

Planning for the Future of Housing in the Merrimack Valley

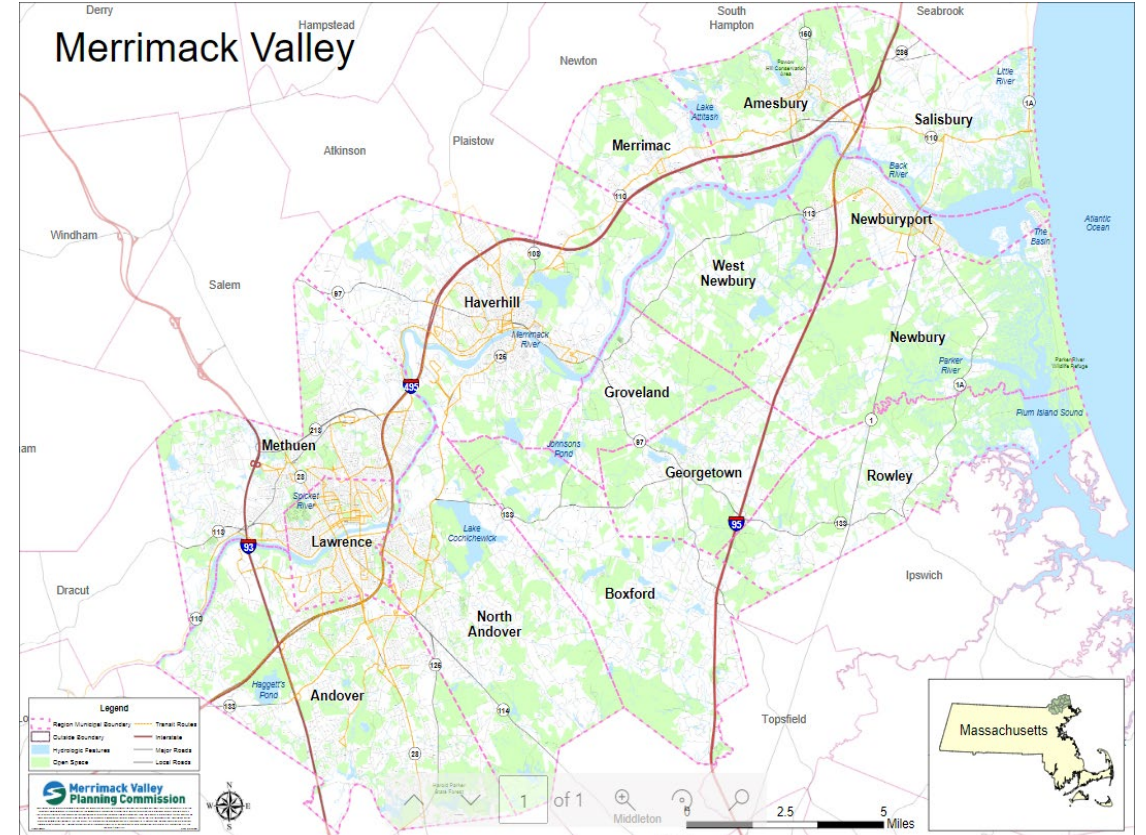
Virtual Sub-Regional Session

October 12, 2023

6:00PM-7:30PM

Your Regional Planning Agency

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) is a regional planning agency created in 1959 with a goal of consistently planning, developing, and promoting the sustainable development of the Merrimack Valley through responsible and efficient use of regional resources.



Who We Are

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

Jerrard Whitten – Executive Director

Ian Burns – Community & Economic Development
Program Coordinator

Kayla Rennie – Community & Economic Development
Planner

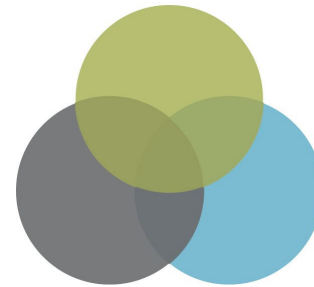
Lauren Keisling – Community Planner

Municipal Planning Staff

Consensus Building Institute - Facilitation Support

Elizabeth Cooper

Abby Fullem



CBI

CATALYZING COLLABORATION

Technology and Guiding Principles



Zoom logistics



Stay muted.



Use video if
you like.



Use Chat
function ask
questions.



Raise hand in
"Reactions" if
you want to
speak



Chat CBI host
Abby Fullem
with technical
issues.



Please rename
yourself to
include your
name and
community

Guiding Principles for Today's Discussion

- Assume good intentions
- Be open to another perspective
- Make space/take space (actively contribute via hand raise/chat; be mindful of sharing airtime with others)
- No technical expertise needed to participate. No question is bad or silly to ask.
- Ask questions in chat at any time! We'll also pause for Q&A after we introduce the assessment.

Agenda

Welcome

Overview of the Housing Production Plan (HPP) Process and Regional Perspective

Community Breakout Groups

Return to main session – Summary and Adjourn



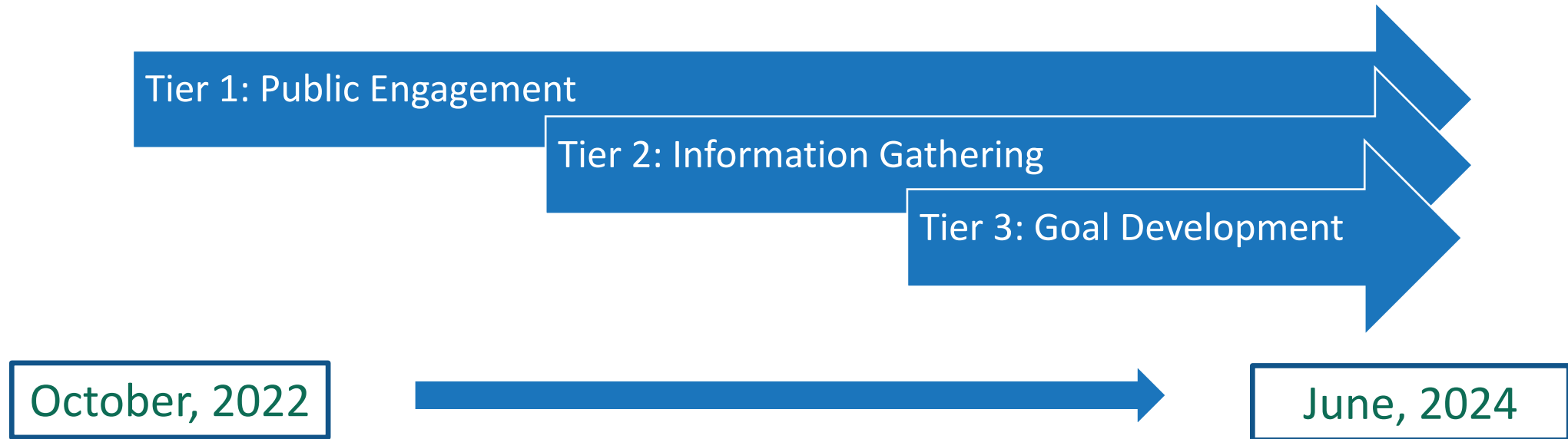
What is a Housing Production Plan (HPP)?

- HPPs allow communities to articulate their vision for housing production in a comprehensive plan and identify **community specific** strategies to achieve said goals
- HPPs are a statutory requirement to be used as a tool to grant communities further control over 40B development
- HPPs help communities achieve the state requirement of **at least 10%** of their housing stock qualifying to be listed on the **Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)**



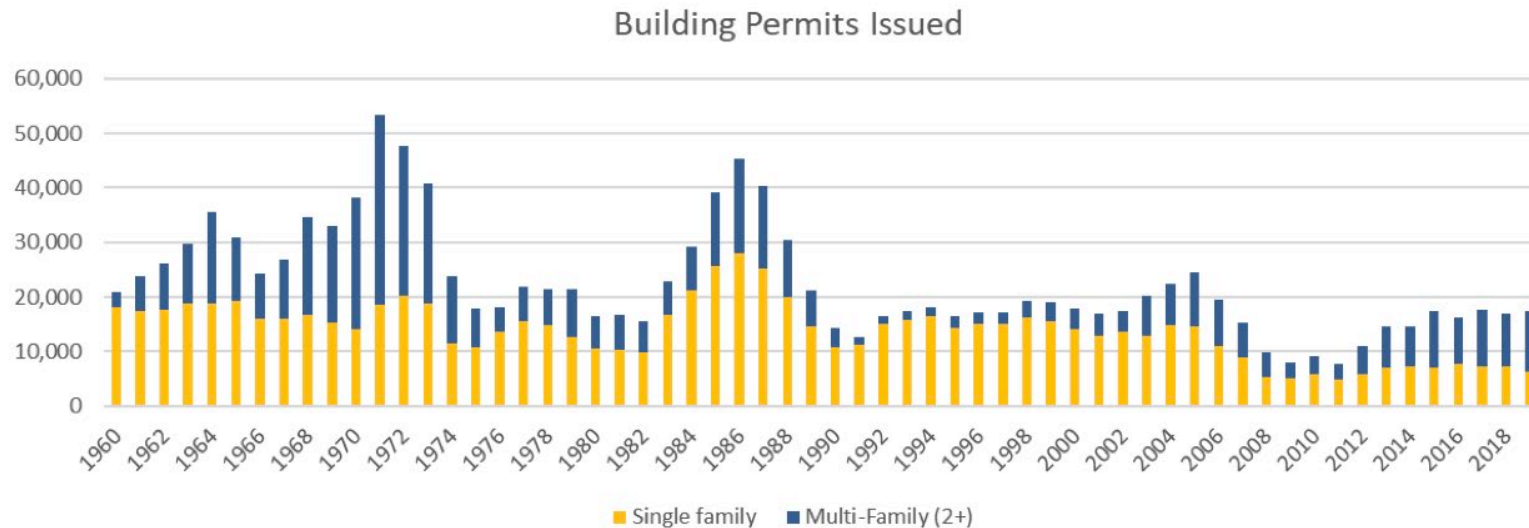
The Process

Housing Production Plan Process



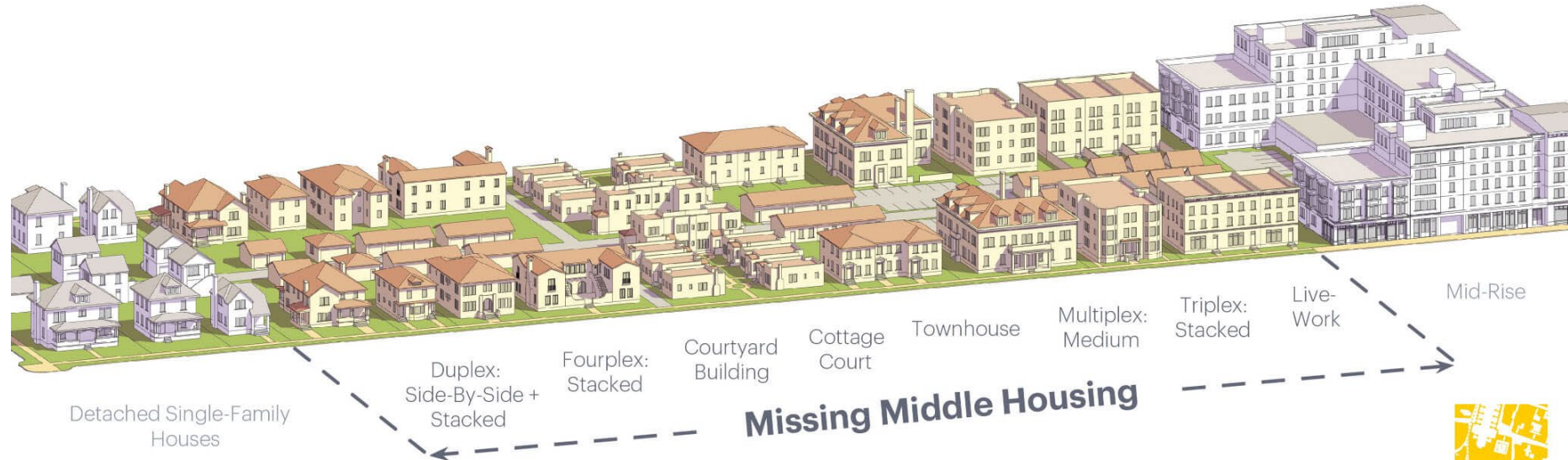
Why is there a housing shortage?

- Between 1960 and 1990, Massachusetts communities permitted almost 900,000 housing units. Since 1990, communities have permitted fewer than 470,000 new units.
- There is an estimated shortage of 200,000 housing units in the state



Bullets and graphic on this slide from MA EOHED MBTA Communities Webinar presentation

Missing Middle Housing



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Community Impact of Housing Access



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



EQUITY



SUSTAINABILITY



CULTURAL VIBRANCY



PUBLIC HEALTH



Regional Housing Needs

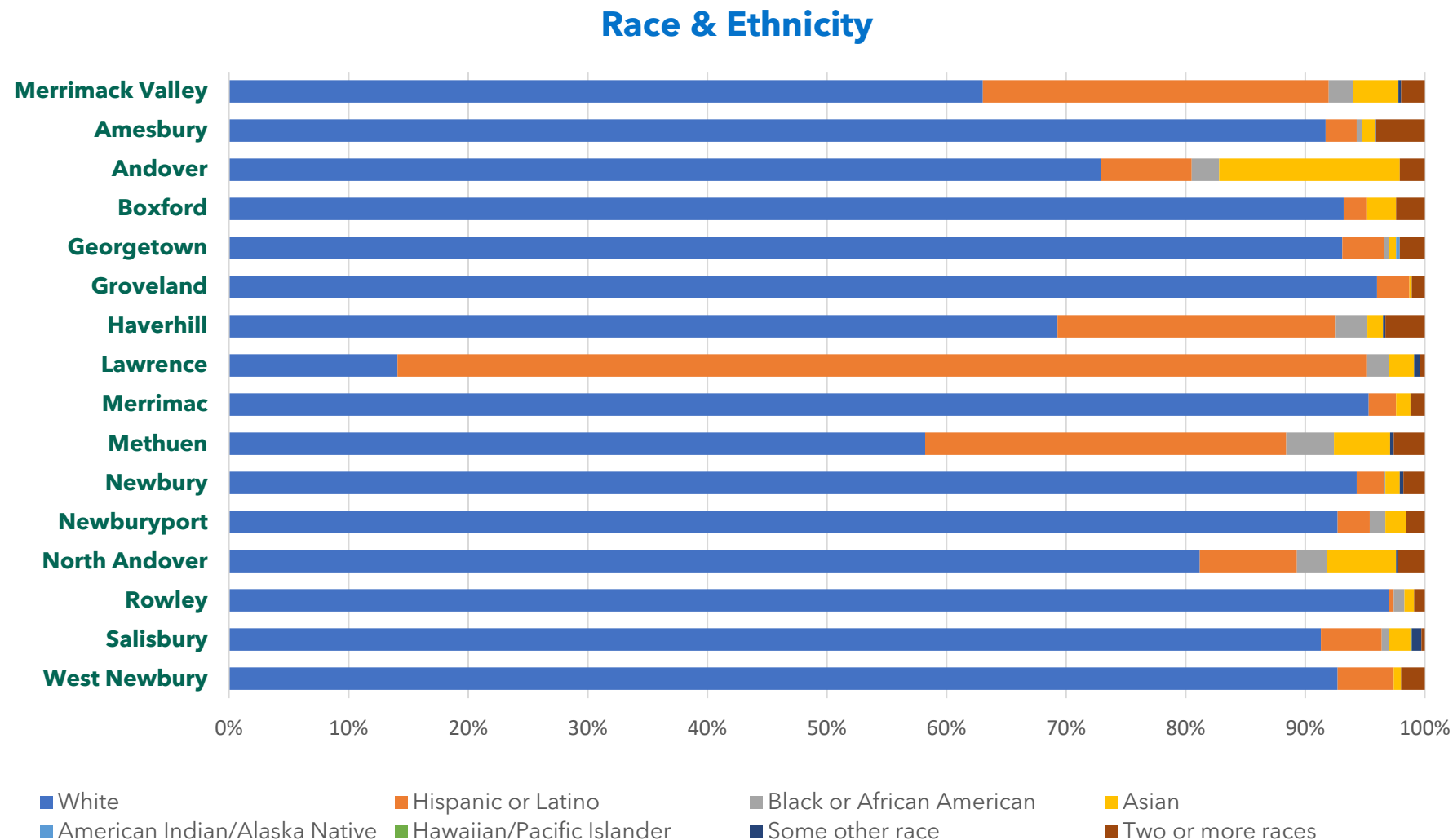


Why A Regional Approach?



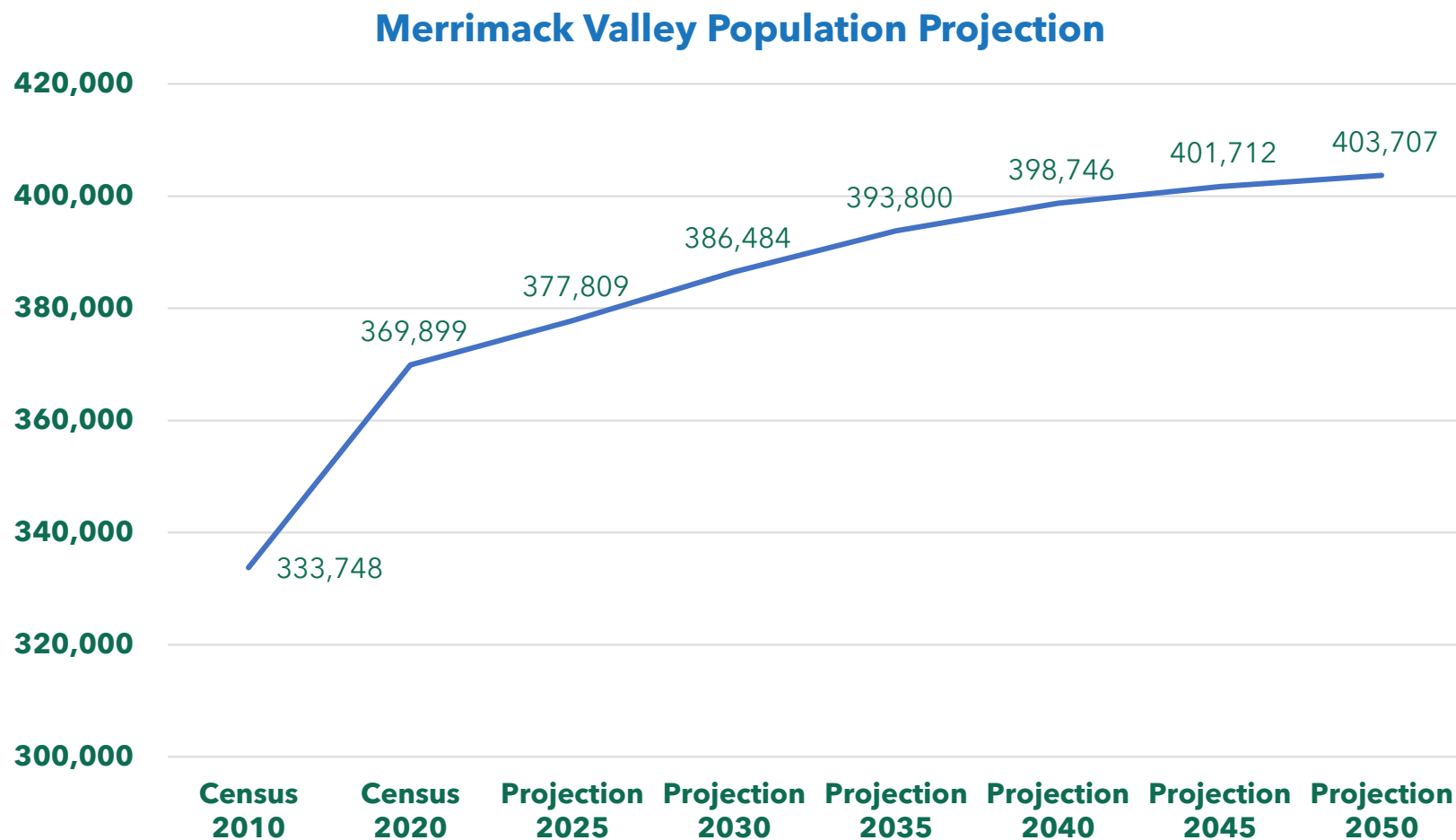
- Allows us to gather region-wide information on the housing landscape to make informed decisions about appropriate, impactful housing development across municipalities
- Housing precarity does not exist in a vacuum in any one municipality, and having this regional approach helps us problem-solve across cities and towns
- Allows us to take advantage of economies of scale in terms of data collection and analysis, goal development, and assembly of the final plans

Regional Demographic Trends



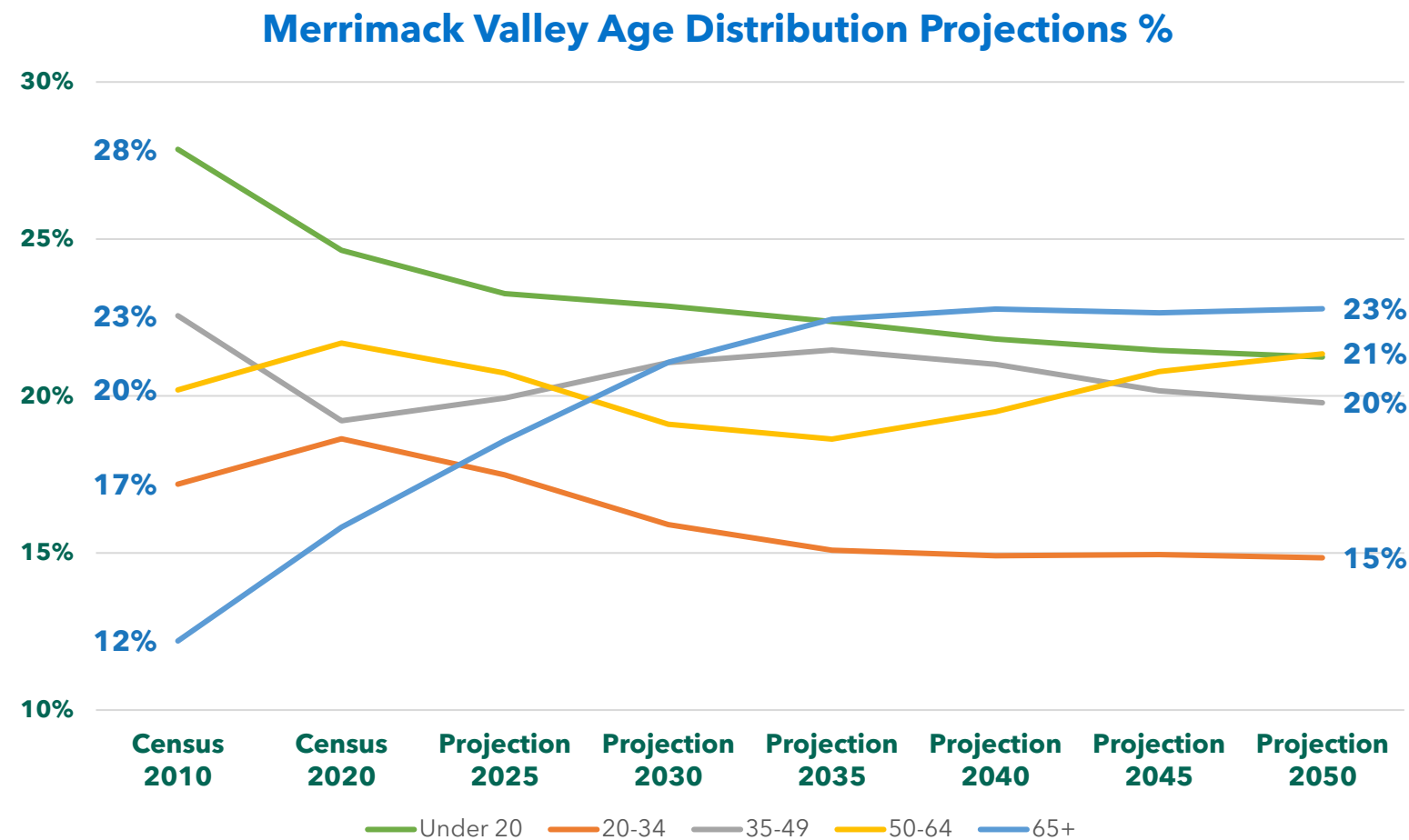
Source: 2020 Decennial Census, Table P1

Regional Demographic Trends



Source: UMass Donahue Institute Projections

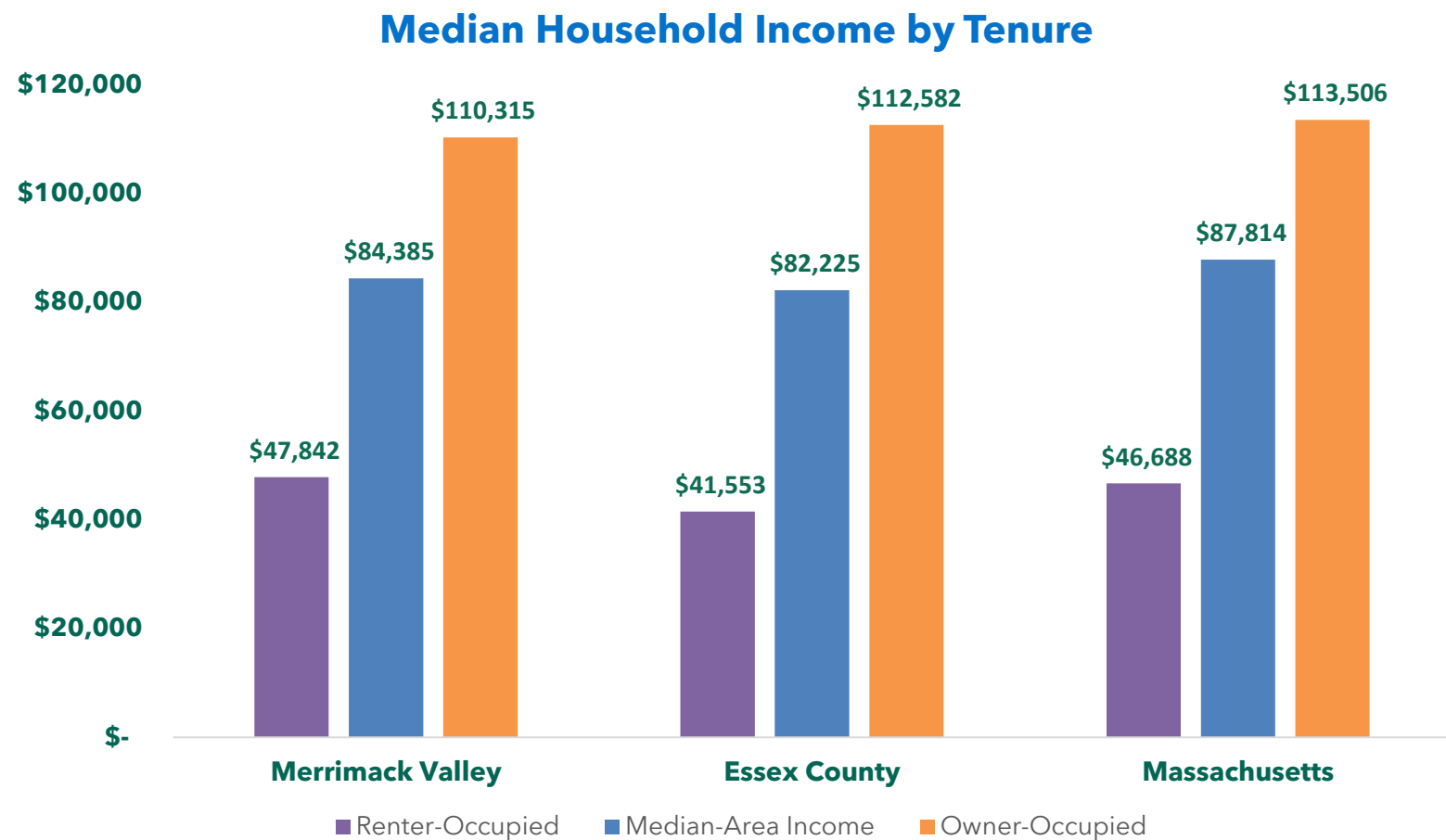
Regional Demographic Trends



Source: UMass Donahue Institute Projections



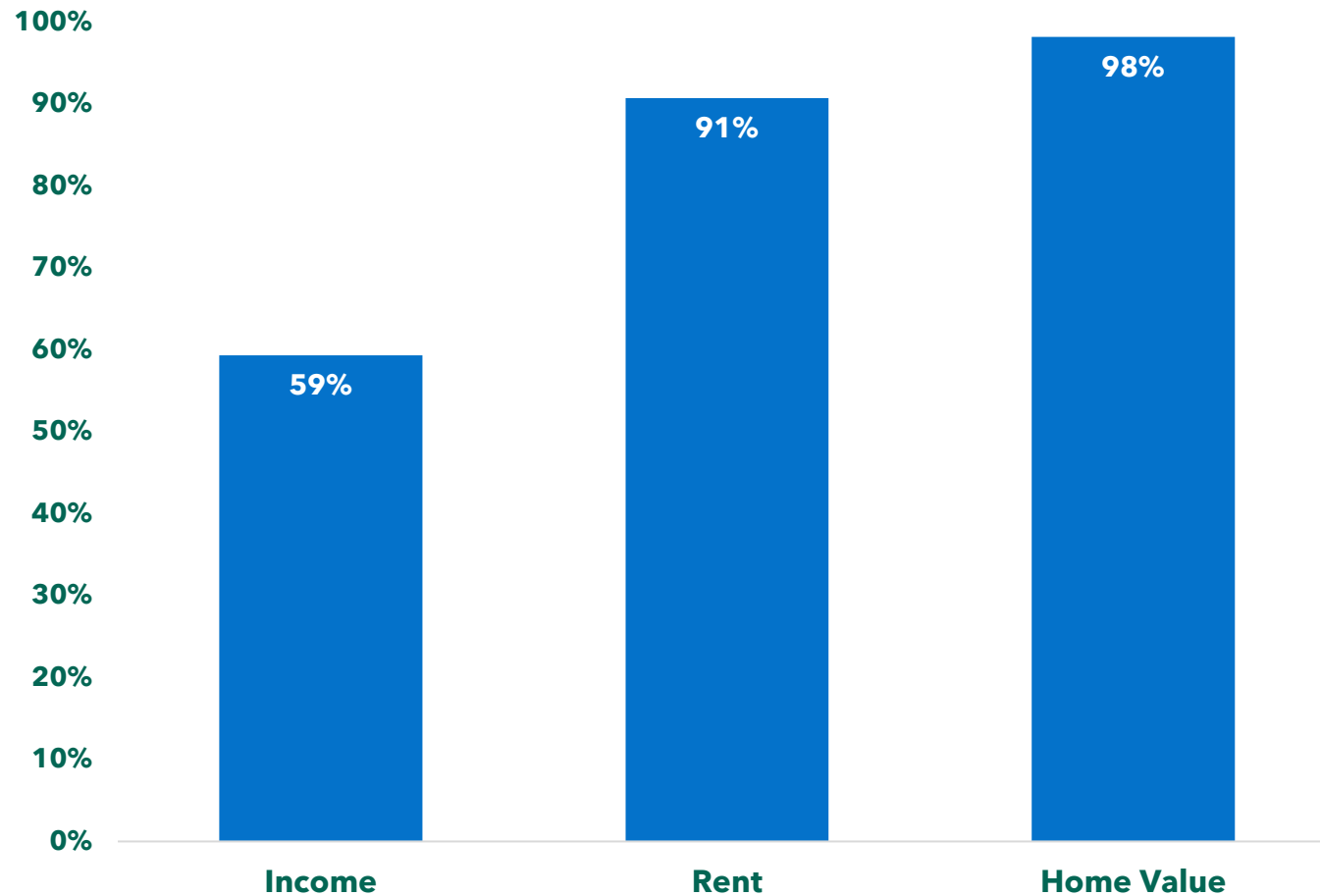
Regional Housing Needs



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2020.
Table B25119

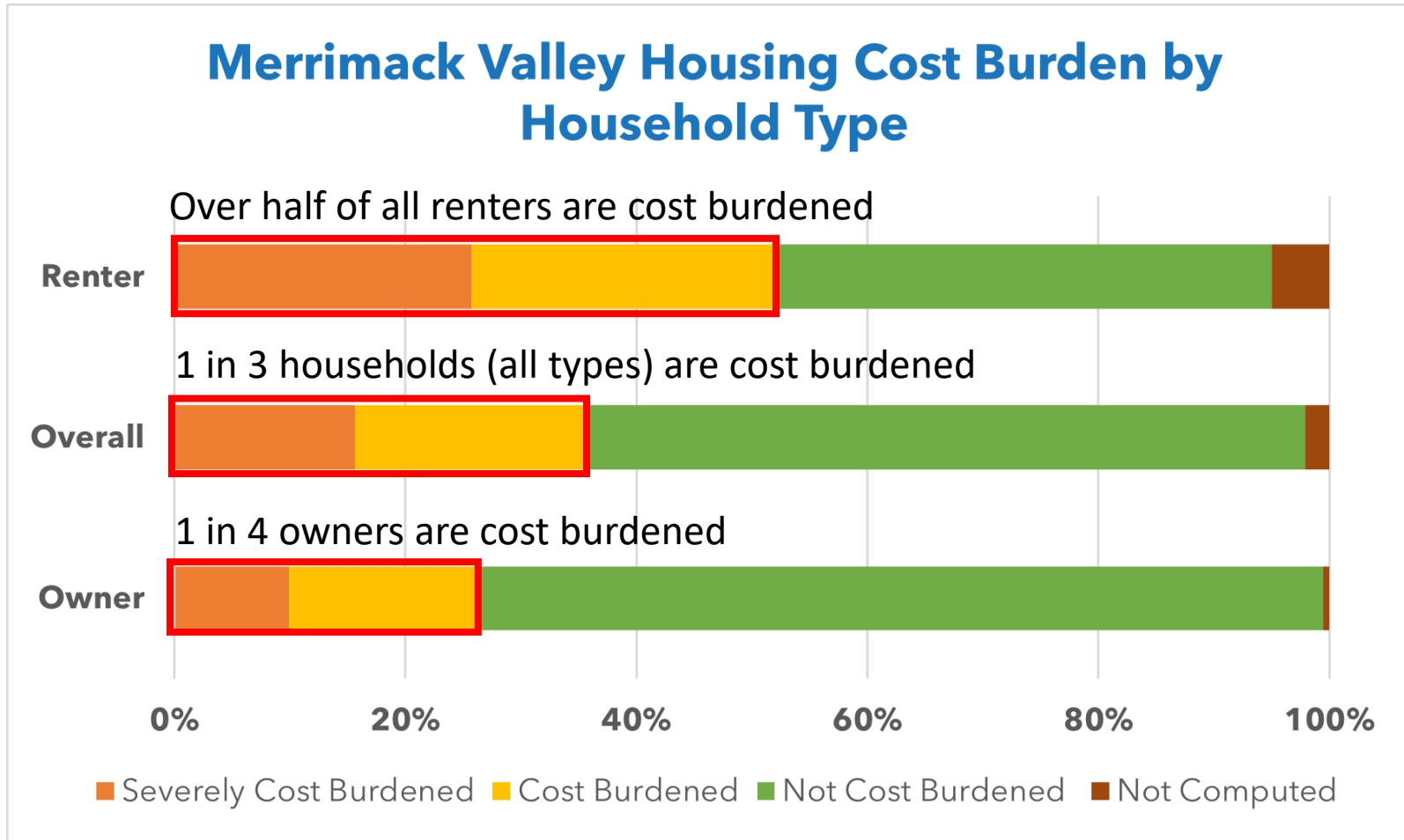
Regional Housing Needs

Merrimack Valley Median Income, Rent, and Home Value: % Increase from 2000-2020



Source: 2000-2020 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables DP03 & DP04

Regional Housing Trends



“Cost Burdened”
means a household
pays **more than 30%**
of their gross income
towards housing

**“Severely cost
burdened”** means a
household pays **more
than 50%** of their
gross income towards
housing

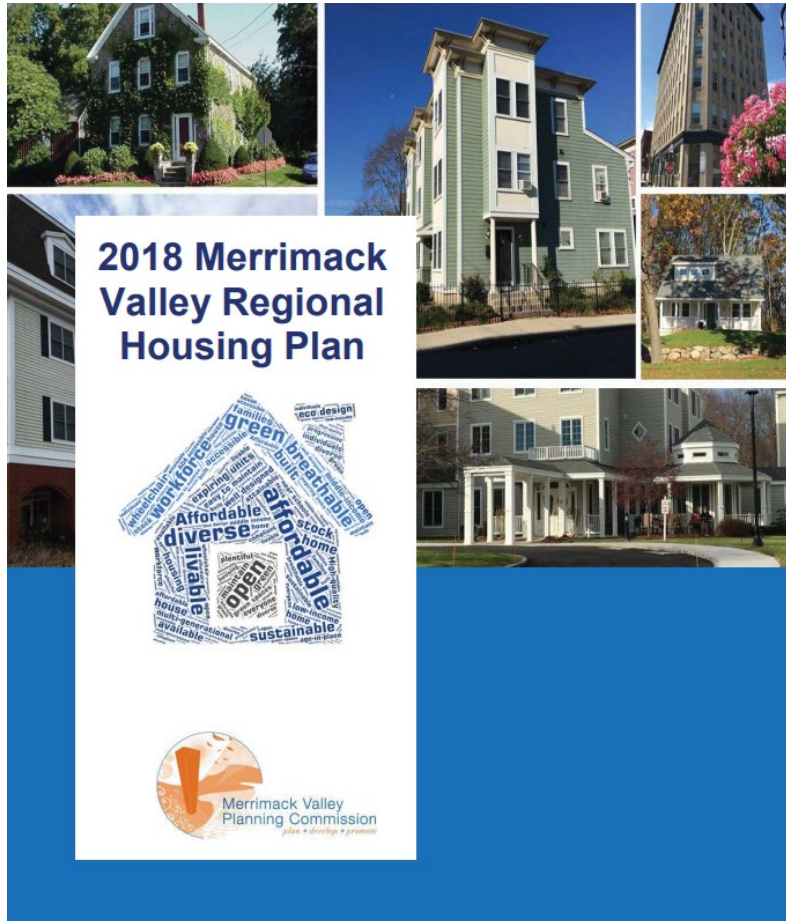
Regional Housing Work

- Many of our Merrimack Valley communities have been undergoing Master Plan updates, Hazard Mitigation Plan updates, and other community-wide plans to guide ongoing growth and change
- Most recently on the regional scale, MVPC worked with a breadth of stakeholders throughout the Valley to develop the next 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)



Planning Context – Where are we now?

Over the past 5 years, our housing environment has changed:



- COVID-19
- Each of our communities experienced expected population increase
- Passing and implementation of Section 3A (MBTA Communities)
- Increased awareness of impact of housing costs on economic status



Planning and Implementation Considerations



Administrative Capacity



Infrastructure Capacity



Town Meeting Approval Process



Policy Mechanisms – What tools are available?

Planning and Policies

- Inclusionary zoning
- Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaws
- Creation of Affordable Housing Trust
- Zoning amendment to allow for specific housing types by-right

Production and Preservation

- Develop incentives for developers (i.e. waive permit fees, expedite permitting, density bonuses)
- Explore use of Historic Tax Credits
- Explore use of publicly-owned land for housing
- Retrofitting existing structures for housing (i.e. single to multi-family conversion, historic conversion)

Breakout Sessions



Next Steps



MVPC to incorporate public input into housing strategy lists



In-person, public meetings for each community throughout the winter to review finalized strategy lists



Ongoing housing conversation in your community – MBTA Communities, zoning changes, introduction of new ordinances/bylaws

Thank you!