

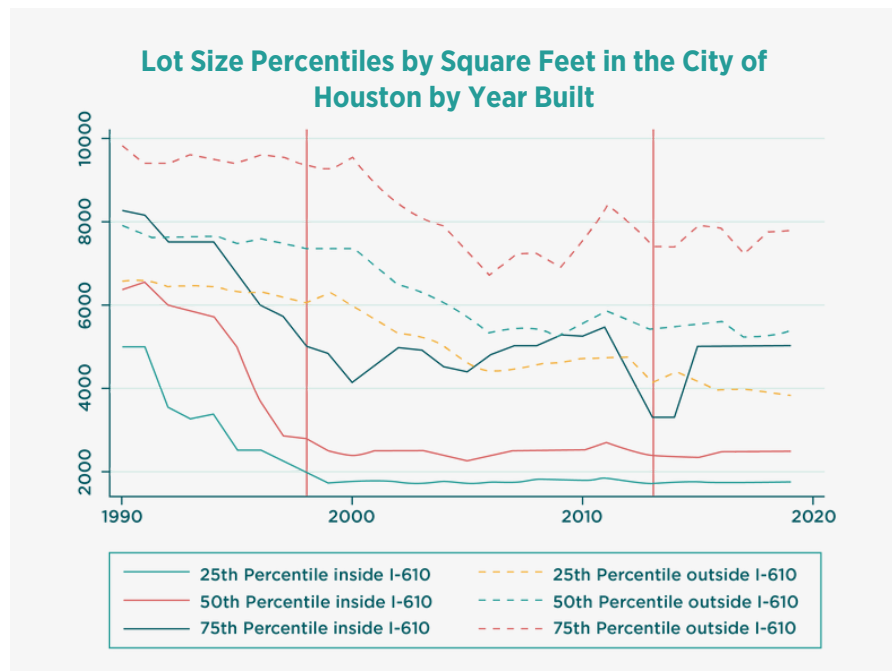


Cutting Zoning Down to Size

How Reducing Minimum Lot Size Requirements Can Unleash Attainable Housing

HOUSTON LEADS THE WAY

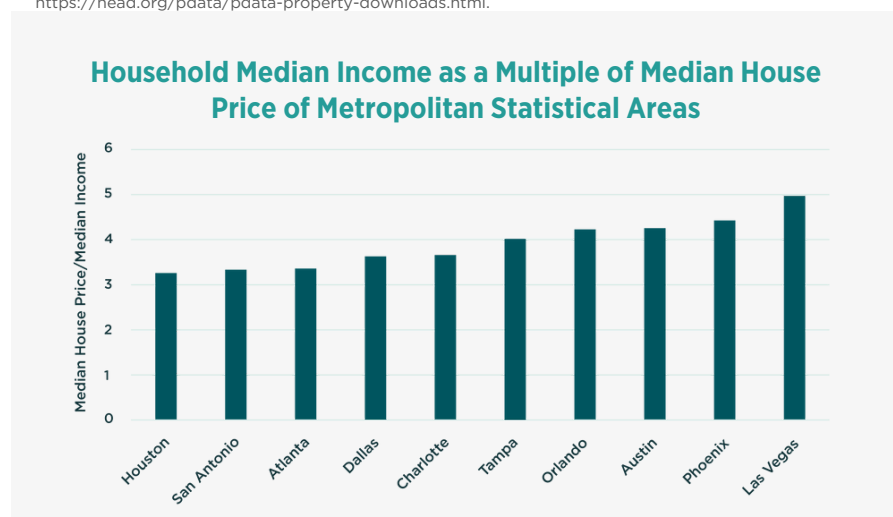
In 1998, Houston reduced the by-right minimum lot size from 5,000 to 3,500 square feet within the city's I-610 Loop and permitted even smaller lots (down to an average of 1,400 square feet) for subdivisions that meet certain conditions. In 2013, they expanded the reform to outside the loop. This has led to an increase in smaller-lot "starter homes":



Source: Harris Central Appraisal District, Property Data (database), last updated March 19, 2023, <https://head.org/pdata/pdata-property-downloads.html>.

HOUSTON IS AFFORDABLE

Among its fast-growing Sun Belt peers, Houston remains more affordable for median-income homebuyers:



Source: Zillow Research, Housing Data (database), "ZHVI Homes Time Series (\$)," accessed March 24, 2023, <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>; and US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (database), accessed March 24, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

STATEWIDE CHANGES

In 2023, Montana, Vermont, and Washington passed statewide reforms to minimum lot size requirements and eight other states introduced housing reforms. As of February, eight states have introduced reforms in the 2024 session.