



# **A Community First Affordability & Budget Stabilization Plan for District 8 and Orange County**

*Protecting Working Families While Growing Responsibly*

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When I speak with residents throughout District 8 including Meadow Woods, Southchase, Hunters Creek, Wyndham Lakes, Sawgrass, Moss Park, and Lake Nona, I continue hearing the same concern repeated in different forms. Families feel like Orange County is growing around them faster than they can financially keep up with. Residents are watching rent increase, insurance premiums rise, traffic worsen, and the overall cost of living become heavier every single year. Many people no longer feel like they are simply trying to get ahead. They feel like they are trying to avoid falling behind. I believe the people of District 8 are not against growth. Most residents understand that Orange County is expanding rapidly and that economic investment will continue flowing into our communities. The real concern is whether the people who already live here will actually benefit from that growth or eventually become displaced by it. That is the conversation many working families are quietly having throughout our neighborhoods today. This

issue is larger than budgeting alone. It is an affordability crisis that affects transportation, housing, public safety, youth opportunity, infrastructure, healthcare access, and economic stability. Many families are balancing rising rent or mortgages, utility bills, childcare costs, fuel expenses, tolls, insurance increases, and inflation on everyday necessities while wages continue struggling to keep pace with the actual cost of living in Central Florida. That is why I believe District 8 needs a long term community first affordability strategy rooted in transparency, prevention, stability, and responsible development. My goal is not to stop growth. My goal is to make sure growth finally works for the people who already call these communities home.

## **The Current Reality Facing District 8**

Areas like Lake Nona continue seeing major investment through Medical City, expanding commercial corridors, and private development projects. While that growth creates jobs and attracts outside opportunity, it also raises surrounding property values, rental prices, and long term affordability concerns for nearby residents. Communities like Meadow Woods, Southchase, Wyndham Lakes, Sawgrass, and portions of Hunters Creek continue experiencing infrastructure strain, traffic congestion, affordability pressure, and fears surrounding displacement. Many working class residents now question whether their children will even be able to afford living in the same communities they grew up in. Orange County has already invested millions into affordable housing programs, homelessness prevention services, transportation safety improvements, and workforce housing initiatives. Those investments matter and deserve recognition. However, the scale and speed of growth occurring throughout South Orange County requires deeper structural solutions that directly protect residents before displacement accelerates further. Transportation has also quietly become one of the largest financial burdens on working families. Residents commuting between Meadow Woods, Southchase, Lake Nona, the airport corridor, and downtown Orlando are spending significant amounts every month on fuel, tolls, insurance, maintenance, and lost

time in traffic. Transportation is no longer simply an infrastructure issue. It is a quality of life issue and an affordability issue.

*“The future of District 8 should not be built around pushing working families further away from opportunity. It should be built around bringing opportunity directly into the communities that already exist.”*

## **Current Efforts Already Underway**

Orange County has already acknowledged affordability and housing instability as major concerns through recent budget allocations focused on workforce housing, homelessness prevention, behavioral health services, transportation safety improvements, and infrastructure modernization projects. Current county efforts include affordable rental development, housing rehabilitation programs, eviction prevention assistance, roadway upgrades, pedestrian safety improvements, and expanded community outreach initiatives. The Orange County Sheriff’s Office, community nonprofits, workforce organizations, and local educational institutions have also continued investing in youth mentorship programs, career exposure opportunities, and prevention focused initiatives aimed at strengthening long term neighborhood stability. The problem is not that nothing is being done. The problem is that many residents still feel disconnected from these resources or unable to fully benefit from them consistently. That is why I believe the next step is not simply spending more money. The next step is building smarter systems that directly stabilize the people already living in these communities before rapid growth creates even greater economic separation throughout District 8.

## **My Community First Affordability Plan**

My approach focuses on three major priorities. Stabilize communities. Lower the actual cost of living. Create long term ownership opportunities for residents. The first step is establishing Community Stability Zones throughout high growth areas including

Meadow Woods, Southchase, Wyndham Lakes, Sawgrass, Moss Park, Hunters Creek, and areas surrounding Lake Nona expansion. These zones would ensure that future development projects receiving public support or county incentives directly contribute back into the surrounding community instead of operating independently from it. Developers benefiting from public infrastructure should be required to include long term workforce housing protections for teachers, nurses, airport employees, hospitality workers, first responders, construction workers, and other essential employees who keep Orange County functioning every single day. I also support property tax stabilization protections for longtime homeowners, expanded rental assistance partnerships, senior housing protections, and stronger anti displacement support systems for families facing sudden financial hardship. I also believe development should create opportunity pipelines for local residents instead of simply attracting outside investment. That includes apprenticeship programs, trade partnerships, local hiring agreements, youth mentorship opportunities, and direct career pathways connected to institutions like Lake Nona Medical City, Valencia College, UCF, and regional employers throughout Orange County.

## **Lowering the Cost of Living**

Affordability is bigger than housing alone. Families are financially strained by transportation costs, utility expenses, healthcare access limitations, and long commutes that reduce both income and quality of life. That is why I support expanded Lynx connectivity between Meadow Woods, Southchase, Lake Nona, and surrounding employment corridors. I also support neighborhood based transportation solutions including micro transit systems, safer pedestrian infrastructure, improved roadway lighting, and expanded community access points designed around people instead of only traffic flow. I believe District 8 should also pursue neighborhood service hubs that combine childcare resources, workforce services, healthcare access, educational support, and small business spaces directly within local communities. Residents should not have

to drive across Orange County simply to access basic services that could exist closer to where they already live. Additionally, I support energy efficiency partnerships, weatherization programs, and utility assistance initiatives that help families reduce long term monthly costs. Direct financial relief is not only created through wages. It is also created through lowering the everyday costs people carry each month.

## **Building Wealth Without Displacement**

One of the biggest mistakes governments often make is treating affordability as permanent dependency instead of long term empowerment. My vision for District 8 is centered around helping residents build ownership, stability, and generational opportunity within the communities they already call home. I support exploring community land trusts, cooperative housing models, shared equity homeownership opportunities, and resident investment participation connected to redevelopment projects. Communities should not simply watch development happen around them. They should be able to benefit from that growth financially and economically. District 8 is also filled with entrepreneurs, especially throughout Black, Brown, immigrant, and working class communities. I believe local businesses are one of the strongest foundations of neighborhood stability. That is why I support local business grants, startup incubators, reduced permitting barriers, cultural business protections, and small business affordability initiatives focused on helping neighborhood entrepreneurs survive and grow. Long term affordability ultimately depends on whether residents can build stable futures for themselves and their families. That means creating stronger career pipelines for young people, supporting workforce development, and making sure the next generation sees opportunity within District 8 instead of feeling forced to leave it behind.

## **Transparency & Accountability**

One of the most common frustrations residents express is feeling excluded from major development conversations until decisions are already finalized. I believe transparency must become a core part of responsible leadership. Residents deserve clear communication regarding where funding is going, who benefits from major projects, how developments impact surrounding neighborhoods, and what protections exist for current residents. That is why I support quarterly affordability reports, transparent development impact reviews, multilingual community engagement, public budget workshops, and neighborhood advisory boards directly connected to planning discussions throughout District 8. Strong communities are built when residents feel informed, respected, and included in shaping the future around them.

## **Final Vision Statement**

I believe District 8 can become a model for responsible and community centered growth throughout Orange County. Not by stopping development, but by finally making sure development works for the people already living here. The goal is simple. Protect working families. Preserve cultural identity. Reduce financial pressure. Create ownership opportunities. Strengthen transportation access. Expand youth opportunity. And build communities where residents can still afford to live, grow, raise families, and build futures. Because success should never be measured only by rising property values or new construction projects. Real progress is measured by whether working families can still afford to remain part of the communities they helped build. If growth comes at the expense of the people, then we are not building stronger communities. We are simply building exclusion more efficiently. That is not the future I believe District 8 deserves. I believe District 8 deserves growth with dignity, stability, transparency, opportunity, and community at the center of every decision we make.

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## **Sources & Existing County Efforts**

Orange County FY 2025 and 2026 Adopted Budget Reports

Orange County Housing & Transportation Investment Initiatives

Orange County Open Government Budget Resources

Orange County Workforce Housing Programs

Orange County Accelerated Transportation Safety Program

Orange County Community & Infrastructure Development Reports

Lake Nona Medical City Economic Development Information

District 8 Public Safety & Youth Crime Prevention Action Plan