- Zoning education and developer do's/don'ts
- Create and disseminate consistent advocacy message
- Develop advocacy toolkit
- Help housing authorities operate regionally
- RHP members serve as liaisons back to respective groups (BOS, PC, non-profit, fellow developers, etc.) to share RHP's work
- Provide info to public about needs of their communities
- Education community to housing need
- Advocate for lower infrastructure cost for affordable housing
- Perpetuate awareness of needs and resources
- Educate builders/developers on ways to incorporate affordable housing
- Host educational events (virtual or in-person) to share information and knowledge
- Be a resource to local governments

## Resource Zoning

- Help locality with comp planning and zoning
- Draft zoning sections
- To see zoning and comp plans updated for affordable housing

## Resources for Localities

- Give funding opportunities online
- Provide best practices on how to overcome resistance to affordable housing projects
- Develop in-house consulting services for localities for addressing housing needs
- Advocate for more funding of housing
- Develop library/resource list of model policies for government/funders
- Stabilize funding source for partners
- Tool kit for government
- Give specific items localities can implement
- Provide technical assistance to localities for grants/policy development
- Develop regional affordable housing toolkit—resource guide, best practices, comp plan affordable housing inputs
- land bank

- provide best practices support for localities
- study feasibility and/or support for regional housing trust fund
- integrate further with TJPDC housing programs
- coordinate a regional community land trust
- provide affordable housing resource guide
- convene local government conference

## **Inclusion/Community Membership**

- Increase community involvement
- Connect with urban and rural communities
- Embed inclusivity into everything we do
- Review RHP bylaws/membership
- Update bylaws and membership list to keep partnership vibrant
- Revise bylaws/membership to encourage diverse and dynamic participation

## **Action**

- Convene regional strategy
- Solid action items with real achievable results
- Revisit goals
- Continue to convene stakeholders with a view toward developing actions
- Achieve and bolster consistent member attendance/input/participation
- Less strategizing, more action
- Keep grinding

## **Metrics Dashboard**

- Feel free to add in relevant pictures as useful
- Define metrics that will measure success/failure
- Complete dashboard with specific data/metrics/resources
- Create dashboard
- Develop metrics and dashboard
- Measure outcomes and publicize them
- Establish and track metrics to measure effectiveness
- Supply affordable housing metrics to regional stakeholders
- Dashboard for community for good awareness of housing resources in community
- Identify metrics and develop “dashboard” to report progress
- Market Porchlight VA or determine best “host” for the tool