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I go to college in Austin right now, so I decided to focus on lead paint being an environmental hazard to the city. Lead paint is extremely toxic and can lead to lead paint poisoning. It was commonly used in buildings built before the 1960s, and its effects are irreversible, affecting all ages severely. It's a serious issue that although may not be the most fatal thing, can alter your health in significant ways, like high blood pressure in adults and behavioral issues in children.

Source: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/bldg-mgr-brochure.pdf>

In Austin, the areas where lead paint activity is high are located to the right of my school, UT Austin. There is one area, with a population of 2253, that is at the highest risk of lead paint exposure because they have the most buildings built pre 1960. That is extremely concerning especially with how dangerous lead paint poisoning is. The conglomerated area surrounding this red zone is highlighted in yellow and orange, indicating high levels of lead paint. Most of the houses in this area were built in the 1960s, which makes sense why they have such a high level of lead paint, according to Zillow databases. According to the EJ Screen, the more intense the color is, the higher the percentage of buildings in that area that were built pre 1960. There is a higher chance that low-income families reside in this neighborhood, because Austin is becoming gentrified and heavily populated. These are older homes that haven't been renovated or torn down, so lead paint continues to be quite prevalent throughout them. Even to the left of UT Austin, where a lot of student housing exists, the lead paint possibility is in the 81 percentile. I live in that area, West Campus, as well as many of my friends.

UT Austin is 1-2 miles away from the most impacted area, which is very close. I could take a 45 minute bus ride there, according to Google Maps. I live in West Campus, which is 3.9 miles away from this injustice.

The EPA and federal government have actually been interfering. Biden has actually granted Texas more than \$500 million in a new Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan. According to Fox 7 Austin, the EPA has mobilized the community into prioritizing disadvantaged communities which include high lead levels and environmental concerns. This aligns with the message of today's challenge: environmental justice and social justice are not mutually exclusive. This new Lead Pipe and Paint Plan aims to remove lead pipes and paint from homes, schools, childcare centers, etc. over the next decade. The EPA recognizes the disproportionate effects of lead paint and environmental safety on low-income and minority residences. They have pressured and come to successfully push into effect something that will address these concerns. The EPA says "non-Hispanic black people are more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic white people to live in moderately or severely substandard housing where the risks of deteriorating lead-based paint are higher."

Source:

<https://www.fox7austin.com/news/texas-to-receive-221m-to-replace-lead-pipes-as-part-of-biden-plan>

If the solution were up to me, I would allocate money to house these residents who live in such poorly constructed houses while I either tore them down and rebuilt, or removed the

lead paint successfully. It is unfair that households who already have it rough live in a home that is degenerating their health, creating more issues for them in the future. That's the problem with a lot of environmental justice concerns: they create this positive feedback loop for those suffering the most. The government could also provide compensation for the current state of their residencies and offer to pay for any future medical bills, because they failed to take any action for so long, like the Principles of Environmental Justice has stated.

# AUSTIN! LEAD PAINT IS STILL HERE

**A MAJORITY OF AUSTIN SITS IN THE 80-100TH PERCENTILE OF LEAD PAINT EXPOSURE.**

**THE EFFECTS OF LEAD PAINT POISONING ARE DANGEROUS AND IRREVERSIBLE, ESPECIALLY TOWARDS KIDS.**

## In adults

lead exposure increase the risk of:

- ischaemic heart disease
- stroke



PICTURE FROM WORLD HEALTH ORG ON TWITTER



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**archoncamp** Thanks to @epagov 's EJ Screen, I was able to see how many buildings in Austin lacked proper regulations and maintenance. Lead paint probably exists in most of Austin and change needs to happen faster. 10 years is too many years for the Lead Pipe and Paint Plan- why are we waiting so long for change?? Especially when it's mainly affecting households who are already suffering.

@friends\_earth @drbronner @turninggreenorg @captainplanetfdn #pgc2022 @kamalaharris @joebiden @traviscountyclerk @who @environmenttexas @cleanh2oaction

2 minutes ago