

12 of 48 — #1 of 10: Share of Cities With Median Gross Rent Above \$1,500

25.0% of Houston MSA cities rent above \$1,500

Source: ALEX Intelligence · Published October 30, 2026

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THE DATA

25.0%

Share of Cities With Median Gross Rent Above \$1,500 (2024)

This marks a structural shift in the Houston MSA's rental landscape, with one in four cities now in the \$1,500+ rent tier.

The data reveals that 12 of 48 cities in the Houston MSA now have median gross rents exceeding \$1,500, a clear threshold in the region's evolving affordability spectrum. This is not a uniform increase but a concentration of high-cost pockets in established, amenity-rich areas. The shift reflects growing demand in walkable, transit-accessible neighborhoods and rising construction costs, even as Houston remains more affordable than most major U.S. metros.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-30-houston-msa-threshold-gross-rent-1500-place>

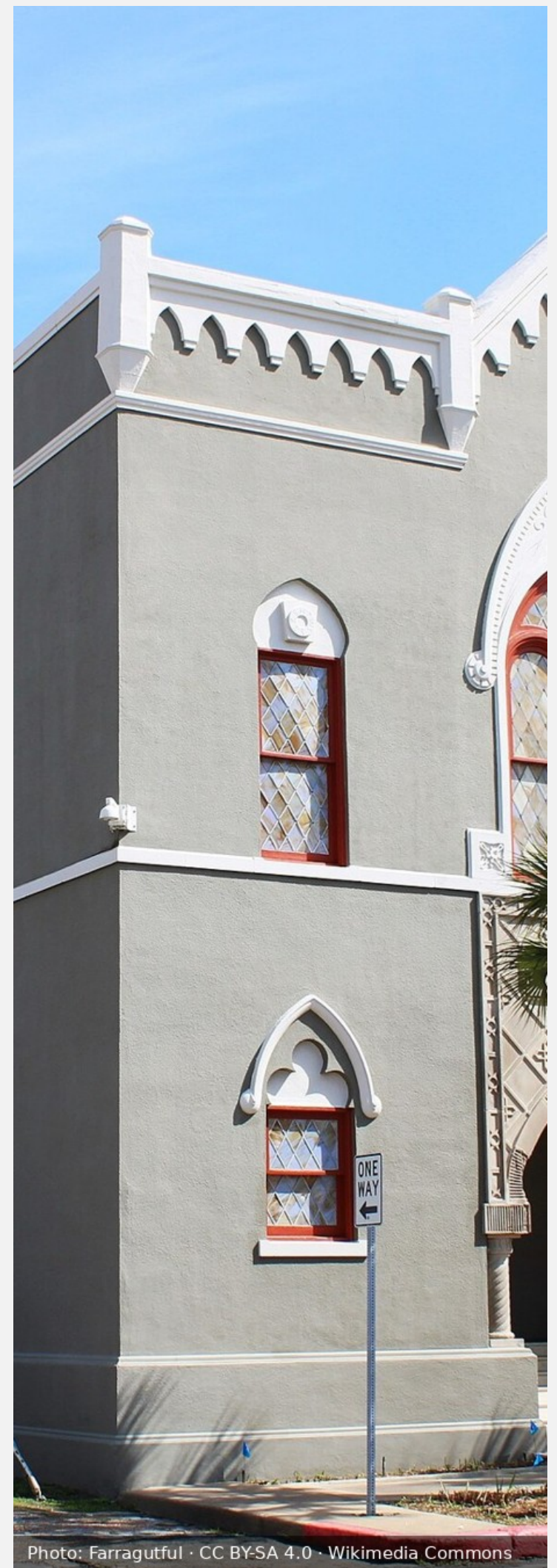


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Affordability is no longer uniform

The persistence of lower-rent cities within the MSA also suggests that Houston still holds a unique advantage: it can absorb population growth without immediate systemic displacement. But the rising share of high-cost cities indicates that unchecked demand in core areas risks creating de facto exclusion zones for middle- and low-income households.

02

Rent thresholds reveal market maturity

This trend suggests that the next wave of Houston MSA growth will be defined not by suburban sprawl, but by the densification and upgrading of existing high-performing nodes. Investors and developers should focus on enhancing walkability, transit access, and community infrastructure in these areas—not just building more units, but redefining what a 'livable' neighborhood looks like in the modern era.



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