

The Partnership for Housing Affordability, a program of the Greater Richmond Chamber, is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the Richmond region by making sure that today, and in the future, there are a broad range of affordable housing options available to our region's residents. The goal of this alliance of business and community leaders is to educate Central Virginia's businesses, political representatives, and the general public about the challenge of ensuring affordable housing options for all. The Partnership strives to educate our colleagues and neighbors to the very real threat that a lack of affordable housing poses for our shared quality of life.

So what do people do when they can't afford housing? They can choose to live in houses in less desirable neighborhoods where perhaps their family's safety is less secure and their quality of life is diminished. Or they choose to move further and further beyond the Richmond region, until they can find affordable housing. This leads to sprawling development, more congested highways and longer commute times, and longer response times for health care workers, firefighters, police and EMS workers. And then there are those who leave for good, choosing to relocate to an area in which they can afford housing.

When a lack of affordable housing leads to these consequences, everyone suffers. Employers are faced with the prospect of either losing employees or raising wages substantially, which diminishes profitability and could mean the difference between a company that survives, dies, or relocates elsewhere. And those of us dependent upon these professions for safe neighborhoods, strong schools, and consistent customer service suffer as well.

Now is the time to shape the long-term plans that will guide the growth of this region for decades to come. And by taking action today to raise awareness of the need for affordable housing, the Partnership for Housing Affordability is protecting the economic vitality and stability of our community, as well as its richness of life.