COMMUNICATING FOR SUCCESS

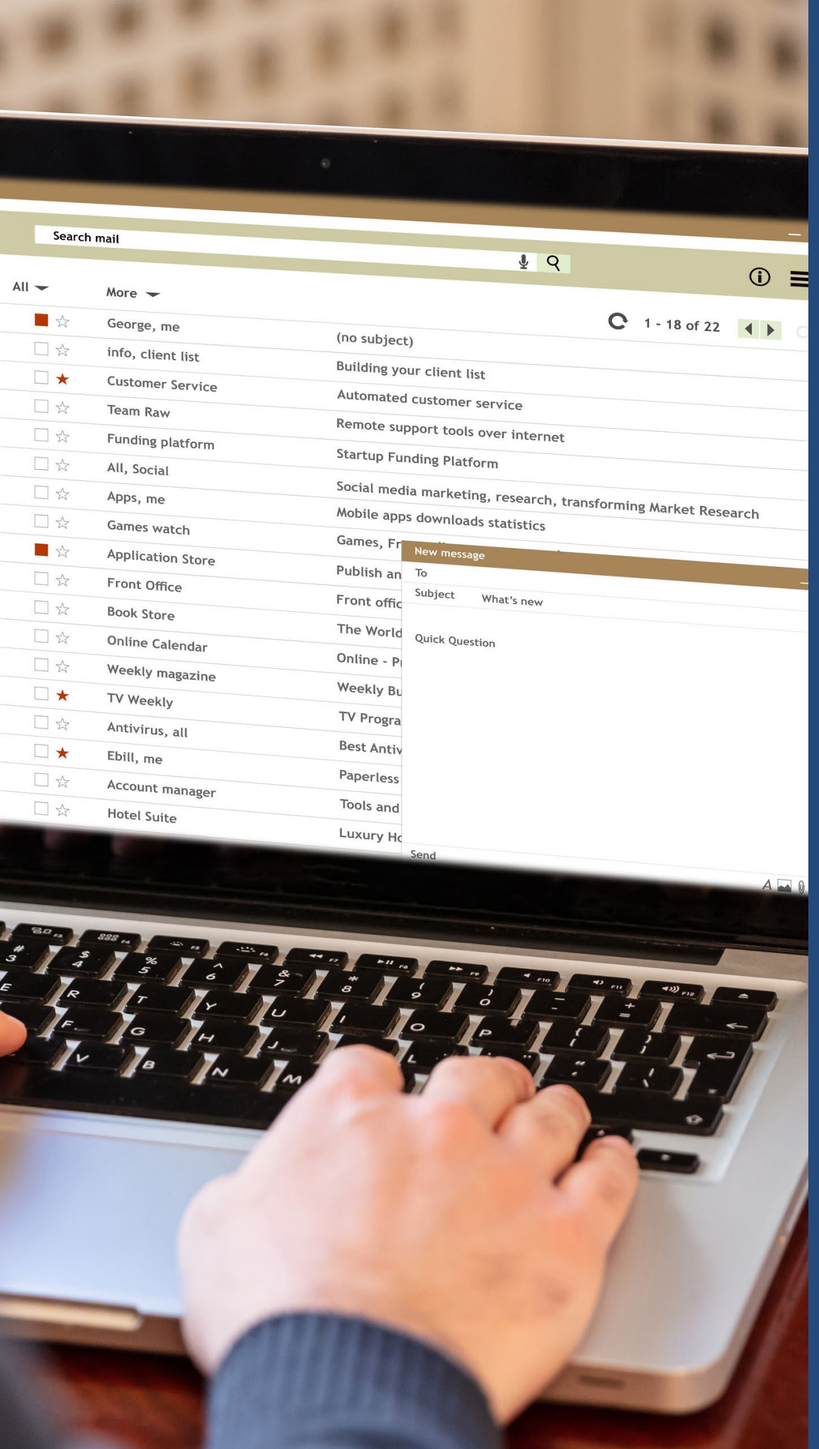
CLEAR. CONFIDENT. PROFESSIONAL.

Katie Cullipher
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

YOU'RE A PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATOR

Whether it's in your job description or not.





JUST THE BASICS

Small habits can have a big impact.



Be Responsive



Be Clear



Be Professional



Be Thoughtful

JUST THE BASICS

Every interaction is an opportunity to build credibility and trust.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

A locality partner emails requesting information you don't have readily available.

A “Let me look into it. I'll get back to you as soon as I have something.”

B “Thanks for reaching out. I'll check with our team and follow up by Thursday with an update.”

YOUR WORDS SPEAK VOLUMES



Stick to the Facts

Share what you know. Don't speculate.

Choose Words Carefully

Be professional, even in difficult conversations.

Know Your Role

Don't speak for your organization without authorization.

Know When to Refer

Connect people with the right person or resource.

FOIA 101

Public business. Public records. Public accountability.

01

Know What It Covers

Public records can include emails, texts, documents, and other work communications.

02

Recognize a Request

A request doesn't have to say “FOIA” to be one.

03

Time Matters

FOIA generally requires a response within five working days.

04

Know Where to Send It

Follow your organization's FOIA procedures and refer requests promptly.

IS THIS A REQUEST?



You receive this email:

“Hi! Could you send me copies of the emails between your agency and the city about the proposed regional housing project? Thanks!”

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

A. Ignore it. They didn't mention FOIA.
B. Search your inbox and send everything you find.
C. Promptly refer it through your organization's FOIA process.
D. Ask them to submit a formal FOIA request first.

THE MEDIA CALLED!

Don’t panic.

Be Responsive

Acknowledge the inquiry and ask about the reporter's deadline.

Don’t Speculate

If you don’t know, it's OK to say you need to verify.

Make the Connection

Understand who's authorized to speak on behalf of your organization and direct the reporter to the right person.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

A reporter calls you directly about a controversial regional project. You aren't involved in the project, but the reporter asks:

“Does your agency support this project? I've heard there's disagreement among the localities.”

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

“Does your agency support this project? I've heard there's disagreement among the localities.”

A “I think most of the localities support it, but I'm not positive.”

B “No comment.”

C “I'm not directly involved in that project, and I don't want to speculate. Let me connect you with someone who can provide accurate information.”

THE 30-SEC ELEVATOR PITCH

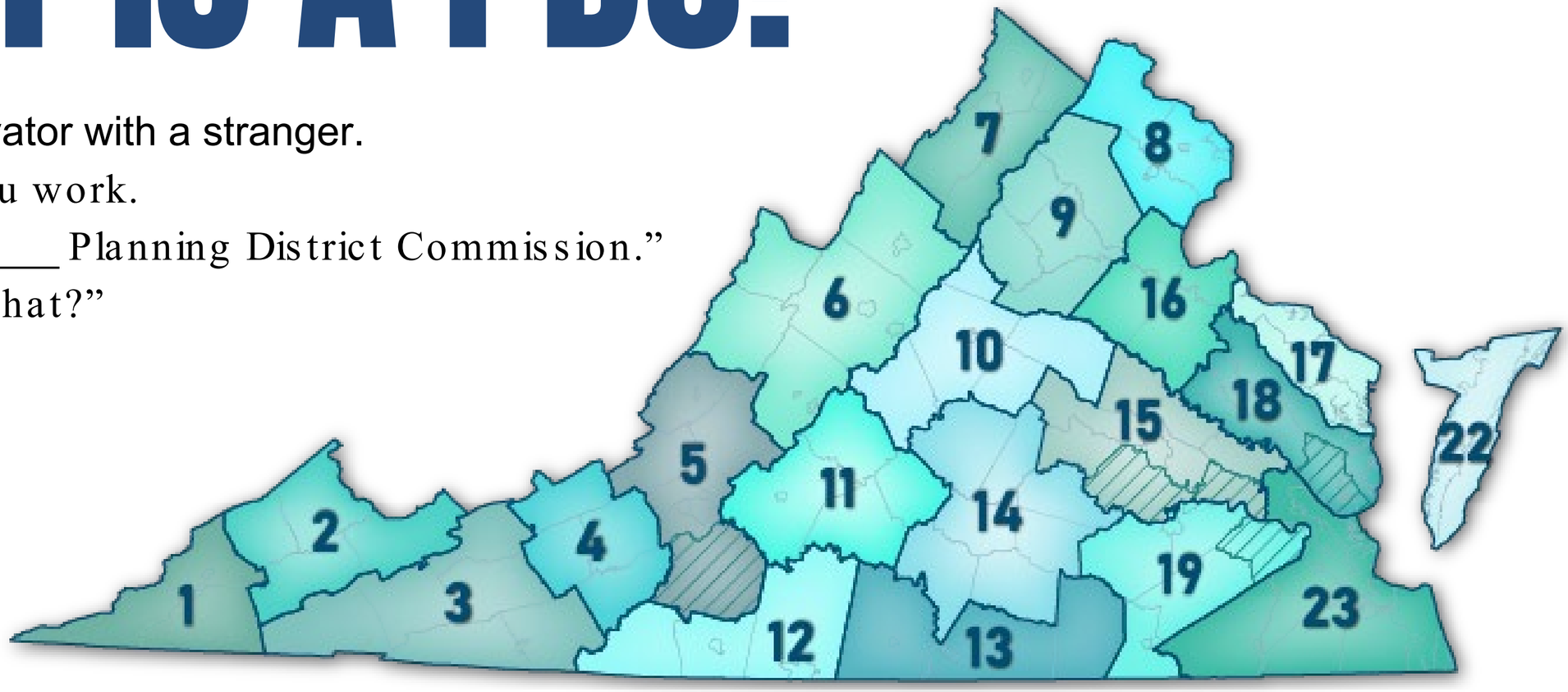
WHAT IS A PDC?

You're riding an elevator with a stranger.

They ask where you work.

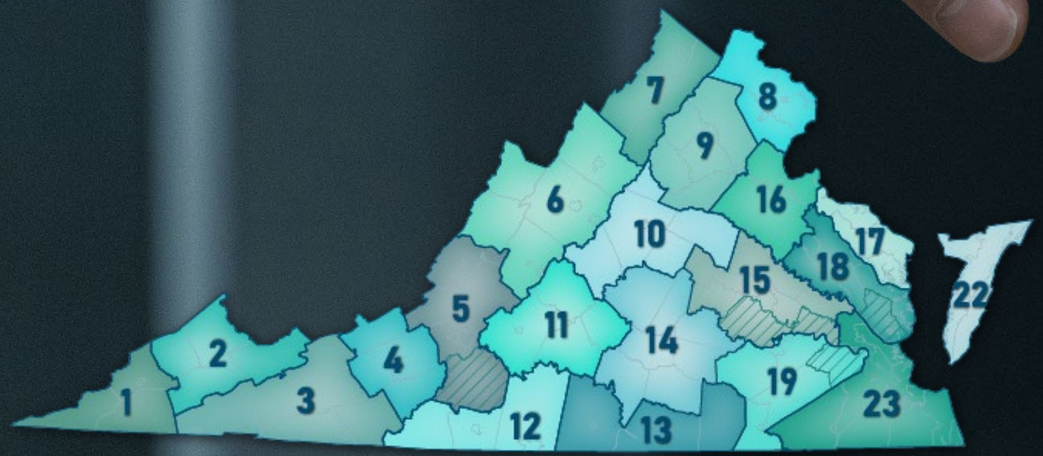
You say, “The _____ Planning District Commission.”

They ask, “What's that?”



THE 30-SEC ELEVATOR PITCH

RULES



- NO ACRONYMNS OR JARGON
- NO LAUNDRY LIST OF PROGRAMS
- EXPLAIN WHY THE WORK MATTERS
- KEEP IT TO 30 SECONDS

THREE INGREDIENTS



- Clear
- Compelling
- Concise

“Planning district commissions help our regions’ cities and counties collaborate on shared challenges. We bring local governments together to plan for things like transportation, housing, and the environment. By working together, our communities can share resources, solve problems, and make the region stronger.”

RIGHT MESSAGE. RIGHT PLACE.

Different approaches for different audiences.





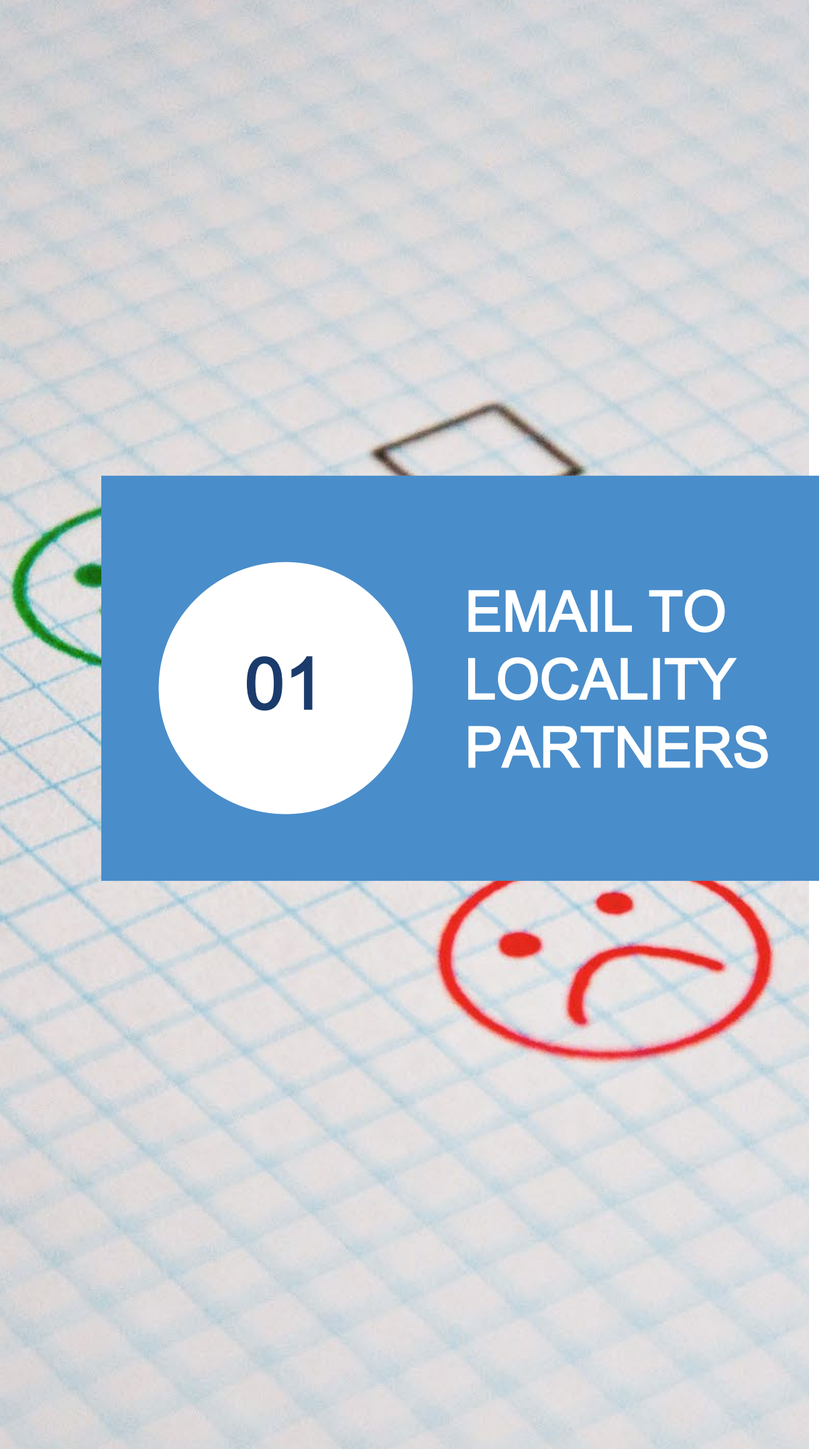
Same Info. Three Different Approaches.

Your PDC is conducting a regional housing study and wants the public to participate in a survey.

01 SEND AN EMAIL TO LOCALITY PARTNERS

02 CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA POST

03 PUBLISH ON YOUR WEBSITE

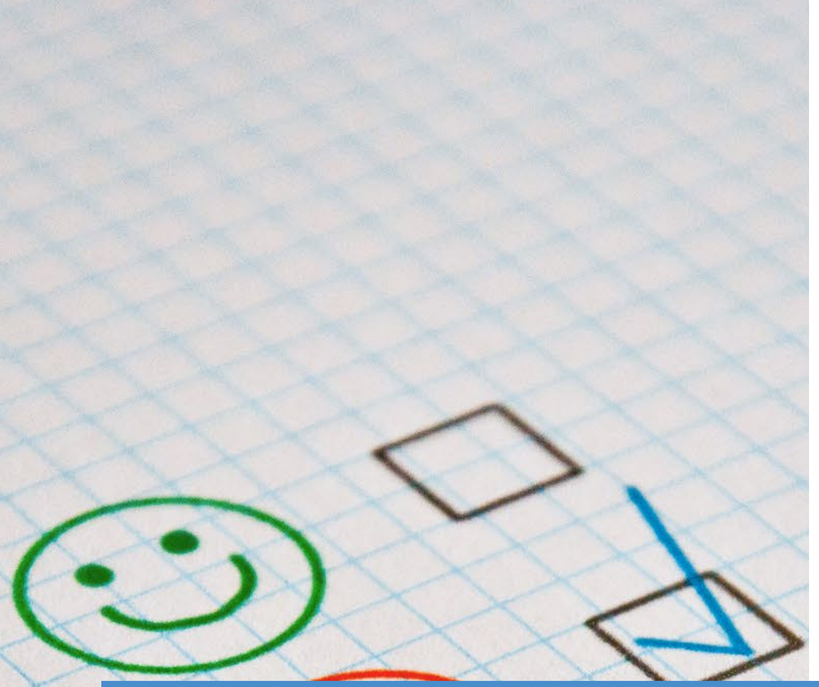


Same Info. Three Different Approaches.

Your PDC is conducting a regional housing study and wants the public to participate in a survey.

01 EMAIL TO LOCALITY PARTNERS

“We're conducting a regional housing study to better understand housing needs and challenges across our communities. Please help us reach residents by sharing the public survey through your websites, newsletters, and community networks.”



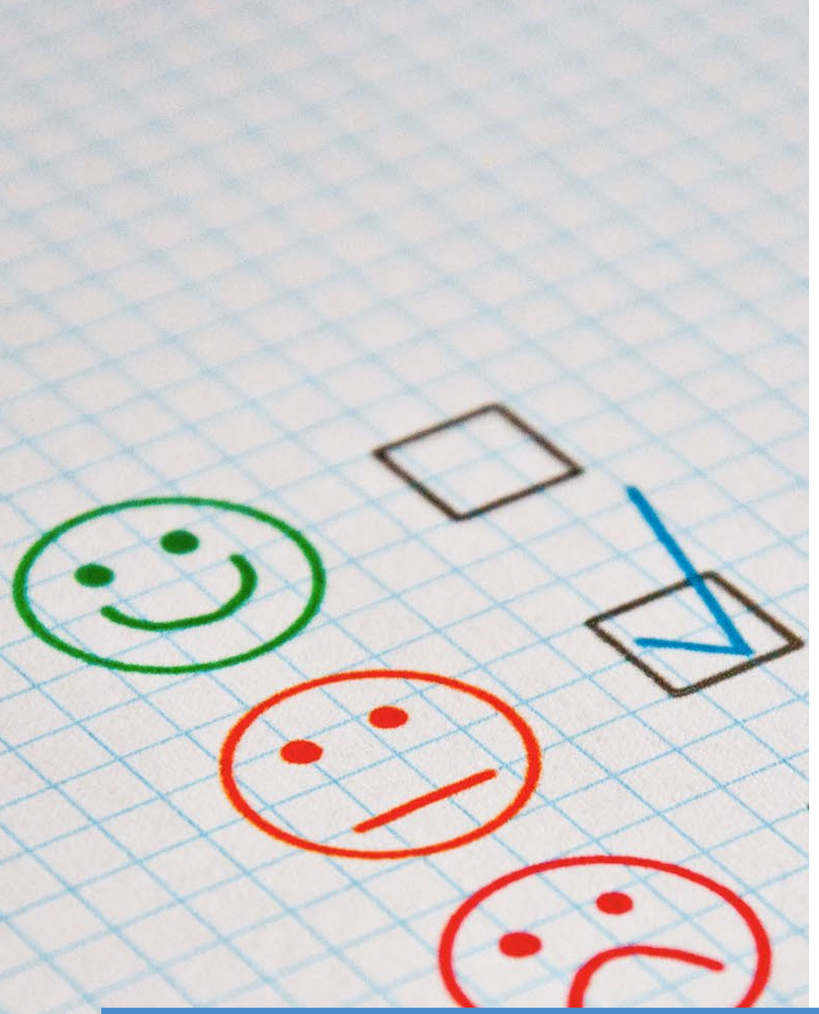
Same Info. Three Different Approaches.

Your PDC is conducting a regional housing study and wants the public to participate in a survey.

02

SOCIAL MEDIA POST

“Is it getting harder to find a home you can afford? Whether you rent or own, we want to hear about your housing experiences. Take our short survey and help shape the future of housing in our region.”



Same Info. Three Different Approaches.

Your PDC is conducting a regional housing study and wants the public to participate in a survey.

03 WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENT

“The Regional Housing Study is examining housing affordability, availability, and community needs to help inform future planning and local decision -making. Residents are invited to share their experiences through an online survey. Learn more about the study and participate here.”



DON’T JUST COPY AND PASTE.

Adapt your message to the audience, platform, and action you want people to take.

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PRESENTATIONS THAT WORK

Slides should support your message, not compete with it.



- ONE SLIDE. ONE MAIN IDEA.
- EASY TO FOLLOW
- PRESENT, DON’T READ
- DESIGN FOR EVERYONE

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS SLIDE?

Regional Housing Assessment Data Overview

This comprehensive regional analysis evaluates a wide range of interrelated housing market characteristics, demographic factors, supply constraints, cost - burdened households, and affordability trends across multiple jurisdictions.



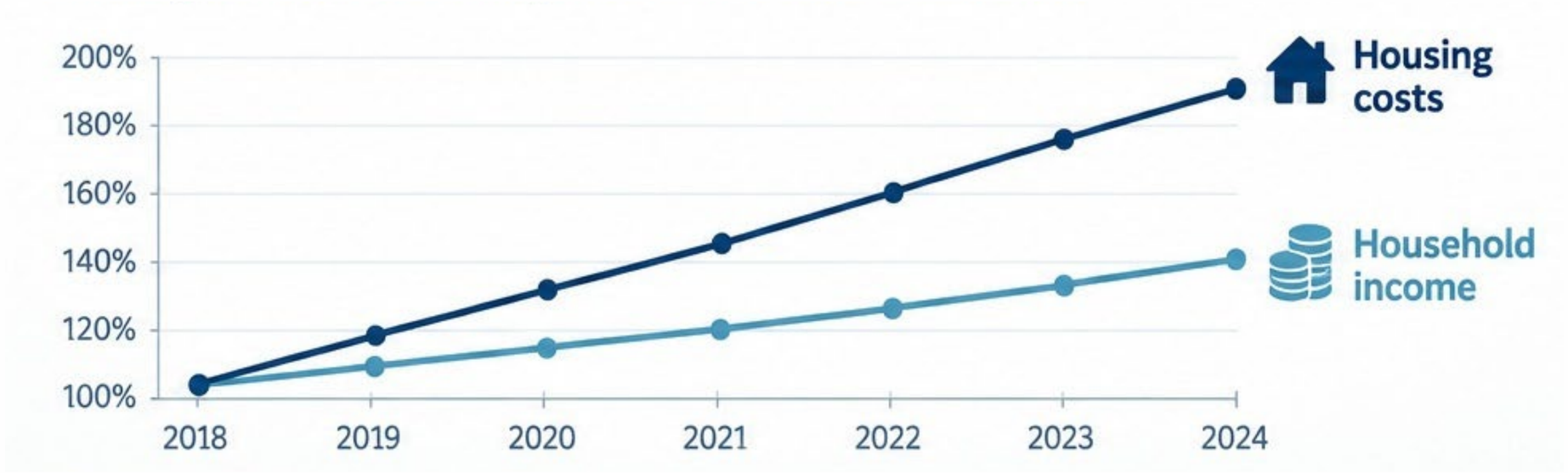
Key Study Components and Preliminary Findings

- Regional housing stock composition and tenure distribution
- Comparative demographic and household growth projections
- Housing cost burden by income and tenure category
- Affordability indicators and AMI-based eligibility thresholds
- Housing supply, vacancy, and development constraints
- Locality-level market conditions and policy considerations
- Stakeholder engagement and methodological limitations

Source: Illustrative multi-jurisdictional housing data. AMI / ACS / HUD / HCV / CHAS / RHA

A BETTER APPROACH

Housing Costs Are Outpacing Incomes



This growing gap between housing costs and household income is making it harder for many residents to afford a home.

BEYOND THE SLIDES

- DELIVER WITH CONFIDENCE
- LEAVE SOMETHING USEFUL BEHIND

Help your audience understand it, remember it, and share it.



BACK TO THE BASICS

Five things to remember, no matter how you communicate.



Be Responsive



Be Responsible



Be Clear



Be Intentional



Be Prepared

THANK YOU!

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