



## LOCATION AFFORDABILITY & FAIR HOUSING

The average household in the US spends more on transportation than any budget item other than housing. How much its members spend depends on where they live. In 2014 HUD released the Location Affordability Index (LAI), a publicly-available online tool that allows users to compare the location affordability of neighborhoods throughout the nation. Calls are beginning to mount for the LAI or similar indices to be taken into account for decisions related to siting of subsidized low-income housing.

There is concern, however, that such efforts, though well-intentioned, could place affordable housing sponsors in legal jeopardy related to Fair Housing law. Is incorporating location affordability into the siting of new subsidized housing projects tantamount to steering such developments into predominantly African American and Latino neighborhoods? Further, does the answer vary across megaregions, perhaps conditioned by differing spatial patterns of racial and ethnic segregation, housing costs, and transportation infrastructure?

This project analyzed three megaregions: Northeast (Boston-Washington); the Texas Triangle (Dallas-Houston-San Antonio); and Cascadia (Seattle-Portland). The Northeast represents a series of high cost cities where market pressures and gentrification are pushing low-income households further from city centers. The Texas Triangle contains Dallas, home to a significant recent US Supreme Court Fair Housing decision. Finally, Cascadia is an area with declining poverty rates but increasing housing and transportation costs. The project finds that from a Fair Housing standpoint, transportation costs may not be an ideal factor to consider when siting affordable housing. At the very least, they should be used with caution to avoid inadvertently intensifying the segregated locational patterns that subsidized rental housing has long exhibited.

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Location Affordability and Fair Housing on a Collision Course? (#CM2-4 & 5)

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Project Information Form:  
<http://sites.utexas.edu/cm2/files/2018/03/Year-2-Jake-Wegmann-Erick-Guerra-Vincent-Reina-Equitable-access.pdf>

Final Report:  
<http://sites.utexas.edu/cm2/files/2019/01/Reina-et-al-Year-1-Final-Report-Accessible.pdf>

