

13.9-Minute Commute Spread — ALEX Intelligence 2026

Austin's Commute Spread Is 13.9 Minutes

The widest gap in mean commute time between any two cities in the metro

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THE DATA

13.9

Spread in Mean Commute Across the Market, in Minutes (2024)

The difference between the longest and shortest average commute times in the Austin metro.

This 13.9-minute spread—between Manor (35.5 minutes) and Wells Branch (21.6 minutes)—is not just a number. It's a structural indicator of how deeply spatial inequality is embedded in the region's development patterns. The gap reveals that the cost of commuting is not distributed evenly but is instead concentrated in specific corridors, with some neighborhoods bearing far greater time burdens than others.

01

Time Is a Location-Driven Asset

The commute spread reflects a deeper economic reality: time is not equally valuable across the Austin MSA. Manor, with the longest average commute, is not just distant—it is functionally isolated from the core innovation and employment centers. This isolation acts as a de facto exclusion mechanism, limiting access to high-wage jobs and reinforcing existing socioeconomic divides. Meanwhile, Wells Branch, with the shortest commute, is positioned as a high-value residential node, attracting professionals who prioritize time efficiency.

02

Commuting Is a Hidden Tax on Equity

The 13.9-minute spread is not just a metric—it's a policy signal. The fact that the longest commute is in Manor, a historically underserved area, while the shortest is in Wells Branch, a high-income enclave, underscores how urban planning has unintentionally institutionalized inequality. This isn't a flaw in the system—it's a feature of how development has been allocated. Without targeted transit investment and zoning reform, this gap will persist, undermining the very promise of the region's economic growth.

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