



# Reflecting Raleigh

THE NEXT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Raleigh  
Planning

## Housing Summit Recap: World Cafe Summary

### Community Conversation Summary

This report consolidates key discussions, themes, and action points from all tables at the Housing Summit Recap event on July 10, 2025. The event was part of the public engagement series for Reflecting Raleigh: The Next Comprehensive Plan. Attendees were randomly assigned to one of ten tables for three rounds of facilitated discussion following a recorded presentation from the Affordable Housing Summit hosted in August of 2024.

This was Reflecting Raleigh's first fully bilingual event. Staff provided printed materials in English and Spanish, Spanish subtitles on the recorded presentation, and full live interpretation services for any attendants who requested them. A few table hosts and notetakers reported having additional time constraints with the need for so much language interpretation and suggested that future events build in additional time so that all participants can give input and have it translated for others.

#### Volunteer table hosts posed guiding questions in each round:

- **Round 1:** What has been your experience with housing in Raleigh? How long have you lived in your neighborhood? What kind of house do you live in? How have your housing costs changed over time? Have you ever struggled to find housing that meets your needs?
- **Round 2:** As we learned at both Housing events, increasing the supply of housing is one of the tools Raleigh can use to promote and maintain affordability. While there is a citywide benefit to adding more homes, concentrating a lot of new development in one place can have negative impacts on individual neighborhoods. What are your thoughts about how to equitably distribute the burdens and benefits of new development?
- **Round 3:** How important is affordable housing to you compared to other city priorities? What do you think the biggest tradeoffs are in making housing more affordable?

## Key Themes

### Rising Housing Costs

Participants at every table shared that a dramatic increase in housing costs is adding strain to their daily lives. Both renters and homeowners shared concerns over increased cost of rent, mortgages, and taxes.

- **High up-front costs:** Many residents emphasized that upfront expenses such as security deposits, down payments, and application fees are significant barriers to securing housing. These costs often prevent lower-income individuals and families from moving into better-quality or more stable homes.
- **Insufficient income:** Though cost of living is increasing rapidly, participants shared that wages are not rising to match the higher housing prices. This left several participants in a position where they needed to work longer hours or take on additional jobs just to be able to afford their housing. Other participants shared that they had to make difficult trade-offs as a result, sometimes sacrificing other essentials like healthcare or food.
- **High material and building costs:** A few participants credited high costs of materials as contributing to unaffordable housing developments. Increased construction and labor costs limit developers' ability to build affordable units, leading to a shortage in affordable housing and in the overall housing supply.
- **Long-time resident displacement:** Many community members expressed concerns about the displacement of Raleigh natives and long-time residents as a result of rising housing costs, impacting not just those who move away from Raleigh, but their neighbors as well. Several participants stressed the importance of implementing policies to help protect vulnerable populations from being priced out of their communities.

### Key Quotes

- *"To rent, it's three times my income."*
- *"People might start leaving Raleigh because of how expensive it is."*
- *"I have friends in Wilson and Henderson who have to drive to Raleigh."*
- *"Am I considered middle class? [I make] less than \$30,000 a year."*

### Quality of Life

Participants described severe housing challenges including overcrowded and unsafe living conditions, frequent relocations disrupting family stability, and limited access to transit. They emphasized the need for affordable, stable housing, stronger tenant protections, and improved neighborhood safety and connectivity.

- **Shared housing situations:** Participants across multiple tables described relying on shared housing arrangements to afford rent, citing multiple families living in the same unit or up to 5 family members sharing a one-room dwelling.

Community members expressed frustration with not being able to afford their own housing units and shared concerns about the impacts of raising their children in overcrowded conditions with little privacy.

- **Poor living conditions:** In addition to overcrowding, residents often reported inadequate maintenance and unsafe housing conditions. They asked for stricter enforcement of housing quality and improved tenant protections, stating an inability to afford moving to somewhere better.
- **Family instability:** Participants who move often due to increasing housing costs cited disruption in their children's education and in their family support networks. Worried about their children's emotional and academic development, parents cited affordable, stable housing as critical for maintaining family well-being.
- **Safety concerns:** Safety was a significant issue for many participants, who associated poor housing and neighborhood conditions with increased crime, substance use disorder, and feelings of insecurity.
- **Connectivity:** Residents emphasized the need for better access to public transit and walkable neighborhoods. Improved connectivity was seen as essential for reaching jobs, schools, and services—especially for those without cars. Though moving to the suburbs may be a more affordable option, participants shared challenges with the commute and number of bus transfers needed to get to work.

### Key Quotes

- "I'm paying almost \$2,000 a month for a 2-bedroom apt. Many people I know have a lower mortgage than that. You wouldn't think at that price there would be a lot of crime, but recently our complex is experiencing more issues with drug activity and evictions."
- "For me, [housing] is top priority from the perspective of [someone] working in clinics. If someone doesn't have housing, it makes it so much harder to access other social services."
- "More affordable housing could be an option, but everything is going up except wages. When you try to move into a safer/more decent place, it could be harder or even impossible for a single person to do. With so much construction, as people move here, it increases prices a lot more. And what type of neighborhood are you creating? You can't find a place where you can get started, and it's harder with children. You have to take schools into account. There are lots more options for people with resources."
- "Living in Boston was affordable and manageable, but now in Raleigh, I'm living in a basement with two granddaughters."

## Housing Supply

Participants cited a lack of housing as contributing to the affordability crisis. They called for more small, affordable housing options over luxury homes and supported increased housing density near transit and amenities. They emphasized prioritizing affordable housing for high-need populations, including seniors, low-income families, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness.

- **Requests to downsize:** Some participants expressed a clear preference for smaller, more affordable housing options like tiny homes, compact apartments, or single-story homes with minimal square footage. Those who cited new developments as being primarily luxury apartments or expansive homes emphasized the need to add smaller units to the housing supply.
- **Need for increased density:** There was broad support across tables for increasing housing density, particularly in areas close to public transit and amenities. Residents believed that smart, targeted density could alleviate supply shortages without contributing to urban sprawl, though some expressed a preference for more single-family homes in the city outskirts where land prices are lower.
- **High-need communities:** Community members highlighted the urgent need to expand affordable housing options in communities with vulnerable populations, including seniors, low-income families, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness. There were calls for prioritizing resources and policies to support these groups specifically.

### Key Quotes

- *"In the 1950s, full families made do with much smaller houses. Why do we need all these 2,000 sq ft or more houses?"*
- *"Use pre-existing structures to create more livable units, such as old homes or warehouses."*
- *"Build fewer luxury apartments and larger homes."*

## Accessibility of Housing Resources

Participants highlighted the need for improved communication and language access, especially for non-English speakers, to navigate housing services and tenant rights. They also called for expanded efforts to support first-time homeowners, raise wages, and adapt outreach methods to ensure all communities can access housing resources.

- **Language barrier:** Spanish-speaking participants reported difficulties accessing information about housing options and support services, either due to a lack of translated materials or bilingual staff. They shared that these barriers have limited their ability to navigate application processes or understand tenant rights.
- **Pathways to homeownership:** Many residents expressed interest in programs that aid first-time homebuyers through bilingual education, counseling, and financial assistance. There was support for expanding down payment assistance and credit-building initiatives.
- **Higher wages:** Participants at many tables stressed the need for improved employment opportunities, job training, and wage growth to supplement affordable housing efforts. Without increased income, participants shared that even affordable housing options may remain out of reach for many low-income residents.
- **Additional communication methods:** Several residents shared that this event was their first time connecting with city staff, and they had been unaware of previous

engagement efforts. They suggested improving outreach through additional means that are more available to people with limited TV and internet access, such as partnerships with local organizations, door-to-door knocking, and multilingual platforms. Some residents asked to be connected with any housing resources the city can provide.

Key Quotes

- *"In my 20 years here, I have not been able to buy a house."*
- *"I don't think I will ever be able to buy a home, or my children."*
- *"Can the city tell me why it is so difficult for me to get a place to live while I am working hard [11 hours per day] and still can't afford a home independently?"*
- *"When income doesn't increase over the years, is anything looking at that? I know Raleigh can't change, but is there anyone looking at that?"*

Key Conversation Themes	Tables
Burden of Rising Housing Costs	All ten tables
Quality of Life Concerns	All ten tables
Housing Supply	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10
Accessibility of Housing Resources	2, 3, 4, 5, 9