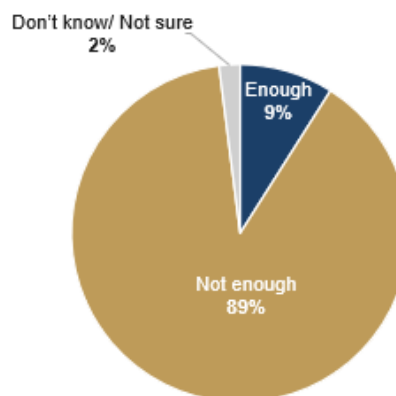


TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Jay Campbell and Claire Chen
DATE: February 23, 2026
RE: Key Findings from a Survey among Vermont Voters on Housing

This memorandum summarizes key findings from a survey conducted among a representative 404 voters in Vermont from February 12-16, 2026. The sample interviewed is statistically representative of the demographics and geography of Vermont and has a margin of error of ± 4.9 percentage points.

- Three-quarters (75%) of Vermonters say it is important that the state legislature takes action to deal with the housing situation in the state, including nearly half (47%) saying it is *extremely* important.**
 - There is wide, cross-partisan agreement that it is highly important for the state legislature to prioritize the housing situation in Vermont, including among 89% of Democrats, 67% of independents, and 64% of Republicans. Additionally, there is nearly no differentiation on this issue by age (75% of those ages 18-44, 74% of those ages 45-64, and 77% of those over the age of 65 say the state legislature should take action) and very little by geography (74% in the north, 78% in Chittenden County, 76% in central Vermont, and 71% in the south say the same).
- Public need for more housing that is affordable to the average Vermonter has reached a critical mass: 93% of Vermonters say that the cost of renting or buying a home in the state is a major or somewhat of a problem, with 68% of voters overall and at least two-thirds of every demographic group saying that it is a *major* problem.**
 - High renting and homebuying costs impact residents across all areas of Vermont: those in the north region and in Chittenden County are most apt to say housing costs are a major problem (76% and 70%, respectively), but two in three residents in central (67%) and southern (63%) counties say the same.
 - Fully nine in 10 Vermonters (89%) agree that there is not enough housing in the state that is affordable for average people, with no less than 83% of every major demographic group aligned on this.

Generally speaking, do you think Vermont has enough homes that are affordable for average people to buy or rent, or not enough?



- In comparing to other issues, the cost and availability of housing is a top-two priority with half (49%) of Vermont voters, beating out taxes (39%), healthcare costs (38%), jobs (16%), and four other issues for the top spot. (NOTE: this was the first question in the survey, before respondents thought about or answered other questions on the topic of housing.)
 - High housing costs have had serious downstream effects on Vermonters' lives, with 60% saying that housing costs had a negative impact on ability of them or someone they know in their community to rent or purchase a home, and at least half saying the same for their ability to save for retirement (54%), live in their desired neighborhood (50%), and afford basic needs like groceries or medications (49%). This last point is especially striking, even more so for voters under age 45: two-thirds (67%) say they or someone they know in their community has struggled to afford basic needs as a result of high housing costs.
3. **Vermonters widely prioritize increasing housing that is affordable to average people over concerns about changing communities.**
- Voters by a three-to-one margin say that it is more important to build more housing for working Vermonters (76%) than it is to protect their community from change (21%).
 - This ratio persists across both age and parental status. Demographic groups who would especially prioritize increasing housing in this trade-off include those making less than \$50,000 a year (82%), women (80%), and those in central Vermont (82%) or Chittenden County (79%).
4. **Vermonters also fully reject the notion that building more housing in and near existing communities automatically means damaging the environment.**
- Eight in 10 voters (81%) believe that it is possible to both build more homes *and* protect the environment by building in and near existing communities, while only 14% say it cannot be done.
5. **Even in the wake of a “debate” about growth, Vermonters come down firmly on the side of more housing by a margin of more than two to one.**
- Respondents were read two statements and asked which they agree with more. One makes the case that we can build more housing to ease Vermont's other pressing needs like schools and hospitals while also protecting the environment; the other that there should be a more gradual process of increasing housing meant to reduce the risk of overcrowding, protect the environment, and prevent lowering the quality of life.
 - Build more housing to ease other pressing needs: 67% agreed more with this statement, including 44% much more
 - Gradual process to protect the environment and quality of life: 29% agreed more with this statement, including 12% much more
6. **While these problems with Vermont's housing situation are universally experienced, young people and families with children are struggling in particular.**
- Younger voters under the age of 45:** This group is disproportionately renters (30% compared to 15% overall), and are particularly affected by the housing situation in the state:
- Three in five (60%) say that the cost and availability of housing is one of their top issues, with the next highest issue of healthcare costs (32%) a distant second place.
 - Three-quarters (73%) say that housing costs are a major problem in the state (compared to 68% overall).

- Young voters are much more likely to feel the subsequent negative impacts: 72% say their ability to rent or purchase a home is affected by high housing costs (compared to 60% overall), and 67% say the same for their ability to afford basic needs (compared to 47% overall).

Parents of children under age 18:

- Eight in 10 parents of minor children (80%) say that the cost of renting or buying a home in Vermont is a major problem (compared with 65% of non-parents), emphasizing the difficulties of raising a family in a state with a shortage of homes affordable for working families.
- In addition, parents are more likely than non-parents to say that high housing costs affected their ability to rent or purchase a home (71% vs 57%), live in a desired neighborhood (66% vs 45%), and afford basic needs like groceries and medications (60% vs 45%).