



TRUE AFFORDABILITY AND LOCATION EFFICIENCY

H+T[®] Affordability Index

htaindex.org



Can You Afford that Home?

The Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation (H+T[®]) Affordability Index provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability. The Index examines the impact that transportation costs associated with location have on a household's economic bottom line.

The traditional measure of affordability recommends that housing cost no more than 30 percent of income. However, that benchmark ignores transportation costs, which are typically a household's second largest expenditure. **The H+T Index offers an expanded view of affordability, one that combines housing and transportation costs and sets the benchmark at no more than 45 percent of household income.**

Washington, DC

72% of neighborhoods in the DC metro area are considered affordable **using the conventional measure of affordability.**

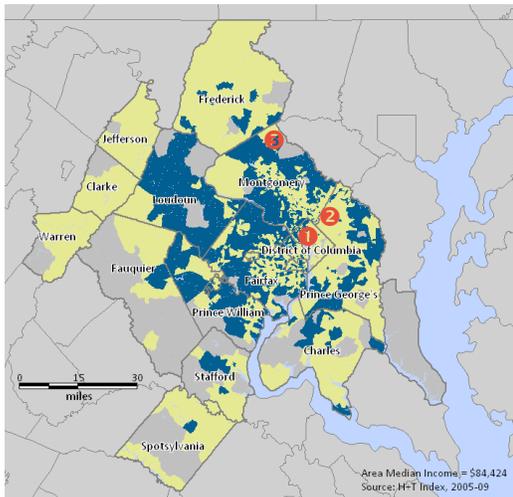
61% of neighborhoods in the DC metro area are considered affordable **using the H+T Index's expanded measure**, which includes housing and transportation costs.

Two Views of Affordability in Washington, DC

THE MAPS BELOW SAY IT ALL. On the left, 7 in 10 neighborhoods (72%) in the Washington, DC region are considered affordable when using the conventional measure. On the right, affordability shrinks to 6 in 10 neighborhoods (61%) when using the expanded view of affordability. This produces a net loss of 309 neighborhoods where a typical family could afford to live.

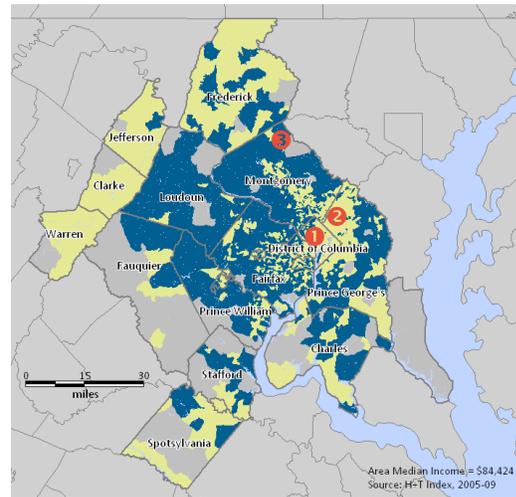
AFFORDABILITY: HOUSING COSTS AS PERCENT OF AREA MEDIAN INCOME

- 0 to 30%
- Greater than or equal to 30%
- Data not available



AFFORDABILITY: HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS AS PERCENT OF AREA MEDIAN INCOME

- 0 to 45%
- Greater than or equal to 45%
- Data not available



Neighborhood	Housing Costs	Transportation Costs	H+TCosts
① Dupont Circle Metro station in Dupont Circle neighborhood	26.42%	9.04%	35.46%
② College Park Metro station in College Park, MD	26.34%	17.71%	44.04%
③ Main St. and Ridge Rd. in Damascus, MD	27.73%	20.57%	48.30%

Housing and Transportation Costs in Three DC Neighborhoods

When looking for a place to live, considering housing and transportation costs together changes the picture of affordability significantly. Neighborhoods with expensive housing may prove affordable thanks to a compact layout and multiple travel options that keep transportation costs low. Places with seemingly inexpensive housing may in fact be unaffordable due to high transportation costs that come from having to use a car for most trips. The three neighborhood profiles below demonstrate these tradeoffs.

Neighborhood Average	Dupont Circle	College Park	Damascus
Autos per Household	0.82	1.93	2.20
Household VMT	12,659	20,781	25,727
Commuters Using Transit	60.21%	7.76%	1.45%
Residential Density	17.71HH/Res. Acre	2.52HH/Res. Acre	1.70HH/Res. Acre
Monthly Transportation Costs	\$636	\$1,246	\$1,447

Affordability Has Declined Since 2000

Nationally, housing and transportation costs have increased more significantly than income. The national median income grew by approximately 22 percent from 2000 to 2009*, while housing increased by almost 37 percent and transportation costs grew by nearly 39 percent in the regions covered by the Index.

The maps below illustrate how national trends have played out in the DC region. Comparing 2000 transportation costs on the left with 2009 transportation costs on the right reveals that there are many fewer places in DC where transportation costs as a percentage of national median income are low and affordable.

*The most recent version of the H+T Index uses American Community Survey 2005-2009 5-year estimates

