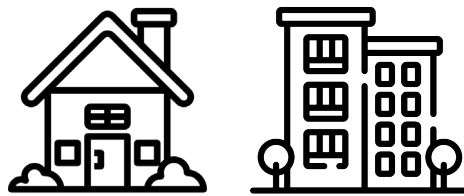




# COLLEGE HILL

## Housing Affordability Study

2022



Prepared by LISC Greater Cincinnati and the Community Building Institute  
for the College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation

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## A Letter from Seth Walsh

Executive Director, College Hill CURC

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We pride ourselves in College Hill of being a middle-class neighborhood that has been racially and economically diverse for decades. It has provided the opportunity for White and Black families to own a home and to build wealth since the 1970s and for renters to immerse themselves in the College Hill community.

Our efforts at the College Hill CURC have been focused the past two decades on bringing back to life our business district along Hamilton Avenue. Like so many areas experiencing development, it requires thoughtfulness and balance, ensuring the heart of the neighborhood is not lost in the process.

Between 2014 and 2022, over \$85 million of development has occurred along Hamilton Avenue. It is undeniable that we are seeing the fruits of our community's hard work and commitment.

In recent years, home values have grown at a record-breaking pace. Across the country, home sale prices and rents are increasing and yet incomes are failing to keep pace.

As the cost of housing increases, it is more and more difficult for families to make ends meet. These national trends alone make it difficult to achieve our community goals. Add in COVID-19, record breaking inflation, and our current economic conditions and the goal can feel like an impossible challenge.

College Hill is no stranger to rising to the occasion when things seem impossible. With this study, we have a guide for how to focus our work in the coming years to beat back national trends and ensure that College Hill remains a diverse, middle-class neighborhood for all.

The challenges we face are clearly not unique to College Hill. The need for new housing in Cincinnati and the region is significant and the need for housing that is affordable for households with income of less than \$50,000 a year (known as "affordable housing") is critical.

Over a two-year period, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Greater Cincinnati convened a table including housing professionals, community development corporations, financial institutions, government officials, and community members to discuss housing in the Cincinnati and Hamilton County region in general, as well as the need for affordable housing in particular.

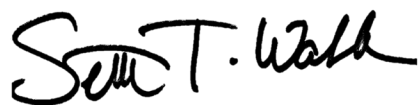
The resulting strategy, Housing Our Future, includes recommendations to produce new housing, preserve existing affordable housing, protect vulnerable households, and change underlying systems that impact housing access. The implementation of Housing Our Future will take collective, dedicated action from throughout the community.

In the following study, we get a better understanding of the role College Hill as a neighborhood and how College Hill CURC, as an entity, can play in addressing these issues. The study provides a way to investigate the College Hill housing market and translate regional recommendations to actions that will continue to make College Hill a balanced, competitive housing market that includes housing affordable for its residents.

To achieve our collective goal of a diverse, middle-class neighborhood will take a collaborative approach by all of our stakeholders: the College Hill CURC, the College Hill Business Association, the College Hill Forum, the College Hill Ministerium, the College Hill community, and more.

Our regional housing crisis cannot be solved just by College Hill, but we can collectively move the needle to have our desired impact. And in partnership with regional leaders, we can be a part of making policies that change our community and region for the better.

Like everything in College Hill, we will meet that challenge head on to ensure the College Hill we all love remains that College Hill for future generations of homeowners and renters.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott T. Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# College Hill CURC's Accomplishments

The College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (College Hill CURC) is the community development corporation for College Hill tasked with revitalizing the Hamilton Avenue business district. Since 2016, College Hill CURC has led \$85 million in investment into the College Hill Business District, including acquisition, redevelopment, new construction, parking lot improvements, gateway installation, signage, and small business support. Throughout this time, College Hill CURC has raised significant private and public dollars in response to the College Hill community's vision for their business district while focusing on four program areas: Affordable Housing, Economic Development, Community Engagement, and Small Business Support.

As an organization, College Hill CURC has grown their portfolio of properties to 31 buildings over the past 6 years and tripled the size of their team. The Board of Directors continues to expand diversity from having 6% people of color as board members in 2016 to 40% in 2022. College Hill CURC continues to evolve as an organization becoming more diverse as a staff and more inclusive and accessible to the community at large.

## Recent success includes:

- Investing over \$500,000 in existing businesses to improve their facades and create attractive and welcoming outdoor spaces through the City of Cincinnati's NBDIP program. This program will impact 26 small businesses along the business district with a focus on the most under-resourced businesses on the Avenue.
- Attracting 14 new businesses to College Hill, with 7 opening in the midst of the global pandemic and associated recession. In the coming year, College Hill will welcome at least 9 more businesses to the district.
- Raising over \$6 Million from the community to further their vision in revitalizing the avenue into a walkable, active business community
- Building a greenspace, Patrick's Park, in the heart of the business district for activation, programming, and community gatherings
- Creating density by adding over 250 new units (both affordable and market rate) to the business district while preserving and protecting over 50 units of naturally occurring affordable housing.
- Reimagining community engagement by lowering the barrier of entry to be involved in College Hill CURC's work so that all events are free and accessible, inclusive to all, resulting in events with over 1,000 people in attendance from College Hill.
- Demystifying organizational efforts by hosting transparent community conversations that break down the work of the organization and provide details and context for the community.

## Affordable Housing Highlights

### **Hollywood Apartments**

*5818 Hamilton Avenue*

College Hill CURC acquired the Hollywood Apartments in October of 2021 with a goal to address years of deferred maintenance and maintain the units as naturally-occurring affordable housing (around 50% area median income). Over the past six months, College Hill CURC has raised over \$600,000 to address the maintenance issues, improve apartment quality, address health hazards, repair the exterior, create a community space, acquire new appliances for all residents, and purchase a new boiler for the building, without displacing a single tenant. As a non-profit, community-led organization, College Hill CURC is uniquely positioned to raise funds for this renovation without impacting the cost of rent for the tenants. This is a great example of the preservation of existing affordable units in the neighborhood.

### **The Dixon Building**

*6128 Hamilton Avenue*

College Hill CURC purchased the Dixon Building in 2017 after raising \$375,000 directly from the community for acquisition. Since 2017, CHCURC has spent over \$120,000 in capital improvements to upgrade the units while maintaining their affordability (around 60% AMI). This is a great example of naturally-occurring affordable housing in a mixed-use property.

### **The Dow's Corner & The Doll House**

*5901 Hamilton Ave and 5917 Hamilton Ave*

College Hill CURC and partners transformed 2 vacant buildings along the Hamilton Avenue Business District. College Hill CURC was able to secure City of Cincinnati HOME funds as part of the \$2.9 million redevelopment, which allowed for four affordable units to be included. As tenants sign leases, an analysis is completed to ensure they aren't cost-burdened and rent is adjusted accordingly based on the tenant's income. These properties serve as an example of mixed-used and mixed-income developments that further the mission of College Hill CURC to revitalize the Hamilton Avenue Business District.

### **Marlowe Court**

*6009 Hamilton Avenue*

Built in 2018, Marlowe Court showed a tremendous demand for senior affordable housing with over 1000 seniors expressing interest in the units and over 500 applications received for the 53 available units. These units are priced at 30% AMI or lower. This is an example of a LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit), mixed-use deal. Partners: Model Group and Episcopal Retirement Services.

### **CH KeyMark Development**

*6060 Hamilton Avenue*

Breaking ground in early 2022, KeyMark will include 26 affordable units (50%-80% AMI) set to open in the Spring of 2023. The development transformed a vacant commercial space into 14 affordable units at 6060 Hamilton Avenue, and restored 12 affordable units at 5906 Hamilton Avenue. This project also includes College Hill CURC's first fully ADA accessible unit.

## Economic Development and Small Business Support Highlights

### OurShop College Hill

In 2021, College Hill CURC launched OurShop College Hill, a 6 month pilot program designed to provide rent free space and mentorship to 5 entrepreneurs in order to de-risk their brick and mortar experience. This initiative offered 5 small, woman-owned businesses with free rent space, mentorship, activation funding, and tenant improvement funds to aid in the transition from an online and market business model to a brick and mortar business model.

### College Hill Station/HaNoBe

After 20 years of planning, the community's vision for the corners of North Bend Road and Hamilton Avenue finally is coming to fruition. In 2022, HaNoBe (fka College Hill Station) will open its doors with 171 new residential units (pricing starting at \$895 for studios) and 11,000 square feet of commercial space. This site sat vacant since 2002 when Kroger and Schuler's WigWam closed their doors. Located in Census Tract 82.01, this development did not have the same financing tools available to it as the projects that took place in Census Tract 82.02. The development will create an anticipated 22 new full-time jobs within 18 months of project completion.

### Business Improvement Programs

College Hill CURC is currently managing the third round of the facade improvement program and the first round of the outdoor improvement program to invest in existing businesses along the business district. This year, the organization will invest over \$500,000 in its existing businesses.

See the **College Hill Business District** map in **Appendix** for a map of properties.

## Community Engagement Highlights

### Community Conversations

Series of nine short episodes in which College Hill CURC dives into different topics related to community development and revitalization of College Hill's business district. Live streamed discussion and Q + A with experts, College Hill CURC staff and board, and Community members.

### Light up College Hill

Light up College Hill attracted 2,000 people and featured penguins, reindeer, a holiday express train, and light installations along the Avenue. Over 15 businesses participated in the event with free activities for the community.

### The Avenue Experience

The Avenue Experience transitioned the Annual Meeting from a ticketed "raise the paddle" event to a behind-the-scenes look at the work.

### Summer on the Hill

27 fun, family-friendly events activating Patrick's Park (5923 Hamilton Ave) summer 2022 from June - September featuring Patrick's Park Tales, Fitness Fridays, Family Movie Nights, College Hill Express, Block Party, College Hill Art Market, etc.

### Hollywood Drive-in Theatre

In 2020 and 2021, screened movies for the family on the back of the Hollywood Theatre in the parking lot, engaging the community during the beginning of COVID-19

# Introduction

## Study Purpose

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## Defining Affordable Housing

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## Study Methodology

The College Hill Affordable Housing Study was commissioned by the College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (College Hill CURC). CHURCH is a non-profit community development corporation with the mission of revitalizing the Hamilton Avenue Business District. For more on the impact of College Hill CURC and its partners, see **College Hill CURC's Accomplishments**. While commissioned by College Hill CURC, the Study is a comprehensive analysis of the entirety of the College Hill housing market.

College Hill is one of Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods and sits at the Northern edge of the City bordered by the Cincinnati neighborhoods of Mount Airy, Northside, and Winton Place/Winton Hills. College Hill also borders two Hamilton County communities, North College Hill and Finneytown. Therefore, the Study uses both Cincinnati City-wide and Hamilton County data as context for analysis of the housing market in College Hill.



# Study Purpose

The purpose of the College Hill Affordable Housing Study is threefold, (1) develop a clear picture of the current College Hill housing market, (2) assess the need for affordable housing in College Hill, and (3) translate recommendations from Housing Our Future (HOF) to recommendations for College Hill.

## (1) Develop a clear picture of the current College Hill housing market

Housing markets have been volatile over the past decade. In order to develop strategies that meet the needs of the current residents in the community and stay competitive in this ever-changing housing market it is important to get a clear picture of the current market. It is often the case that people's perception of a neighborhood is different from the current state of affairs. People see College Hill as an affordable, middle-class community of families. While it is a strong middle-class neighborhood, there are fewer families with children than there once was. People who may have been able to purchase a home affordably in the last decade may be surprised by home prices of today. Getting a clear picture of who lives in College Hill today and what kind of housing best serves them is an important part of this study.

It is also important to recognize the collective impact of the College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (College Hill CURC) and other College Hill stakeholders over the past decade. Improvements in the business district have added housing options and brought new businesses that add to the strength of the College Hill neighborhood.

## (2) Assess the need for affordable housing in College Hill

There has been much written and said about the need for affordable housing nationally, in Cincinnati, and Hamilton County. For years in the early part of this "affordable housing crisis," it was hard to imagine that Cincinnati had the same kinds of problems as New York or Chicago. While our issues are somewhat different than those cities, there is absolutely a need for more affordable housing in Cincinnati.

Housing construction has not kept pace with the need for new and renovated housing in this region since before the Great Recession of 2008. A lack of production and rising prices has made what was a real problem before 2010 a true crisis today. Meanwhile, household incomes have not kept up with rising housing costs. While Cincinnati is still an affordable market for middle- and upper-income households, the data shows it is increasingly less affordable for households that make less than \$50,000 in gross annual income.\* This Study assesses the need for affordable housing in College Hill to provide a clearer understanding of renters and homeowners in College Hill struggling to keep up with housing costs. These households will be referred to as cost-burdened throughout this Study.

\* Affordability data is available for households with an income of less than \$20,000, between \$20,000 and \$35,000, between \$35,000 and \$50,000, between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and more than \$75,000. 80 percent of cost-burdened Cincinnati households have an income of less than \$50,000.

### **(3) Translate Housing Our Future recommendations to recommendations for College Hill**

The **College Hill Affordable Housing Study** is designed with an understanding of the larger regional housing initiative presented in [Housing Our Future](#) (HOF). Over a two-year period, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Greater Cincinnati convened a table including housing professionals, community development corporations, financial institutions, government officials, and community members to discuss housing in the Cincinnati and Hamilton County region in general as well as the need for affordable housing in particular.

The recommendations identify the need to produce new housing of all types; specifically the need to create at least 20,000 new housing units available and affordable to extremely low-income households over

the next ten years. It recommends preserving existing affordable housing stock and reinvesting in over 60,000 existing affordable subsidized and unsubsidized housing units (naturally occurring affordable housing) to reduce housing insecurity and homelessness and protecting the most vulnerable residents. Finally, there are a series of recommendations that call for changing the underlying systems that affect resident's ability to access quality housing and the region's ability to effect meaningful change.

HOF provides a framework for the **College Hill Affordable Housing Study** and provides a way to investigate the College Hill market and translate the regional recommendations into actions that will make College Hill a balanced, competitive housing market that includes housing affordable for its residents.

# Defining Affordable Housing

## What is affordable housing?

For most households, housing is their biggest monthly expense. For most homeowners, the investment in their homes is also the way their family builds wealth. In order to keep a budget in balance and keep up with other expenses, affordable housing is critical. Households with higher incomes can spend more on housing, but every household should be able to find housing that allows them to keep their costs in balance. Cost-burdened households cannot find decent housing that they can afford for less than 30% of their income.

If a household is spending more than 30% of its gross monthly income on housing costs, they are said to be "cost-burdened." Renters and owners both can be cost-burdened. Renter housing costs include the cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water, and sewer). Owner housing costs include all mortgage principal payments, interest payments, real estate taxes, property insurance, homeowner fees, condo or cooperative fees, and utilities.

Renters or owners are considered severely cost-burdened when housing costs are more than 50% of household income.

## Who needs it?

Households that are making the median income and above in Cincinnati can generally find housing they can afford. In 2021, the Area Median Income for Hamilton County, as set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, was \$85,400 for a 4-person household. The Area Median Income represents the midpoint of a region's income distribution, meaning half of families in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median.

In College Hill, more than half of renters have an income of less than \$35,000. Rental housing costs of \$900 would be affordable for households with incomes of \$36,000 or more. Costs include the cost of rent and utilities. For households unable to afford \$900 a month in expenses, it is a real challenge to find a decent and affordable place to live. The lack of supply, rising costs of construction, and the rising cost of rents and mortgages makes it increasingly difficult for lower-income households to keep their budgets in balance. Many current College Hill residents are struggling to stay in their homes affordably and people who would like to move to College Hill are being priced out of the neighborhood. Several long-time residents of College Hill interviewed as part of this study suggested they would not be able to move into the neighborhood today.

## Who is cost-burdened in College Hill?

Renters or owners are **cost-burdened when housing costs are more than 30% of household income**. This widely shared standard for cost burden recognizes that housing is just one item that people need to meet basic needs. Residents that spend a larger share of income on housing have less income to spend on other items, including transportation, food, child care, health care, and more. They also have less money to spend at neighborhood shops and businesses, potentially impacting the overall economic health of the community.

### 36% of all households in College Hill are cost-burdened

2,599 of 7,263 households spend more than 30% of income on housing:

- 1,360 of 3,095 renters spend more than 30% of income on housing  
*44% of College Hill renters are cost-burdened*
- 1,239 of 4,168 owners spend more than 30% of income on housing  
*30% of College Hill owners are cost-burdened*

### 17% of all households in College Hill are severely cost-burdened

1,255 of 7,263 households spend more than 50% of income on housing:

- 707 of 3,095 renters spend more than 50% of income on housing  
*23% of College Hill renters are severely cost-burdened*
- 548 of 4,168 owners spend more than 50% of income on housing  
*13% of College Hill owners are severely cost-burdened*

## How does cost-burden in College Hill compare with Cincinnati and Hamilton County?

Residents in College Hill are more likely to be cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened when compared with Cincinnati and Hamilton County overall.

### Cost-burdened Households

(percent of all households)

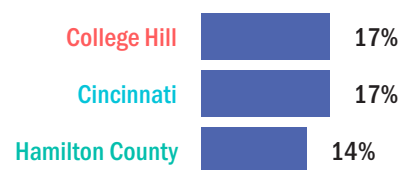
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Severely Cost-burdened Households


(percent of all households)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates




## What are the key takeaways when it comes to cost-burden?

- More than a third of all households in College Hill spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. See **page 27** for detail.
- **All households:** The share of all households that are cost-burdened increased slightly in College Hill between 2009 and 2019. In contrast, Cincinnati and Hamilton County saw a decrease in cost-burdened households. See **page 28** for detail.
- **Renters:** The share of renters that are cost-burdened decreased in College Hill between 2009 and 2019. This trend is consistent with Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In 2020, College Hill renters were less likely to be cost-burdened than renters in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. See **page 29** for detail.
- **Owners:** The share of owners that are cost-burdened increased in College Hill between 2009 and 2019. In contrast, Cincinnati and Hamilton County saw a decrease in cost-burdened owners. In 2020, College Hill owners were significantly more likely to be cost-burdened than owners in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. See **page 29** for detail.
- **Age:** Nearly half of cost-burdened owners are over age 65 years old. Nearly half of cost-burdened renters are between the ages of 35 and 64 years old. See **page 31** for detail.
- **Income:** Cost-burden is not only a problem for lower income households. More than a quarter (26%) of cost-burdened households have an income between \$20,000 and \$35,000 and 16% have an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000. See **page 32** for detail.



Renter cost-burden in College Hill is moving in a positive direction; fewer renter households are spending too much on housing.



Owner cost-burden in College Hill is moving in a negative direction; more owner households are spending too much on housing.

# Study Methodology

## Interview and Focus Groups

The Community Building Institute conducted a series of 10 interviews and 7 focus groups in order to provide community-based context for the data and market research. The purpose of these conversations was to identify housing needs and barriers in the community, as well as understanding how people familiar with the community perceive the housing available to them and their neighbors. These conversations were designed to further unpack housing trends presented by the data and market research presented and to understand how those translate into on-the-ground experiences in the community. In particular, the conversations focused on perceptions and experiences with housing affordability in College Hill. The interviews and focus groups were not intended to be statistically representative of the entire College Hill community. The interviews and focus groups considered the College Hill housing market overall and the role of College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation's (College Hill CURC) in particular as the neighborhood's community development corporation.

Interviews and focus group participants included representatives from the College Hill Forum, College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, representatives from the faith community in College Hill and the College Hill Ministerium, representatives from the College Hill Business Association, College Hill residents, a local school representative, and developers who have recently completed, or are currently working on, housing projects in College Hill.

The interviews were conducted between November 2021 and January 2022 primarily via Zoom.

Focus groups were conducted in December 2021 and January 2022. In total, approximately 40 people attended 7 focus groups.

For a full summary of interview and focus group insights, please see the **Appendix**.

## Census Data and Market Analysis

Unless otherwise noted, data used in this analysis is from the U.S. Census, 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (referenced as "2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates"). When available, U.S. Decennial Census data is included. The 2000 and 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates are used for trend information. Comparisons are made to Cincinnati and Hamilton County throughout. "Cincinnati" refers to the City of Cincinnati and all 52 of its neighborhoods. "Hamilton County" refers to the entire county and includes the City of Cincinnati. Due to inherent errors in 2020 ACS data, comparisons with previous years ACS estimate cannot be made.

## Feedback Meetings

The Community Building Institute and LISC conducted 4 community feedback meetings in March 2022 to present initial market analysis, census data, in addition to interview and focus group feedback. Meetings were held at the College Hill Forum meeting, the College Hill Ministerium, the College Hill CURC property committee, and an open community forum hosted at College Hill Presbyterian Church. Feedback from these sessions was used to create the final Study recommendations.

# Data Summary

## Total Population

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Age

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Households

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Housing Stock

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Building Type

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Bedrooms

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Homeownership

## Sale Prices and Rents

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Publicly Supported Housing

---

Institutional Investors

---

Income

---

Cost-burdened Households

Unless otherwise noted, data used in this analysis is from the U.S. Census, 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (referenced as "2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates"). When available, U.S. Decennial Census data is included. The 2000 and 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates are used for trend information. Comparisons are made to Cincinnati and Hamilton County throughout. "Cincinnati" refers to the City of Cincinnati and all 52 of its neighborhoods. "Hamilton County" refers to the entire county and includes the City of Cincinnati. Due to inherent errors in 2020 ACS data, comparisons with previous years ACS estimate cannot not be made.

# Total Population

## College Hill's population rebounded to 16,039 in 2020

College Hill's population grew slightly between 2010 and 2020 (5% increase), reversing a decade of population decline experienced between 2000 and 2010 (8% decrease). Between 2010 and 2020, College Hill's population increased by 5%. College Hill's population increase was slightly higher than in Cincinnati and Hamilton County (both 4% increases) between 2010 and 2020.

Overall, College Hill's population dropped by 3% between 2000 and 2020. College Hill's population decline was less than Cincinnati's (6% decrease) and more than Hamilton County (2% decrease) between 2000 and 2020.

## College Hill's Black population continues to increase

In 2000, just over 50% of College Hill's population was Black. By 2020, 60% of College Hill's population was Black. College Hill gained Black population (13% increase) while Cincinnati's Black population declined between 2000 and 2020 (11% decrease).

# Age

## More Millennials and Baby Boomers call College Hill home; fewer Generation X

Millennials (ages 25 to 34 years olds) made up 15% of the College Hill population in 2020. The younger Millennial population share in College Hill is comparable to Hamilton County's (15%) and lower than Cincinnati's (19%).

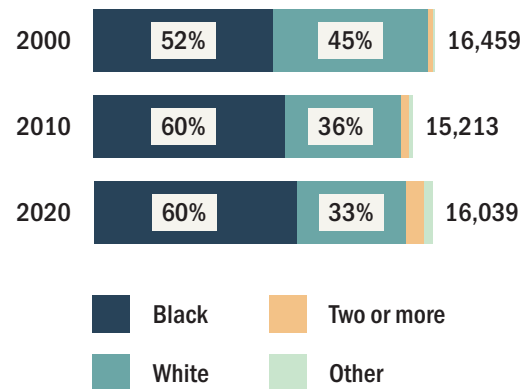
The population share of ages 55 and over in College Hill is 32%, higher than both Hamilton County's (29%) and Cincinnati's (24%).

## In contrast, College Hill's white population continues to decline, but at a slower rate

Between 2000 and 2020, College Hill lost nearly 30% of its white population, with 25% being lost between 2000 and 2010. College Hill lost white population at a significantly higher rate than Cincinnati (16% decrease) and Hamilton County (15% decrease) in the last two decades, especially between 2000 and 2010. The rate of white population loss between 2010 and 2020 was slower than between 2000 and 2010.

### Total Population in College Hill

Source: U.S. Decennial Census

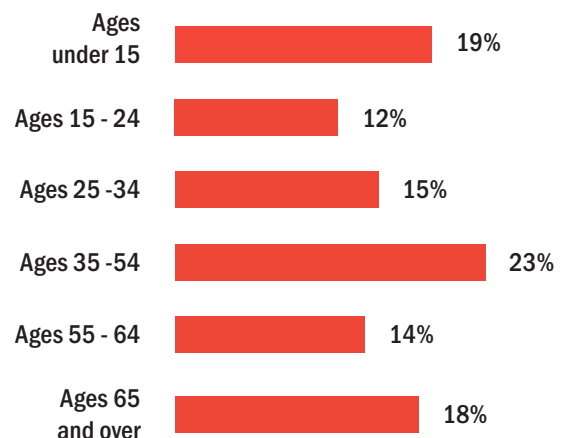


The **Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract** map includes total population and the percent of Black and white population in each of College Hill's five Census Tracts.

### Population Age in College Hill

(percent of total population)

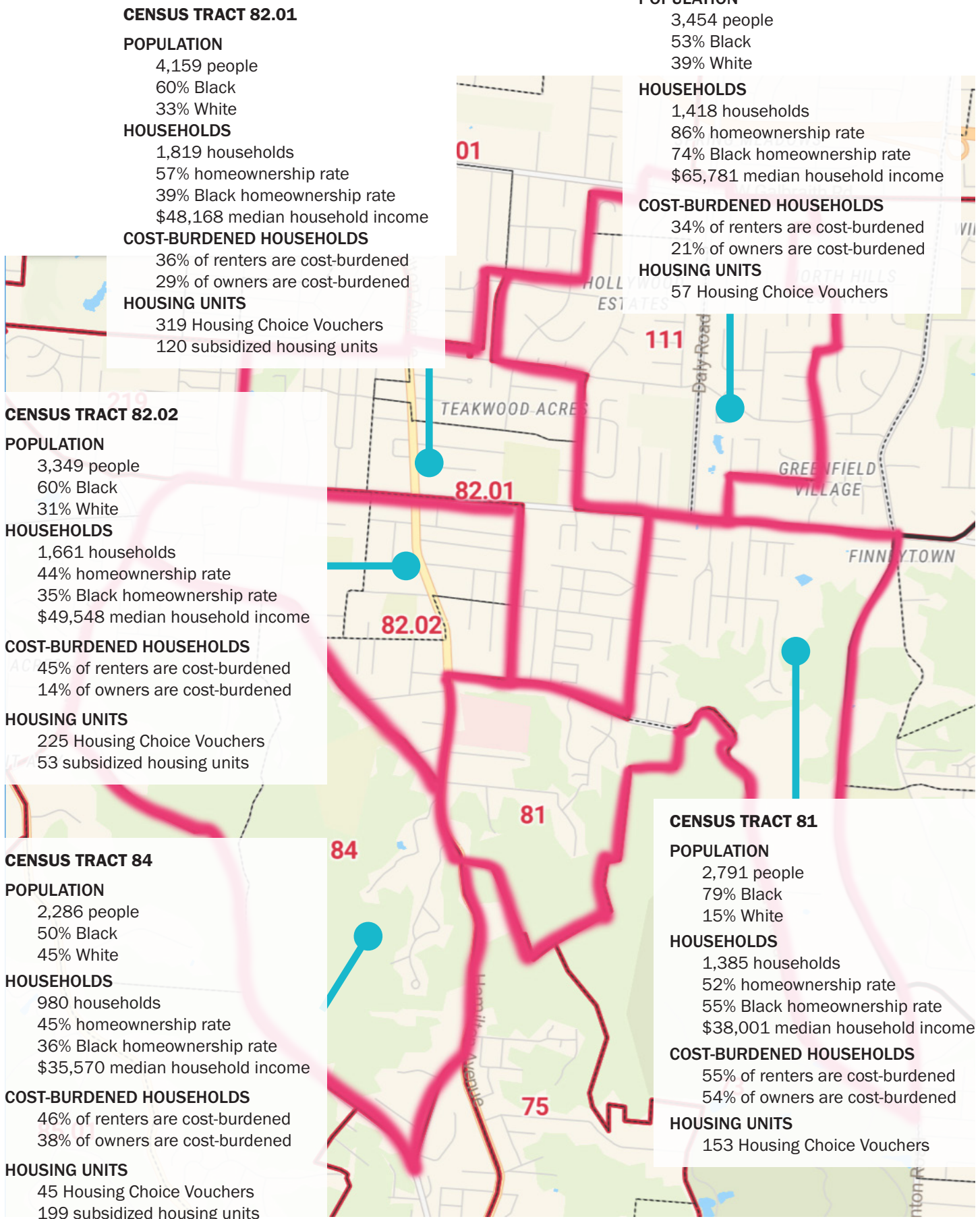
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates





**Map: Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract**

Sources: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, National Housing Preservation Database, Department of Housing and Urban Development



# Households

## The most common household type in College Hill is single-person households living alone

In 2020, 54% of households were family households; 46% were non-family households. Non-family households include households with a single-person living alone and other non-family households (with two or more non-related people living together).

While there are more family than non-family households in College Hill, the share of non-family households increased between 2000 and 2019 while the share of family households decreased.

## Half of College Hill households moved into their current unit in the last 10 years while almost half of owners have been in their house for more than 40 years

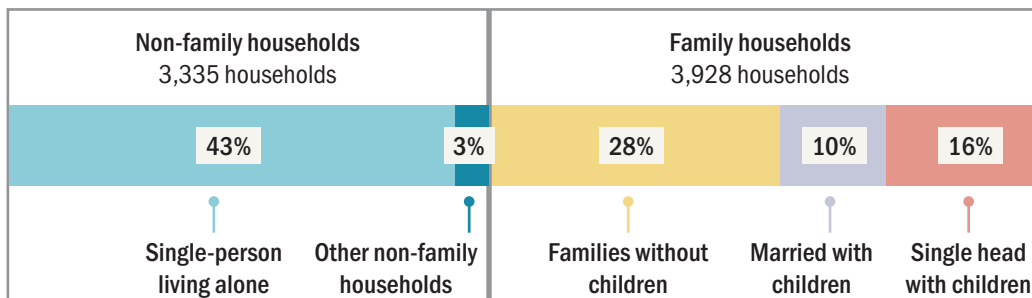
More than 55% of renters moved into current unit within the last five years, compared to more than 60% of renters in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In the last 20 years, 60% of owners moved in College Hill, compared with 68% in both Cincinnati and Hamilton County (40% before 2000).

College Hill also has a higher share of owners that have lived in College Hill for more than 40 years (40%) compared with 32% in the both Hamilton County and Cincinnati.

### Household Types in College Hill

(percent of all households)

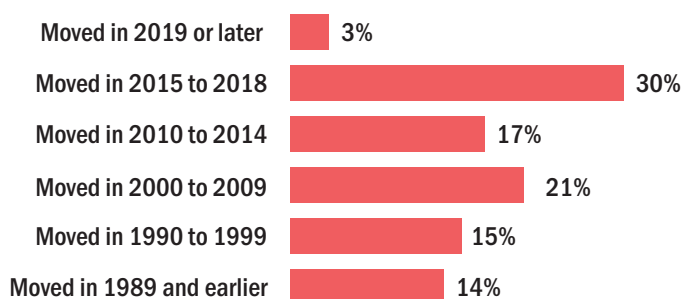
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Year Household Moved Into Current Unit in College Hill

(percent of all households)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



# Housing Stock

## College Hill's housing stock has been steadily increasing over the last 20 years

Even with an overall slight decline in population between 2000 and 2020, the number of total housing units increased steadily between 2000 and 2020. College Hill had about 300 more units in 2020 than it did in 2000.

### Housing Units in College Hill

Source: U.S. Decennial Census



## Under 10% of College Hill's housing stock was built over the last 30 years

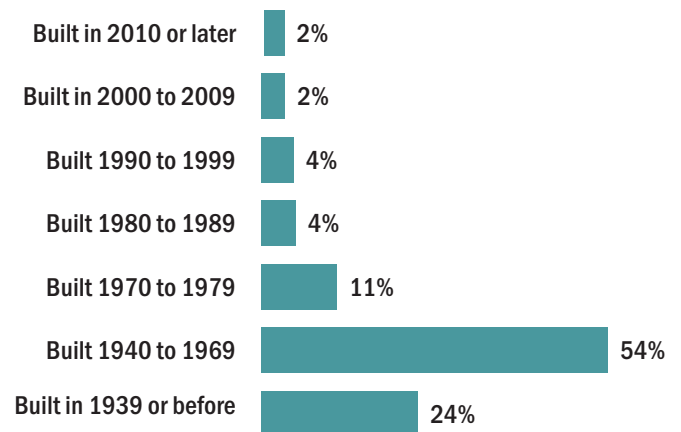
College Hill has a high share of housing units that were built before 1970 (89%) compared with Cincinnati (84%) and Hamilton County (76%).

Currently under construction in 2022, HaNoBe will add another 171 market-rate rental units to the northern end of the business district while KeyMark will add an additional 26 affordable units to the middle of the business district.

### Age of Housing Stock in College Hill

(year built)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



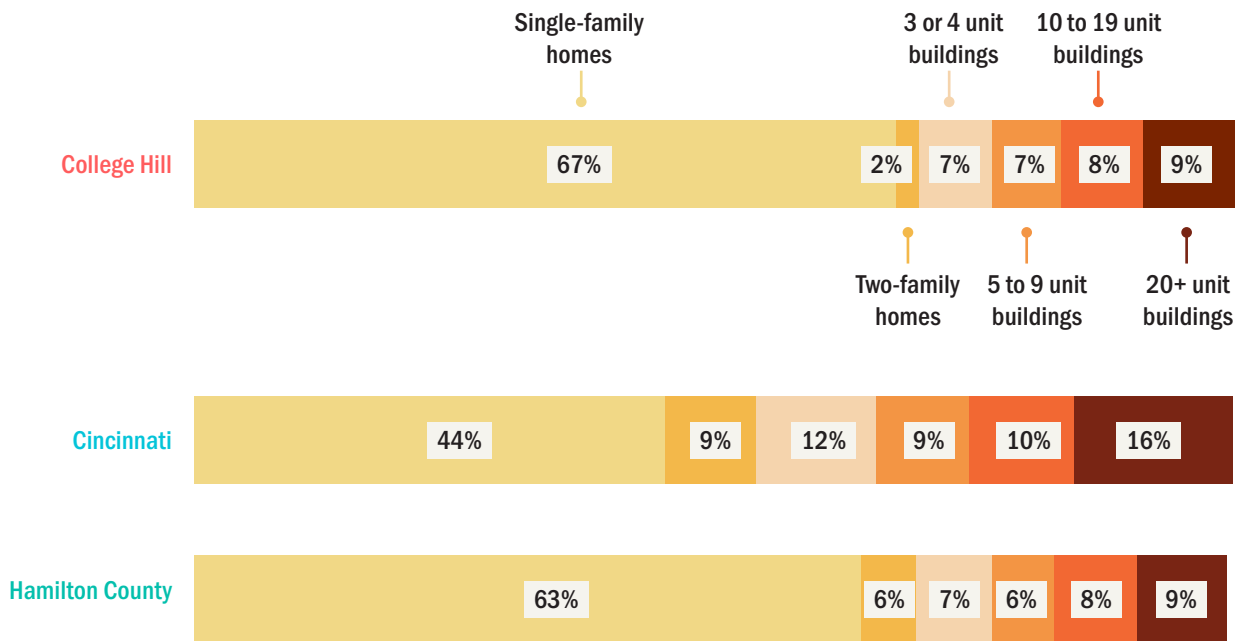
\* Sum of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding

# Building Type

## More than two-thirds of housing units are single-family homes

The distribution of building types in College Hill resembles Hamilton County more than Cincinnati. College Hill has a high share of single-family homes (67% of College Hill units; 63% in the County; 44% in Cincinnati), a low share of medium and large multi-family buildings with more than 20 units in a building (9% of College Hill units; 9% in the County; 16% in Cincinnati), and a moderate share of small multi-family buildings with three to 19 units in a building (22% of College Hill units; 21% in the County; 31% in Cincinnati).

**Housing Unit Building Type**  
(number of units in building)  
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



\* Sum of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding

- Single-family homes
- Two-family homes
- 3 or 4 unit buildings
- 5 to 9 unit buildings
- 10 to 19 unit buildings
- 20+ unit buildings

# Bedrooms

## College Hill has a high share of housing units with three or more bedrooms

College Hill has a higher share of units with three or more bedrooms and a lower share of one bedroom/studio units as compared with Cincinnati. In College Hill, just under half of housing units have three or more bedrooms (48%), compared with just more than a third of units in Cincinnati (37%). Hamilton County's share of homes with three or more bedrooms is slightly higher than in College Hill (54%).

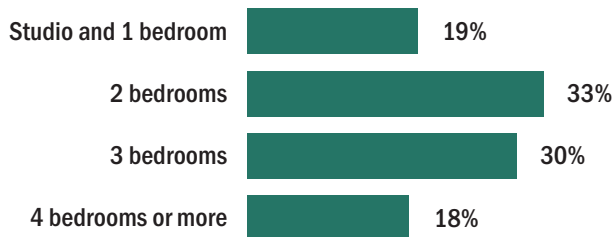
College Hill has a smaller share of units with one bedroom/studio units when compared with Cincinnati. In College Hill, 19% of units had one bedroom. In Cincinnati, 31% of units had one bedroom.

College Hill has a higher share of occupied rental units with two bedrooms and a lower share of one bedroom/studio units as compared with Cincinnati. In College Hill, just under half of occupied rental units have two bedrooms (46%), compared with 35% in Cincinnati and 37% in Hamilton County. In College Hill, just over a third of occupied rental units have one bedroom/studio (37%), compared with 45% in Cincinnati and 39% in Hamilton County.

### Number of Bedrooms in Housing Units in College Hill

(percent of total housing units)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



# Homeownership

## College Hill's homeownership rate of 57% is comparatively high

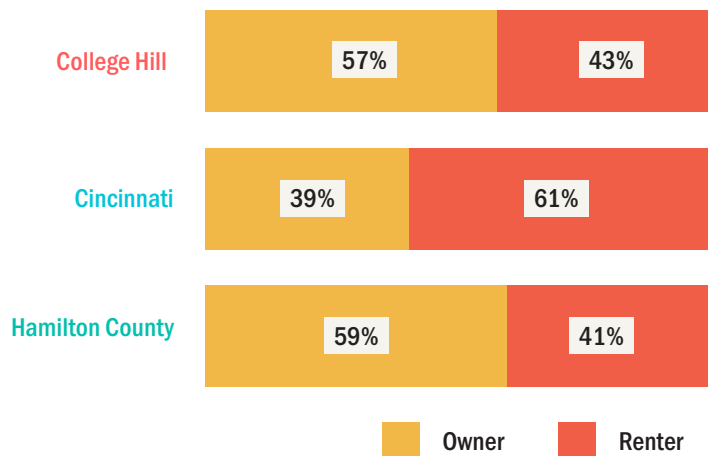
When it comes to the share of owners and renters, College Hill again looks more like Hamilton County than Cincinnati. The homeownership rate in College Hill was comparable to the County (59%) and significantly higher than Cincinnati's (39%). Homeownership rates in College Hill, Cincinnati, and Hamilton County decreased slightly between 2000 and 2019.

The **Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract** map includes the homeownership rate for each of College Hill's five Census Tracts.

### Renter and Owner-occupied Households in 2020

(percent of total households)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



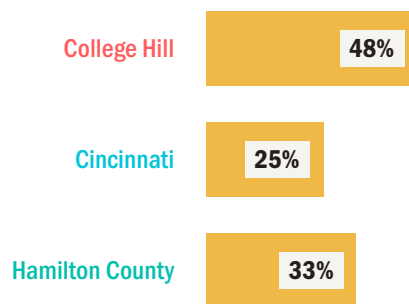
## Black homeownership in College Hill is comparatively high

College Hill's Black homeownership rate (48%) is much higher than Cincinnati (25%) and Hamilton County (33%). Between 2010 and 2020, it remained consistent at 48% while the white homeownership rate increased between the same period (70% to 75%). Black borrowers made up 40% of all home loan origination borrowers in 2019, significantly higher than in Cincinnati and Hamilton County (13% and 10%, respectively).

The **Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract** map includes the Black homeownership rate for each of College Hill's five Census Tracts.

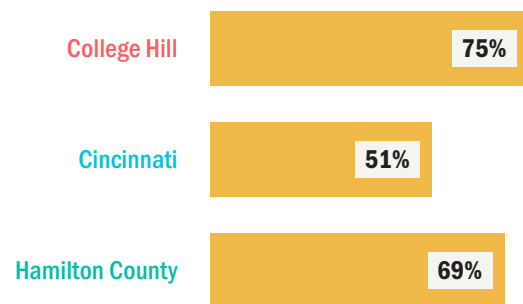
### Black Homeownership Rate

(percent of Black households that are homeowners)  
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



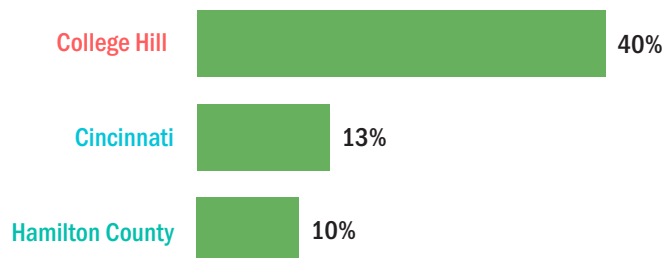
### White Homeownership Rate

(percent of white households that are homeowners)  
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Home Loan Originations to Black Borrowers

(percent of all loan originations made to Black borrowers)  
Source: 2019 PolicyMap and FFIEC



# Sale Prices and Rents

## Housing costs in College Hill are rising

Between 2014 and 2021, the median sale price of single-family homes in College Hill increased \$100,000 (143% increase). By comparison, between 2014 and 2021, the median sale price in Cincinnati increased by \$97,500 (83% increase). The median single-family sale price in Cincinnati was \$117,500 in 2014 compared with \$215,000 in 2021.

Compared to Cincinnati overall, College Hill is still an affordable neighborhood to buy a home but it is becoming less so: the median single-family sale price in College Hill increased from 60% of the overall Cincinnati median single-family home sale price in 2014 to 79% in 2021.

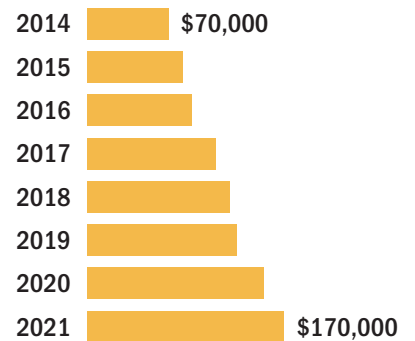
The median gross rent in all but one College Hill Census Tract increased between 2010 and 2020 (7% to 23% increases). Rent increases for College Hill were less than those experienced in Cincinnati and Hamilton County during the same period (28% and 27% respectively). As reported by CoStar, multi-family rental rates steadily increased while vacancy rates decreased between 2012 and 2021 (CoStar report, LISC).

There is a lack of units available at a gross rent of \$600 or less to meet the needs of renter households with incomes less than \$20,000. There is also a lack of units affordable to households earning between 50 - 80% of AMI, with incomes between \$42,700 and \$68,320. In 2020, there were approximately 920 renters in this income range and approximately 660 units with a gross rent between \$900 and \$2,000.

## Home Sale Trends

### Single-family Median Sale Price

Source: Multiple Listing Service (MLS) of Greater Cincinnati, Inc.



## Rent Trends

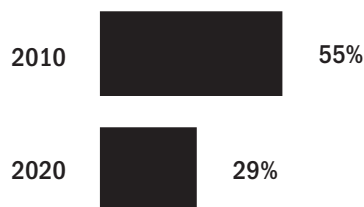
### Median Gross Rent in 2020: \$552 - \$802

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Gross rent is the monthly amount of rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.).

### Gross Rents \$600 or less

(percent of renter-occupied housing units with cash rent)  
Source: 2010 and 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



A \$600 gross rent would be affordable for households with incomes of \$24,000 or more.

867 units with rent of \$600 or less in College Hill (2020).

1,148 renter households with incomes less than \$20,000.

### Gross Rents \$900 or less

(percent of renter-occupied housing units with cash rent)  
Source: 2010 and 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



A \$900 gross rent would be affordable for households with incomes of \$36,000 or more.

2,188 units with rent of \$900 or less in College Hill - 1,321 have rents between \$600 and \$900 (2020).

1,768 renter households with incomes less than \$35,000 - 620 have incomes between \$20,000 and \$35,000.

# Publicly Supported Housing

There are two primary forms of public subsidy that create affordable housing: public subsidy of housing units and vouchers for very low-income households to help them afford housing.

## Public subsidized housing units

Public subsidy of housing units means that there are affordability thresholds attached to housing units. The degree and length of subsidy is dependent on the funding source. The National Housing Preservation Database is a source for comprehensive data on the publicly supported housing property inventory. According to the Database, there were 4 housing projects in College Hill with a total of 372 units in 2021: Ashwood Apartments, Hickory Woods, Savannah Garden Apartments, and Marlowe Court. These 372 units represent just under 5% of College Hill's housing stock (7,801 total housing units).

## Housing choice vouchers

Housing Choice Vouchers help some very-low income households afford housing through a program allowing participants to rent units from participating landlords with the assistance of a voucher. In 2020, there were

799 Housing Choice Vouchers used by households in College Hill (Source: PolicyMap with data from the Department of Housing and Urban Redevelopment). In 2019, there were 843 vouchers in College Hill, 6% more than in 2020. The Housing Choice Voucher program is a federal government program that assists very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Because housing assistance is provided on behalf of a household, participants must find a unit and a landlord willing to accept a voucher. The income of households using a voucher may not exceed 50% of the area median income (AMI), which varies by household size. For a single-person, 50% of AMI would be \$30,250. For a family of three, 50% of AMI would be \$38,850. By law, 75% of vouchers must go to applicants whose incomes do not exceed 30% of AMI. For a single-person, 30% of AMI would be \$18,150. For a family of three, 30% of AMI would be \$23,350.

The **Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract** map includes the number of Housing Choice Vouchers and subsidized housing units in each of College Hill's five Census Tracts.

# Institutional Investors

## Investor ownership of single-family homes

According to a data analysis by The Washington Post, 22% of purchased homes in the College Hill zip code of 45224 were bought by an investor in 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2022/housing-market-investors/>

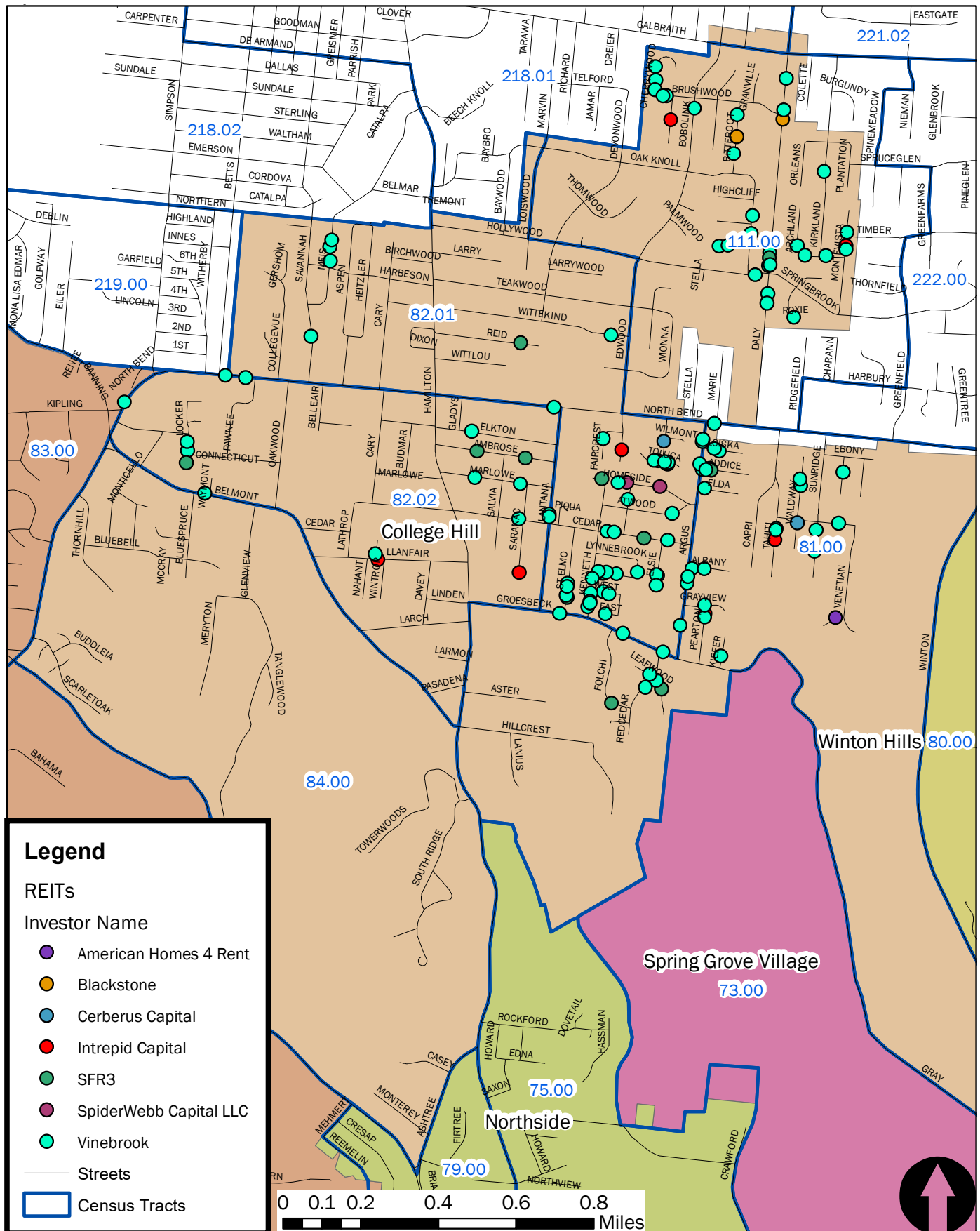
Locally, The Port looked at institutional investor purchases of single-family to 3 unit buildings purchased between 2009 and 2022. The Port analysis excludes some "LLC" and "Corp" ownership by local organizations that may have been included in The Washington Post analysis. According to The Port analysis, between 2009 and February 2022 there were 144 investor purchases. Most properties are located east of Hamilton Avenue

and south of North Bend Road. By far, the largest purchaser of properties is Vinebrook. They purchased 111 homes between 2009 and 2022. Between 2018 and 2021, 22 to 25 homes were purchased by investors each year with the exception of 2020 (2020 was also the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic). Based on The Port investor data and purchase data of single-family homes from the Multiple Listing Service, between 7 to 9% of homes purchased between 2014 and 2021 were purchased by institutional investors.

The **College Hill Investor-Owned Property** map on the following page shows the location and owner of properties owned by institutional investors.



**Map: College Hill Investor-Owned Property**  
 Prepared by the Community Building Institute with data from The Port



# Income

## College Hill household median income decreased between 2009 and 2020

The household income in College Hill varies greatly by Census Tract. The household median income for all Census Tracts ranges from lower than Cincinnati to higher than Hamilton County (\$35,570 in Census Tract 84, compared to \$42,663 in Cincinnati; \$65,781 in Census Tract 111, compared to \$59,190 in Hamilton County). The **Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract** map includes the median household income of each of College Hill's five Census Tracts.

In 2020, the income of Black households in all 5 College Hill Census Tracts was higher than Cincinnati and Hamilton County. For all other household types, the income of renter, owner, and white households in the 5 College Hill Census Tracts ranges from lower to higher than comparable households in Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

## Only 55% of College Hill households could afford the median College Hill home price

The median single-family home sale in 2020 was \$152,000 in College Hill. In 2021, it was \$170,000. Using a standard price-to-income ratio, households can afford a house if its price is equivalent to roughly 2.6 years of your household income. Using the ratio, households with an income of \$50,000 could afford a home price of \$130,000. More than 55% of College Hill households have an income of less than \$50,000 in 2020 and could not afford the median single-family home in the neighborhood.

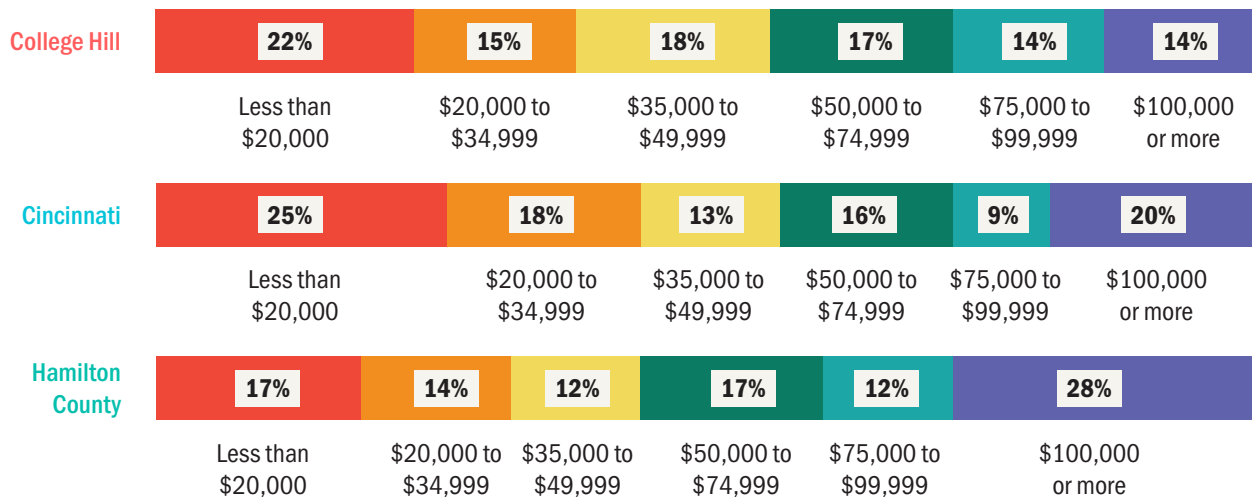
By comparison, the median single-family home sale in 2020 was \$178,000 in Cincinnati. In 2021, it was \$211,000. Households with an income of \$75,000 could afford a home price of \$195,000. More than 70% of Cincinnati households have an income of less than \$75,000 in 2020 and could not afford the median single-family home in Cincinnati.

### Household Income Categories

(percent of total households)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

3,993 households - 55% of College Hill households - have an income under \$50,000.

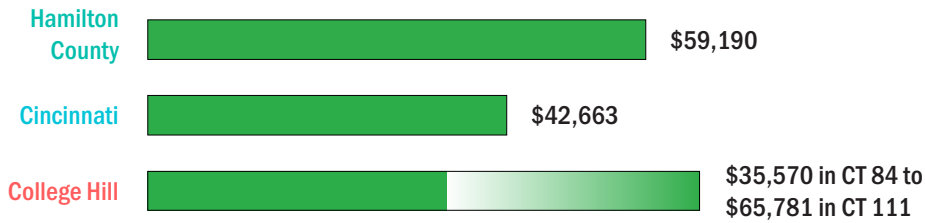


\* Sum of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding

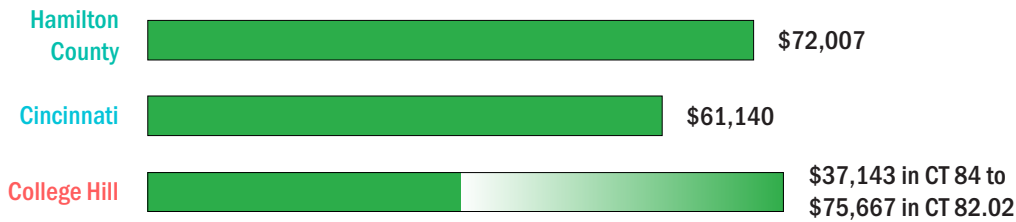
## Median Household Income by Household Type in 2020

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

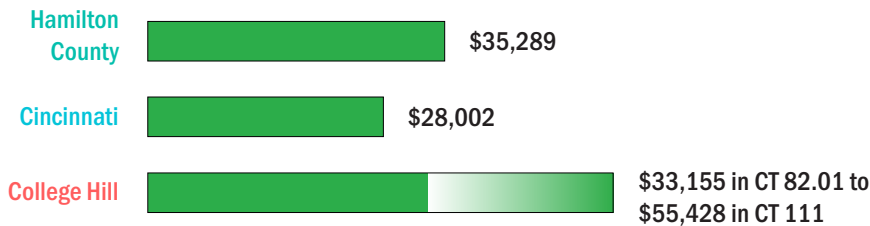
### All households



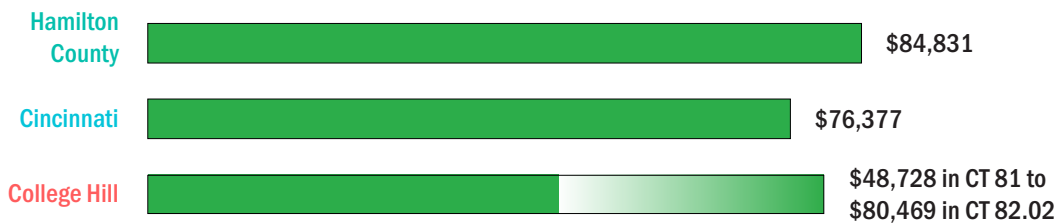
### White households



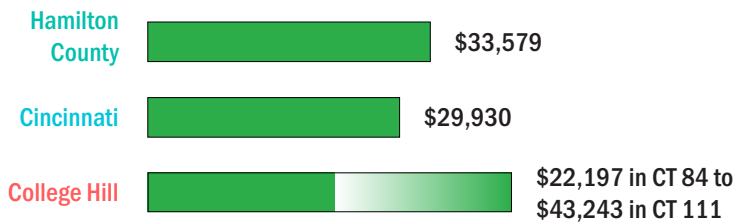
### Black households



### Owners households



### Renters households



 Indicates the range of income in College Hill Census Tracts (CT)

Note: For **College Hill** households, includes (5 Census Tracts (CT) for all households, 4 Census Tracts for all other)

## College Hill owner income is relatively lower than Cincinnati and Hamilton County

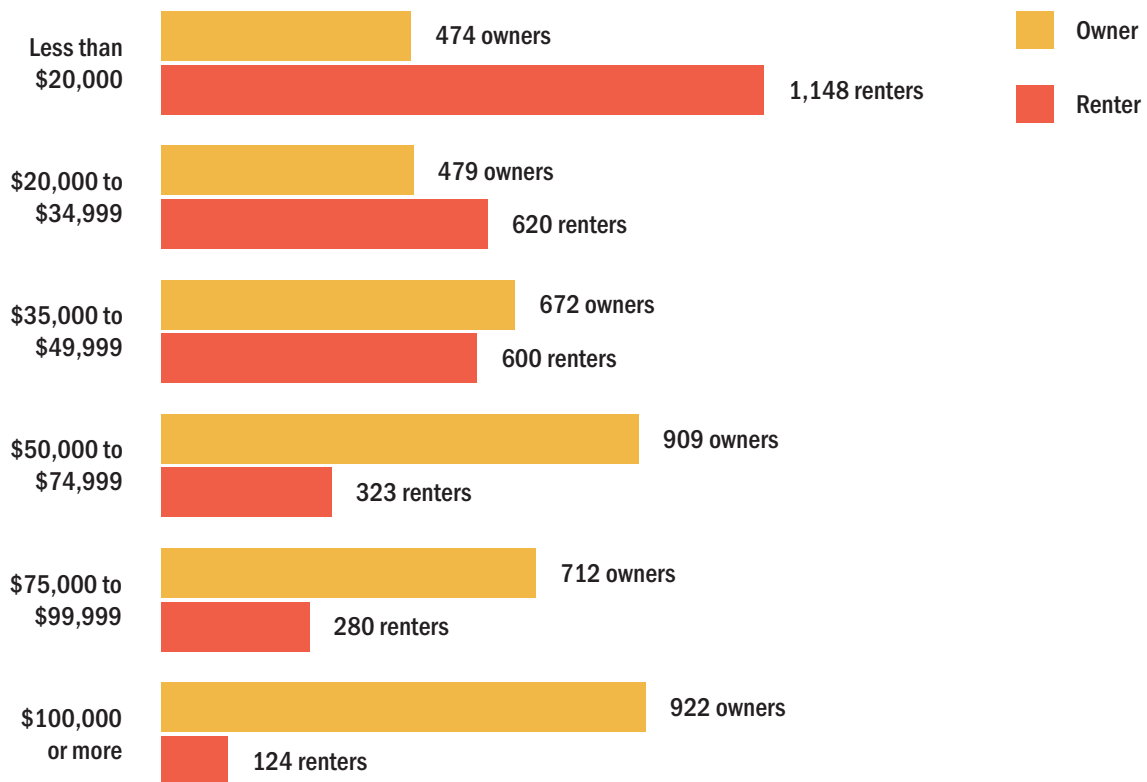
In College Hill, more than half (55%) of renter households have an income of less than \$50,000, which is similar to Cincinnati renter households. However, in Hamilton County, fewer renters (43%) have an income of less than \$50,000.

College Hill has a greater share of owners with an income of less than \$50,000 compared to Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In College Hill, 39% of owners have an income of less than \$50,000, compared with 32% in Cincinnati and 27% in Hamilton County. College Hill has a greater share of owners (22%) with an income between \$50,000 and \$75,000, compared with 17% in both Cincinnati and Hamilton County. College Hill has a lower share of owners with an income above \$100,000 (22%), compared with Cincinnati (38%) and in Hamilton County (41%).

### Owner and Renter Household Income

(number of owner and renter households by household income category)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



# Cost-burdened Households

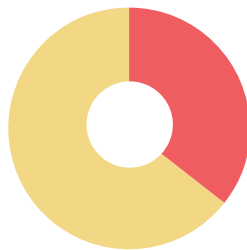
Cost burden takes into account how much of a household's income is spent on housing costs.

The following pages will detail how College Hill residents experience cost burden.

Renters or owners are **cost-burdened when housing costs are more than 30% of household income**. Renter housing costs include the cost of utilities such as electricity, gas, water, and sewer. Owner housing costs include all mortgage principal payments, interest payments, real estate taxes, property insurance, homeowner fees, condo or coop fees and utilities.

Renters or owners are **severely cost-burdened when housing costs are more than 50% of household income**.

**2,599**  
**cost-burdened**  
**households**



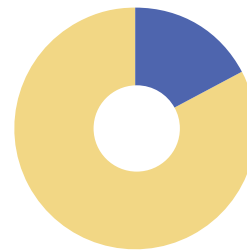
**36% of all households in College Hill are cost-burdened**

2,599 of 7,263 households spend more than 30% of income on housing:

- 1,360 of 3,095 renters spend more than 30% of income on housing  
**44% of College Hill renters are cost-burdened**
- 1,239 of 4,168 owners spend more than 30% of income on housing  
**30% of College Hill owners are cost-burdened**

Nearly half of all cost-burdened households are severely cost-burdened

**1,255**  
**severely cost-burdened**  
**households**



**17% of all households in College Hill are severely cost-burdened**

1,255 of 7,263 households spend more than 50% of income on housing:

- 707 of 3,095 renters spend more than 50% of income on housing  
**23% of College Hill renters are severely cost-burdened**
- 548 of 4,168 owners spend more than 50% of income on housing  
**13% of College Hill owners are severely cost-burdened**

Note: A comparison of College Hill's cost-burdened households with Cincinnati and Hamilton County can be found on the following page.

## Cost-burden is increasing in College Hill; decreasing in Cincinnati or Hamilton County

In College Hill, 36% of households are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of income on housing) and 17% of households are severely cost-burdened (spending more than 50% of income on housing). The share of cost-burdened households in College Hill is slightly higher than in Cincinnati (35%) and higher than Hamilton County (29%). The share of severely cost-burdened households in College Hill is comparable to Cincinnati (17%) and higher than Hamilton County (14%).

Due to inherent errors in 2020 ACS data, comparisons with previous years ACS estimate cannot be made. Looking at 2009 ACS and 2019 ACS, the share of cost-burdened households in College Hill increased slightly from 34% in 2009 to 35% in 2020. In contrast, the share of cost-burdened households decreased in Cincinnati and Hamilton County: 40% in 2009 to 37% in 2019 in Cincinnati; 34% in 2009 to 30% in 2020 in Hamilton County.

The share of severely cost-burdened households decreased in College Hill from 20% in 2009 to 17% in 2019, in Cincinnati from 20% in 2009 to 18% in 2019, and in Hamilton County from 15% in 2009 to 14% in 2019.

### Cost-burdened Households

(percent of all households)

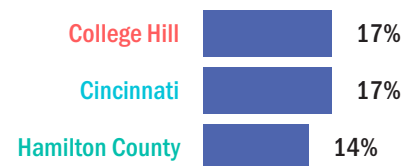
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Severely Cost-burdened Households

(percent of all households)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



## Housing Cost Perspectives

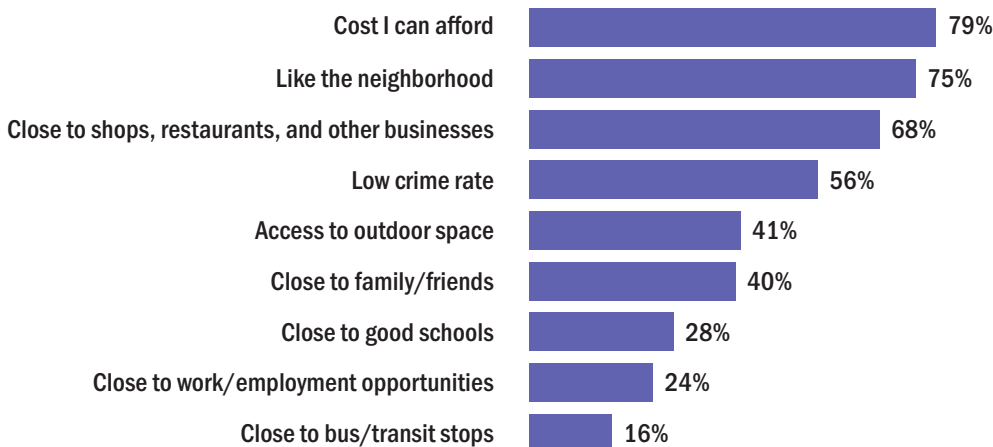
### College Hill Survey: Important Factors When Choosing Where to Live

2021/2022 Survey conducted by the College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (College Hill CURC)

Responses to 2021/2022 Survey Question:

When choosing where to live, what are the five most important factors for you and the members of your household?

Please select only five options. (reflects 338 responses)



## The number of cost-burdened owners households is increasing

A higher share of owners in College Hill (48%) are cost-burdened compared with owners in Cincinnati (26%) and Hamilton County (39%).

The household income of College Hill owners is relatively lower than in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In College Hill, 61% of owners have an income of less than \$75,000, compared with 49% in Cincinnati and 44% in Hamilton County. Nearly half of cost-burdened owners are 65 year old and over and may have fixed incomes. With relatively lower incomes and rising housing costs, an increasing number of College Hill owners are facing challenges affording their home.

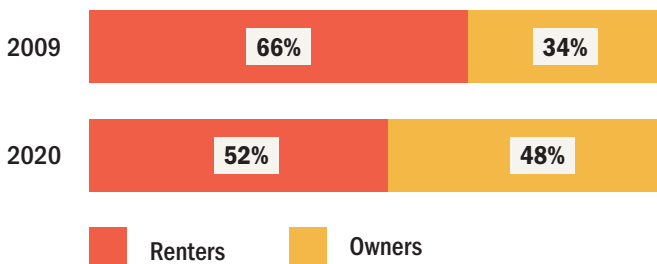
In 2009, 821 owners were cost-burdened in College Hill. In 2020, there were 1,239 cost-burdened owners - an increase of 51% in just over 10 years.

The **Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract** map includes the percent of cost-burdened renter and owner households in each of College Hill's five Census Tracts.

### Cost-burdened Renters and Owner Trends, 2009 to 2020

(cost-burdened households by renter/owner status and age of householder)

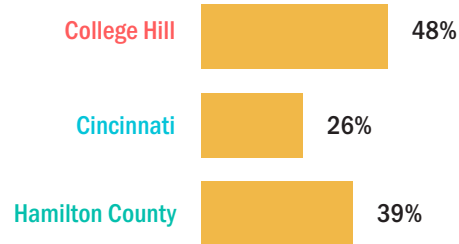
Source: 2009 and 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Cost-burdened Owner Households

(percent of all cost-burdened households that are owners)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



There are several factors that contribute to College Hill's relatively higher share of cost-burdened owners:

- A higher share of owners in College Hill (73%) have a mortgage compared with owners in Cincinnati and Hamilton County (both 68%). Owners both with and without a mortgage are more likely to be cost-burdened compared with owners in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In College Hill, 34% of owners with a mortgage are cost-burdened, compared with 26% in Cincinnati and 22% in Hamilton County. In College Hill, 20% of owners without a mortgage are cost-burdened, compared with 17% in Cincinnati and 14% in Hamilton County.
- College Hill has a greater share of owners with an income of less than \$50,000 compared to Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In College Hill, 39% of owners have an income of less than \$50,000, compared with 32% in Cincinnati and 27% in Hamilton County. Households with incomes under \$50,000, face greater cost burden. The potential impact of cost burden on households is exacerbated when paired with rising housing costs.
- College Hill has a higher share of cost-burdened owners with incomes between \$35,000 - \$50,000 (26%), compared with Cincinnati (19%) and Hamilton County (19%).
- A higher share of tax filers in College Hill (16.37% in zip code 45224) have taxable Social Security benefits compared with filers in Hamilton County (13.43%). Source: IRS (PolicyLink). This is consistent with College Hill's higher share of households with a householder over age 65 (28%), compared with Cincinnati (19%) and Hamilton County (24%).

## Majority of College Hill cost-burdened households have income less than \$50,000

Most College Hill cost-burdened renters (89%) have an income of less than \$50,000. Nearly two-thirds of College Hill cost-burdened owners (61%) have an income of less than \$50,000.

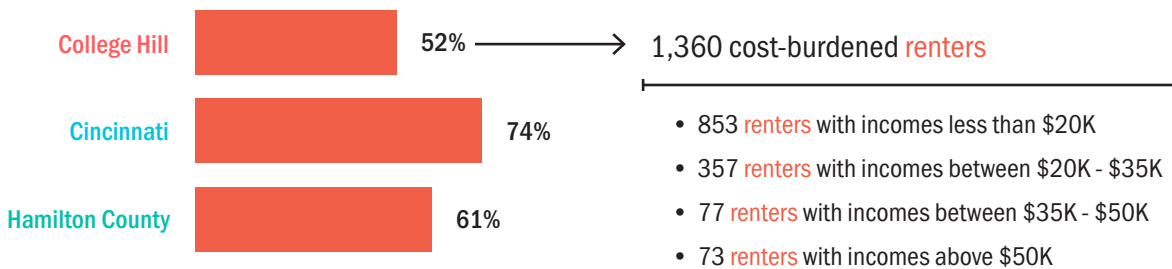
Cost-burdened renters in College Hill are likely to have an income of less than \$35,000: 89% of cost-burdened renters have an income of less than \$35,000.

Cost-burdened owners in College Hill are likely to have an income of less than \$50,000: 87% of cost-burdened owners have an income of less than \$35,000.

### Cost-burdened Renter Households

(percent of all cost-burdened households that are renters; cost-burdened renter income)

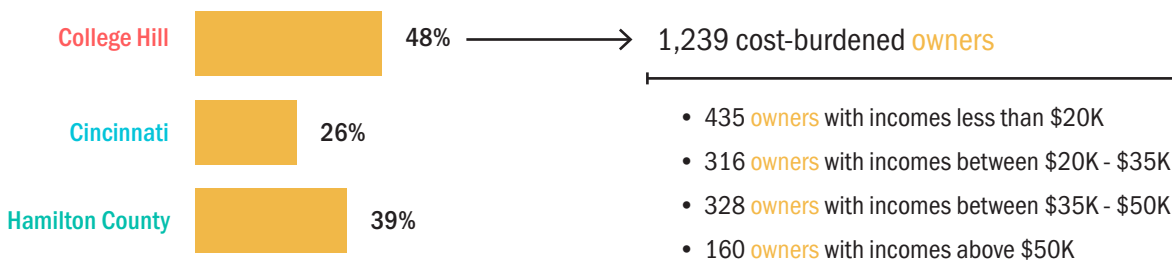
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Cost-burdened Owner Households

(percent of all cost-burdened households that are owners, cost-burdened owner income)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates





## High share of cost-burdened households over 65 years old, especially owners

Cost-burdened renters in College Hill are more likely to be under 65 years old, while owners are more likely to be over 35 years old.

Nearly half (49%) of cost-burdened owners in College Hill are 65 years and over; significantly higher than in Cincinnati (40%) and Hamilton County (42%). College Hill has a lower share of cost-burdened owners that are 35 to 64 years old (42%) compared to Cincinnati and Hamilton County (both 48%). Cost-burdened households over 65 years old are more likely to be owners (610) than renters (211) in College Hill.

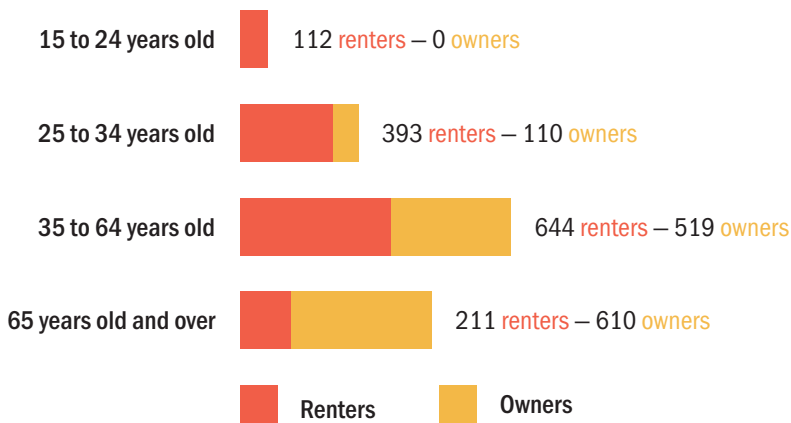
College Hill has a higher share of cost-burdened renters that are 25 to 34 years old (29%) than Cincinnati or Hamilton County (both 25%) and cost-burdened renters that are 35 to 64 years old (47%) than Cincinnati (40%) or Hamilton County (41%).

College Hill has a higher share of cost-burdened households over 65 years old (32%) than Cincinnati (23%) and Hamilton County (29%). Most of those cost-burdened households 65 years and over are owners (610 of 821). College Hill has a higher share of householders 65 years and over with incomes below \$50,000 (64%), compared with Cincinnati (62%) and Hamilton County (54%). All of College Hill's cost-burdened households have an income less than \$50,000.

### Cost-burdened Renters and Owners by Age

(cost-burdened households by renter/owner status and age of householder)

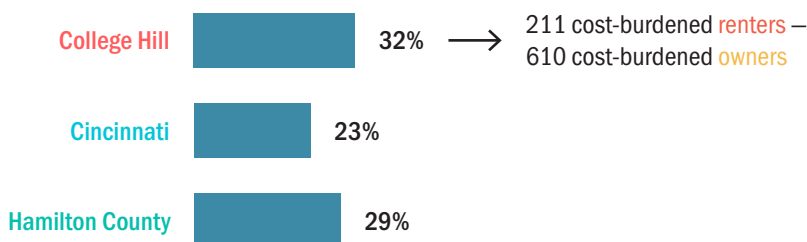
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Cost-burdened Households Over 65 Years Old

(percent of all cost-burdened households with head of household over 65 years old)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



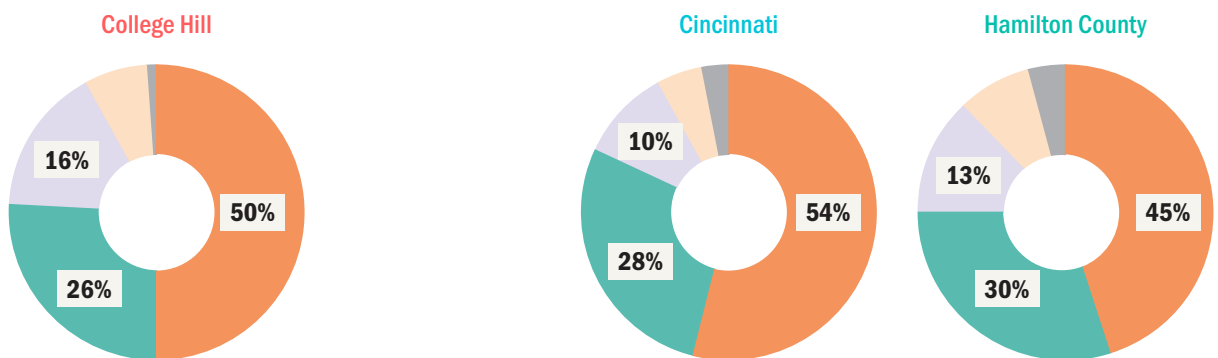
## Half of College Hill's cost-burdened households have an income of less than \$20,000

Half of College Hill's cost-burdened households have an income of less than \$20,000, compared with 54% in Cincinnati and 45% in Hamilton County. College Hill has a lower share of cost-burdened households with an income between \$20,000 and \$35,000 (26%) compared with Cincinnati (28%) and Hamilton County (30%) and a higher share of cost-burdened households with an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (16%) compared with Cincinnati (10%) and Hamilton County (13%).

### Income of Cost-burdened Households

(percent of cost-burdened households by household income)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Number of cost-burdened households in College Hill in each income category:

1,288 cost-burdened households with incomes less than \$20,000

→ 853 cost-burdened renters – 435 cost-burdened owners

673 cost-burdened households with incomes between 20,000 and \$35,000

→ 357 cost-burdened renters – 316 cost-burdened owners

405 cost-burdened households with incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000

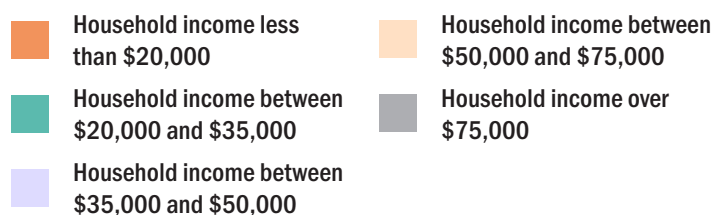
→ 77 cost-burdened renters – 328 cost-burdened owners

184 cost-burdened households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000

→ 44 cost-burdened renters – 155 cost-burdened owners

49 cost-burdened households with incomes over \$75,000

→ 44 cost-burdened renters – 5 cost-burdened owners



## College Hill has a relatively high share of cost-burdened owners with an income between \$35K - \$50K

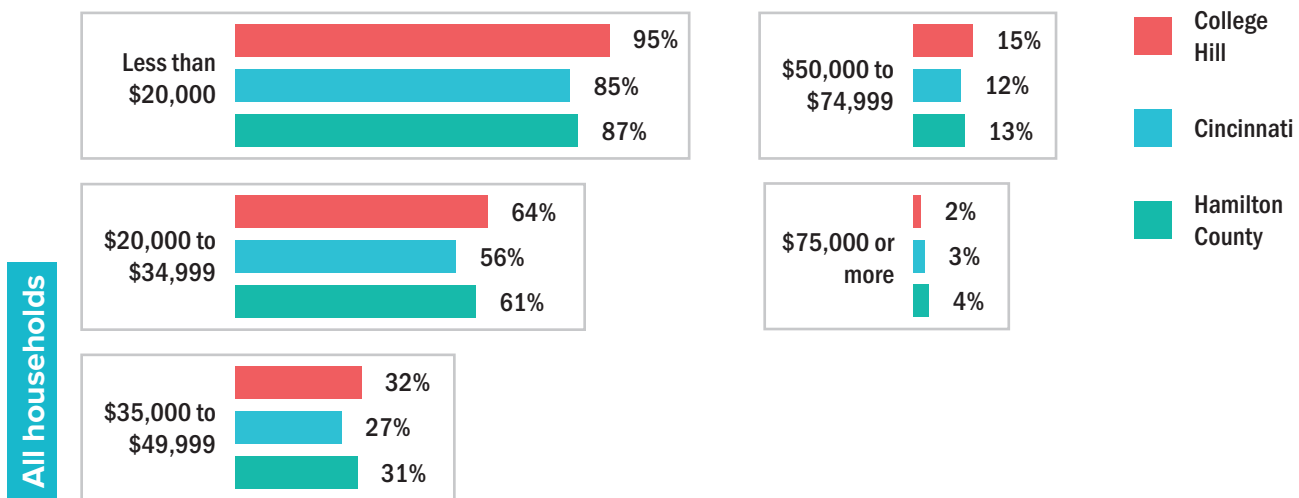
The percentage of cost-burden for renters (94%) and owners (99%) with incomes of less than \$20,000 and renters (62%) and owners (66%) with income between \$20,000 and \$35,000 in College Hill is relatively similar to Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Renters with an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (13%) are likely to be cost-burdened in College Hill, which is significantly lower than in Cincinnati (21%) and Hamilton County (28%).

Owners with an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (49%) are likely to be cost-burdened, which is significantly higher than in Cincinnati (40%) and Hamilton County (35%).

Owners in all income categories under \$50,000 are more likely to be cost-burdened than owners with similar incomes in Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

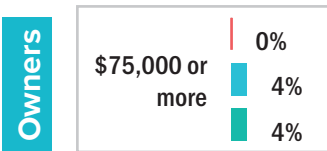
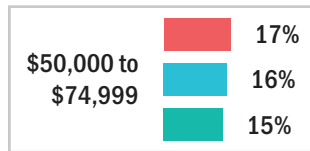
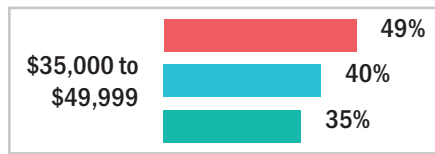
**Likelihood of Household Cost-burden by Income**  
 (percent of households in each income category that are cost-burdened)  
 Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table S2503)



### Likelihood of Owner Cost-burden by Income

(percent of owner households in each income category that are cost-burdened)

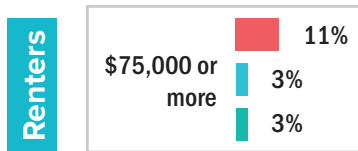
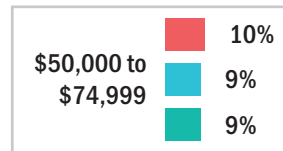
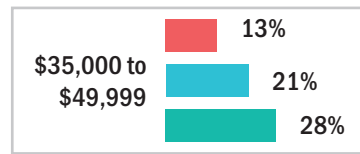
Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



### Likelihood of Renter Cost-burden by Income

(percent of renter households in each income category that are cost-burdened)

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



# Community Insights

## Focus Groups and Interviews

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## Feedback Meetings

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## Community Survey

In addition to the Data and Market Analysis, this Study included opportunities to hear from College Hill residents and community stakeholders through focus groups, one-on-one interviews, feedback meetings, and a community survey.

# Focus Groups and Interviews

The Community Building Institute conducted a series of 10 interviews and 7 focus groups in order to provide community-based context for the data and market research. Interviewees included representatives from the College Hill Forum, College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, representatives from the faith community in College Hill, representatives from the College Hill Business Association, College Hill residents, a local school representative, and developers who have recently completed, or are currently working on, housing projects in College Hill. The focus groups also included representatives from the College Hill Forum, the College Hill Business Association, the College Hill Ministerium, residents from the College Hill Community at large, and developers who have recently completed, or are currently working on, housing projects in College Hill.

The interviews and focus groups were not intended to be statistically representative of the entire College Hill community, however, but they do help to unpack housing trends the data and market research presented and understanding of how those translate into real-life experiences in the community. In particular, the conversations focused on perceptions and experiences with housing affordability in College Hill.

The interviews and focus groups considered the College Hill housing market overall as well as the role of College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (College Hill CURC) in particular as the neighborhood's community development corporation.

For a full summary of interview and focus group insights, please see the **Appendix**.

## Focus Group and Interview Highlights

1. Residents and stakeholders value that College Hill is a solid middle-class neighborhood and has been able to maintain a positive trajectory over the last several decades.
2. Residents and stakeholders value the economic and racial diversity of College Hill.
3. Residents and stakeholders recognize that College Hill CURC has significant property control on Hamilton Avenue and recognize the significant, positive impacts College Hill CURC has made in the business district. There are mixed opinions about College Hill CURC's capacity and role as the dominant property owner in the district moving forward.
4. While residents and stakeholders expect College Hill CURC to stay focused on the business district, they see a possible role in housing and support for mixed-income housing on Hamilton Avenue.
5. Residents and stakeholders see the need for supporting the College Hill legacy renters and owners, and value their long-term, steadfast presence in the community.
6. Residents and stakeholders appreciate the new additions in the business district. There is also demand for more service-based businesses which would support quality of life and basic needs of neighborhood residents. People interviewed want long-time, Black, and women-owned businesses to be supported and successful.

# Feedback Meetings

In March 2022, the Community Building Institute and LISC conducted 4 community feedback meetings to present initial market analysis, census data, interview, and focus group feedback. Meetings were held at the monthly College Hill Forum, the College Hill Ministerium, the College Hill CURC property committee, and an open community forum hosted at College Hill Presbyterian Church.

The preliminary Data and Market Analysis, Focus Group and Interview Highlights, and the direction of recommendations were presented for feedback at each meeting. At meetings, a draft guiding vision was shared: Maintain College Hill as a functioning middle-income community so it continues to be a neighborhood where Black wealth is created through homeownership and it maintains its balance. Draft recommendations were also shared:

- Continue to be open to first-time and new (to College Hill) home buyers
- Support cost-burdened residents
- Maximize valuable small multi-family stock
- Expand housing options

Feedback from these sessions was used to create the final Study recommendations.

# Community Survey

The College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation conducted a community survey in late 2021 and early 2022. The survey was intended to help the College Hill CURC understand community perceptions, needs, and a vision of College Hill. Questions were added to the survey to understand housing perceptions.

## Community Survey Highlights

- The cost of housing is top of mind for College Hill residents and community members. The cost of housing was the most common response to this question: When choosing where to live, what are the five most important factors for you and the members of your household? 79% of respondents chose “cost I can afford” as a factor.
- The survey asked whether the College Hill Business District had sufficient affordable housing. Responses depended in the income of respondents. Lower income respondents were more likely to say that the business district did not have sufficient affordable housing while higher income respondents were more likely to say that it did. Middle income respondents were likely to be neutral on the question.
- Top 3 responses to the question: “When choosing where to live, what are the five most important factors for you and the members of your household? Please select only five options.”
  - 79% selected "cost I can afford" and a food source, like a grocery or market
  - 75% selected "like the neighborhood"
  - 68% selected "close to shops, restaurants, and other businesses"

# Themes

These themes bring together the Data and Market Analysis to identify the opportunities and issues in the College Hill housing market. Recommendations are guided by the following themes.

## Theme 1

College Hill is a solid middle-class neighborhood and has been able to maintain a positive trajectory over the last several decades.

## Theme 2

While rising home values are the mark of a strong housing market, rising costs can also provide challenges to some College Hill households.

## Theme 3

Housing stock in College Hill is predominately single-family and more than 50 years old. New housing options can help to attract new people to College Hill while also meeting the needs of its existing households.

## Theme 4

College Hill is a racially and economically diverse neighborhood on the whole, but race and income varies widely by Block Group across the neighborhood.

## Theme 5

College Hill CURC has significant property control on Hamilton Avenue and has made a significant positive impact in the business district. Other partners provide housing resources and assistance throughout the neighborhood.

## Theme 6

College Hill residents prioritize cost, the neighborhood, and proximity to shops, restaurants, and other businesses when choosing a place to live.



## Theme 1

College Hill is a solid middle-class neighborhood and has been able to maintain a positive trajectory over the last several decades.

### Population growth

- Population growth in College Hill rebounded between 2010 and 2020, growing faster in College Hill than in Cincinnati and Hamilton County.
- Based on feedback from focus groups and interviews, the positive momentum in the business district has increased demand for housing.

### High homeownership rates

- College Hill's homeownership rate (75%) and Black homeownership rate (48%) remains relatively high when compared with Cincinnati's homeownership rate (51%) and Black homeownership rate (25%).

### Rising sale prices and rents

- Median single-family home sales hit a high of \$170,000 in 2021, up from \$70,000 in 2014. In all but one year between 2014 and 2021, home sale prices had a double-digit annual increase.
- Median gross rent increased 7% to 23% between 2010 and 2019, dependent on a unit's location in College Hill.
- College Hill homes are relatively affordable, however are becoming less so in comparison to the rest of Cincinnati. The median single-family home sale price remains lower than the City of Cincinnati overall median, though the gap is decreasing. The median single-family home sale in College Hill was 33% lower than in Cincinnati in 2014 and in 2021 it was just 19% lower.
- Based on feedback from focus groups and interviews, rising home prices were viewed positively. There was also concern from existing residents regarding the affordability of their home, if they were purchasing it now.
- Feedback from focus groups and interviews showed residents and stakeholders alike are conscious of not wanting to price people out of higher housing costs and pricing people out of the neighborhood. At the same time they do not want to risk the community falling into a cycle of decline. Balancing this can be a difficult task.

## Theme 2

While rising home values are the mark of a strong housing market, rising costs can also provide challenges to some College Hill households.

### Household income

- Rising home prices do not match the rate of income increases. In 2019, the median household income for all households was slightly lower than in 2009 (adjusted for inflation). Owner median household income between 2009 and 2019 decreased dramatically (varies by Census Tract; greatest decrease was 53%).

### Housing cost burden

- More than one-third of all College Hill households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs.
- The number of cost-burdened homeowners increased 51% between 2009 and 2020.
- 43% of all renters are cost-burdened (1,360 renter households), spending more than 30% of household income on housing.
- 30% of all owners are cost-burdened (1,239 owner households) spending more than 30% of household income on housing. These 1,239 owner households that are cost-burdened make up 48% of all households experiencing cost burden in College Hill. This share of cost-burdened households that are owners is significantly higher than in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In Cincinnati, only 26% of cost-burdened households are owners. In Hamilton County, 38% of cost-burdened households are owners.

- The number of cost-burdened owners is growing in College Hill, while the number is decreasing significantly in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In 2009, 21% of owners were cost-burdened growing to 27% in 2019. Between 2009 and 2019, the share of owners that were cost-burdened decreased 7 percentage points in Cincinnati (31% to 24%) and Hamilton County (27% to 20%). In 2009, the percentage of owners that were cost-burdened in College Hill (21%) was lower than both Cincinnati (31%) and Hamilton County (27%). In contrast, by 2019, the percentage of owners that were cost-burdened in College Hill (27%) was higher than both Cincinnati (24%) and Hamilton County (20%).
- Cost-burden is not only a problem for lower income households. More than a quarter (26%) of cost-burdened households have an income between \$20,000 and \$35,000 and 16% have an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000. For context, the latter range includes the median household income for the City of Cincinnati: \$42,663.

### Affordable housing

- Housing Choice Vouchers support 799 very-low income households afford housing in College Hill in 2020.
- In College Hill, four housing projects provide 372 units of publicly subsidized housing.
- College Hill CURC is investing in affordable housing in the College Hill Business District. Developments include Dixon, Hollywood Apartments, Marlowe Court, Dow's Corner, and Doll House. See the **College Hill Business District** map for a detailed breakdown of property ownership and building locations.

## Theme 3

Housing stock in College Hill is predominately single-family and more than 50 years old. New housing options can help to attract new people to College Hill while also meeting the needs of its existing households.

### Housing stock

- College Hill is a predominately single-family neighborhood with more than two-thirds of the housing stock being single-family homes (67%) which is significantly higher than Cincinnati (44%) and higher than Hamilton County (63%).
- The share of housing units in multi-family buildings (3 + units) in College Hill (31%) is significantly lower than Cincinnati's (47%).
- Less than 10% of College Hill's housing units were built after 1990. Nearly 90% of units were built before 1970.

### Population age

- College Hill has a higher share of population age of 55 and over (32%) in comparison with Cincinnati (24%) and Hamilton County (29%).
- In much of College Hill, householders over age 65 are much more likely to be homeowners. In three of five College Hill Census Tracts (81, 82.01, and 111), the rate of homeownership for householders over age 65 is greater than 85%.
- Based on feedback from focus groups and interviews, transitional housing for retired professionals is seen as a missing housing type in the neighborhood. The overall opinion is current owners would not want to move into a rental. This would be a housing option in addition to those offered at Llanfair and Twin Towers.

### Institutional investor trends

- Between 2009 and 2022, 144 single-family homes were purchased by investors, removing these homes as opportunities for homeownership.

### Development opportunities

- Zoning in College Hill allows for higher density residential as well as mixed-use commercial and residential properties, primarily in and around the business district. In addition, few pockets of higher density zoning is located along major commercial corridors.
- Based on feedback from focus groups and interviews, there is not consensus on what types of additional housing College Hill needs. However, there is some consensus around the desire for mixed-income projects in the business district to complement the work already underway.

## Theme 4

College Hill is a racially and economically diverse neighborhood on the whole, but race and income varies widely by Block Group across the neighborhood.

### Neighborhood racial and economic diversity

- The overall population in College Hill is 60% Black and 33% white.
- The share of Black population throughout College Hill varies widely. Based on the smallest geography available, Census Block Groups in the business district and in the south east quadrant of the neighborhood (included in Census Tract 81) are 70% to 85% Black while Block Groups to the north, west, and south west are closer to 50% Black. Each Census Tract contains multiple Block Groups.
- The household median income ranges from a low of \$35,570 in Census Tract 84 to a high of \$65,781 in Census Tract 111.
- While College Hill is diverse on paper, not everyone feels there is a cultural and racial integration in College Hill. This is different and more apparent in particular quadrants of the community.

### Black-white trends

- While the population in College Hill remained majority Black between 2000 and 2020, a significant share (30%) of its white population was lost, mostly between 2000 and 2010 and at a significantly higher rate than Cincinnati and Hamilton County. White population decreases by Census Tract ranged from 17% to 40% between 2000 and 2020.

See the **Demographic and Housing Summary by Census Tract** map for a detailed breakdown of population, household, and housing unit characteristics by Census Tract.

## Theme 5

**College Hill CURC has significant property control on Hamilton Avenue and has made a significant positive impact in the business district. Other organizations provide housing resources and assistance throughout the neighborhood.**

### College Hill CURC

- The College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (College Hill CURC) supports affordable housing and commercial uses in the College Hill Business District. The mission of College Hill CURC is to revitalize the Hamilton Avenue Business District to strengthen the surrounding College Hill community. Recent successes include \$81.5 million in development since 2016
- Within the business district, five buildings contain 111 total housing units. Of those buildings, 109 units are affordable units, either naturally occurring affordable housing with rents affordable to lower income households or subsidized housing units.
- KeyMark will add another 26 affordable units. HaNoBe will add 171 market-rate units.
- Based on feedback from focus groups and interviews, residents and stakeholders feel that College Hill CURC's focus should be Hamilton Avenue and the business district but many believe College Hill CURC also has a role in supporting balanced growth and quality housing neighborhood-wide. This support may include acting as a convener of partners and as an advocate for policies and resources that support quality housing in the neighborhood.

See the **College Hill Business District** map in **Appendix** for a detailed breakdown of property ownership.

### Working in Neighborhoods

- Working In Neighborhoods (WIN) has been in College Hill since just after The Great Recession of 2008 to help stabilize and rebuild home values in the neighborhood.
- Since 2008, WIN has built and/or rehabbed 20 single family homes in College Hill and sold them to first time home buyers. Work by WIN has been focused on Cedar Avenue and the surrounding streets in the South east quadrant of the neighborhood.
- Building and rehabbing vacant houses, energy efficiency upgrades, foreclosure prevention counseling, homeownership classes, financial literacy training, and improved credit counseling are all a part of the efforts of WIN in College Hill.

### Other housing resources

- College Hill residents have access to residential tax abatements, the homestead exemption, and other assistance for both renters and owners. See Appendix for more information on Housing Resources for College Hill Residents.

## Theme 6

**College Hill residents prioritize cost, the neighborhood, and proximity to shops, restaurants, and other businesses when choosing a place to live.**

- When choosing a place to live, an affordable cost tops the list, however College Hill residents also prioritized the neighborhood ("like the neighborhood"), closeness to shops, restaurants, and other businesses.
- The College Hill Business District provides a range of neighborhood-serving businesses.
- Based on feedback from focus groups and interviews, residents and stakeholders appreciate the new business in the business district but also have a desire for more service-based businesses to support quality of life and basic needs of residents. Essentially people don't just want more restaurants and bars. Some desired businesses types mentioned include:
  - A food source, like a grocery or market
  - Pharmacy
  - Replacement of services lost by House of Joy leaving the community. These do not all have to be on Hamilton Avenue. House of Joy provided a number of services outside of worship gatherings every Sunday including adult and youth choirs, classes and fellowship, affordable housing for families, low-rent office space to aspiring businesses, and they sponsored several recovery groups. Residents and stakeholders expressed a need for College Hill CURC to develop better relationships with social service providers as partners.
  - Hobby/entertainment-based businesses.

# Recommendations

The following Goals and associated Strategies outline a set of actions that will ensure the neighborhood stays a vibrant place to live and also addresses the cost burden of existing residents. College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (College Hill CURC), the College Hill community, and other partners and stakeholders all have roles to play to ensure College Hill continues to be a functional middle-income community for current and future residents. The recommendations depend on strategic partnerships for implementation. College Hill CURC's focus should remain on the Business District and higher density developments. The Guiding Vision, Goals, and Strategies respond to the Themes emerging from data, interviews, focus groups, and the community survey.

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## Guiding Vision for Recommendations:

**Maintain College Hill as a functioning middle-income community so it continues to be a neighborhood where Black wealth is created through homeownership and it maintains its balance.**

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### Goal 1

**Continue to be a neighborhood open to first-time and new (to College Hill) home buyers.**

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### Goal 2

**Support housing stability for residents.**

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### Goal 3

**Maximize valuable small multi-family housing stock.**

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### Goal 4

**Expand housing options.**

## Goal 1

### Continue to be a neighborhood open to first-time and new (to College Hill) home buyers.

#### Housing Our Future Connection:

**Produce:** Increase access to lending products.

**Protect:** Expand homeownership opportunities and increase equitable wealth creation.

#### Connection with College Hill Themes:

College Hill is a solid middle-class neighborhood, however current and future homeowners are facing increasing challenges due to rising home costs.

Housing resources and assistance can help provide support for new homeowners in College Hill.

## Goal 2

### Support housing stability for residents.

#### Housing Our Future Connection:

**Preserve:** Provide home repair funding to low-income homeowners and small landlords. Strengthen code enforcement to identify properties in need of assistance.

**Protect:** Expand tax relief for vulnerable homeowners. Increase support for existing efforts that assist the most vulnerable households.

**Systems:** Create a revolving loan fund for repairs.

#### Connection with College Hill Themes:

More than one-third of College Hill households are currently cost-burdened and need support.

Organizations provide housing resources and assistance.



## Goal 3

### Maximize valuable small multi-family housing stock.

#### Housing Our Future Connection:

**Preserve:** Require long-term affordability in exchange for renovation assistance. Provide home repair funding to low-income homeowners and small landlords. Strengthen code enforcement to identify properties in need of assistance.

**Protect:** Target interventions to rapidly appreciating neighborhoods. Educate and incentivize landlords to accept vouchers.

**Systems:** Create a revolving loan fund for repairs.

#### Connection with College Hill Themes:

More affordable rental housing units are needed to meet the demands of existing residents.

## Goal 4

### Expand housing options.

#### Housing Our Future Connection:

**Produce:** Create new incentives for affordable housing.

**Systems:** Expand the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to ensure an increase in annual production of housing for very low-income households. Modify tax incentives and funding priorities. Amend zoning codes to allow for denser housing development. Create a low-interest acquisition and pre-development fund. Increase subsidy to developers when they include more affordable units.

#### Connection with College Hill Themes:

New housing options can help to attract new people to College Hill while also meeting the needs of its existing households. Production has been limited over the past 30 years.

Mixed-income housing can help to promote economic balance.

New housing options can add to the affordable supply while new units can support a vibrant business district, both priorities for College Hill.

## Goal 1

**Continue to be a neighborhood open to first-time and new (to College Hill) home buyers.**

This strategy will support College Hill's continued position as a stronghold of homeownership, especially Black homeownership.

**Potential Partners:**

College Hill Forum  
College Hill Ministerium  
Working in Neighborhoods

**Strategy 1a:**

**Reduce barriers to homeownership by connecting potential College Hill home buyers with down payment closing cost assistance along with homeowner education and counseling. Connect with banks that offer mortgage lending products designed to support moderate-income home buyers.**

**Relevant Data and Impact:**

The median income of owners is decreasing while single-family home prices continue to rise making it difficult for new homeowners to call College Hill home. This is especially true for first-time home buyers or buyers using traditional mortgage products like an Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan.

This strategy will maintain College Hill's owner-occupied housing stock.

**Potential Partners:**

College Hill CURC  
The Port

**Strategy 1b:**

**Create strategies to get investor owned properties into friendly ownership and out of institutional investor ownership. Strategies include moving properties from investor ownership to local, friendly ownership or convert back to homeownership. Create a proactive strategy to reduce future investor purchases of single-family homes.**

**Relevant Data and Impact:**

Institutional investors own 144 single-family homes in College Hill. Between 2018 and 2021, 22 - 25 homes were purchased by investors each year with the exception of 2020 (first year of the COVID-19 pandemic). Homes purchased by an investor become rental properties, reducing the opportunity for homeownership.

## Goal 2

### Support housing stability for residents.

This strategy will support the continued position of College Hill as a stronghold of homeownership, especially Black homeownership, and improve the housing stock in the neighborhood.

#### Potential Partners:

LISC Greater Cincinnati  
Working in Neighborhoods

#### Strategy 2a:

**Improve the quality of existing housing and stabilize homeownership through a home rehabilitation loan program. This program can provide financing which allows homeowners to pursue code compliance, health and safety concerns, facade improvements, and other home improvements, potentially increasing the value of the home. Such a program would be administered by a partner.**

#### Relevant Data and Impact:

College Hill had 276 residential buildings with building code enforcement issues between 2018 and 2022.

**Loan programs targeted to households with incomes under \$75,000 could address the needs of up to 1,200 owners.** In particular, a home rehabilitation loan program with low or no interest and flexible loan terms can address these code violations as well as providing financing for other repairs helping families maintain their homes, build and maintain generational wealth, and help stabilize College Hill. Paired with homeownership coaching, these programs can provide housing stability and financial sustainability for households.

#### Strategy 2b:

**Enhance housing stability for homeowners by connecting current and future homeowners with available resources.**

#### Relevant Data and Impact:

College Hill had \$5.7MM in residential abatements between 2016 and 2021, however in the last two years had only two abatements. The number of cost-burdened owners increased by 51% between 2009 and 2020. Connecting homeowners with information on available programs, such as residential abatements for new construction and rehabilitation, emergency assistance funding which includes mortgage support, utilities, and property tax assistance for those experience financial hardship due to Covid-19 like the homestead tax exemption will support continued equity building, especially for Black owners.

This strategy will help current homeowners stay in their homes, and help provide incentives for future homeowners looking to make College Hill home.

#### Potential Partners:

College Hill Forum  
College Hill Ministerium  
Working in Neighborhoods

This strategy will help current renters stay in their homes.

## Strategy 2c:

**Enhance housing stability for current renters by connecting with available resources.**

### Potential Partners:

College Hill Forum  
College Hill Ministerium  
Working in Neighborhoods  
LISC Greater Cincinnati

### Relevant Data and Impact:

More than 40% of College Hill renters are cost burdened with just under a quarter being severely cost-burdened with most incomes below \$35,000. Connecting renters with emergency assistance funding which includes mortgage support, utilities, and property tax assistance for those experience financial hardship due to Covid-19 will support continued housing stability by helping to keep renters in units. For the most up-to-date assistance available, visit Hamilton County's [www.513relief.org](http://www.513relief.org).

## Goal 3

### Maximize valuable small multi-family housing stock.

This strategy builds on the strength of small multi-family housing stock to preserve affordability in College Hill.

#### Potential Partners:

College Hill CURC  
City of Cincinnati  
LISC Greater Cincinnati

#### Strategy 3a:

**Create and preserve dedicated affordable housing units with existing housing stock by expanding access to capital for owners of unsubsidized affordable rental properties.**

#### Relevant Data and Impact:

Units in small multi-family buildings are more likely to be naturally affordable. There are limited financing options for owners of properties who are not participating in a subsidy program.

**Preservation of units in existing buildings with three to nine units could result in 1,100 affordable units.** In College Hill, many small multi-family buildings are locally owned. Investing in the ongoing maintenance of existing housing stock, these affordable units are more likely to be preserved.

#### Strategy 3b:

**Encourage landlords to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program to protect affordability for households using existing units.**

#### Relevant Data and Impact:

In 2020, there were 1,460 units with a monthly contract rent of \$600 or less and 2,590 units with a monthly contract rent of \$900 in College Hill. These numbers reflect all rental units in College Hill, including those rented by families with or without a voucher.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, fewer renters in College Hill were able to find a landlord accepting Housing Choice Vouchers. In 2020, 799 Housing Choice Vouchers were used by households in College Hill, down 6% from 2019. As rents increase, landlords have reason to increase rents and stop accepting vouchers. Encouraging landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher program is one strategy to ensure that people who want to live in College Hill are able to afford it.

This strategy maintains affordability for renters in College Hill.

#### Potential Partners:

College Hill Forum  
College Hill Ministerium

## Goal 4

### Expand housing options.

These strategies expand housing options in College Hill through housing production.

#### Strategy 4a:

**Explore more housing options for seniors, particularly for-sale options.**

#### Relevant Data and Impact:

More than a quarter of College Hill households are over 65 years of age with a home ownership rate of 75%, which is significantly higher than Cincinnati (60%). Currently 610 owners over 65 years old are cost-burdened.

Providing increased housing options for households over 65 years of age will likely increase the ability for households to find a home that fits their changing and expanding needs as they age. This allows housing options to become available to different or new households as seniors move into senior-friendly housing.

#### Strategy 4b:

**Increase housing options by increasing the production and supply of smaller units.**

#### Relevant Data and Impact:

[National trends](#) show high demand for smaller homes, lower cost of living, walkable neighborhoods, and places for people to age in place. In College Hill, 43% of households are single-person households with more than two-thirds of the housing stock being single-family homes. Increasing the number of smaller housing units can support the vibrancy of the College Hill business district while providing lower living costs.

One such housing option are Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). [AARP](#) has a number of ADU publications showing how ADUs can expand housing options for people of all ages. While not currently permitted in the City of Cincinnati, a report on Accessory Dwelling Units dated November 19, 2020 recommended staff pursue the inclusion of ADUs in the Zoning Code. ADUs provide a number of benefits, including providing more housing options in established neighborhoods such as College Hill.

#### Potential Partners:

College Hill CURC  
City of Cincinnati

This strategy supports the economic diversity of College Hill and expanded housing options.

**Potential Partners:**  
College Hill CURC  
City of Cincinnati

## Strategy 4c:

### **Support mixed-income housing to promote economic balance.**

#### **Relevant Data and Impact:**

College Hill is an established neighborhood meaning opportunities for new housing on vacant land is limited. While College Hill is racially and economically diverse on the whole, race and income varies widely by Block Group across the neighborhood. More than one-third of College Hill households are currently cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of income on housing. New housing construction and rehabbing of existing units help to promote a more even mix of home prices and rental rates, from affordable to market rate housing options promoting neighborhood-wide economic balance.

**New rental unit construction helps address the gap in affordable units to households with an income of less than \$35,000.** Based on the number of cost-burdened renters, there is an unmet need for affordable and available housing units for 853 renters with incomes of less than \$20,000 as well as 357 renters with incomes between \$20,000 and \$35,000. This recommendation does not intend to limit the production of market rate rental units, but does suggest a need and opportunity to provide units that are affordable to the majority of existing College Hill residents in addition to increased housing options.

#### **Affordable Housing Criteria:**

New affordable rental units for households with an income of less than \$35,000 are best located close to major commercial and transportation corridors. These housing options should be prioritized in blocks or Block Groups where the current share of subsidized housing units is relatively low in comparison to other areas of College Hill. Larger opportunity sites should include a mix of affordable to market rate home prices and rents.

# Appendix



# Interview and Focus Group Summary

- 1. Residents and stakeholders value College Hill as a solid middle-class neighborhood able to maintain a positive trajectory over the last several decades.**
  - People value that College Hill has been able to maintain a positive trajectory as a solid neighborhood; they recognize that there is positive momentum in the business district and demand for housing in the community.
  - Residents and stakeholders are conscious pricing people out of the community due to high housing costs yet at the same time they want to avoid putting the community into a cycle of decline. This is a difficult balance.
  - There is generally no consensus on what types of additional housing College Hill needs. However, there is some consensus around the desire for mixed-income projects in the business district to complement the work already underway.
  - People see transitional housing for retired professionals as an outage in the neighborhood. They don't see current owners wanting to move into rentals. This would be a housing option in addition to those offered at Llanfair and Twin Towers.
  - People both fear and are comforted by the rising single-family home values in College Hill. Some residents report they couldn't afford their home if they had to buy it again at current home sale prices.
- 2. Residents and stakeholders value the economic and racial diversity of College Hill.**
  - While College Hill is diverse on paper, not everyone feels there is a cultural and racial integration in the neighborhood. While College Hill is a racially and diverse neighborhood overall, race and income diversity varies widely at smaller geographies like blocks and streets.
  - Overall, the diversity of the neighborhood is not reflected in community leadership, most notably in the College Hill Forum and College Hill CURC staff and board. Many see the lack of Black community representation in the leadership of College Hill as a fundamental issue contributing to the balanced progress of the community.
  - Community engagement needs to go beyond social media and general "come all" invites to events. Relational, authentic, and intentional engagement needs to be a priority.
- 3. Residents and stakeholders recognize that College Hill CURC has significant property control on Hamilton Avenue and recognize the significant, positive impacts College Hill CURC has made in the business district. There are mixed opinions about the capacity and role of College Hill CURC as the dominant property owner in the district moving forward.**
  - Some feel College Hill CURC is overextended and owns too much property in the business district.
  - There is concern College Hill CURC cannot perform maintenance on their current properties.
  - Some residents and stakeholders shared concerns about College Hill CURC having too much control.

**4. While residents and stakeholders expect College Hill CURC to stay focused on the business district, they see a possible role in housing and support for mixed-income housing on Hamilton Avenue.**

- Overwhelmingly people feel that Hamilton Avenue should be the focus of College Hill CURC.
- Many believe College Hill CURC should support balanced growth and quality housing neighborhood wide, however they should not be building or owning housing. Some see the role of College Hill CURC as a convener of partners and advocate for policies and resources that support quality housing in the neighborhood.

**5. Residents and stakeholders see the need for supporting legacy renters and owners in College Hill, valuing their long-term, steadfast presence in the community.**

- College Hill CURC should work with partners to strategically address issues of legacy renters and owners.
- Support is needed for code enforcement and regulation of REITs and out of town landlords.
- Support is needed for local owners of small multi-family buildings, including "Cincinnati Fours" with four units in one building.
- First time home buyer assistance and financial literacy classes.

**6. Residents and stakeholders appreciate the new additions in the business district. There is also demand for more service-based businesses which would support quality of life and basic needs of neighborhood residents. People interviewed want long-time, Black, and women-owned businesses to be supported and successful.**

- People don't just want more restaurants and bars. Desired business types mentioned include:
  - A food source, like a grocery or market.
  - Pharmacy.
  - Replacement of services lost when House of Joy left the community. House of Joy provided a number of services outside of worship gatherings every Sunday including adult and youth choirs, classes and fellowship, affordable housing for families, low-rent office space to aspiring businesses, and they sponsored several recovery groups. These do not all have to be on Hamilton Avenue. Residents and stakeholders reported a need for College Hill CURC to develop better relationships with social service providers and partners.
  - Hobby/entertainment-based businesses.

## Map: College Hill Business District Housing Opportunities

Source: College Hill CURC, updated 8/2022



## Summary of Business District Housing Stock

**Dixon (#3/4)** has 16 units of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) without income restrictions or subsidy priced between \$650-800 (all 1-bedrooms).

**Hollywood Apartments (#39)** has 34 units of (NOAH) priced between \$500-600 (1-bedrooms); two 2-bedroom apartments priced at \$700.

**Marlowe Court (#56)** has 53 units of subsidized affordable senior studio, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom units. 1-bedroom priced around \$250-400.

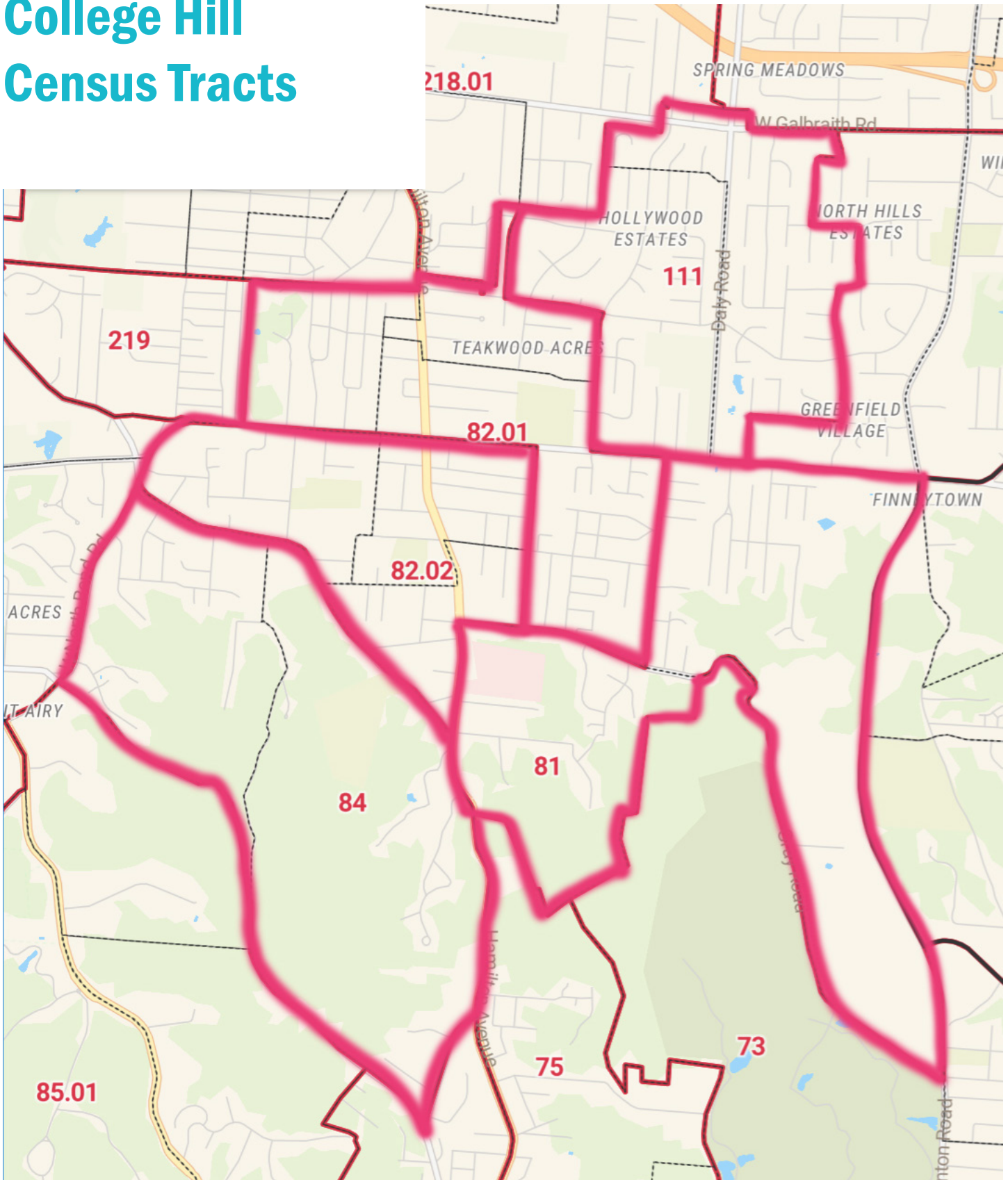
The **Dow's Corner (#50/51/52)** has 4 units; 3 are income-restricted at 80% area median income (AMI) or below and 1 is market-rate (\$995).

The **Doll House (#54)** has 2 units; 1 is restricted at 80% AMI or below and 1 is market-rate (2-bedroom at \$1,800).

**KeyMark (#25/27/28)** will have 26 units (7 will be 50% AMI or less, 19 will be 80% AMI or less).

**HaNoBe** will have 171 market-rate units.

# College Hill Census Tracts



# Housing Resources for College Hill Residents

## ■ Residential Tax Abatement

When you build a new home or invest in renovations, your property taxes can go up. The City of Cincinnati's Residential Property Tax Abatement allows owners to pay taxes on the pre-improvement value of their property for 10-15 years. Property tax abatement is available for any increased valuation that results from improvements to the property for new construction and renovation. [More information](#), including a program overview and application, is available on the City of Cincinnati's website.

## ■ Homestead Tax Exemption

The Homestead Exemption allows low-income senior citizens and permanently and totally disabled Ohioans to reduce their property tax bills by shielding some of the market value of their homes from taxation. [More information](#), including a program overview and application, is available on the Hamilton County Auditor's website.

## ■ Other Housing Resources

Mortgage, rent, and utility programs to designed to keep families safe in their homes by helping with rent, mortgage, utilities, and eviction prevention are available in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. [More information](#) on a range of programs is available at LISC Greater Cincinnati's website.