

# *housing*

## **HOW RESIDENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AFFECTS OUR REGION'S GROWTH AND PROSPERITY**

Shelter is essential for human life. When there is enough affordable housing available for everyone who needs it and in places where people can access opportunities, communities can thrive.

Houston has always had a reputation as a place with ample, affordable housing. However, the truth is more complicated than that reputation. Between 2010 and 2017, Houston's overall supply of housing grew at a much faster rate than both the state and national averages, in line with our growing population. At the same time, however, the rate of building permits issued was below the state or national averages, indicating that the local housing market and economic conditions may not be as favorable as other areas. Disasters and flooding events like Hurricane Harvey also contributed to a drop in vacancy rates, which points to fewer homes available to meet the needs of people across income levels. Finally, as supply of available housing units shrinks, prices rise for both those looking to buy or rent homes, which contributes to affordability issues.



For many, homeownership is a critical form of wealth building and remains a central part of the American Dream.<sup>1</sup> Since 2010, homeownership has increased 12% across the three-county area. However, due to lower incomes on average, discriminatory practices, and predatory lending, among other factors, only 36% of black householders owned their own homes in Harris County, compared to 80% of white householders. More broadly, many low-to-median-income households and first-time homebuyers in the region have barriers to accessing sustainable homeownership, such as saving for a down payment, lack of credit access, along with rising

entry-level home prices and interest rates. These issues, in addition to delayed home purchasing for younger populations, are likely contributing to the growth in renter-occupied housing units, which was up 22% across the three counties between 2010 and 2017.

Houston is particularly struggling to provide adequate housing for residents at the lower end of the income spectrum. Housing is the single largest expense for families and households, and over 600,000 households in the Houston area spend too much for housing, particularly low-income households and people of color. Overall, renters have a higher housing-cost burden than homeowners. In the three-county area, nearly a third of all households are housing-cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their monthly income on housing. In Fort Bend County in particular, the average household spends 60% of their income on housing and transportation costs combined. High housing and transportation costs result in fewer resources available for other expenses for families, including investments in health care, savings, or educational opportunities. Houston also has far fewer government subsidized units available than many other large cities and counties to help the lowest-income households afford rising rent costs.<sup>2</sup>

Adding to affordability issues and poor conditions, many residents are facing greater instability in housing whether through homelessness, eviction, or displacement. High housing costs mean that low-income families are less able to weather sudden changes or costs, which can often lead to eviction and temporary homelessness if rent goes unpaid. The three-county area's eviction rate is higher than the nation's, although we've seen an improvement in the number of eviction filings and actual eviction cases since 2010. Finally, while permanent homelessness has declined in Harris County since 2011, 4,000 people were homeless on any given night in 2018.

*The more we understand affordable and safe housing as a basic need, the more we can do to ensure quality housing options are available for people across our growing region.*

# 5 Subtopics of Housing



## HOUSING STOCK AND GROWTH

**13%** growth in housing supply

across the three-county area from 2010-2017, compared to 9% statewide and 4% nationally.

## HOUSING CONDITIONS

**5.3%** of housing is overcrowded

The three-county area average is higher than the state (4.8%) and national (3.4%) averages.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP AND RENTING



**Homeownership increased by 12%**

across the three-county area in 2017. However, just 41% of black households and 52% of Hispanic households are homeowners compared to 71% of white households.

## HOUSING VULNERABILITIES

**4,000**

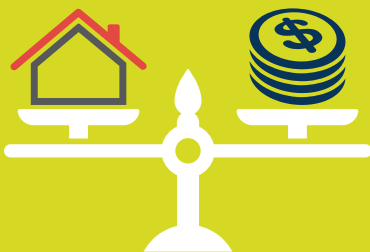
homeless people on any given night in the Houston area.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**About \$500 more than the national average**

In median monthly costs among Fort Bend County homeowners with a mortgage. **Median monthly homeowner costs**—including utilities, mortgage, and other associated costs—across the three counties are higher than the national and state averages.

EXPLORE ALL FIVE SUBTOPICS FURTHER ON OUR WEBSITE.



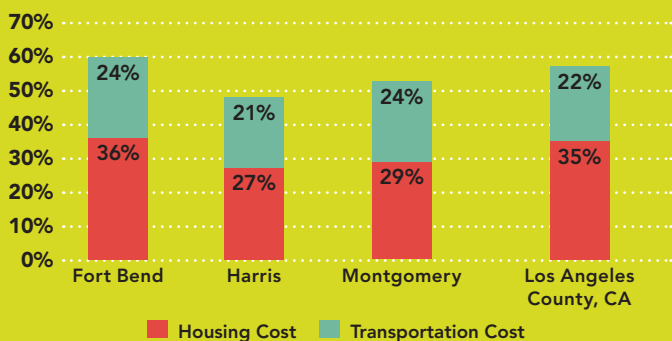
## HOUSING-COST BURDEN

About one in five homeowners, and nearly one in two renter households, across the three counties is housing-cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs on a monthly basis.

Trend over time: Owners: / Renters:   
Compared to nation:

## LOCATION AFFORDABILITY

Percent of Household Income on Housing & Transportation Costs

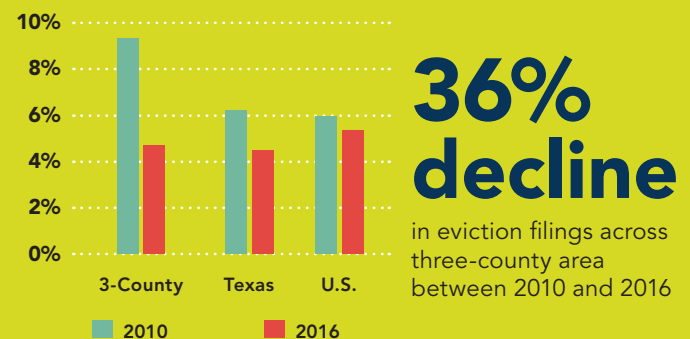


According to 2015 data, **Fort Bend County residents spent approximately 60% of household income on combined housing and transportation costs**—the highest across the region.

Trend over time:   
Compared to nation:

## EVICITIONS

Eviction Filing Rate as a Percentage of Renter Households



Across the three-county area, we see a much sharper decline in the share of renters with an eviction filing than the nation and state since 2010—dropping from 63,276 cases in 2010 to 40,218 cases in 2016 across the three counties.

Trend over time:   
Compared to nation:

## LEGENDS

LOCATIONS: **FB** Fort Bend **H** Harris **M** Montgomery

COMPARISONS: Better Worse Same No Info

See page 30-33 of 2019 Summary Report for references and data sources.