



HOUSING
DEPARTMENT

Student Housing in Austin

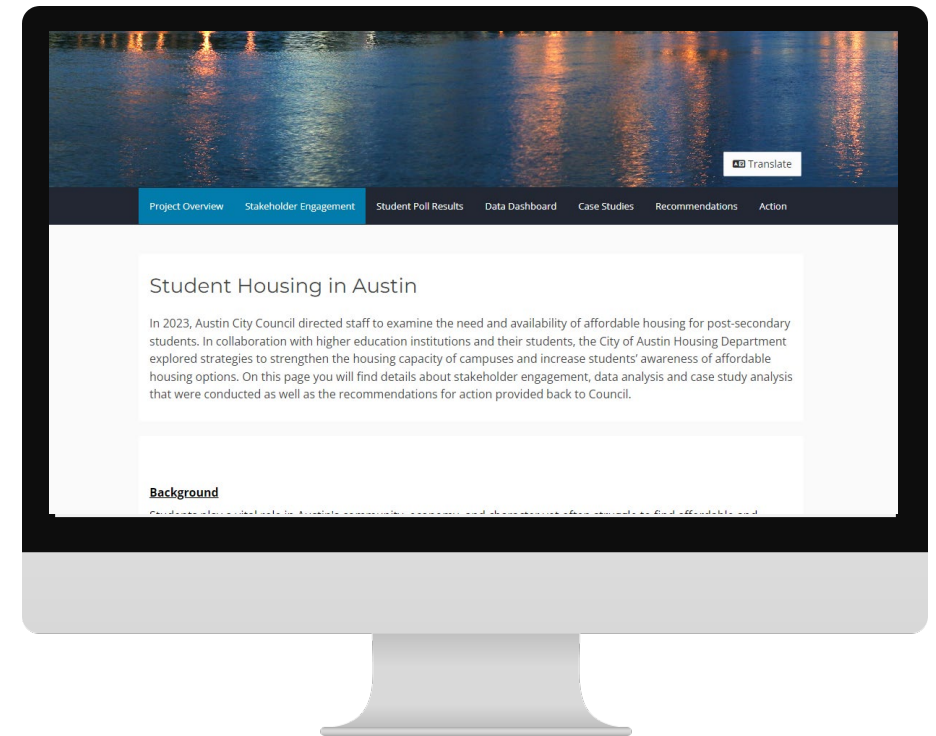
October 1, 2024

Housing and Planning Committee Briefing



Background

- In 2023, Austin City Council Resolution No. [20230223-043](#) directed staff to **examine the need and availability of affordable housing for post-secondary students.**
- From July 2023 to June 2024, **City of Austin staff collaborated with higher education institutions and their students** to explore strategies to strengthen the housing capacity of campuses and increase students' awareness of affordable housing options.
- On June 14, 2024, staff released [a memo](#) summarizing stakeholder engagement, data analysis, case study research and **ten recommendations** related to the need and availability of affordable housing for post-secondary students.



[Student Housing Public Input Website](#)

Recommendations & Updates



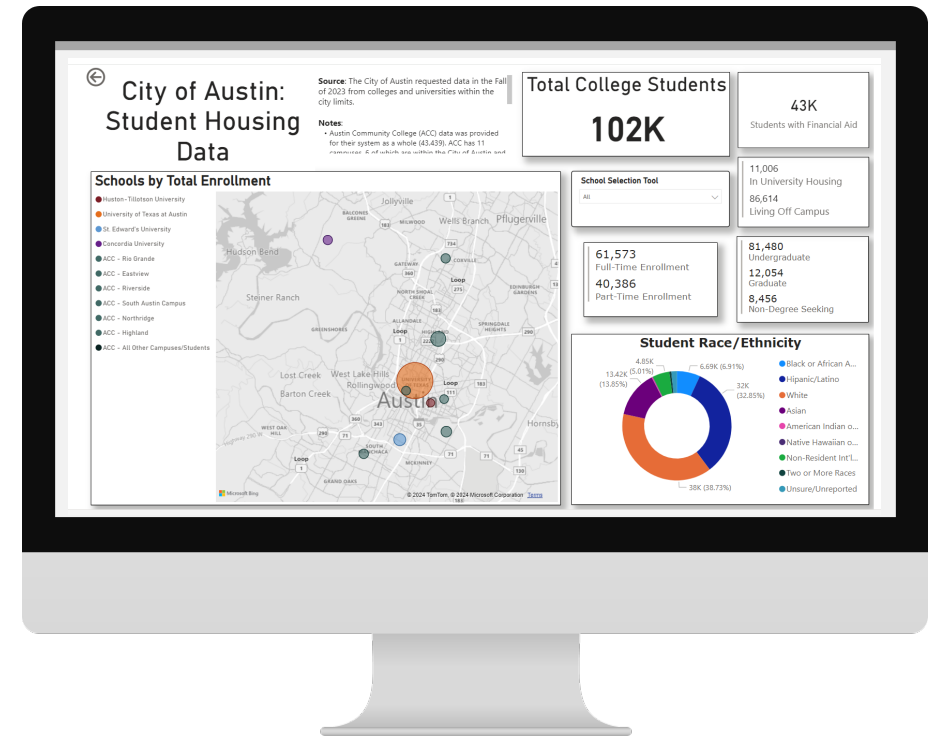
1: Establish a college student housing consortium.

- Establish a consortium between the City of Austin, major higher education institutions, and the College Student Commission to regularly collaborate, share data, and address student housing challenges.
- **Updates:** The College Student Commission has not yet convened for the 2024-2025 school year. If determined to be a valuable use of staff resources, an annual meeting can be scheduled accordingly.



2: Maintain a student housing data dashboard with annual updates.

- Create an annually updated dashboard focused on student housing data. This dashboard provides transparent, up-to-date information to support student housing affordability and enhance collaboration between stakeholders. Annual updates ensure consistent data sharing and coordination.
- **Updates:** Staff created the dashboard using 2023 enrollment data and plans to engage with colleges and universities in the coming months to update it with the latest enrollment figures.

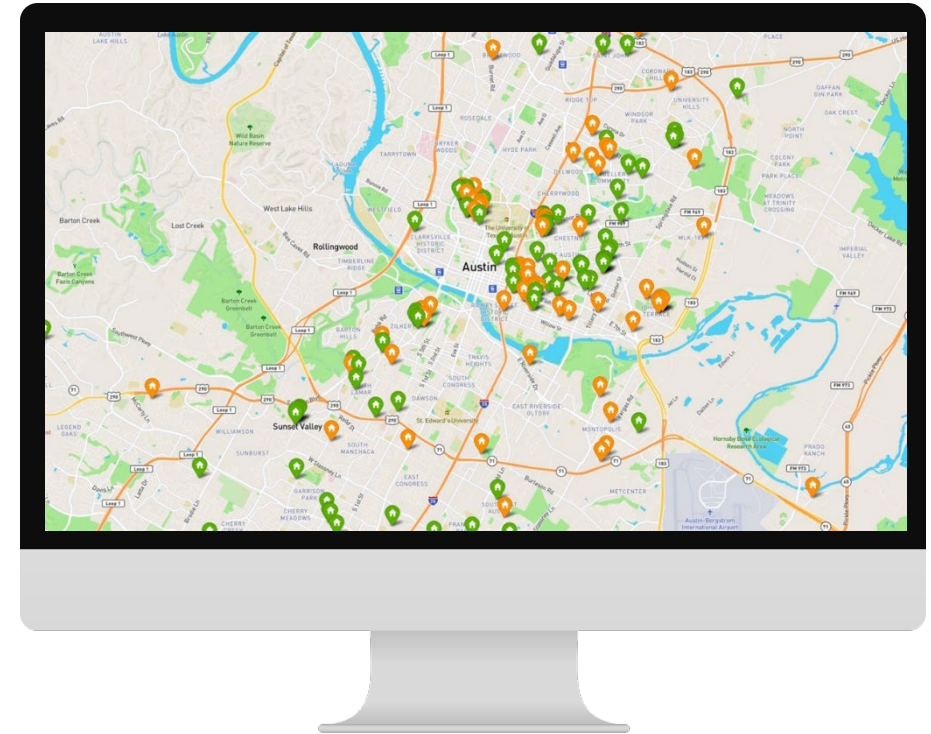


An Interactive Dashboard of 2023 College and University Student Housing Data in Austin, Texas



3: Update the Affordable Housing Online Search Tool (AHOST).

- Staff recommends adding all affordable units under the UNO program into the AHOST and adding a “student” filter to help students easily identify affordable housing units for which they are eligible.
- **Updates:** Staff is collaborating with HousingWorks Austin to improve the reporting process for property managers, aiming to improve the functionality of the AHOST tool. Adding new information to AHOST will occur after reporting process established.



[Affordable Housing Online Search Tool \(AHOST\)](#)



4: Accelerate and ease the permitting process for university housing.

- Colleges and universities in Austin struggle with the high costs of building student housing, which can lead to higher housing fees for students. One way for the City to ease these cost pressures is to allow streamlined permitting and review for residence hall construction that provides affordable student housing.
- **Implementation Considerations:** Additional directives could be provided from Council to consider revising the S.M.A.R.T. housing ordinance to create a process for university residence halls to qualify for the program if certain criteria are met.



5: Affirmatively market city-owned housing redevelopment near campus facilities to low-income students if they are determined to be a priority population.

- The Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) considers location, financing, and community feedback when developing a solicitation for the redevelopment of city-owned land. If students were identified as priority populations through the development of an AHFC solicitation, AHFC could require as part of a solicitation that the developer affirmatively market towards income-qualifying students in a similar way.
- **Updates:** No additional updates at this time.



6: Continue to explore ways to utilize density bonus programs to facilitate the construction of off-campus student housing where appropriate.

- The University Neighborhood Overlay (UNO) was adopted in 2004 and has delivered primarily positive outcomes, however there are opportunities for further improvement and refinement. In April of 2024, City Council adopted Resolution No. 20240418-077, which seeks to update the University Neighborhood Overlay (UNO).
- **Updates:** The Planning Department is spearheading the code amendment process and anticipates adoption in early Summer 2025.

PLANNED

Community Engagement & Development

Fall 2024 through Early 2025

PLANNED

Public Hearings and Review Process

Early 2025 through Spring 2025

PLANNED

Adoption

Early Summer 2025

Contact Information

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<https://publicinput.com/unoupdate>



7: Explore the creation of an intergenerational home share pilot program.

- An Intergenerational Home Share pilot program is where university students live with elderly homeowners who have extra bedrooms. This arrangement offers affordable housing for students and provides homeowners with additional income, fostering community connections without new construction. The proposal aligns with the Strategic Housing Blueprint's goals of preventing displacement and addressing the needs of seniors.
- **Implementation Considerations:** Boston allocated \$100,000 in FY2020 to expand its pilot program to 100 student-host pairings through public-private partnerships.



8: Develop education and outreach materials about affordable housing and how to navigate the housing market as new renters.

- Develop educational materials to assist college students as first-time renters in navigating the housing market. Provide information about leasing agreements, legal rights, and affordable housing options, with income-restricted housing eligibility and access.
- **Implementation Considerations:** Developing these materials will require additional funding to hire contractors.



9: Promote and strengthen code education and accountability.

- Many students are unaware of how to report code violations, which is vital for maintaining safety and livability in their homes. Informing students about how to choose safe housing can empower them and promote landlord accountability.
- **Updates:** The Code Compliance team at the Development Services Department (DSD) is currently conducting educational outreach about how to find safe housing.



[How to Choose Safe Housing, Development Services Department: Code Compliance Website](#)



10: Engage students in the upcoming Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan update.

- Austin allocated \$3 million for the 2023-2024 update of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. Previous outreach efforts included only some universities. Post-secondary students make up about 10% of the city's population and face unique housing challenges. The proposed College Student Housing Consortium could support informed planning, along with ongoing data collection through the College Student Data Dashboard.
- **Updates:** The Imagine Austin Planning team is currently finalizing the stakeholder engagement plan.



Summary

Complete

- ✓ Maintain a student housing data dashboard with annual updates

Underway/Ongoing

- Update the Affordable Housing Online Search Tool (AHOST)
- Affirmatively market city-owned housing near campus
- Continue to explore ways to utilize density bonus programs
- Promote and strengthen code education and accountability
- Engage students in the upcoming Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan update

Require Additional Council Direction

- Establish a college student housing consortium
- Accelerate and ease the permitting process for university housing
- Explore the creation of an intergenerational home share pilot program
- Develop education and outreach materials about affordable housing and how to navigate the housing market as new renters



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Thank You

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