

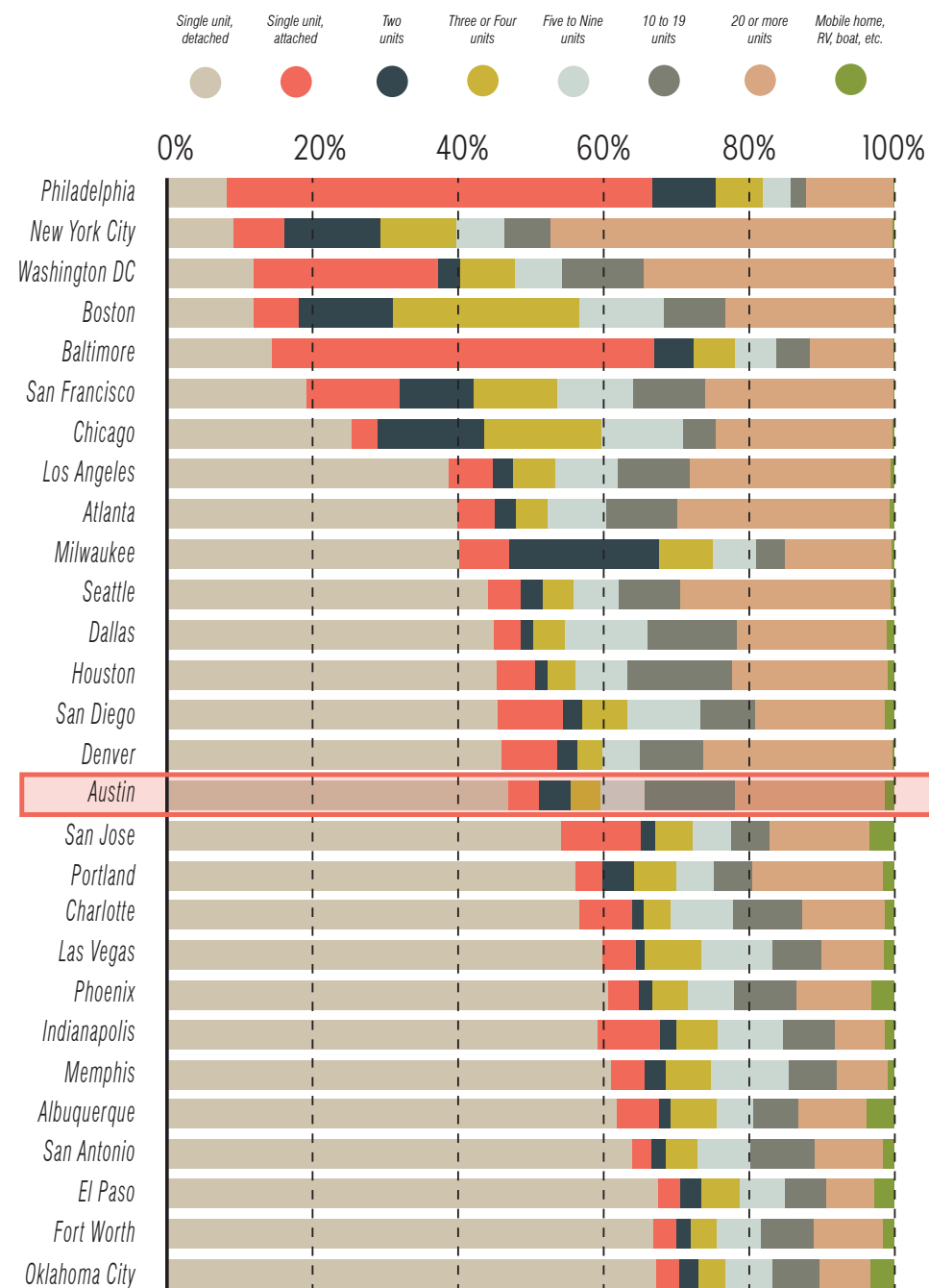
# THE TOOLS IN OUR CODE

The City of Austin Land Development Code (LDC) determines how land can be used – what can be built, where it can be built, and how much can (and cannot) be built. Our LDC sets a minimum size for single family lots and further dictates the percentage of that site a home can occupy. In most cases, a lot can only contain one home and there is a limit to the number of people who can live within that home.

Parameters like these and others – building setbacks and the street network - impact the character of neighborhoods throughout the City. Older housing built before today's current land development standards often have much smaller lot sizes and shallower setbacks from property boundaries. On a larger scale, these elements of the code affect land patterns, the supply of housing, environmental resilience, and affordability.

Like Austin, single family housing in the US is highly regulated, often requiring minimum lot sizes much larger than needed to provide a comfortably sized home. For cities where single family homes are the most predominant housing type, minimum lot sizes play a powerful role in dictating how land is used. Larger lot sizes reduce the amount of people that can live within a certain geographic boundary. This in turn limits the supply of housing, leading to higher land and home prices, and affecting the overall affordability of the City.

Other cities in the US have employed more flexible regulating tools, like small lot single family and missing middle housing types. These tools have allowed growth to be accommodated while retaining the character of neighborhoods and ensuring equitable quality of life.



Washington Post, 2015  
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

## How Cities Compare

A breakdown of housing stock percentages by building type

Minimum allowable single family lot size by code

### Small lots in Austin

This featured tour stop scales the home to lot size and shape more efficiently

Typical Austin Home  
Lot size : 5750 sf (min)

5109 Evans Ave  
Lot size : 3263 sf

Small lot amnesty permits construction or major renovation of existing single-family homes on existing legally-created lots that do not meet current minimum lot standards. To qualify, the lot must have a minimum area of 2,500 square feet and a minimum width of 25 feet. So far, 36 of 48 neighborhoods in Austin have opted into small lot amnesty.

square feet

1400

Houston



2500

San Francisco // Kansas City //  
Baltimore // Charleston // Chicago



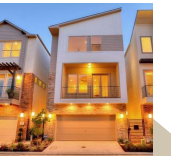
2800

Atlanta



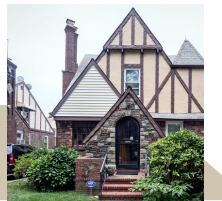
3000

Portland // San Antonio //  
Denver



3800

New York



5000

Dallas // Raleigh //  
Seattle // Philadelphia



5750

Austin



7500

Chattanooga

