Austin at a Glance and District by District Analysis

Executive Summary 2019

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 fifth iteration of HousingWorks Austin’s Affordable Housing District by 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 ten city council districts and the city as a whole. This year’s District Analysis also includes demographic information for the first time as we believe it is important to track the change of demographics in correlation with our data. 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 affordability challenges.

Major findings include:

**Austin saw a significant increase in median family income (MFI) and median home prices from 2018 to 2019.** In 2019, MFI increased by 11.5% from $86,000 to $95,900 while the median home price kept pace with a 10% increase from $367,000 to $404,298. Whereas other districts experienced an increase in median family income, District 3 was the only district to have a significant decrease in median family income by 17.5% from $56,756 to $46,797. District 9 had the greatest increase (20.4%) in MFI from $99,185 to $119,422. District 10 has both the highest median family income at $141,843 and median home price of $674,000. The average rent in the city increased by 9% from $1,235 to $1,349 with District 9 holding the highest average at $1,869. The number of people living in poverty decreased in all districts except Districts 6 and 8.

Austin is a fairly young city with a median age of 34.5 and is a majority-minority city. District 1 has the highest number of Blacks/African Americans of the city’s population, although the overall percentage for the city continues to decrease every year. District 4 has the largest Hispanic/Latino population in the city while District 6 has the highest number of Asians and Whites.

**Fewer Austinites are housing cost-burdened but many still struggle to meet housing costs.** In almost all districts in 2019, the percentage of cost-burdened homeowners (households spending more than 30%
of their annual income on housing) only fluctuated by a few percentage points, with increases occurring in Districts 2, 3, 4, and 10. It is important to ensure all households have the ability to afford housing without being cost-burdened.

**Austin increased its subsidized unit count from 34,712 to 42,136 from 2018 to 2019, totaling 7,424 new units.** This was a greater increase in subsidized units than from 2017 to 2018, which saw an increase from 28,038 to 34,712 units, totaling 6,674. These numbers indicate we are successfully working toward creating new and affordable housing choices throughout Austin. Per the goals listed in the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint, Austin must continue to focus efforts on equitably distributing subsidized housing units across the city. Districts 1, 2, and 3 have the highest number of subsidized units and absorb development burdens while Districts 6, 8, and 10 saw little to no increase in subsidized units. Whereas District 1 has the greatest share of subsidized units at 21%, Districts 6, 8, and 10 have an overall share of only 5% of the city’s subsidized units. Additional efforts must be made to ensure subsidized housing is distributed evenly throughout the ten city districts.

**Preventing households from being priced out of Austin is a key value identified by the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint, and preserving already existing subsidized units is one way to support this value.** Because of a regulatory loophole, many affordable housing units are exiting the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. Strategic investments are required to preserve pre-existing affordable housing and minimize displacement of residents.

**Even though homelessness remains a major community concern, significant strides were made between 2018 and 2019.** In 2019, the number of unsheltered individuals in the City of Austin increased by only 3%, a sharp contrast between the 2017 to 2018 increase of 23%. This is linked to many factors, but may be attributed to the 21% increase in subsidized housing units and Austin’s Action Plan to End Homelessness that was adopted by the Austin City Council in 2018 that, among many other things, shifted a greater focus to rapid re-housing strategies. We hope to continue to see improvements in this critical issue as community partners and nonprofits work together on solutions.

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 2019 District Analysis identifies the challenges ahead in ensuring all Austin residents have affordable housing opportunities and showcases the progress already being made to achieve this.

Considering the increase in housing prices and stagnation of housing-cost burden 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
DISTRICT 1 CHALLENGES

20.2% POVERTY RATE
INDIVIDUALS BELOW POVERTY
20,503

12% ARE EXTREMELY COST BURDENED
HOME OWNERS
54% ARE COST BURDENED
RENTERS
28%

10 11 12

26% ARE EXTREMELY COST BURDENED
2019

375 SUBSIDIZED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS
9,040 UNITS (21% of city subsidized units)

Compared to other districts, District 1 saw the highest percentage increase of homeowners and has the highest number of subsidized units.

Sources: Austin Board of Realtors, Austin Investor Interests, Austin Tenants’ Council, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development City of Austin, Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation, Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs, United States Census Bureau, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. For detailed information on sources, please visit www.housingworksaustin.org

* Data includes existing and planned units

http://housingworksaustin.org

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Sources

The district analysis is based on a variety of sources and these are mentioned on each district analysis sheet. The numbers below correspond with the numbers marked on the figure above for reference.

- **Source 1**: Combination of sources below with data from the 2018 Affordable Housing District Analysis.
- **Source 2**: Multiple sources are combined to create a comprehensive list.
  - Austin Tenants’ Council, 2019
  - National Low Income Housing Coalition and Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation, Accessed 2019
  - Neighborhood Housing and Community Development City of Austin, Accessed 2019
  - Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs, Accessed 2019
  - National Housing Preservation Database, Accessed 2019
  - Housing Authority of the City of Austin, Accessed 2019
  - United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Accessed 2019
- **Source 3**: United States Census Bureau, 2017 5-Year ACS. District Analysis based on methodology 3.¹
- **Source 4**: Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), 2019. Data available at City Council District Level.
- **Source 5**: United States Census Bureau, 2017 5-Year ACS. District Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **Source 6**: Austin Board of Realtors (ABOR), Q2 2019. Data available at City Council District Level.
- **Source 7**: Austin Investor Interests, Q2 2019. District Analysis based on methodology 2.
- **Source 8**: United States Census Bureau, 2017 5-Year ACS. District Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **Source 9**: United States Census Bureau, 2017 5-Year ACS. District Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **Sources 12-13**: Center for Neighborhood Technology Housing and Transportation Affordability Index, 2018. District Analysis based on methodology 1.

¹ See methodology section for reference

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Methodology

The district analysis a number of resources and different geographical scales. Furthermore, this data is analyzed in the context of the boundaries of the City of Austin Council Districts. This has led to three separate approaches based on geographic scale of source data:

1. **Census tract data**: Data available at the census tract level is analyzed based on a methodology developed after conversation with the City of Austin demographic staff. Census tracts are divided according to their overlap with the Austin City Council District boundaries. Tracts that overlap between two council districts are attributed to one council district based on the overlap area and the existing land use type. Once all the tracts have been linked to a council district, the corresponding data is calculated for that district. For average values such as median rent and home price, the data is weighed for each census tract based on its total population using Microsoft Excel.
   
   a. Similar to 1 but with updated census tracts shared by the City Demographer. The rest of this methodology performs the same analysis as methodology 1.

2. **Zip code data**: Data available at the zip code level is analyzed using the Zonal Statistics as Table tool in the Spatial Analyst toolbox of the ArcGIS software. This requires converting vector source data into the raster format and then using the tool to summarize the values of the raster based on the zones of another dataset (Austin City Council District boundaries in this case). The results from the generated table then provide a value at the district level.

3. **Point Data**: data associated with distinct addresses, such as the data collected from the sources above, is linked to Austin City Council District boundaries by its overlap.

Notes

- Families that spend more than 30% of their income on housing related costs are considered cost burdened.
- Families that spend more than 50% of their income on housing related costs are considered extremely cost burdened.

Limitations

- American Community Survey (ACS) is based on sampling and thus the data from ACS involves a margin of error. This margin of error varies for 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year data, with decreasing levels of margin of error.
- Considering the varied sources, different geographical scales, and multiple methodologies it is important to understand that most of the data for each district is best evaluated comparatively and not referenced as absolute numbers.
- The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Dataset from Housing and Urban Development is based on a rotation of 3-year and 5-year ACS data. This limits the availability of the data in certain years.