



Austin City Council District Analysis Executive Summary September, 2018

HousingWorks Austin is a nonprofit organization that aims to increase the supply of affordable housing in Austin by providing research, education, advocacy and thoughtful, workable affordable housing policy recommendations.

The fourth iteration of HousingWorks Austin's Affordable Housing District Analysis highlights several household affordability trends and issues in the city of Austin. Combining updated data from numerous sources, the analysis provides a complete picture of the 10 city council districts and the city as a whole. The analysis clearly shows that although the city of Austin is making progress in supporting the values highlighted in the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint, additional efforts are required to address the affordability challenges faced by Austin residents. Major findings from the analysis include:

Fewer Austinites are housing cost-burdened but many still struggle to meet housing costs. The housing cost burden faced by households generally decreased across the 10 districts. In almost all districts in 2018, fewer households are spending more than 30 percent of their annual income on housing-related costs. The only exception was District 6, which saw a slight increase in the number of cost-burdened households, specifically renter households. The data shows the city is taking steps in the right direction and moving toward the value of helping Austinites reduce their household costs, which was identified in the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint. Overall, however, 21 percent of homeowners and 43 percent of renters in the city of Austin are cost-burdened. It is important to ensure that all households have the ability to afford housing without being cost-burdened.

Housing dispersion goals are being achieved in Austin, even as additional efforts are required to distribute subsidized housing evenly across the city. Existing and planned subsidized units in Districts 6, 8, and 10, primarily west of MoPac, increased by 231 percent in 2018. Whereas an additional 1,376 units were added in these districts, their overall share of the city's subsidized housing is only five percent. These numbers indicate that we are successfully working toward supporting the value of creating new and affordable housing choices throughout Austin as emphasized in the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint. Nevertheless, additional efforts must be made to ensure that subsidized housing is distributed evenly across the city and throughout the 10 city council districts.

The number of subsidized housing units in the city is increasing but existing affordable units must be preserved. Preventing households from being priced out of Austin is a key value identified by the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint. Preserving already existing subsidized units is one way to support

this value and it is important that we do not see a decrease in such units. Although overall the number of subsidized housing units across the city and in all districts increased, Country Club Creek Apartments in District 3 exited the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program in fall of 2017. After a three-year phase-out process, the district is set to lose 212 subsidized units on East Riverside Drive. Strategic investments are required to preserve pre-existing affordable housing and minimize displacement of residents.

Even though homelessness remains a major community concern, efforts are being made to address this challenge. Between 2017 and 2018, the number of unsheltered individuals in the city of Austin increased by over 20 percent. While this number can be attributed to a number of factors, including improved data collection efforts, it is still a major concern for the community. The Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint highlighted the need to invest in housing for those most in need as a community value, and outlined the need to support all efforts being made to tackle this issue. As a part of these efforts, the Austin City Council endorsed Austin's Action Plan to End Homelessness in 2018. The plan was created by the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) in partnership with various community partners and will help guide the work being done to address this challenge.

In keeping with our motto: *All kinds of homes, In all parts of town, For all kinds of people*, HousingWorks Austin has partnered with numerous stakeholders in the community to address the affordability concerns that many Austinites face daily. The 2018 District Analysis clearly identifies the challenges ahead in ensuring that all Austin residents have affordable housing opportunities and the progress already being made by the city to achieve this. Considering the difference in housing affordability across the city, innovative investment and policy initiatives are required to tackle affordability concerns and close all gaps.

Nora Linares-Moeller
Executive Director,
HousingWorks Austin