Before the Train
PREPARED BY THE HOUSING PRESERVATION PROJECT • SEPTEMBER 2012
We wish to express our gratitude for the help of a number of partners on this project.

The Central Corridor Funders Collaborative made this possible by providing key financial support.

Assistance in designing the project came from friends with the Family Housing Fund, Twin Cities LISC, the Twin Cities Community Land Bank, and HousingLink.

Staff from the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis shared data on licensed rental properties.

Kristen LaFavor of Design Ahead provided the graphic design and Gayle Thorsen of Shepard and Thorsen, Inc. provided editing help for this report.

A special thank you to Renee Klitzke of PERCH consulting and Dan Hylton at HousingLink for doing most of the heavy lifting on this report.

Housing Preservation Project
www.hppinc.org
September 2012
Executive Summary

THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR LIGHT RAIL LINE, running between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul, is scheduled to open in 2014. While anticipation runs high that the Central Corridor line will benefit surrounding neighborhoods, many fear there could be a downside—gentrification and the displacement of lower income residents. As land values rise along the Corridor, rents could increase and force lower income renters from the area. To help forestall that result, we need a deeper understanding of the private, unsubsidized rental market along the Corridor. That’s what this inventory report offers, along with the database that goes with it.

The unprecedented level of detail included here reveals important lessons we can use to craft strategies that minimize resident displacement. The first big take-away from the data is, while there’s a lot of affordable housing (by conventional definitions) within the Corridor, many of those units are in fact unaffordable to very low income residents in certain geographic sub-areas. A second lesson is that affordability and the types of rental buildings both vary considerably depending on where you are along the Corridor. Sub-areas within the larger geography can be quite different, and that fact will be crucial as we explore neighborhood protection strategies. The data in this report can help us assess the effectiveness of potential strategies to minimize gentrification.

In addition, the data will serve as a baseline to measure economic change over time. The database can be broken down and analyzed in a variety of ways, and we intend to freely share it with community partners.
Introduction

FOUR QUESTIONS PROMPTED the Central Corridor Rental Housing Inventory project:

1. How do we ensure the continued affordability of Central Corridor neighborhoods so current residents can remain and enjoy the benefits of the light rail investment?

2. Will property values and rents begin rising—if so, where, when, and by how much?

3. Can we target rental properties for acquisition by nonprofits to preserve affordability?

4. How can we analyze various housing strategies for their real-world impact on these neighborhoods?

Having as complete a picture as possible of the Central Corridor’s rental housing supply is valuable for a number of reasons. But until now that picture’s been incomplete. The real estate industry has extensive data about for-sale housing in the area, and there’s also a database on subsidized rental housing. But the part of the housing market where lower income residents are most vulnerable to economic change is the private unsubsidized rental market.

That’s the market segment this report covers. Private unsubsidized rentals are where lower income tenants are most at the mercy of rising land values and rents. And that’s where they can encounter competition for affordable units from higher income renters entering the neighborhood. Although St. Paul and Minneapolis have extensive databases of registered rental properties, they lack information on the single most important detail for this project: rents.

In nearly three quarters of transit-rich neighborhoods studied nationally, rents increased faster than in other parts of the same metro area. The impact on home prices was even more dramatic—nearly nine out of ten transit-rich neighborhoods experienced an increase in median home values greater than the increase in home prices in the metropolitan area. Gentrification occurred in an overwhelming majority of the newly transit-served neighborhoods that were studied.

—The Dukakis Center

National research on gentrification

National research suggests that concerns about gentrification are well founded. The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University did an extensive analysis of gentrification along transit corridors: “Maintaining Diversity in America’s Transit-Rich Neighborhoods: Tools for Equitable Neighborhood Change,” (October 2010). They concluded that in the majority of cases where new transit stations are built, neighborhood incomes go up and housing stock becomes more expensive. P.25.

They also conclude that neighborhoods with many renters were more susceptible to gentrification. However, economic change occurring in these neighborhoods was not necessarily accompanied by change in the racial/ethnic composition. There was no clear evidence of involuntary displacement, suggesting that the changing population in these areas may have more to do with succession or replacement than displacement. P. 29. Overall results, however, show that on average these areas became wealthier, rents were higher—and surprisingly, residents were more likely to own cars.
Background

The Housing Preservation Project produced this inventory in partnership with HousingLink, Twin Cities LISC, the Family Housing Fund, the Twin Cities Community Land Bank, and our funder--the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative. We aimed to create a rental housing inventory/database that gives as complete a picture as possible of the private rental market along the Corridor. This inventory takes a deep look at a slice of time during 2011, and includes rent levels in various geographic sub-areas and various building types. To the extent this exercise can be repeated in coming years, we can answer the questions: Are rents rising along the LRT line? By how much, and where?

How data was gathered and analyzed

First, we defined the Corridor as stretching from downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul with a half-mile buffer on each side of the rail line. A section of Snelling Avenue just north and south of the line was added, because Snelling’s heavy transit use tied it into the zone likely to be affected by gentrification. This addition created a buffer along Snelling Avenue, running one mile north and one mile south of the line, and a quarter mile east and west of Snelling.

We began by applying rent data from HousingLink to the list of Corridor properties available in the two city databases. Since this still covered a relatively small share of units and properties, we also did a phone survey of rental owners and managers. We hired PERCH Consulting to oversee the survey and gather results. Since our goal was a meaningful level of data for various geographic sub-areas of the Corridor and various building types, we gathered sufficient data to provide a statistically reliable sample for each category. While our data still covers only a fraction of the private rental market, the share of the market captured is substantial and provides a solid basis to draw conclusions.¹

¹ Combined HousingLink and Survey results cover 15% of all properties and 21% of all units. Data in larger property categories were oversampled; that is, data covered a significantly larger share of the units.

THREE MAIN PURPOSES OF THE PROJECT

First: Provide a baseline to measure neighborhood change.

Second: Enable groups such as the Land Bank and other nonprofits to identify individual rental properties for possible acquisition for preservation purposes.

Third: Provide a database of information, sortable in a variety of ways, to evaluate various housing strategies and their likely impact on local neighborhoods.
The PERCH survey was completed in late 2011 and the initial results compiled in January 2012. Data is broken down into six geographic sub-areas that are now widely recognized: Downtown Minneapolis, University and Environs, Midway West, Midway Central, Midway East, and Downtown St. Paul.²

Building types were divided into four categories: Medium to large apartment buildings, triplexes to small apartment buildings, single family homes and duplexes, and condos/townhomes. Within each geographic sub-area, rents can be divided into these building type categories.

One challenge in comparing the relative affordability of rents is the need for standardized data so units where tenants pay utilities can be compared with units where utilities are included in the rent. To ensure an “apples to apples” comparison, survey respondents were asked to indicate what percentage of utilities tenants were responsible for. An average percentage for each property type was then applied to utility allowances used by the St. Paul Public Housing Authority, and added to the appropriate unit’s base rent so that such rents always included utilities.

**Measuring affordability in terms of AMI (Area Median Income)**

One of our goals is to focus on the most affordable housing within the Corridor. Because there are advantages and disadvantages to the various ways to measure affordability, our report gets at that in two ways. Traditionally, government housing programs define levels of affordability in terms of the Metropolitan Area Median Income (AMI). For example, the Metropolitan Council defines affordable rental housing as housing where a household earning 60% of the AMI could afford the rent—that is, pay no more than 30% of their income for housing (the generally accepted threshold). On the other hand, government programs with the deepest subsidies, such as Public Housing or Section 8, commonly serve households with incomes in the 0-30% AMI range. Using the Metro AMI, the report can compare the mix of affordability along the Corridor and within sub-areas by separating out levels of affordability—units affordable to 30% AMI, 50% AMI, 60% AMI, 80% AMI, and higher-end units unaffordable to all these groups.³

² The University and Environs sub-area presents a special situation, with the predominance of student housing. The survey excluded formally designated student housing but of course many of the private rental units available to anyone in this sub-area are occupied by students.

³ These levels of affordability are typically used in HUD programs, and often in state and local housing programs as well.
The drawback with relying solely on the Metro AMI measure is that it tends to overstate the level of affordability in low income areas. Therefore, this report also examines levels of affordability based on the AMI for sub-areas—described below. This measure gives a better sense of how each sub-area’s private rental supply matches the need of the local population—as reflected through income levels.

**Focusing on private market housing**

Finally, it’s important to note that this report does not present the full story of the Corridor’s affordable rental housing supply, because it does not include the existing supply of subsidized rental housing. To provide a general sense of proportion, in the study area for this report there are approximately 6,000 subsidized rental units compared to 21,896 private market rental units. We focused on private market rents because they change readily as market conditions change. Generally, the rent restrictions on publicly subsidized rental units assure they remain affordable. But despite that, private owners can and do sometimes terminate rent restrictions and convert their buildings to market rate rents. Rising land values and rents along these new transit corridors can provide incentives for owners to do just that. The Housing Preservation Project has been analyzing all subsidized developments within the Corridor, and the potential for market rate conversion. Initial conclusions suggest that, while there is some risk of private owners converting subsidized buildings to market rate rents, the risk is low and limited to a handful of projects. This is largely because many projects remain bound by long-term program restrictions, and many projects are owned by nonprofit, mission-driven organizations with little or no incentive to convert to market rents.

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4 This measure actually overstates affordability in at least three ways: 1) it’s based on a regional standard that almost always will produce higher median incomes than in low-income neighborhoods, 2) the metro Area Median Income (AMI) standard is based on a HUD statutory definition that counts only incomes of families, excluding single person households, which if included would likely bring the median income down, and 3) the AMI is based upon a four-person household and is adjusted for household size using a standard formula that often does not accurately reflect actual variations in income by household size.

5 This is based upon aggregate data provided by the Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.
Presentation of Data

Affordability mix among private rental units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR DATA FALLS INTO THREE CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The mix of affordability among private rental units along Central Corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The mix of building types along the corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Landlord attitudes on the impact of the light rail on future rents and Section 8 voucher acceptance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1. Two Views of Affordability Corridor-Wide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (Regional point of view)</th>
<th>Surveyed units affordable at 60% of Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Median Income AMI at $82,700</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twin Cities Central Corridor Area (Local point of view)</td>
<td>Surveyed units affordable at 60% of Central Corridor Area Median Income AMI at $24,413 to $57,197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affordable to households at 60% AMI or Central Corridor AMI and below</th>
<th>Unaffordable to households at 60% AMI or Central Corridor AMI and below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24% affordable</td>
<td>76% unaffordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9% affordable</td>
<td>91% unaffordable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Levels of affordability along the corridor

Figure 1-A adds additional detail, by indicating what share of units are affordable to various income groups. Again, the two pie charts compare these levels of income and affordability from a regional income point of view (AMI) and a local income point of view (Central Corridor AMI).

First, from a Regional Income perspective: for a household with income equal to 30% of Area Median Income (AMI), considered extremely low income by HUD standards, only 8% of the unsubsidized units along the Corridor are affordable. A household with an income equal to 60% AMI has many more choices, as 76% of the units (the 8% affordable to 30% AMI, plus the 53% affordable to 50% AMI, plus the 15% affordable to 60% AMI) would be affordable. The pie slice labeled “not affordable to 80% AMI” means units only affordable to households with incomes above 80% AMI.

When the focus shifts to local incomes, the housing choices become much more constricted, particularly when looking at the lower income segments of local median incomes. No private units are affordable to a household at 30% CCMI. Even a household at 60% CCMI can afford only 9% of the units, as opposed to 76% of the units being affordable, based on 60% AMI.

NOTE: Percentages shown in each category are just for that increment, and are not cumulative. For example, 19% of units are affordable for families between 60% and 80% AMI. But of course such families could also afford units in the lower income categories; meaning that of all units, families at 60% AMI could afford 76% of the units (all of the units affordable at 60%, 50%, and 30% of AMI).
**Why use two standards for determining affordability?**

Each standard reveals different things. Measuring affordability with AMI is the standard measure used in government housing programs, and allows us to compare across sub-areas along the Corridor because each sub-area uses the same standard. So on Figure 1, (page 6) the left pie chart using AMI shows that Corridor-wide, three quarters of the private units are affordable given the broadest definition (60% AMI).

When the focus shifts to local sub-area median Incomes, presented Corridor-wide in Figures 1 and 1-A, suddenly the picture shifts from three quarters of the units being affordable to more than three quarters of the units being unaffordable. This reflects the low median incomes along Central Corridor, which range from $24,413 to $57,197 by sub-area, compared to a Twin Cities metro AMI of $82,700. Thus, rents are affordable to those moving into the neighborhood, but may not be for those trying to stay. This would be particularly true to the extent incoming residents reflect higher incomes more in line with the whole region. This could well be the case as the line is completed and demand to live along the Corridor grows.

**Looking at sub-areas of the Corridor: Understanding the next page**

Page nine shows the geographic subareas along Central Corridor used in this report (Figure 2). Figure 2-A on p. 10 indicates the share of units which are affordable for each of those subareas using the broadest definition of affordability, units affordable at 60% AMI. Generally speaking, the middle of the Corridor is the most affordable by this standard.
Figure 2. Six Central Corridor Sub-Areas

Figure 2. We have used the same geographic sub-areas along the corridor that were used in “The Big Picture Project: Aligning Housing Plans Along the Central Corridor”. (Twin Cities LISC, February 2012)
be considered affordable? Using this affordability definition, the Corridor running between Midway West and Midway East has the largest share of affordable units, while Downtown Minneapolis has by far the smallest share.

Figure 2-A. Share of Units Affordable by Sub-Area (60% Area Median Income and below)
A Deeper View: Levels of Affordability by Sub-Area

Figure 2-B (on page 12) presents a more complex view of affordability for each geographic subarea. The top row of piecharts show the distribution of units affordable at various income levels, based on the regional AMI. You can see at a glance that the affordability mix varies by subarea. The piecharts in the lower row provide the same analysis based on median incomes in each subarea. First impressions here can sometimes be misleading. For example, if units with rents above 80% CCMI are viewed as “high end,” it appears that the University sub-area is all high end, and that Midway East and Downtown St. Paul are mostly high end. However, keep in mind that this is partly due to the very low median incomes in these sub-areas. See the table to the right for median incomes by subarea.

The lower row of piecharts in Figure 2-B can be viewed as revealing how well rents in each sub-area measure up to the needs of households based on incomes in that sub-area. As you can see, Midway West and Midway Central come closest to matching rents with incomes. Both areas contain a high share of affordable units. University and Environs is shown as being completely unaffordable based on local income, though this is undoubtedly skewed by the high number of students in the area with very low incomes. Midway East, which looks very affordable by the standards of Metro AMI, now looks three quarters “unaffordable,” which again, is probably a reflection of the very low income levels in this area. Figure 2-C on page 13 presents the same information as Figure 2-B but in tabular form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Corridor Sub-Area</th>
<th>Sub-Area Median Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Minneapolis</td>
<td>$ 57,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and Environs</td>
<td>$ 24,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway West</td>
<td>$ 47,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway Central</td>
<td>$ 46,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway East</td>
<td>$32,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Saint Paul</td>
<td>$35,554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Central Corridor sub-area median income levels come from the Central Corridor Affordable Housing Coordinated Plan, “The Big Picture Project,” p. 15. Census block group level data was used from the 2009 American Community Survey (the most recent year in which data was sufficiently detailed) and then adjusted using standard methodology to fit the recognized subareas along Central Corridor.
Figure 2-B. Two Views of Affordability by Sub-Area (Percentage of surveyed units affordable to various area median incomes)
### Figure 2-C. Two Views of Affordability by Sub-Area

Nine percentages shown for each category are just for that category and are not cumulative.

#### Percent of surveyed units affordable at Twin Cities Metro Area median income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Corridor Sub-Area</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 30% AMI</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 50% AMI</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 60% AMI</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 80% AMI</th>
<th>Units Not Affordable at 80% AMI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Minneapolis</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and Environs</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway West</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway Central</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway East</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown St. Paul</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Percent of surveyed units affordable at Central Corridor median income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Corridor Sub-Area</th>
<th>Sub-Area Median Household Income</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 30% AMI</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 50% AMI</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 60% AMI</th>
<th>Units Affordable at 80% AMI</th>
<th>Units Not Affordable at 80% AMI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Minneapolis</td>
<td>$57,197</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and Environs</td>
<td>$24,413</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway West</td>
<td>$47,946</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway Central</td>
<td>$46,981</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway East</td>
<td>$32,202</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown St. Paul</td>
<td>$35,554</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3. Share of Units Affordable by Building Type
Percentage of surveyed units affordable at 60% AMI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Corridor Sub-Area</th>
<th>Single Family or Duplex</th>
<th>Small Apartment (3 to 9 Units)</th>
<th>Large Apartment (10+ Units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Minneapolis</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and Environs</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway West</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway Central</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway East</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown St. Paul</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The share of affordable units varies considerably by unit type and sub-area. It's interesting to note that in the middle of the Corridor (Midway West, Central, and East) single family/duplex units appear significantly less affordable than multifamily properties. In Downtown Minneapolis, affordability is concentrated in smaller apartment buildings rather than larger apartment buildings.

Single family/duplex buildings may be anywhere from 61% affordable to 100% affordable, depending on the area. Not surprisingly, the least affordable units are larger buildings in Downtown Minneapolis, with just 32% of the surveyed units meeting the definition of affordable.
Figure 3-A. Mix of Building Types by Sub-Area

Figure 3-A. Mix of building types by sub-area covers all units, those affordable to 60% AMI as well as higher end. There’s also an additional unit type—other (condo and townhome). We wanted to illustrate the building types that predominate (in terms of total units) in each sub-area, regardless of rent levels. What’s immediately evident is that rental units are concentrated in larger apartment buildings in all sub-areas except Midway East.
### Figure 3-B. Mix of Building Types by Sub-Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Corridor Sub-Area</th>
<th>Single Family or Duplex</th>
<th>Small Apartment (3 to 9 Units)</th>
<th>Large Apartment (10+ Units)</th>
<th>Other (Condo or Townhome)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Minneapolis</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and Environs</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway West</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway Central</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway East</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown St. Paul</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on data (number of units) from the City of Minneapolis and the City of St. Paul, supplemented by 2011 Q3 landlord survey data by Perch Consulting and analysis by HousingLink.

**Figure 3-B. Mix of building types by sub-area** presents the same information as Figure 3-A, but in tabular form. The focus is not on affordability, but on the mix of building types. In terms of units, most sub-areas are dominated by larger buildings. However, in Midway East, small and medium sized buildings make up 61% of the unit supply. Knowing the type of rental building that predominates and the type that provides most affordability in any sub-area is useful. For example, it could help in implementing a preservation-through-acquisition strategy.
Figure 4. Anticipated Rent Change by Landlords
What do landlords think about light rail and rent increases?

The data suggests that proximity to the line matters, with a much higher percentage of landlords within a quarter mile anticipating rent increases than landlords with buildings farther away.
Figure 5. Landlord Acceptance of Section 8 Vouchers

**Downtown Minneapolis**
- Listing indicates acceptance of Section 8: 20% (180)
- Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated: 80% (712)

**Midway West**
- Listing indicates acceptance of Section 8: 5% (25)
- Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated: 94% (426)

**Midway East**
- Listing indicates acceptance of Section 8: 20% (78)
- Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated: 80% (307)

**University and Environs**
- Listing indicates acceptance of Section 8: 37% (40)
- Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated: 63% (67)

**Midway Central**
- Listing indicates acceptance of Section 8: 24% (71)
- Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated: 76% (231)

**Downtown Saint Paul**
- Listing indicates acceptance of Section 8: 6% (108)
- Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated: 94% (1,596)

The bottom number in each section represents the total units advertised with HousingLink.

Figure 5. Landlord acceptance of Section 8 vouchers, shows where landlords along the Corridor appear to be most willing to accept Section 8 vouchers. This is important to voucher-holders, who often run into greater resistance by landlords when market conditions are strong and landlords can pick from many applicants. The results shown here are based on two things: landlord requests to advertise Central Corridor units through HousingLink, and whether those landlords indicated to HousingLink a willingness to accept Section 8 voucher-holders. The clearest indications of acceptance of Section 8 are in Midway East and Downtown Minneapolis, and to a lesser degree the University and Environs, and Midway Central. Note that the category of "Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated" doesn't mean landlords will not take Section 8 for the surveyed units, only that willingness to accept Section 8 has not been indicated to HousingLink. So, the percentages shown may underestimate the share of units available to voucher-holders. But this does suggest where Section 8 opportunities may be more available.

Although the limitations of this data prevent too much weight from being placed on any conclusions, it does seem probable that Section 8 acceptance appears to be highest in Midway East and Downtown Minneapolis, and much lower in Downtown St. Paul and in Midway West. This could change as market conditions change.

**NOTE:** The category “Acceptance of Section 8 not indicated” does not mean landlords are refusing Section 8 vouchers, only that Section 8 acceptance is unknown.
Recommendations for Follow-up

Our project sponsors have agreed that this inventory/database will be freely shared with community partners, subject to a data-sharing agreement. If you would like access to the inventory, contact HousingLink at [www.housinglink.org](http://www.housinglink.org) or 612-522-2500, for more information. We hope this data will serve as a community resource.

The inventory/database will only serve its purpose of measuring economic change over time in the Central Corridor rental market if the data gathered here is periodically updated. We see at least two ways to do this. At some point, the database needs to be replicated by capturing the same range of data as is captured here. The only way to adequately supplement existing data was to perform a phone survey of landlords—a fairly labor intensive and not inexpensive project. In the meantime, there may be more limited and general but still useful information that could provide some picture of changing rental rates within the Corridor, especially in comparison to other areas of the Twin Cities Metro Area. For example, HousingLink’s Twin Cities Rental Revue includes between 15,000 and 20,000 Metro Area rents each quarter, including 590 in the Central Corridor study area during the fourth quarter of 2011. This data would provide at least a general indicator of changing rents until a replication of this data project can be done.

ABOUT THE HOUSING PRESERVATION PROJECT

Founded in 1999, the Housing Preservation Project (HPP) is a nonprofit public interest advocacy and legal organization based in the Twin Cities, whose primary mission is to preserve and expand affordable housing for low income individuals and families.

We seek to prevent the loss of affordable rental housing and to foster expanded affordable housing opportunities. We further our goals by:

- Providing technical assistance to tenant advocacy organizations, community groups, attorneys, owners, housing funders, and policy makers
- Negotiating with property owners
- Pursuing litigation to uphold both local and national laws, enforce fair housing and affordable housing planning requirements, and to challenge NIMBYism by local groups opposing affordable housing
- Seeking local and national policy changes through legislative advocacy
- Educating the public about affordable housing issues
- Continual inventory and monitoring of the current supply of affordable housing
- Working with tenant advocacy organizations to organize and empower tenants

With a highly experienced staff and the use of cutting edge innovative strategies, the Housing Preservation Project has a track record of advocacy that produces concrete results for the communities we serve.

To learn more about us, please visit [www.hppinc.org](http://www.hppinc.org).