

Morehead-Cain Civic Collaboration Final Presentation

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Charles McCain, Dani Simon, Derrian Wilson, Josie Blackman, Lulu Sasz

Innovate Memphis

516 Tennessee St

Memphis, TN 38103



Executive Summary

This paper delves into the critical issue of securing sustainable funding sources for the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHTF) through a comprehensive approach that includes research, stakeholder interviews, and the analysis of successful strategies from peer cities. The research unpacks Memphis' housing challenges defined by economic shifts, demographic changes, and policy decisions, resulting in a severe shortage of affordable housing units amid escalating construction costs and limited federal support. Low homeownership rates, particularly among African American residents, underscore historical inequities and discriminatory practices. This is further compounded by rising property values and corporate investments that strain affordability and contribute to neighborhood instability. High eviction rates highlight the precarious housing situation for many residents, underscoring the urgent need for effective funding solutions.

To address these pressing issues, this paper draws on successful funding models from peer cities such as Nashville, Louisville, Austin, Atlanta, and Baltimore. These cities have implemented innovative funding mechanisms, including tax increment financing, dedicated housing trust funds, and public-private partnerships, to finance affordable housing initiatives and support community revitalization efforts. The paper will then summarize our interviews conducted with various community organizations, nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, and financial institutions. The goal of these interviews is to provide valuable insights into potential funding sources and strategies that could be implemented for the MAHTF.

The maps we have created illustrate the geographic distribution of major employers and existing government subsidized housing locations across Memphis, highlighting spatial disparities and underserved areas where targeted workforce housing development could be prioritized. These visual aids not only display the need for strategic interventions but also inform potential funders and policymakers about areas requiring increased investment and development focus.

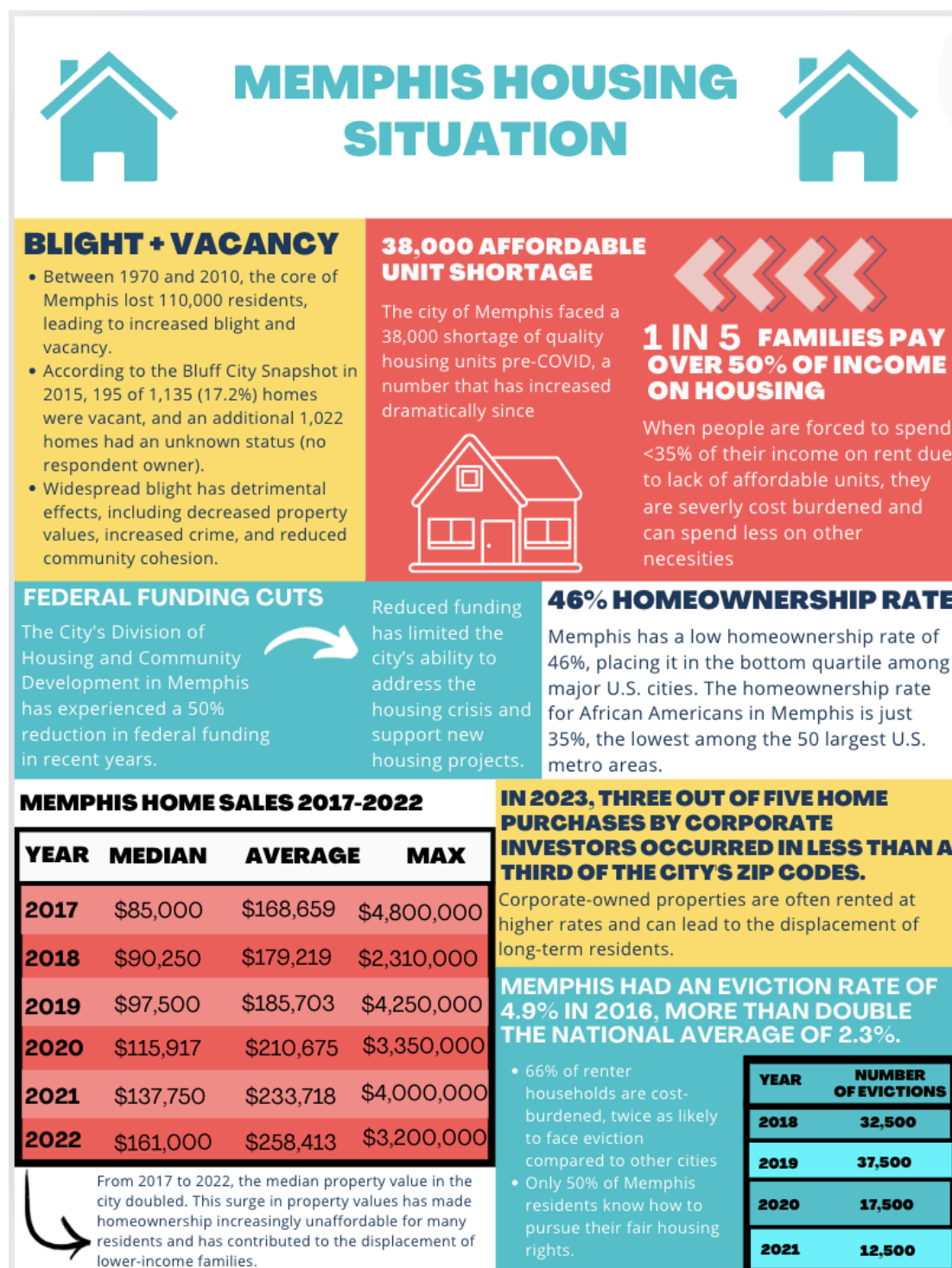
From this research, we developed recommendations that emphasize securing public dollars for the fund, enhancing public awareness of affordable housing needs, streamlining communication and application processes for potential funders, and fostering collaborations across Shelby County to build unified support for sustainable funding initiatives. By implementing these proactive strategies, Memphis can strengthen the MAHTF's capacity to secure reliable funding sources and advance its mission of ensuring equitable access to affordable housing for all residents.



This paper concludes with actionable steps for policymakers, stakeholders, and community leaders to collectively address MAHTF's funding challenges and build a more resilient and inclusive housing landscape. By leveraging lessons learned from peer cities and local stakeholder insights, we believe Memphis has the ability to create thriving communities where housing affordability is a cornerstone of economic and social well-being.

Literature Review and Background

The following graphic briefly explains the current issues Memphis is facing regarding the affordable housing crisis.





Introduction

Memphis, Tennessee, is a city with a rich cultural heritage and a strategic economic position along the Mississippi River. Despite its many advantages, Memphis has long struggled with significant housing challenges. These issues have been exacerbated in recent years by economic shifts, demographic changes, and policy decisions. This section of our paper explores the various facets of Memphis' housing landscape, examining the shortage of quality housing, funding constraints, affordability issues, and disparities in homeownership. It also looks at the impact of corporate investment, blight, and high eviction rates on the city's housing market.

Pre-COVID Housing Shortage

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Memphis already faced a considerable shortage of quality housing units. With a deficit of approximately 38,000 units, the city's housing market struggled to meet the needs of its residents. This shortage has grown even more severe since the onset of the pandemic, driven by factors such as increased construction costs, supply chain disruptions, and rising demand for housing.

Nationally, the situation for extremely low-income renters is dire, with only 7.0 million affordable rental homes available for 11.0 million households in need. This translates to a significant shortfall in affordable housing for vulnerable populations. In Memphis, the scarcity of affordable units is acute, with only 28 available units per 100 households at or below the extremely low-income threshold (defined as incomes at or below either the federal poverty guideline or 30% of the area median income (AMI) – whichever is greater), compared to the national average. Additionally, currently, almost half of the renters in Memphis spend more than 35% of their income on housing, making it difficult for them to meet other essential needs.

Federal Funding Cuts

The City's Division of Housing and Community Development in Memphis has recently experienced a 50% reduction in federal funding. This cut has severely impacted the division's ability to support affordable housing initiatives and provide essential services to low-income families. The reduction in funding has constrained efforts to address the housing crisis and support the development of new housing units.

Homeownership Rates

Homeownership is a critical indicator of economic stability and wealth accumulation, but Memphis lags behind in this area. The city's overall homeownership rate is 46%, placing it near the bottom quartile among major U.S. cities. This low rate reflects the barriers that many residents face in achieving homeownership, such as high housing costs, limited access to financing, and systemic inequalities. The situation is even more concerning for the African American community in Memphis, where the homeownership rate is only 35%. This is the lowest rate among the 50 largest metro areas in the United States.

Rising Property Values


Property values in Memphis have increased significantly in recent years. From 2017 to 2022, the median property value in the city doubled, reflecting a broader trend of rising housing costs. This surge in property values has made homeownership increasingly unaffordable for many residents and has contributed to the displacement of lower-income families.

The following table illustrates the rise in median and average home sale prices in Memphis from 2017 to 2022:

Change in Memphis Home Sales 2017 to 2022				TABLE 1
YEAR	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	MAX	
2017	\$85,000	\$168,659	\$4,800,000	
2018	\$90,250	\$179,219	\$2,310,000	
2019	\$97,500	\$185,703	\$4,250,000	
2020	\$115,917	\$210,675	\$3,350,000	
2021	\$137,750	\$233,718	\$4,000,000	
2022	\$161,000	\$258,413	\$3,200,000	

These rising prices highlight the growing affordability crisis in Memphis and the challenges faced by residents seeking to buy homes.

Corporate Investment and Market Dynamics



In recent years, corporate investors have become increasingly active in the Memphis housing market. In 2023, three out of every five home purchases by corporate investors occurred in less than a third of the city's zip codes. This concentration of corporate ownership in specific areas has raised concerns about the impact on local communities and housing affordability. Corporate-owned properties are often rented at higher rates and can lead to the displacement of long-term residents.

The influx of corporate investment has also contributed to the overall rise in property values, making it harder for individual buyers to compete in the market. This trend underscores the need for policies that balance investment opportunities with the protection of local communities and affordable housing.

Blight and Vacancy

Memphis has a long-standing issue with blight and vacant properties. Between 1970 and 2010, the city's core lost 110,000 residents, leading to a significant increase in blight and vacancy. A citywide survey conducted between 2008 and 2010 found that 40,000 of the city's 200,000 residential properties were blighted. Additionally, according to the Bluff City Snapshot in 2015, 195 of 1,135 (17.2%) homes were vacant, and an additional 1,022 homes had an unknown status (no respondent owner). This widespread blight has detrimental effects on neighborhoods, contributing to decreased property values, increased crime, and a decline in community cohesion.

Addressing blight and vacancy is critical to revitalizing neighborhoods and improving the overall quality of life for Memphis residents. Efforts to combat blight must include strategies for rehabilitating vacant properties, promoting community development, and preventing further decline.

Eviction Rates

Eviction is a significant issue in Memphis, with the city having an eviction rate of 4.9% as of 2016. This rate is more than double the national average of 2.3%, highlighting the precarious housing situation for many residents. High eviction rates are closely linked to the city's severe cost-burdened households, which make up 66% of the renter population. These households are twice as likely to face eviction compared to other cities, reflecting the acute financial pressures they experience.

The number of evictions in Memphis has fluctuated in recent years, influenced by various factors including economic conditions and public health emergencies. The table below shows the number of evictions in Memphis from 2018 to 2021:

Year	Number of Evictions
2018	32,500
2019	37,500
2020	17,500
2021	12,500

These figures underscore the ongoing challenges that renters face in maintaining stable housing and the need for robust support systems to prevent evictions.


Fair Housing Awareness

Awareness of fair housing rights is crucial for protecting tenants and promoting equitable housing practices. However, in Memphis, only 50% of residents know how to pursue their fair housing rights. Some examples of these rights include a right to file a complaint, a right to living accommodations, or a right to equal terms and conditions. This lack of knowledge can perpetuate unfair rental practices and discrimination, particularly affecting vulnerable populations such as low-income and minority households. Increasing awareness and education about fair housing rights is essential to empower residents and ensure that all Memphians have access to safe and affordable housing.

Literature Review Conclusion

The housing challenges in Memphis are complex and multifaceted, requiring comprehensive and sustained efforts to address. The city's housing landscape is marked by a severe shortage of affordable units, rising property values, low homeownership rates, high eviction rates, and significant corporate investment in the housing market. Blight and vacancy continue to affect neighborhoods, while limited awareness of fair housing rights perpetuates inequalities.

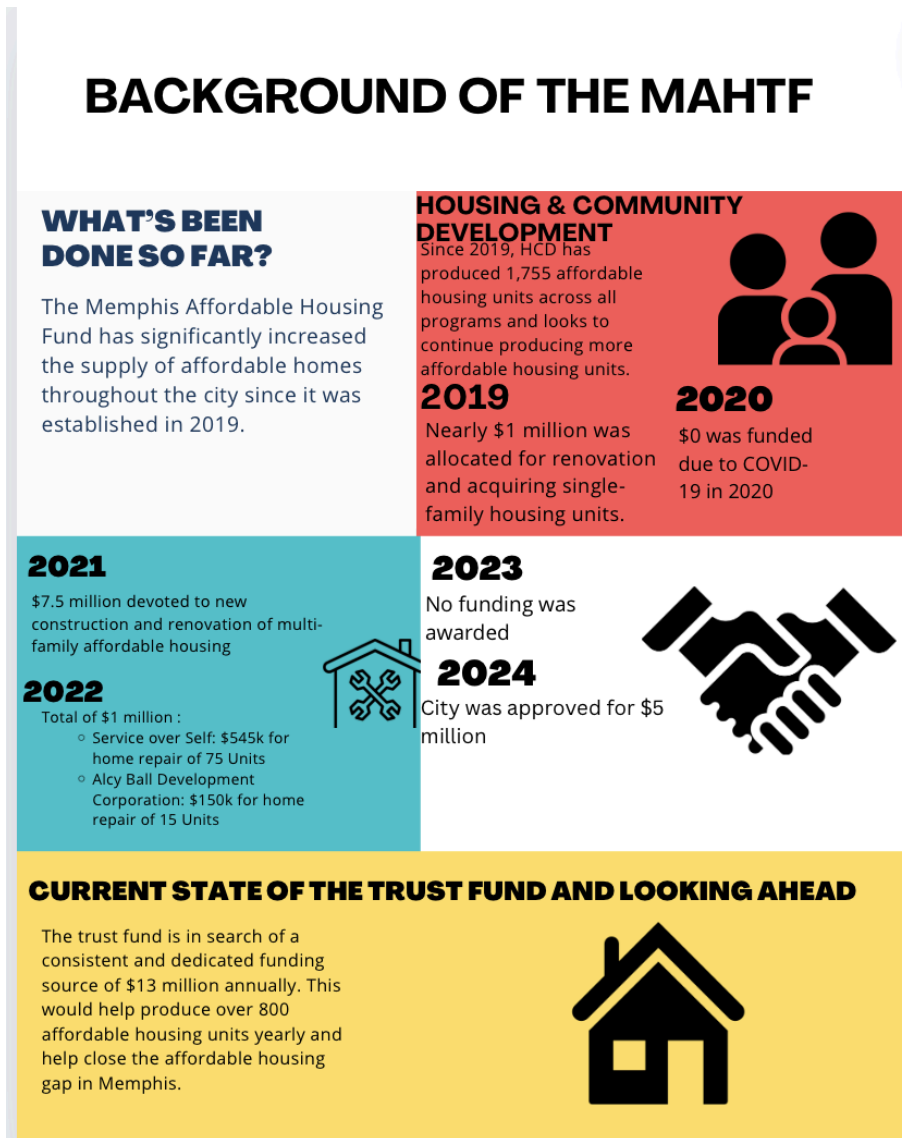
To create a more equitable and sustainable housing environment in Memphis, coordinated action is needed from policymakers, community organizations, and residents. Efforts



should focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing, protecting renters' rights, promoting homeownership, and revitalizing blighted areas. By addressing these issues holistically, Memphis can build a stronger, more resilient community that provides safe and affordable housing for all its residents.


Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHTF)

The graphic below explains the background of the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund and what it has accomplished since being established.



Case Studies

To better understand how cities across the nation are addressing the housing crisis and enhancing affordable housing options, this section will examine several case studies of peer cities. By exploring the initiatives and strategies implemented through their Affordable



Housing Trust Funds, we can gain insights into successful approaches and potential best practices that could be adapted in Memphis. These case studies will highlight the various ways in which cities have leveraged their resources to create more housing solutions for their residents.


Nashville, TN

The Barnes Fund, named for well-known housing advocate and philanthropist Reverend Bill Barnes, was established in 2013 with the goal of providing grants to nonprofit developers to provide affordable housing options to Nashvillians. The fund has invested over \$108 million in affordable housing development and has constructed more than 4,700 housing units. It has also leveraged \$1 billion in private and federal funding. The Barnes Fund receives a considerable portion of its funding through the Short-Term Rental (STR) Tax for the city of Nashville. The Barnes Fund receives 1% of the Short-Term Rental Tax, which generated \$3.5 million in funding for the trust fund in 2022. The growing prevalence of Airbnb, VRBO, and other STR companies has made this a solid source of income each year.

The Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund could benefit from the growing number of STR properties around the city. The Hotel/Motel Tax in Memphis is currently being allocated to the City of Memphis Tourism Department, which only uses about 85% of its funding, as opposed to 96%-98% in other cities. As Adriane Harris, Senior Advisor on Housing Policy for Think Tennessee, said in a recent interview, Memphis is at a unique time in its growth where the Housing Trust Fund can capitalize off of the STR Tax before the market for Airbnb and other STR companies skyrockets in the area.

Louisville, KY

The Louisville Affordable Housing Trust Fund, established in 2008, aims to use public funds to help increase affordable housing for groups like seniors on fixed incomes, young people trying to access starter homes, and working people whose wages alone cannot cover housing. The city allocated \$15 million for the fund in 2024, which is intended to go towards units for households with incomes between 30% and 80% area median income (AMI). One notable program they have established is the REVERT program, which has leveraged \$13 million to combat the historical redlining in the city. It aims to assist families disproportionately affected by redlining by providing homeownership opportunities. Another program Louisville has implemented through its Affordable Housing Trust Fund is a Renter Center, which provides online videos and hosts in-person forums with useful



information for tenants. This includes information on financing homes and rental units, tenant rights, and renter responsibilities.

A program like this could be relatively easy to implement if a dedicated group took it on as a responsibility. Informative videos, created once, could be distributed and utilized for years to come. While forums would require more planning, they would demand relatively little funding compared to other measures. Meanwhile, a program like the REVERT project, which necessitates significant funds and operating costs, could serve as a crucial initiative to address the ongoing impacts of redlining, a significant historical issue in Memphis.

Austin, TX

Austin's Housing Trust Fund serves as a key tool in providing affordable housing through various mechanisms like voter-approved bonds, downtown density bonus programs, and density bonuses with incentives. Austin voters have repeatedly approved bond measures aimed at raising funds for affordable housing. To show the public's support for addressing housing affordability, the city passed a \$250 million affordable housing bond in 2018. Memphis could implement this strategy by introducing bonds that have been approved by the public and allocated for affordable housing. Voters would be involved in local elections to decide on bond measures that are specially designated for affordable housing initiatives. Bond proceeds could fund new construction, repair, and maintenance of affordable housing units throughout Memphis. This would provide a consistent and large financing source necessary for increasing affordable housing production while also encouraging community engagement by involving the public in decision-making and aligning housing goals with public interests.

Austin's Downtown Density Bonus Program encourages developers to exceed regular zoning limits in downtown areas in exchange for contributions to affordable housing. Memphis could adopt a similar policy to encourage growth by allowing higher construction densities or taller structures in specific places, such as downtown Memphis. Developers would have to include affordable housing units in their developments or contribute money to the Affordable Housing Fund. Austin has a significantly greater population density, meaning this program will be less effective in Memphis.

Density incentives offer developers more development space in exchange for public benefits including affordable housing, green spaces, and infrastructure improvements. Memphis can adopt density incentives by setting clear requirements for bonus eligibility based on affordable housing contributions or other community benefits, as well as updating zoning regulations to facilitate bonus distributions and assure compliance with



housing affordability targets. This method uses private sector investments to create affordable housing rather than depending exclusively on public funds, and it promotes environmentally friendly practices and community-enhancing amenities alongside affordable housing initiatives.


Austin's successful strategies—voter-approved bonds, downtown density bonus programs, and density bonuses with incentives—could strengthen Memphis' Affordable Housing Fund's ability to effectively address its housing difficulties. By looking into these strategies, Memphis could increase the availability of affordable housing and promote inclusive urban growth. These projects give financial resources but also promote community engagement and urban expansion, allowing Memphis to meet its long-term housing demands and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

Atlanta, GA

Atlanta's Beltline Housing Trust Fund, created in 2009, is overseen by Beltline Partnership. The Atlanta Trust Fund outlines directives for developers to pursue to receive funding. This incentive system is a two-step process for developers as they submit a preliminary questionnaire with Neighborly through which Invest Atlanta project managers determine if the project is eligible for funding, meaning it aligns with Atlanta's redevelopment goals. If the developer is eligible, they will receive the development incentives application to complete and are required to submit a Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) recommendation letter. If accepted, developers work directly with Invest Atlanta project managers to go over the timeline and hold developers accountable. Neighborly also appears to be an effective way to connect developers and have an effective communication pathway to share information and programmatic announcements or changes.

As its funding source, this Trust Fund utilizes tax increment financing via Tax Allocation Districts by outlining geographical territories throughout Atlanta and managing districts separately. It froze its taxes at a set point as the city and its residents invested in community anchors. The tax base rose due to the property value increase and the newly generated revenue was reinvested in the community. Atlanta has ten tax allocation districts, including one that is the area within the Atlanta beltline. The Beltline district is currently one of the broadest redevelopment programs and all increments collected go towards funding the city of Atlanta's redevelopment project. The surrounding 9 districts operate individually and not as a unified fund.

Implementing more tax increment financing (TIFs) could be useful to Memphis to generate funds as a recurring, ever-growing funding source. Following the 3.0 plan, Memphis could



start collecting its increments and allocate funding according to the 3.0 plan. This would enable the MAHTF to cultivate its own source of revenue and direct it towards the city of Memphis to build “up” and not out. The city of Memphis would need to outline its district and record the current tax revenue for this area and allocate any raised revenue above that baseline to the MAHTF. This would, however, require significant policy change and also excludes the rest of Shelby County.

Baltimore, MD

Baltimore faces significant housing challenges including a history of redlining, widespread blight, and high vacancy rates. Like Memphis, Baltimore struggles with providing affordable housing, making it a valuable peer city to study.

Baltimore's Affordable Housing Trust Fund was established in 2016 to tackle these issues. To establish a permanent funding source, Baltimore introduced a 0.6% excise tax on property transfers and a 0.15% recordation tax for properties valued at or above \$1 million. These taxes are expected to generate \$13 million annually, providing a reliable source of funding for affordable housing projects.

Memphis could benefit from adopting a similar approach. Establishing a stable funding source for the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund is crucial. With rising property values across Tennessee, more homes may cross the \$1 million threshold, which could be an opportunity Memphis could capitalize from.

This would require collaboration between city officials and community organizations to gain political and public support. However, the success of Baltimore's model shows that such a strategy can provide substantial financial backing for affordable housing initiatives.

Interviews

To understand housing challenges and the impact of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, we interviewed community members, housing experts, and other stakeholders. We synthesized their key points to present the most critical insights. This section highlights the main findings from these interviews, offering perspectives on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and insight into ways to approach the housing crisis.

The following graphic explains some common themes from these stakeholder interviews.



OUR INTERVIEWS: COMMON THEMES + RECOMMENDATIONS



NON PROFITS

(BLDG MEMPHIS, LISC MEMPHIS, ALCY BALL)



NEED DIVERSE FUNDING SOURCES:

PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND PHILANTHROPIC. CONSISTENT AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING STREAMS ARE CRUCIAL FOR EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS.

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION:

AUTOMATED AND CLEAR UPDATES ON APPLICATIONS AND FUNDING PROCESSES.

POLICY AND REGULATION:

UPDATED ZONING AND POLICY CHANGES .
EXPLORATION OF CRA AND OTHER INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE BANK AND CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT.

PUBLIC AWARENESS:

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ABOUT THE MAHTF AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

BANKS

(FIRST HORIZON BANK)

KEY CRITERIA FOR BANK INVOLVEMENT:

- TAX CREDITS: INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE TAX CREDITS
- CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF ROI FOR BANK INVOLVEMENT
- PARTICIPATION HELPS FULFILL CRA REQUIREMENTS, ENHANCING THE BANK'S CRA SCORE
- INCENTIVES: IMPROVES CRA RATING, MAKING COMMUNITY IMPACT, EXPANDING CLIENT BASE



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

(BARNES AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND, CITY OF MEMPHIS)



FUNDING:

- DIVERSITY: PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND PHILANTHROPIC SOURCES
- CONSISTENCY: CONSISTENT REVENUE STREAMS FROM TAX SALES OR LARGE BUSINESSES FOR LONG-TERM STABILITY

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY:

- INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH RECOGNIZABLE BRANDING AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS

(ASSISI FOUNDATION)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INVITE THE COMMUNITY TO ACT AS EXPERTS IN IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING NEEDS

FUNDING CHALLENGE:

OVERABUNDANCE OF NONPROFITS: MANY ORGANIZATIONS COMPETE FOR LIMITED FUNDING, CREATING RESOURCE ALLOCATION CHALLENGES

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- HOUSING QUALITY: BUILDING CODES TO MAINTAIN THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF HOUSING
- CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION: GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, NONPROFITS, AND PRIVATE SECTOR ENTITIES

BLDG Memphis

BLDG Memphis, formerly known as the Community Development Council of Greater Memphis, is a coalition dedicated to the equitable redevelopment of vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods throughout Memphis. This membership organization primarily supports community development corporations (CDCs) by fostering investment in disinvested areas. BLDG Memphis enhances CDC capacities through robust programming, including capacity assessments, workshops, consultations, and peer learning sessions. Their mission is to drive investments in Memphis neighborhoods by building member capacity, shaping public policy, and promoting civic engagement. By centering resident voices, BLDG Memphis collaborates with various stakeholders to advocate for community development rooted in racial, economic, and social equity, while representing members at decision-making tables and working on community improvement initiatives.

In our first interview with them, BLDG highlighted that affordable housing is challenged by both ends of the housing market spectrum: developers are incentivized to build luxury homes, while older buildings are abandoned and become blighted. BLDG advocates for policy changes, such as updated zoning regulations, to promote the development of quality affordable multifamily housing units. They support directing public funds like taxes and fees to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) and back the Memphis 3.0 plan. However, BLDG is skeptical about the philanthropic sector's capacity to reliably fund the AHTF without county and government backing. Thus, government commitment could boost philanthropic and corporate investment.

BLDG emphasizes the need for clear communication channels to secure funding for affordable housing and is working on a uniform application process for developers. They note lack of public awareness about available resources and suggest resource tables for education. Consistent, annual funding for the AHTF would alleviate the pressure on nonprofits to secure grants, allowing them to focus more on their missions. In August, BLDG will publish an investor brief analyzing the trust fund's investment potential. Locally, while there is passion, efforts are fragmented and inefficient, with a lack of transparency in the affordable housing sector. BLDG also suggests exploring investment interest from Patriot Bank, which may seek to repair its reputation after a recent redlining scandal.

In our second interview with BLDG, we focused on public awareness of the MAHTF. In this interview, it was brought to our attention that the general public is not aware of the trust fund, though it would be valuable for them to be informed. Some possible ideas they presented were more online information or social media platforms.


LISC Memphis

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Memphis is a local branch of a national nonprofit organization dedicated to financing and supporting community development. As one of over 30 local offices, LISC Memphis collaborates with local government, community development corporations, and other nonprofits to revitalize neighborhoods and create opportunities. Their mission is to forge resilient and inclusive communities across America, making them great places to live, work, visit, do business, and raise families. LISC Memphis pursues strategies that strengthen alliances, develop leadership, equip talent in underinvested communities, invest in community infrastructure, and drive policy changes to foster prosperity and well-being.

In our interview with LISC Memphis, we learned that they serve as both lenders and nonprofit lenders, working directly with nonprofits to achieve their goals. LISC Memphis is involved in two key initiatives: 901 Help, which assists low to moderate-income homeowners in Memphis with home repairs through a \$2.5 million pool, and an upcoming Senior Grant Program aimed at providing up to \$20,000 for very low-income seniors. United Housing, Inc. services these loans, while LISC manages the programs. Funding is awarded by the city, and recipients are responsible for the programming. In 2019, Memphis' Affordable Housing Trust Fund had three rounds of funding totaling \$1 million, sourced from the general city budget and the local housing division. Two years later, \$7.5 million in interest bonds were allocated for multifamily properties, and an additional \$1 million from the city's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars funded home repair the following year. However, the funding allocations are inconsistent, and the county is not involved. The 901 Help program includes private dollars from banks and philanthropy, but LISC has not actively pursued private funding sources. They highlighted the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) as a potential avenue for consistent funding, as it requires banks to invest in community programs. They also highlighted the need for both public and private funding.

Alcy Ball

Alcy Ball Development Corporation is a dedicated non-profit CDC that has been making strides in the affordable housing sector for the past three years. Their approach involves a meticulous process: they screen homeowners in need, obtain approval from the Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD), carry out the necessary work, pay contractors, and then seek reimbursement through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). Despite their limited engagement with the AHTF—having utilized it just once to




complete a roof repair and receiving one reimbursement check—Alcy Ball's experience highlights both the opportunities and challenges faced by small nonprofits in the affordable housing space.

During our interview with Alcy Ball, they highlighted concerns about communication and procedural inefficiencies within the AHTF. They recounted a protracted process for obtaining their reimbursement, which took six months and required them to apply three times. The lack of communication and transparency left them uncertain, as they received no confirmations or updates until the funds appeared in their account. Alcy Ball suggested improvements such as automated responses upon application receipt and clearer notifications regarding approval or denial. They also highlighted the need for a more efficient reimbursement system to protect smaller nonprofits from financial strain. Furthermore, Alcy Ball pointed out the inconsistencies and lack of clarity in the application process, exacerbated by staff turnover at HCD, which led to changing requirements. They proposed a checklist of application requirements, a template of a completed application, and a file-sharing system like Neighborly to streamline the process. In fact, HCD has taken the feedback from Alcy Ball and has begun using Neighborly, which they believe has helped streamline the application process. With the inclusion of their suggestions, Alcy Ball is supportive of the AHTF, recognizing its potential if it were permanently funded and better managed. They also proposed innovative funding ideas, such as a new fee tied to the creation of rental units, and emphasized the importance of sharing success stories to garner public support for affordable housing initiatives.

Keith Turbett (First Horizons Bank)

Keith Turbett serves as the Community Development Manager at First Horizon Bank, where he oversees the bank's Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) funds. His role focuses on directing these funds to meet the city's most pressing needs. Turbett recognizes affordable housing as a critical issue in the community and believes that other banks likely share this view. He expressed openness to collaborating with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), provided that the initiative has a well-defined management structure and a clear pathway for banks like First Horizon to engage effectively. For Turbett, understanding the specific benefits for the bank—such as applicable tax credits and the return on investment (ROI)—is essential for any potential partnership with the AHTF.

In our conversation, Turbett emphasized the importance of building strong relationships when working on collaborative projects. He suggested that Mayor Young could be a credible and trustworthy advocate for the AHTF, potentially enhancing its appeal to



financial institutions. Turbett proposed a structured approach for bank involvement, such as committing to underwrite a substantial number of housing loans. This would be beneficial for First Horizon as it would not only fulfill its CRA requirements and improve its CRA rating but also help the community and broaden its customer base. However, he noted the risk of losses from failed loans as a potential obstacle. To mitigate this, Turbett recommended a system where either a third party or the AHTF itself would cover these losses, similar to a past collaborative effort.

Turbett recounted a successful project from four years ago that involved the Hyde Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, First Horizon Bank, SunTrust, and Regions Bank, aimed at redeveloping the medical district. In this project, philanthropists covered operational costs for the CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) network, while the Kresge Foundation provided a backstop by agreeing to cover failed loans up to a certain limit. This made it safer for banks to participate. Turbett sees this model of collaborative engagement as promising for the AHTF, suggesting that a multi-bank effort could be particularly effective.

To facilitate discussions with banks, Turbett advised HCD to clearly communicate the city's housing needs, how the AHTF addresses these needs, and showcase tangible results achieved by the AHTF. He recommended creating a concise, two-page document outlining these elements, along with the ROI for banks and a list of applicable tax credits. This document should also detail a straightforward process for banks to join the AHTF and explain why it is a valuable and meaningful way to deploy capital for both the banks and the community. Turbett also mentioned the CRA association, where banks in the city meet monthly to discuss projects and funding allocations. These meetings could serve as a strategic opportunity to engage banks and promote their involvement in the AHTF.

Incentives for banks to participate include fulfilling CRA requirements and achieving favorable CRA scores, which are reviewed every three years. Additionally, First Horizon is genuinely committed to uplifting the community, and such collaborations could help expand its client base. However, potential disincentives include the complex financial and legal obligations and possible loan losses. When partnering directly with nonprofits, First Horizon evaluates the organization's administrative efficiency relative to its impact, its board's reputation, and ideally seeks low turnover rates.


Regarding the recent Patriot Bank scandal, Turbett suggested that Patriot Bank might now have a greater incentive to invest in community development as a means to rebuild trust and reputation. The coming months would be a good time to approach the bank with a succinct plan for them to collaborate with the MAHTF.

Adriane Harris (Barnes Affordable Housing Trust Fund)

Adriane Harris joined ThinkTennessee in January 2023 as the Senior Advisor on Housing Policy, where she leads initiatives to boost investment in sustainable housing systems that align with transportation options in Tennessee. ThinkTennessee is a “nonpartisan, results-oriented think tank that uses research and advocacy to build a state where all Tennesseans are civically engaged and economically secure.” Harris herself is an urban planner and community development practitioner with nearly 20 years of experience in multi-stakeholder engagement and public-private partnerships. As the Principal/Owner of HarCo Consulting, she aids leaders, organizations, and communities of color in developing authentic, equitable, and innovative solutions through active listening, coaching, and action planning. Before her consulting career, Harris directed national and local housing and community development initiatives, focusing on creating healthy, affordable, and culturally curated spaces for low to moderate-income communities, including her tenure directing the Office of Housing under Nashville Mayor’s Megan Barry and David Briley.

We interviewed Harris to learn more about Nashville’s Barnes Affordable Housing Trust Fund (Barnes Fund). In our interview, she discussed Barnes Fund which was launched in 2015 with an initial commitment from a progressive mayor of \$10 million annually that later increased to \$30 million per year under subsequent mayors. The fund prioritized creativity in funding allocations to nonprofits, resulting in 33 nonprofits receiving support and the development of 5,000 housing units across various types without specific exclusions. Successful strategies included securing dedicated revenue sources from tax sales and engaging public-private partnerships, particularly with financial institutions. She also noted what makes the Barnes Fund so successful was attaching Reverend Bill Barnes’ name to it, as he is well known and respected in the Nashville community. She recommended that Memphis potentially look into attaching a name or personable aspect to the fund, as it increases its public awareness as well as its saliency. She also discussed many challenges with the fund, which included difficulties in incentivizing broader private sector engagement beyond financial institutions, navigating state preemption issues in fund-raising efforts, and addressing regional housing needs. At the end of our interview, she also recommended looking into big businesses, like Elon Musk’s future xAI data center, to help fund the MAHTF as these businesses have to have some community development efforts.

Bradyn Carson (City of Memphis, Comprehensive Planning)



Bradyn Carson is the project manager for the Memphis 3.0 plan. Carson provided an in-depth look into its comprehensive framework for guiding future growth, investment, and planning in Memphis. The plan, which is updated every five years to ensure relevance, focuses on community anchors where people come together, building density in these areas before expanding outward. It categorizes change implementation into three degrees: nurturing slow-growth markets through public and philanthropic investments, accelerating high-potential markets with a mix of public, private, and philanthropic investments, and sustaining well-performing markets primarily through private investment. The plan is structured around three core elements: land, connectivity, and opportunity. Every five years, the plan undergoes a reassessment of district priorities and actions, refinement of future land use maps, and updates to zoning maps, spending six weeks in each district to engage with the community and gather input.

Carson emphasized the need for diverse housing types, given that only 12% of households in Memphis are traditional nuclear families (married couple and their biological child or children). MAHTF is integral to supporting the Memphis 3.0 plan, focusing on rental housing, rental assistance, homeownership, housing rehabilitation, and supportive housing. The MAHTF aims to improve housing quality, support homeownership, grow the "missing middle" of housing, and increase the availability of quality low-income housing, ensuring that housing is affordable, defined as spending less than 30% of one's salary on housing. The interview underscored the importance of collaboration between city, county, state, and non-profit organizations to address the historical disinvestment and redlining that have led to disinvestment, blight, and abandonment in many areas. Reforming land use regulations and expanding financing options are seen as crucial steps to making housing investments economically feasible and improving the overall quality and availability of housing in Memphis.

Assisi Foundation

The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc. supports nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving Memphis and the Mid-South. Established in 1994 from the sale of St. Francis Hospital, the Foundation has awarded over \$280 million to local nonprofits. The Foundation aims to address pressing community challenges and uncover root causes to achieve community-wide transformation. Guided by principles of respect, compassion, service, and stewardship, the Foundation strives to allocate resources effectively, enhancing the quality of life for all in the Greater Memphis area. They believe in



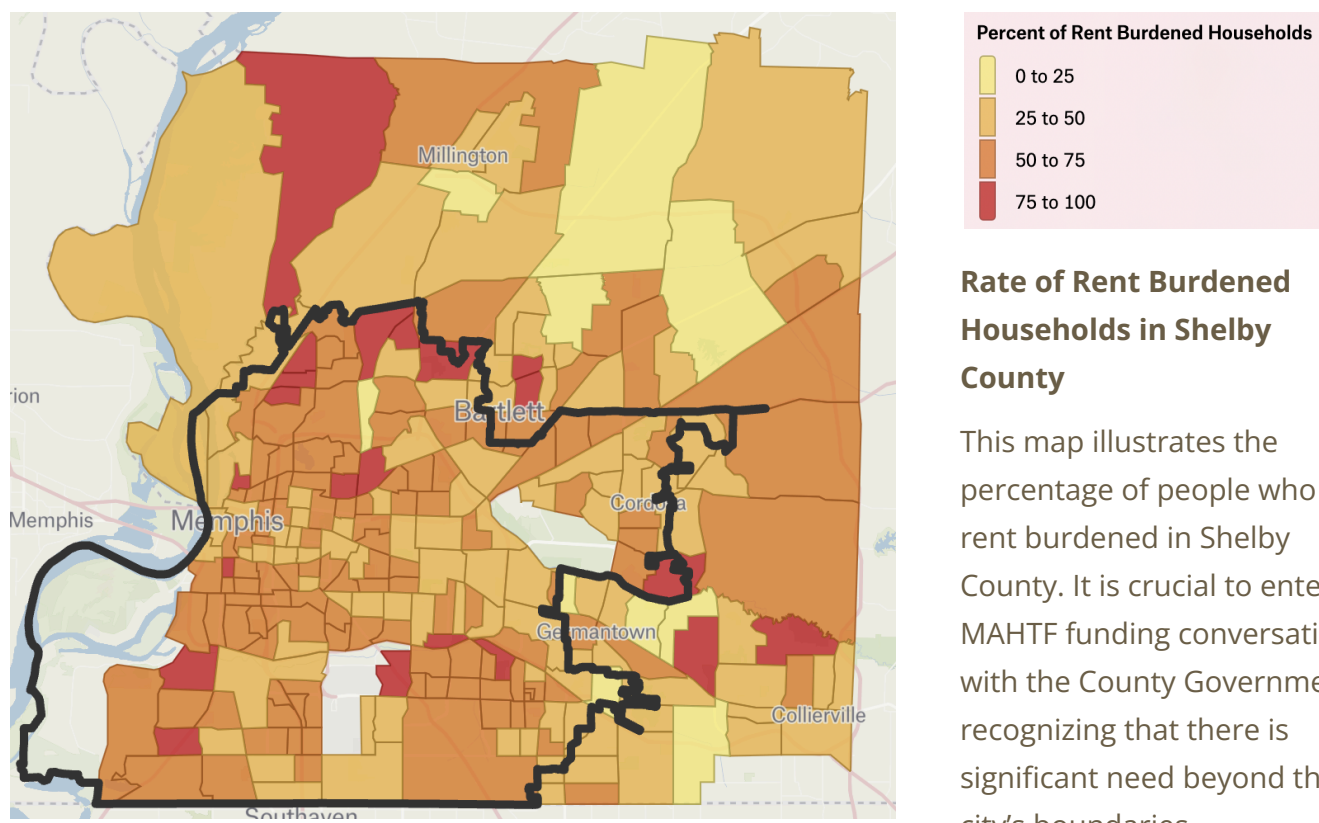
philanthropy done well, ensuring that their contributions lead to meaningful and lasting improvements.

During our interview with the Assisi Foundation, they emphasized their role in facilitating opportunities for Memphians to reach their full potential by inviting the community to act as experts. They focus on initiatives like behavioral science labs and effective philanthropy, ensuring their funds are utilized effectively. The Foundation noted an overabundance of nonprofits competing for limited funding and highlighted their responsive grants approach. They have collaborated with the Division of Housing and Community Development on projects like tiny homes and have made recommendations for property sales to benefit the Trust Fund. The Foundation stressed the need for steady government grants from both city and county levels, pointing out that political issues and egos hinder progress. They also discussed the unreliability of private funding due to market changes and the absence of state income tax.

The conversation touched on significant social determinants, inadequate public transportation, and the impact of gentrification. The Foundation called for better code enforcement and emphasized the importance of city and county agreement to properly allocate funds to the housing trust. They highlighted the stigma around affordable housing and the importance of a collective Memphis story to effectively address these issues. The Foundation mentioned collaboration with organizations like Habitat for Humanity, United Housing, and Green and Healthy Homes. They also pointed out the need to assess the objectives of major investments, such as Ford's Blue Oval project, in terms of transportation and education. Finally, they suggested exploring funding opportunities beyond local banks, leveraging resources like Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) for broader support.

Affordable Housing and Large Employer Location Analysis

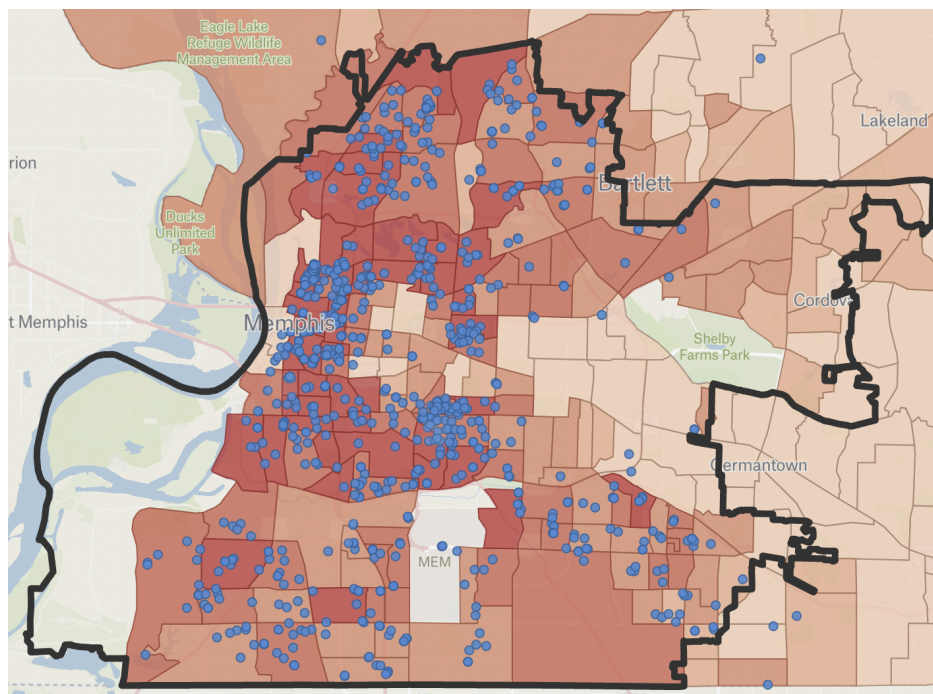
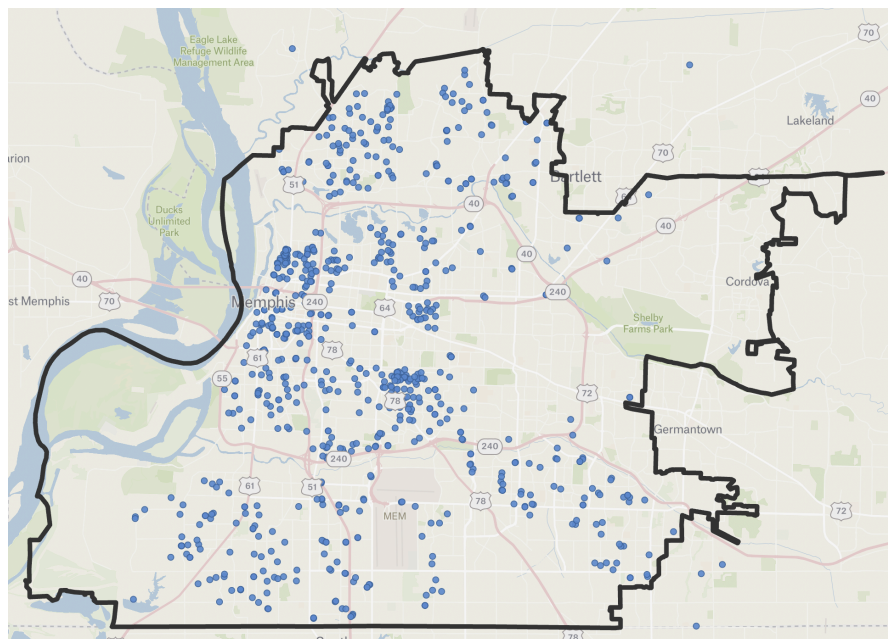
Our analysis of affordable housing focused on the prevalence of rent burdened households and the availability of affordable housing near Memphis' largest employers.



Locations of government subsidized Housing in Memphis Tn.

● Government Subsidized Affordable Housing Units

Upon analyzing the locations of Federal, State, or Locally subsidized units, there is a lack of subsidized affordable housing in East Memphis.



Median Household Income

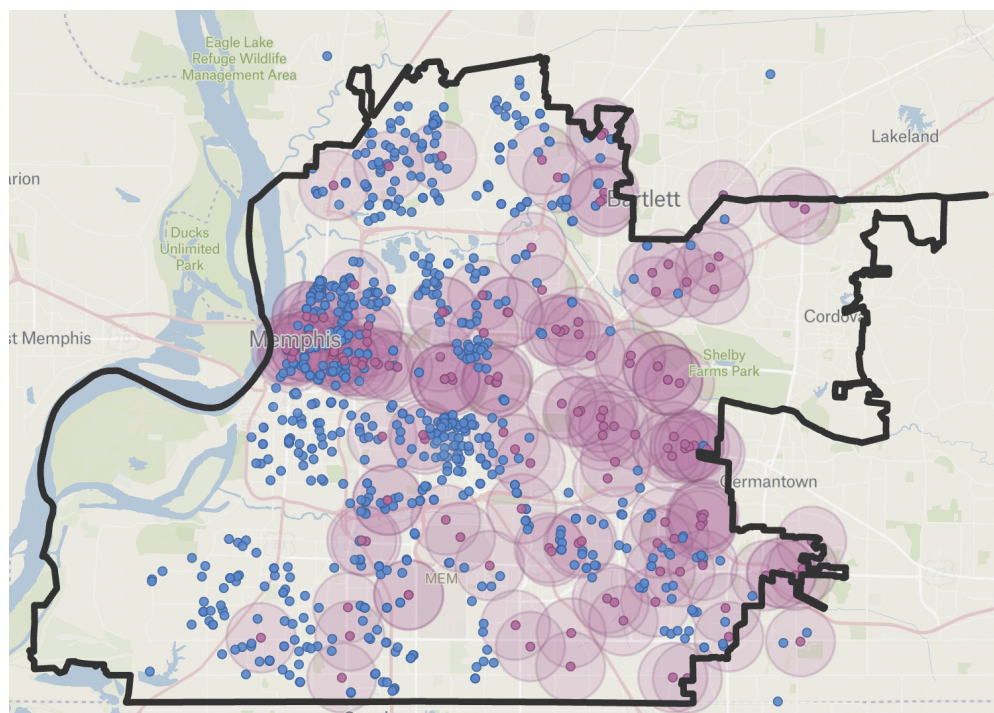
13.81K to 31.2K
31.2K to 42.6K
42.6K to 68.15K
68.15K to 85.2K
85.2K to 226.53K

Household Income and Subsidized Housing Locations

This map highlights the difficulty of placing government subsidized housing in the wealthiest areas of Memphis.

- Government Subsidized Affordable Housing Units
- Corporations (1 mile radius buffer)

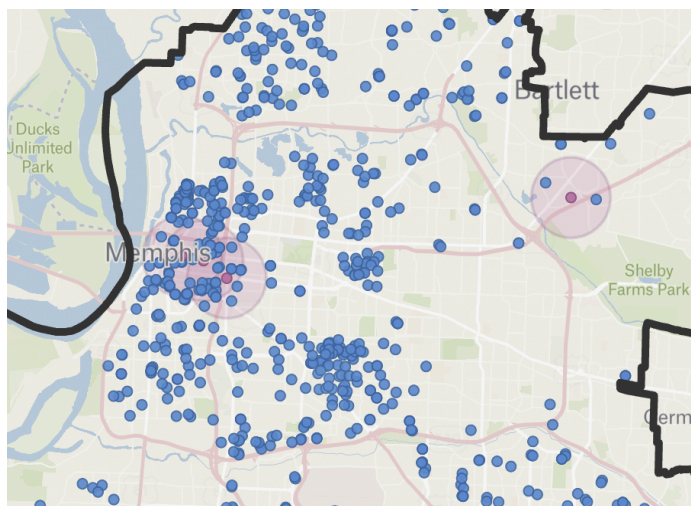
The map juxtaposes the locations of Memphis' 16 largest employers with locations of government subsidized affordable housing. Notably, East Memphis has a high density of employers and few government subsidized affordable housing units.



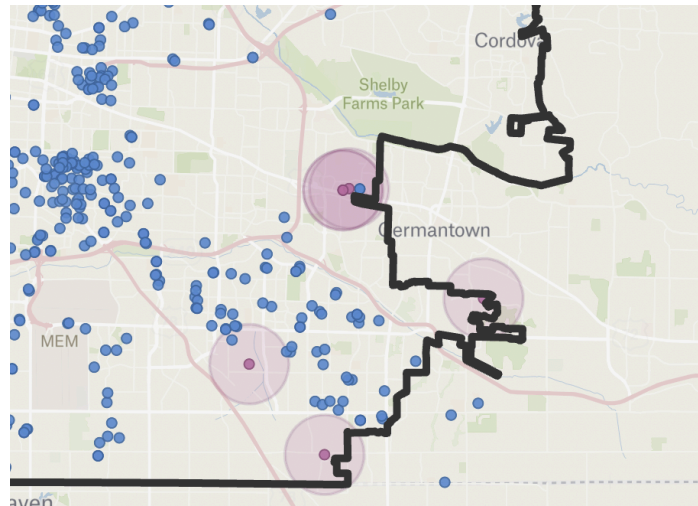
Subsidized Affordable Housing to Employer Proximity

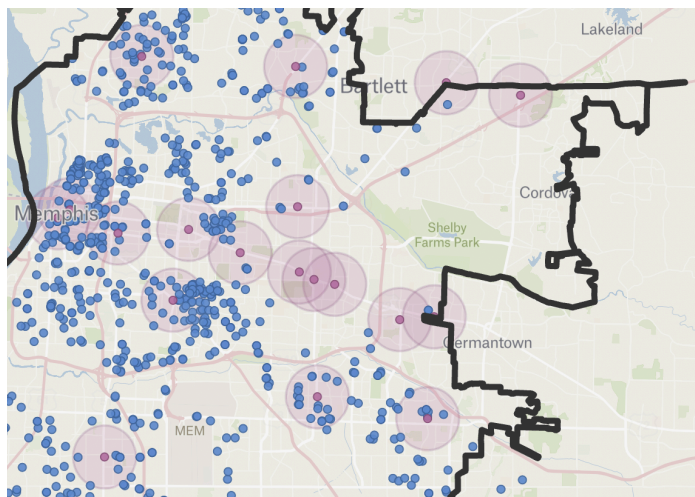
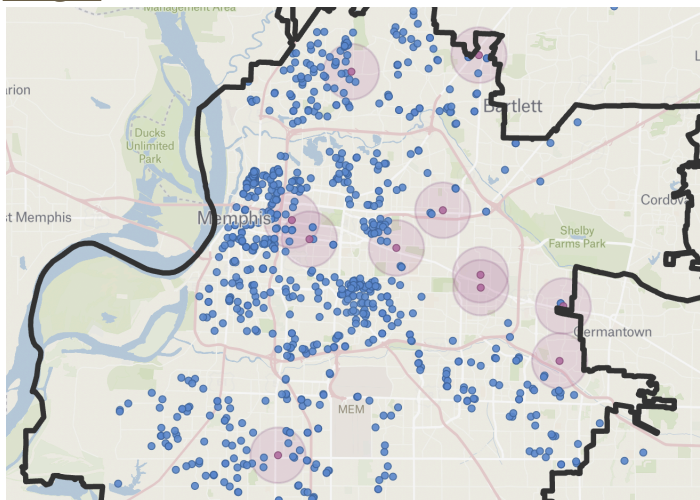
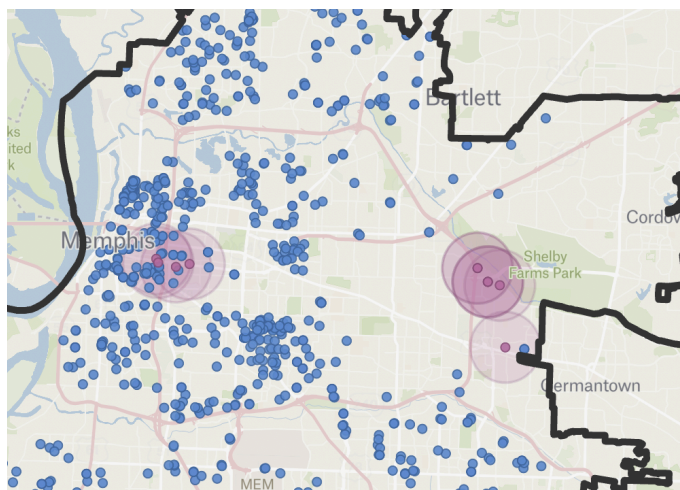
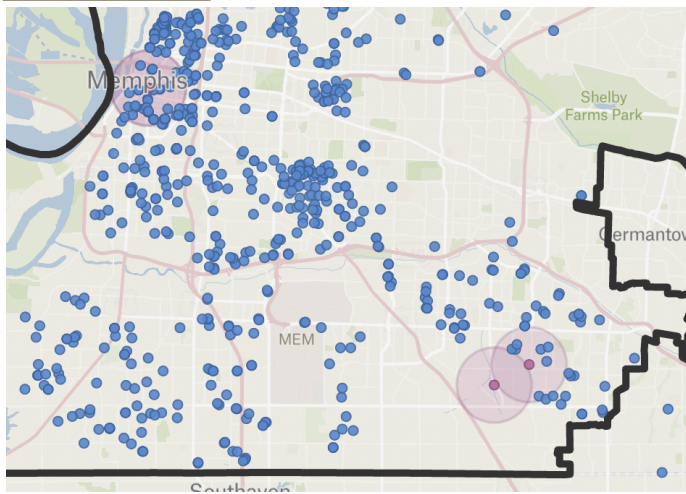
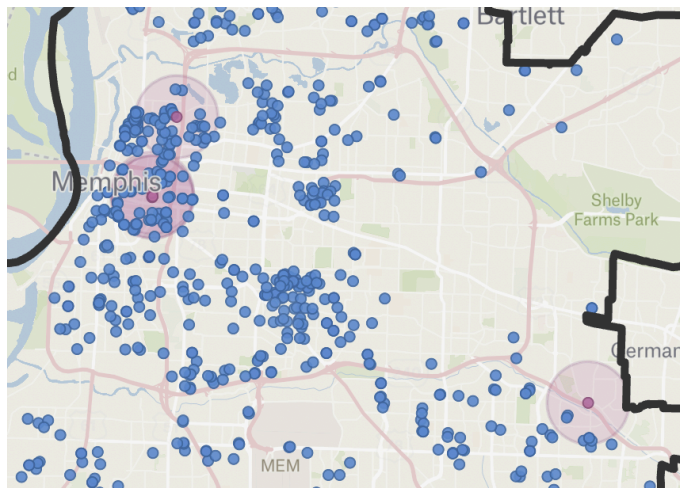
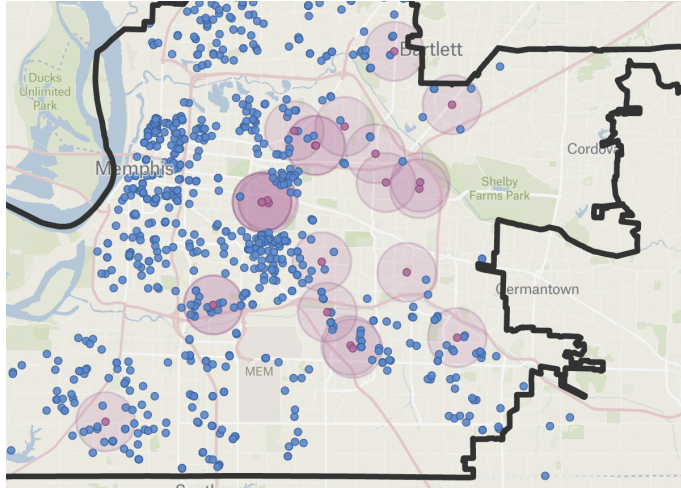
The following maps depict the locations of the 16 largest employers and government subsidized affordable housing units. Employers with few or no subsidized affordable housing units within the 1 mile radius buffer are strong candidates for corporate donations to the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

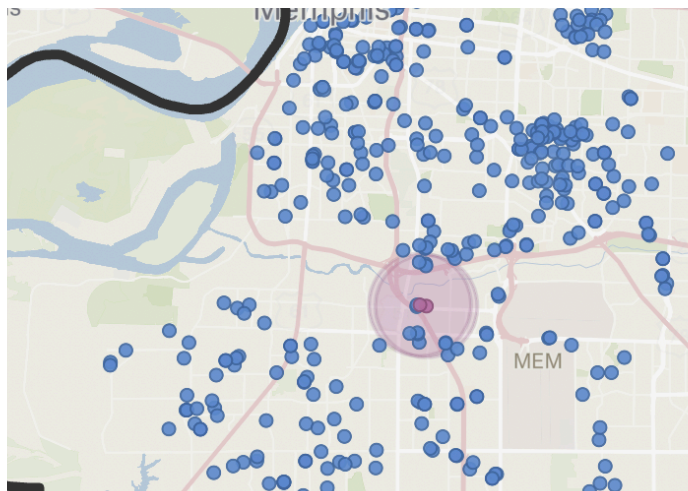
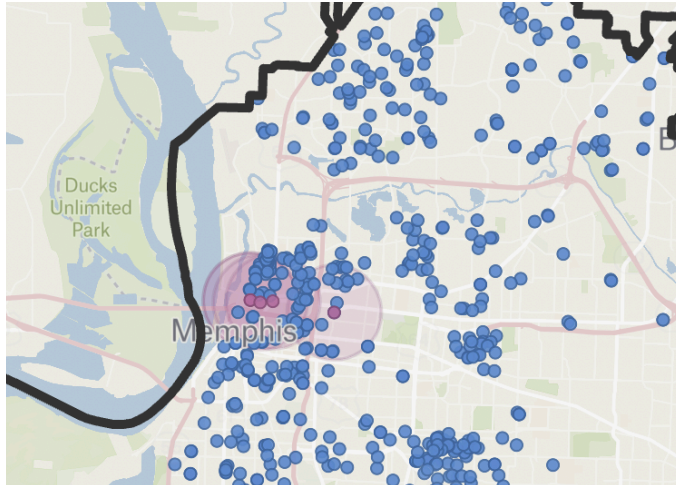
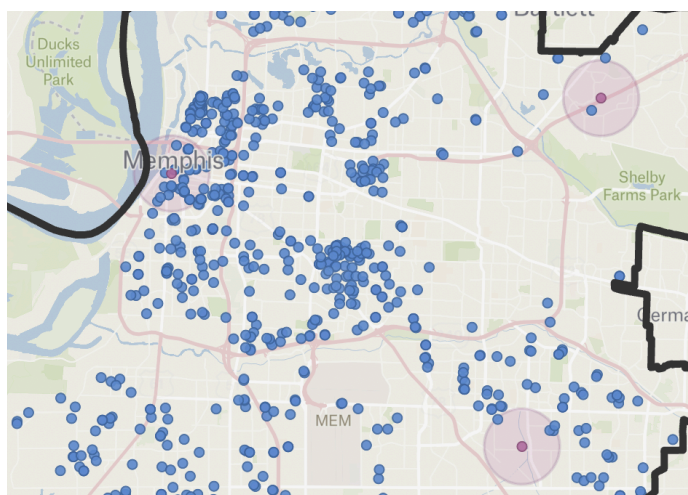
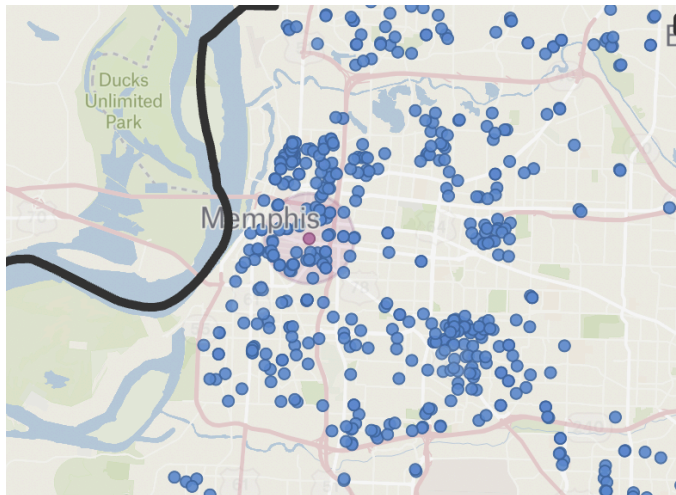
Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare



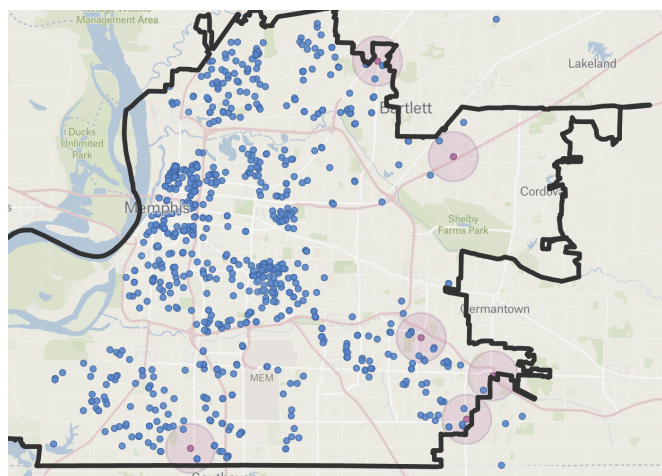
International Paper



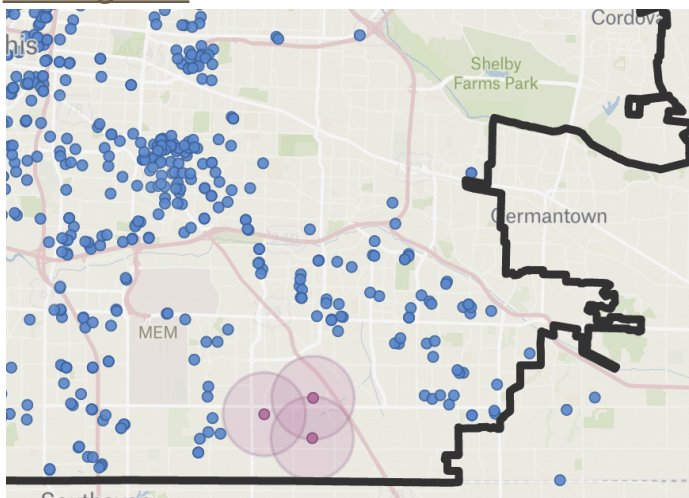
First Horizon**Kroger****Baptist Memorial Healthcare****Servicemaster****Regional One Health****Shelby County Schools**

Smith and Nephew**St. Jude****Terminex****University of Tennessee HSC**

Walmart



XPO logistics



Funding Sources

Interviews with individuals from various sectors and organizations led us to the conclusion that the most effective and feasible solution for funding the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is through public dollars, rather than philanthropic or private funds. This is because of the lack of consistency associated with corporations due to volatile revenue streams and changing priorities. Moreover, interviews with stakeholders have revealed that philanthropies would be much more likely to make match donations once the city shows its commitment to the fund through a dedicated public funding source. It is our recommendation that the Trust Fund look at public avenues of funding right now to create more consistency and signal commitment to the fund to private sector investors. Despite this, we have compiled a list of potential private sector funding options to look into in the future, as well as potential public sources.

Public Funding Options

The following graphic briefly outlines potential public funding sources.

PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES

HOTEL/ MOTEL TAX (SHORT TERM RENTAL TAX)

- Generates \$15.75 million annually, making up 1% of the city's total revenue
- STR Tax is current allocated to Memphis Tourism Bureau, which uses only 85% of its budget
- Redirecting that 15% surplus annual to the MAHTF could generate a dedicated, annual funding source



RECORDATION TAX



- Baltimore uses excise taxes on \$1M+ property transactions for its Housing Trust Fund
- Enacting a similar tax in Memphis could provide consistent revenue for MAHTF
- Rising home values could increase potential revenue
- Requires collaboration with the city, HCD, and Shelby County Register

TAX INCRIMENT FINANCING

- Designate TIF districts, freeze tax revenues, and allocate the surplus to MAHTF
- Funds would support affordable housing and invest in blighted neighborhoods
- Proven effective in other cities for housing and community development (Atlanta)



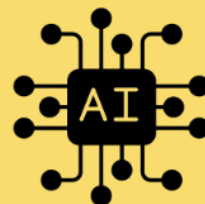
LAND-VALUE TAX



- Current system rewards blights and vacancy, discourages development
- Proposed reform: reduce taxes on building, increase land taxes
- Makes housing more affordable, increases Memphis' density
- Detroit example: building tax reduced from 2% to 0.6%, land tax increased to 11.8%
- Memphis could increase land tax to further fund the MAHTF

DATA CENTER TAX

- Elon Musk's xAI data center in Memphis presents an economic opportunity
- Henrico County's \$60M affordable housing trust fund, funded by data center revenue, serves as a model
- Funnel unbudgeted revenue from the xAI data center into MAHTF



Hotel/ Motel Occupancy Tax

The Hotel Motel Occupancy Tax, currently set at 3.5%, generates significant revenue for Memphis—\$15,749,999 in 2023 alone, making up 1% of the city's total revenue (budget summary). A portion of this tax, the Short Term Rental Tax (set at 3.5%) is currently allocated to the Memphis Tourism Bureau.

Interestingly, the Tourism Bureau typically uses only about 85% of its yearly budget, compared to the average 98-99% in other cities. This means there is a surplus within the Hotel Motel Occupancy Tax Fund. If even the 15% surplus were redirected to the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHTF), it could account for a considerable annual investment. It is also a feasible option because it does not require a new tax, just a reallocation of funds that are not being used to the fullest extent.

To make this happen, collaboration between the MAHTF and the City of Memphis would be necessary. By tapping into this underused resource, the Trust Fund could significantly boost its efforts to support affordable housing initiatives and address the housing crisis in Memphis.

TIFs

Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) could be a powerful tool for funding the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHTF). As mentioned in the previous case study, Atlanta's Beltline Housing Trust Fund, established in 2009, successfully uses TIFs to support redevelopment projects by leveraging increased property tax revenues within designated districts.

Memphis could adopt a similar approach by following the Memphis 3.0 plan. The city could designate specific districts, freeze current tax revenues, and allocate any additional revenue generated above that baseline to the MAHTF. This would create a steady and growing source of funding for affordable housing.

Additionally, TIFs could support the trust fund while also providing investment into local anchors and blighted neighborhoods, which is a key goal of the 3.0 plan. By focusing on these areas, TIFs would not only support affordable housing but also drive revitalization efforts across the city.

Implementing TIFs would require significant collaboration with city officials and potential policy changes. However, this method has proven effective in other cities and could provide substantial financial support for Memphis' affordable housing initiatives and community development goals.



Data Center Funds

With the impending arrival of Elon Musk's xAI data center in Memphis, the city stands on the brink of an economic transformation that could be leveraged to address its pressing affordable housing needs. Henrico County's recent initiative to establish a \$60 million affordable housing trust fund provides a compelling blueprint for how Memphis might capitalize on its own data center revenue. In Henrico, the county placed a personal property tax of 0.4% on computer and peripheral equipment used in Data Centers and funneled the tax revenue into an affordable housing trust fund. Memphis, facing similar housing challenges with escalating costs and limited affordable options, could adopt this innovative approach to create a robust, dedicated funding stream for its own Affordable Housing Trust Fund.


As Elon Musk's xAI prepares to build what is touted as the 'world's most powerful supercomputer' in Memphis, the project promises substantial financial windfalls. By capitalizing on a new, unbudgeted revenue source from the data center and allocating it into the AHTF, Memphis can secure a sustainable and significant source of funding dedicated to affordable housing. The influx of revenue from the data center could transform the financial landscape for affordable housing initiatives in the city, allowing for a consistent flow of resources into the trust fund. This strategic allocation of funds would ensure that as the city grows and prospers from new economic developments, it simultaneously addresses the critical housing needs of its residents.

Recordation Tax

As mentioned previously, Baltimore enacted two excise taxes on the transfer of real property and the recordation tax for real property transactions valued at or above \$1 million. These excise taxes were allocated to the Baltimore Affordable Housing Trust Fund as a permanent source of funding. If a similar tax on real property transactions was enacted in Memphis, the trust fund could have access to a more consistent revenue, which is likely to increase as home values continue to go up.

This would require collaboration between the Mayor's office, elected officials, the Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and the Shelby County Register (report draft). This may be a more ambitious measure; however, if implemented could be pivotal for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Land Value Tax Policy



Currently, property taxes in Memphis reward blight and vacancy and disincentivize development because property taxes are determined by the real estate property value. A reformed tax policy which would reduce taxes on buildings and increase taxes on land would discourage blight and vacancy as it would reduce the profit made by owning vacant land while encouraging property development and improvement thus encouraging people to either develop their land or sell it to someone who will. In addition to using space efficiently and increasing Memphis' density, this decreased building tax would enable homes to be more affordable.


Detroit recently implemented this system by reducing the property value tax of buildings from 2% to 0.6% and taxing the land at 11.8%. Detroit created this split rate tax system to be revenue neutral; however, Memphis could increase the taxes on land by a higher percentage to increase overall tax revenue and divert those funds to the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

This recommendation faces political hurdles as well as challenges in fairly evaluating land value. It would also require time for the new policies to be implemented.

This tax innovation makes housing more affordable, incentivizes development, and disincentivizes outside investors from purchasing cheap property and leaving them undeveloped and blighted. As taxes are based mostly on the land itself and not the development of the land, property owners are not discouraged from improving their property and developing further. It also limits sprawl.

To evaluate the exact percentage adjustments needed to generate revenue, one needs to observe the previous years' property tax revenue and calculate the revised split-tax rates accordingly. There should be around a 30% decrease in real estate tax and an increase in the land value tax by however much necessary to compensate for that decrease. We recommend increasing the land value tax an additional percentage and dedicating that revenue to the MAHTF. There needs to be both land value assessments and real estate value assessments for this to come to fruition. Progress decreasing blight and increasing density may be observed by observing vacancy and blight rates over time. Additionally, since Detroit is the largest city to implement such a policy, the city of Memphis may seek consulting with the city of Detroit.

This tax policy would not only cultivate development, but it could serve as a reliable dedicated funding source for the Trust Fund.




There is a great opportunity for the MAHTF to leverage funding by partnering with banks local to the Memphis area. In housing trust funds like the Tennessee Housing Trust Fund, there are opportunities for bank involvement. An interview with First Horizon Bank revealed that banks would likely be willing to underwrite loans under the AHTF. Incentives for banks include Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) credits, tax credits including Community Investment Tax Credits (CITC), charitable contribution qualification for federal taxes, return on investment from providing low-interest loans, and expanding its client base in local communities.

We recommend creating a succinct two page document prior to approaching the banks outlining why partnering with the trust fund is a meaningful and profitable way to deploy capital. This document should include what the MAHTF has done in the past and its plans for the future, a decisive structure outlining the bank's role (we recommend consulting with the Tennessee Housing Trust Fund to understand their legal structure and financial systems enabling convenient bank partnership and replicating that), and incentives for the bank to collaborate. A plausible structure would enable banks to underwrite a certain number of affordable housing related loans through the trust fund. Banks are interested in collaborating on their community development efforts, so it may be possible to cultivate a network of collaboration between banks and the trust fund with relationship building. Banks are more likely to join the trust fund if it is championed by someone like Mayor Young and if there are ways to reduce risk of potential losses.

Corporations

Corporations have a budding relationship with affordable housing. In several counties across the United States, large corporations like Amazon and Meta have invested in housing for their workforce. It is plausible that corporations in Memphis like Autozone, FedEx, International Paper, and its many healthcare providers could invest in workforce housing. Working with limited data, workforce housing analysis shows that while many of Memphis' largest employers have offices in East Memphis, there are not affordable housing units in the area.

Despite having incentive to invest in affordable housing, as their workers need places to live, corporations can be more inconsistent in terms of annual funding. Corporations are ultimately profit driven and have to manage volatile revenue streams. If there is economic downturn or problems within a corporation, it may not be able to maintain its philanthropic commitments. Corporations also have frequent mergers and acquisitions that can cause changes in priorities. For these reasons, corporations are one of the less feasible options



for a sustained funding source for the trust fund, but could be a good option for targeted developments.

Philanthropic Funds

Philanthropic funds are essential for addressing Memphis' affordable housing crisis, but relying solely on them isn't enough. The main issue is the lack of public funding. Without significant public investment, it's hard to meet low-income housing needs, and this gap also makes it difficult to attract major philanthropic contributions.

Some stakeholders believe that directly funding CDCs is more effective than using larger trust funds. CDCs are deeply rooted in their communities and understand local needs better, ensuring resources are used efficiently and transparently.

Successful affordable housing initiatives need the collaboration of both public and private sector funding; however, stakeholder interviews and case study examples have revealed that private sector funding will be more likely if public dollars are going into the fund first. In Atlanta, the city allocated \$100M to affordable housing and the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta matched the allocation with an additional \$100M donation.

In summary, while philanthropic funds are important, there is also a need for strong public financing to create a long-term solution for affordable housing in Memphis and show private sector partners that local government is committed to addressing this issue.

Conclusion and Recommendations for MAHTF

In conclusion, addressing the affordable housing crisis in Memphis requires a multifaceted approach that leverages diverse funding sources, engages stakeholders across sectors, and prioritizes public awareness. By learning from successful models in other cities and incorporating insights from local stakeholders, we can develop sustainable funding strategies that ensure the longevity and effectiveness of the Memphis Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHTF). As we move forward, it is crucial to not only secure additional funding but also to improve the fund's operational efficiency and community engagement.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund has achieved great things so far, and we've discussed ways to expand it through various funding sources. However, as the fund grows, there are additional improvements that can be made. These include more public outreach, a streamlined communication and application process for CDCs, and engaging the greater

Shelby County area. This final section will present key policy recommendations to help the rust fund continue to thrive and make a greater impact.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THE MAHTF

INFOGRAPHICS

- Affordable housing landscape in Memphis
- Resources and assistance programs
- Impact of affordable housing
- Call to action



EVENTS AND INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS

- Understanding affordable housing
- Available resources and programs
- Success stories
- How to get citizens involved
- Leverage social media campaigns



END GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Increase public awareness and knowledge
- Promote community involvement and advocacy
- Ensure more residents have access to affordable housing
- Strengthen community support for affordable housing projects
- Drive positive change and policy development



Public Awareness


A recurring theme in our stakeholder interviews was the lack of public knowledge about the Affordable Housing Trust Fund—its purpose, functions, and benefits. Interviewees expressed that many residents have misconceptions about affordable housing, mistaking it for public housing. Additionally, residents may not realize they are cost-burdened because they believe that is just the way things are in Memphis. Incoming residents may perceive housing costs to be low relative to where they came from and thus do not perceive housing costs as an issue. However, banks and individuals in the affordable housing industry see affordable housing as a top priority. Due to a lack of public awareness around this issue, the public seems to prioritize other issues in the city like crime, though, as one interviewee pointed out, food and shelter are generally the most important aspects of people's livelihoods.

We recommend initiatives to raise awareness of affordable housing in Memphis. One such initiative may be spreading infographics throughout Memphis to address several purposes. One purposeful infographic is to define what affordable housing is with the target audience being residents of Memphis. This infographic may define quality affordable housing, express the city's needs, and provide a QR code that would connect them to additional housing resources. This could also provide people with the information they need to determine if they are cost-burdened. Breaking this down may also enable more affluent residents to conceptualize the housing cost burden and its impacts.

Another infographic may tell the story of the MAHTF. This infographic needs to express the need for affordable housing in Memphis, explain what the trust fund is, who is directing it, what it has previously accomplished, what it means for residents in the present moment and the future, and finally a QR code to enable people to either connect with resources or show support for the fund.

When promoting the trust fund to gain public support and leverage eventual philanthropic donations, it is also important to frame the trust fund correctly. We recommend finding 'champions' to promote the fund and capturing individuals' stories who have directly benefited from the MAHTF.

Another project may be organizing a webinar connecting nonprofits of all sectors throughout Memphis and encouraging them to distribute them to their respective communities or support bases. They may do this by sharing infographics in 'weekly digest'



emails or updates and by posting them in their community hubs. Nonprofits may be willing to include such infographics in a weekly email if it is convenient and easy because lack of affordable housing affects residents' ability to acquire all other needs; because people are housing cost-burdened, they have less money to afford other needs including food, childcare, transportation, and education. Leveraging Memphis' vast nonprofit network and communities invested in uplifting Memphis, may effectively raise public awareness.

To ensure continued and increased funding, raising public awareness about the trust fund is crucial. More outreach efforts are needed to educate the Memphis communities about the services the trust fund provides and its impact on affordable housing. By increasing public knowledge, we can foster greater community support and advocacy for allocating more resources to the fund. This increased awareness and understanding will help secure the necessary investment to effectively address housing challenges in Memphis.

Streamlined Application Process and Communication with CDCs

Current users of the MAHTF express frustration in working with the fund. There is a need for automated responses to alert developer applicants of the reception of the application as well as its approval or denial.

A platform for information sharing is also needed to connect developers and alert them when the MAHTF changes policies and application requirements. One non-profit suggested Neighborly as a platform for developers to sign up and receive alerts. Neighborly is also used in Atlanta's affordable housing industry.

Appeal to Greater Shelby County

Many stakeholders expressed frustration about state preemption of the city's policies. One interviewee suggested engaging the more suburban or rural parts of Shelby County in the affordable housing sector to unite different types of voters on the issue. If state legislators feel like people on both sides of the aisle care about housing policy, they may be more likely to allow the city to pass progressive laws that increase access to affordable housing.

In order to appeal to the other areas of Shelby County, we recommend researching affordable housing needs in these areas to demonstrate that this issue is not exclusively a "city issue," and instead is something everyone should care about.

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