

Part 2: Framework for Evaluating Anti-Displacement Policies

In order to understand the ways that particular policy tools can be used to address the needs of vulnerable groups impacted by displacement in gentrifying neighborhoods, it is helpful to consider their relative strengths and weaknesses. The following set of criteria from the Uprooted Report for the City of Austin and developed by Professors Elizabeth Mueller, Jake Wegmann, and Heather Way can be used to help guide this analysis. To illustrate how these criteria work in practice, they are applied to a short list of specific tools for mitigating displacement.

It is important to keep in mind that no tool will score well on all measures. The criteria are meant to help policymakers consider which tools best further the city's goals and best match the needs of particular places and groups. The criteria also allow policymakers to weigh the effectiveness and impact of specific tools and consider which ones the city has the resources to implement or capacity to develop.

The first two criteria focus on the dimension of need that is addressed by a particular tool. The next three criteria are normative, meaning they are linked to value-based goals that a city or community may have adopted or wish to adopt. A city may have additional goals it wants to add here. The final two criteria focus on considerations important to the successful implementation of each tool. Together, the application of these criteria to the possible displacement mitigation tools will give city policymakers a great deal of information to consider and help inform discussion of which tools a city should adopt.

Vulnerable populations targeted. This criterion considers which vulnerable groups a particular tool is likely to assist the most. We focus here on groups that are known to be most vulnerable to displacement as housing costs rise, that have the fewest housing options once displaced, and that can be easily targeted by particular programs. When it comes to incomes of populations targeted, we recommend breaking this analysis down even further to identify whether a policy targets households with very low incomes (such as at 30 to 50 percent of the Area Median Family Income) or a higher range, such as 60 to 80 percent of the Area Median Family Income.

Stage of gentrification targeted. The second criterion considers at which stage of gentrification a particular tool will be the most effective. Since conditions and challenges vary according to the amount of displacement pressures in a neighborhood, it is important to be aware of which tools are most easily implemented at various stages. Of course, most tools will be easier to implement when neighborhoods are in the earliest stages of change.

Place-based. Place-based tools are targeted for specific gentrifying neighborhoods, rather than being implemented citywide. Some tools may focus on particular vulnerable groups without linking them to particular gentrifying neighborhoods.

Sustainability. Displacement has two time dimensions that are important to consider. First, displacement refers to the loss of existing vulnerable groups of residents. Second, displacement pressures impact the ability of persons from similar demographic groups to return or move into the neighborhood. Some policies are well matched to the needs of current residents but may not extend to future residents, while other policies address both current and future residents' needs. This criterion also speaks to the longevity of city investments: Will a displacement mitigation investment remain when the current residents move? How long will the city's investment in the affordability of a unit last?

Inclusivity. Displacement-mitigation tools vary in terms of the involvement of vulnerable residents in their design, implementation, and oversight. To ensure that tools are designed to address the concerns of these residents, it is important to consider to what extent such involvement is a feature of each tool.

Financial resources required. While it is not possible to precisely detail the likely costs of particular tools, our goal here is to give a sense of which are the most or least costly. We attempt to do this by considering the amount of funding required for initial implementation or investment and the ongoing cost to the city beyond start up. Initial costs might range from those associated with passage of an ordinance to allocation of funds for construction of housing. On-going costs might include funding for staff at agencies charged with implementation.

Capacity required. A key feature of a tool’s successful implementation is the ability of city staff, local nonprofits, and community organizations to carry out the roles envisioned for them by each tool. We attempt to consider here whether the required capacities currently exist, whether there are key gaps that would require attention, and the extent to which any existing deficiencies in capacity could be easily addressed.

Criteria for Assessing and Comparing Anti-Displacement Policy Tools

CRITERIA	RATIONALE	OPERATIONALIZATION
Dimensions of need addressed		
<p>Vulnerable populations targeted. <i>Which group does this tool assist the most?</i></p>	<p>Certain populations are especially vulnerable to displacement and likely to face difficulties finding housing they can afford once displaced.</p>	<p>Vulnerable groups targeted: Includes low-income renters, low-income homeowners, people/communities of color, low-income families with children, low-income seniors</p>
<p>Stage of gentrification targeted. <i>At what stage is this tool most effective?</i></p>	<p>Since conditions and challenges vary greatly according to the development pressure a neighborhood is experiencing, it is important to match policy tools to these conditions.</p>	<p>Early-stage: For neighborhoods susceptible to gentrification or in the earlier stages of gentrifying</p> <p>Mid-stage: For neighborhoods with both significant demographic changes and housing appreciation but low or moderate residential values</p> <p>Late-stage: For neighborhoods in the later stages of gentrifying with high residential values</p>

CRITERIA	RATIONALE	OPERATIONALIZATION
Normative dimensions		
Place-based. <i>Does this policy tool focus on specific gentrifying neighborhoods?</i>	To address change that is affecting entire vulnerable neighborhoods will require an intentional focus on those areas.	Yes: Designed to serve vulnerable residents of one or more gentrifying neighborhoods No: Not targeted to specific gentrifying neighborhoods
Sustainability. <i>How long will the effects of this policy tool last?</i>	To preserve cultural communities and ensure ongoing income and racial diversity in vulnerable neighborhoods, it is important to consider whether the proposed tools will have effects beyond those served initially and for how long.	Good: Creates an ongoing (40+ years) stock of housing for current and future residents from vulnerable groups Fair: Creates housing for current and future residents for < 40 years Poor: No plans for future residents
Inclusivity. <i>How will the voices of vulnerable residents be represented?</i>	To ensure that policy tools incorporate features that best serve vulnerable residents, it is important that residents have a meaningful voice in the design, governance, and ongoing monitoring of the tool.	Good: Includes an active role for vulnerable residents in the design, governance, and ongoing implementation of the tool Fair: Includes some roles for vulnerable residents Poor: No role for vulnerable residents
Implementation dimensions		
Financial resources required. <i>What level of funding or foregone revenue will be required?</i>	Successful implementation and the ability to achieve the desired scale of impact will depend on the availability of financial resources from city tax dollars or other funds and resources.	Low: Minimal start-up and operational costs to the city Medium: Moderate start-up and operational costs to the city High: Either high start-up costs, high operational costs, or both
Current capacity. <i>How well do city and nonprofit staff and community roles match current capacity?</i>	Successful implementation of policy tools requires that city and nonprofit staff and community members are able to carry out the roles envisioned for them.	Good: Staff and community capacity currently exist to perform the envisioned roles Fair: Moderate levels of capacity exist but additional capacity building required Poor: Skills currently lacking or capacity very limited

Source: *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin Neighborhoods and What Can Be Done About It*

Examples of Applying the Assessment

Policy	Vulnerable populations targeted	Stage of gentrification targeted	Place-based	Sustainability	Inclusivity	Financial resources required	Current capacity
Local Housing Voucher Programs	Current low-income renter households	Middle to late	No	Poor to fair	Poor to fair	Medium to high	Fair
Homestead Preservation Center	Current low-income homeowners, including seniors and persons of color	All	Yes	Poor	Good	Medium	Good
Affordable Housing Preservation Network and Database	Current and future low-income renters of apartments	Early and mid-stage	No	Good	Good	Low to medium	Fair
Affordable Housing Strike Funds	Current and future low-to-moderate-income renters	Early and mid-stage	No	Good	Poor to fair	Medium to high	Poor to fair
Community Capacity Building	Low-income residents in vulnerable neighborhoods	Early and mid-stage	Yes	Poor	Good	Medium	Poor to Fair
Adding Internal Accessory Dwelling Units to Existing Homes	Current homeowners, including seniors and persons with disabilities	All	No	Fair to good	Poor to fair	Low	Good
Community Land Trusts	Current and future low-income renters and homeowners	Early to middle	Yes	Good	Good	High	Fair
Tenant Relocation Ordinance	Current low-income renters and mobile home park residents	All	No	Poor	Fair	Low to medium	Fair
City and Tenant Right to Purchase Program	Current and future low-income renters and mobile home park residents	Early and mid-stage	No	Good	Good	Medium to high	Fair
Community Preference Policy	Current displaced residents who are low-income and have ties to a targeted neighborhood	Early to late-stage	Yes	Poor	Fair to good	Low	Good