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### What do Renters Want: Renter Priorities and Neighborhood Organizations' Ability to Address those Issues

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## **What do Renters Want: Renter Priorities and Neighborhood Organizations' Ability to Address those Issues**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this capstone paper is to engage the rental population in two Minneapolis neighborhoods and get renter resident feedback on issues of local concern, and potential programs that a neighborhood organization could offer to ameliorate those issues. The study consisted of surveys collected from tenants and property owners in two neighborhoods in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The results of these surveys will help to guide the development of future neighborhood organization programming targeted towards the benefit of the rental population.

### **Introduction**

Neighborhood organizations representing community groups can offer community-based solutions to address problems and needs within a neighborhood. While some of the more significant contributions by these groups are in community social activities, improving communication among residents or in acting as the intermediary between residents and municipal government (Hur and Bollinger, 2015), some neighborhood organizations have grown financial capacity to be able to affect physical development. This is particularly the case in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota with its Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). The NRP was developed in 1990, and created “the most financially empowered structure of neighborhood governance in any American city.”<sup>1</sup> With this financial empowerment, the city mandates that programs and services offered by individual neighborhood organizations reflect the desires and needs of the local residents learned through various forms of community engagement and outreach to individuals and neighborhood groups. Outreach activities include meetings, surveys, events, focus groups and other efforts managed by the respective neighborhood organization. Using the information gathered in these outreach efforts, neighborhood organizations work with the city to develop financial programs targeted towards addressing identified issues, needs, and opportunities. With regards to NRP funds, there is a requirement to diversify participation and outreach “beyond the circle of ‘usual suspects’ of familiar neighborhood leaders.”<sup>2</sup> In the two Northeast Minneapolis neighborhoods of St. Anthony East and Beltrami, as in most neighborhoods, these “usual suspects” have historically been homeowners, despite both neighborhoods being majority renter. In order to correct the historical focus that was targeted towards, and benefitted, primarily homeowners, this study was designed to engage the rental population in two

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<sup>1</sup> Fagotto, E., & Fung, A. (2006). Empowered participation in urban governance: the Minneapolis neighborhood revitalization program. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30(3), 638-655.

<sup>2</sup> Fagotto, E., & Fung, A p 642

Minneapolis neighborhoods and get renter resident feedback on potential future programming. The St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association (SAENA) and Beltrami Neighborhood Council (BNC) coordinated with the researcher to develop a survey. The results of this survey are intended to aid the neighborhood groups in developing programming as well as to add to the established literature concerning neighborhood organizations and renter populations. The purpose of this study is to identify issues of concern for Minneapolis renter populations, with the objective of proposing recommendations for future strategies to address those issues.

### **Literature Review**

The United States has a robust tradition of local government in its cities and towns. In many of those cities — from long-established east coast cities to those newer cities in the American West—recent decades have seen a further opportunities for engagement that invite residents to participate directly in urban decision-making at the neighborhood level. Citizen participation in local decision-making made great strides as a policy initiative in both national and state programs after policies in the 1960s and 1970s reinvigorated community participation in neighborhood planning (Fainstein and Hirst, 1996; Berger et al., 2000). Per one measure of documenting this rise, the Community Association Institute estimates that the number of association-governed communities in the United States has grown more than 32-fold from 1970 to 2013<sup>3</sup>. As Kathi and Cooper (2005) noted, there are well over 150 mandates in federal legislation requiring increased citizen engagement and feedback from the federal to the local level. Communities create associations for various reasons, including building a sense of community through engagement, serving as a social network, maintaining the physical quality of the neighborhood collectively, helping protect property values, dealing with external issues such as land development/redevelopment projects, and facilitating municipal services. Although each community association may have different goals to achieve and its systems may differ from one another, community associations commonly seek to strengthen the local capacity of its citizens and their ability to affect future decision making in that neighborhood. Much of the literature regarding neighborhood associations argue that it is here, at the level of the neighborhood and locality, that residents encounter the most tangible consequences of public decisions and thus have the motivation and knowledge to engage higher levels of government as well as other citizens (Kotler, 1969; Berry et al., 1993). Berry et al. (1993) explored the relation between neighborhood organizations and the local administration in five American cities with highly structured and formal neighborhood governance arrangements. Strategies to involve stakeholders and citizens in the work of government are now recognized as components of a type of “new governance” that emphasizes horizontal collaboration among public agencies,

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.caionline.org/>

citizens and organizations, as opposed to more top-down bureaucratic models (Bingham et al., 2005).

If Alinsky (1971) saw the interaction between community organizations and city government as a relationship built on resistance and conflict, a more collaborative approach evolved after the 1970s (Kathi and Cooper, 2005). Logan (1990) says that while the most common opponents of neighborhood associations often includes local government, that same local government “is perceived as a political ally as often as it is seen as an opponent, and sometimes it is seen as both on the same issue.”<sup>4</sup> These efforts often take the form of crime-watches, neighborhood clean-ups, beautification projects, block parties or other opportunities for socialization, and more rarely, confrontation and protest. While most research looks at these local neighborhood organizations as playing an “intermediary” function between the neighborhood and the government, Chaskin and Greenberg (2013) argue that the neighborhood organization often functions at the interstices of public and private action, stressing the policy areas in which these organizations may engage more directly in governance decisions, as promoters of community development or as a force affecting zoning decisions and other land use policies (Logan & Rabrenovic, 1990).

As discussed, a reason for the rise in local neighborhood groups’ formation and capacity is the belief that community-based organizations are in tune and highly responsive to their local community which then enables them to serve residents more successfully. Despite this idea, however, the way that directors of community organizations view their neighborhood context, their constituents, and the community’s service needs may not coincide with the views of the residents in the neighborhoods. Kissane and Gingerich (2004) suggest that there can be huge discrepancies between organizational leadership and residents’ viewpoints on neighborhood issues. As they pointed out, further thought should be given about who are the actual stakeholders in such organizations and should shift research participants from the insiders (leaders and participants) to the outsiders (other residents in the community). While these organizations often have a volunteer board of directors and often are required to hold regular meeting open to the public, the question of who shows up and whose voice is heard still remains. As Goetz and Sidney (1994) note, it is often that the community organization has come to be dominated by property owners espousing an “ideology of property”<sup>5</sup> that holds the idea that too much rental housing leads to neighborhood decline. Affordable housing policies for renters were to be avoided, according to this dominant faction, because they increase the neighborhood’s concentrations of both poverty and transients who have no stake in the

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<sup>4</sup> Logan, J. R., & Rabrenovic, G. (1990). Neighborhood associations: Their issues, their allies, and their opponents. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 26(1), p. 91

<sup>5</sup> Goetz, E. G., & Sidney, M. (1994). Revenge of the property owners: Community development and the politics of property. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 16(4), p. 1

neighborhood. Because property owners are less transient and have a stake in the neighborhood's long-term well-being, policy should therefore be crafted to provide benefits for them, halting middle-class flight and attracting investment and stakeholders.

This ideology—that owners are better citizens than renters—is a common idea of a bias hardened in stereotypes that has misguided American public policy from colonial times to the present (Kreuckeberg, 1999). Scholars continue to produce evidence to debunk these myths. Rohe and Stegman (1994) studied the impact of homeownership on political and social involvement in Baltimore and found that the home buyers were less likely to be neighborly than the continuing renters. Although the home buyers were more likely to participate in neighborhood and block associations, they did not participate more than renters in other types of community activities. Moreover, those home buyers who bought primarily for investment purposes rather than for shelter and amenity reasons were no more likely to participate in social and political affairs than renters (Rohe and Stegman 1994). In fact, Kemeny (1981) has put forward the thesis that homeownership encourages privatization which depresses the desire for the public involvement so often deemed characteristic of homeowners. Indeed, it is this private investment that is often behind home-owners main reason for public engagement: to protest the development of affordable housing and rentals into a stable community, as this is seen to create pockets of poverty that will bring the whole community and home values down with them (Scully and Koenig, 2012). This protesting has come to be known as “not in my backyard” (NIMBY). Per Goetz's study (1990), property owners' NIMBYism has put affordable housing proponents on the defensive through the use of a focused (and fear-inducing) argument: negative social, economic, and environmental outcomes result from affordable housing developments (and their tenants) for the targeted neighborhood.

As Scully and Koenig (2012) note, however, the fear induced arguments that the presence of rentals and affordable housing will reduce property values is unsubstantiated, and that in some cases, multifamily housing developments actually raise nearby property values. Additionally, there are indeed many positive aspects to the presence of rentals and affordable housing, including social, racial/ethnic, and economic diversity (Briggs 1998, 2005; Lewis and Sinha 2007; Basolo and Nguyen 2005), improvements to physical infrastructure and built environments, as well as positive outcomes to the targeted population of the multifamily developments.

There is ample literature focused on neighborhood satisfaction and residents' overall feelings on the state of their neighborhood. While various factors have been identified to have impacts on neighborhood satisfaction, it is also asserted that neighborhood satisfaction is a complex and multidimensional feeling related to both the actual and perceived environments. This can include social environments as well as the physical environments and built form of the neighborhood. A subset of the literature focuses on how the built form and infrastructure of a neighborhood can influence the social

environments, particularly physical attributes that improve pedestrian and bike access and safety. Several authors (Talen & Koshinsky, 2015; Bereitschaft 2017) have asserted that increased neighborhood walkability can be a gentrifying factor in neighborhoods causing displacement and socio-economic stratification, as the high demand to live in walkable and bikable neighborhoods can lead to rent/home value increases.

While it is asserted that the most significant factors in neighborhood satisfaction are often characteristics like crime, demographics, or infrastructure, Hur and Bollinger (2015) looked at the roles that a neighborhood association can play in affecting residents' neighborhood satisfaction. They found the most significant contributions neighborhood associations had on resident satisfaction were by acting in a communications and community activities organizing role. Keeping residents informed of neighborhood events and developments by maintaining active communications was appreciated. Per Hur and Bollinger, when residents show higher satisfaction with their neighborhood association and its roles in the community, it is more likely that they will participate more often and more actively in the neighborhood association, and their overall neighborhood satisfaction is enhanced.

In summary, the literature shows several main findings: resident empowerment and neighborhood satisfaction can be achieved through local neighborhood associations, but much of this empowerment has been designed by and for homeowners. This is a particular criticism of the City of Minneapolis' NRP Program, as elaborated on below. While some of the referenced literature works to look at a neighborhood as a whole, renters and owners included, there is a lack of study specifically focused on tenants, their neighborhood satisfaction, and how neighborhood associations can work to empower them. This paper seeks to fill in that gap, with a study specifically focused on renters and their neighborhood issues of concern, with the eventual goal of designing programming targeted at addressing those concerns. This study anticipated results that could encourage neighborhood associations as well as city officials to further engage rental populations and craft programs and policies specifically targeted toward renters.

### **Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)**

Within the spectrum of locally empowered neighborhood organizations, the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota has what has been described as one of the most deliberate and far-reaching neighborhood governance structures in the country (Fung and Fagoto 2006, Fainstein 1996, Goetz 1994 Filner 2006). Per the City of Minneapolis,

“The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) makes the city's residential areas better places to live, work, learn and play. NRP is an investment program based on the belief that the empowerment of residents and the

mobilization of untapped resources, energy and creativity can make our collective desire for a better future a reality.”<sup>6</sup>

The NRP seeks to institutionalize citizen participation and enables those citizens to determine how local community development funds will be spent. It has four goals: build neighborhood capacity, redesign public services, increase government agency collaboration, and create a sense of community.

In 1990, the Minnesota Legislature and Minneapolis City Council established the Neighborhood Revitalization Program using tax increment funds to finance the program at an annual level of \$20 million for a period of 20 years. This was in response to several decades of population decline and disinvestment within the city that was common in many American urban centers. In Minneapolis, the number of high-poverty tracts tripled in number and size during the 1980s from 11 tracts and 24,420 people to 32 tracts and 79,081 people (Orfield 1997,3). Seeking to stabilize neighborhoods and the city as whole, the NRP was implemented to promote the physical revitalization of at risk neighborhoods.

A key concept of the NRP is its delegation of financial decision making to local neighborhood organizations. For the most part, these organizations are autonomous actors who identify priorities, develop project plans, and delegate funding over a range of neighborhood development decisions. However, their autonomy is supervised and checked by the central office of the NRP, staffed by city workers. That office reviews and approves plans, provides various kinds of technical assistance, and attempts to insure that those who participate in neighborhood associations are held accountable and represent a reasonable cross-section of the neighborhood’s residents. At NRP’s implementation, the city categorized 81 neighborhoods of Minneapolis, which differed greatly in population size, income level and racial composition, into three groups: ‘protection’ — sound neighborhoods; ‘revitalization’ — sound neighborhoods at risk of decline; and ‘redirection’ — areas most at risk and in need of decisive intervention (Filner, 2006). NRP’s rules require that neighborhood organizations that receive funding must be established 501c3 non-profit organizations. Given the long history of neighborhood organizing discussed earlier, it follows that many neighborhoods had already established organizations ready to take on these new roles. In other cases, the implementation of the NRP spurred many neighborhoods to form these official groups. In order to work with and receive funding from the NRP, neighborhood organizations must execute ‘Participation Agreements’ with the central NRP office that specify how they intend to include diverse residents in local deliberations to develop and approve neighborhood plans. Once plans are formally drafted by an organization, it is then put forward for

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<sup>6</sup> City of Minneapolis website. Neighborhood Revitalization Program  
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/programs/nrp/index.htm>

review by both neighborhood residents at large as well as NRP staff. Once approved, the neighborhood organization works with NRP staff to allocate funding and execute specific aspects of the plan.<sup>7</sup>

As 501c3 organizations, each neighborhood group must have an elected board of directors and officers, open to anyone with a stake in the neighborhood (resident, property owner, business owner, etc.). One of the main criticisms (Fung and Fagoto 2006, Fainstein 1996, Goetz 1994 Filner 2006) of the NRP is that, despite efforts and participatory requirements to be more inclusive, these organizations and elected officers are dominated by homeowners. Per the NRP's Progress Report in 1998, ninety percent of the dollars spent on housing have been devoted to home improvement and home-buyer assistance programs (NRP 1998). The NRP defends its lack of inclusion of renters by citing the challenges of reaching out to citizens who are less "invested" in the neighborhood. Fulfilling the commitment to outreach is problematic because neighborhood organizations have limited resources in terms of time and staffing. As Filner states, "the NRP does a good job helping those who already have access to power and influence to become even more adept at accessing city resources."<sup>8</sup>

### **Background on this Study- Renter Data**

By a variety of measures, the national housing market has largely recovered from the housing crisis that started in 2007. Per Fernald (2015), home prices in many markets are at or surpassing their pre-crisis levels, and mortgage delinquency rates have fallen significantly from their foreclosure crisis peaks. Despite these aspects of the recovery, the impact of the housing crash on the rental market is ongoing. The homeownership rate nationwide has dropped to 64.2 percent in 2017 (US Census) which erases yearly increases over the past two decades. As demand falls for homeownership, the demand for rental units has increased. As more people move into rentals, and fewer leave the rental market for homeownership, the rental vacancy rate continues to go down. As Gabriel and Nothaft (2001) note, academic analysis has often focused on the role of vacancy rates in determination of the rental price adjustment mechanism. A higher vacancy rate means that there are more available housing units than there is short-term demand for those units. As a result, homes are sitting empty. Given such an environment, landlords face incentives to reduce rents or offer other deals to get tenants into apartments. In a low-vacancy environment, on the other hand, landlords and sellers can raise their asking prices, since they're likely to have many prospective buyers or tenants competing for the same home. Per Gabriel, when the rental vacancy rate in a market is high, rents stayed stable or grew at around the rate of inflation (about 2%). When the vacancy rate was low, on the other hand, average rents grew much faster from one year to the next. Hagen and

<sup>7</sup> City of Minneapolis website. Neighborhood Revitalization Program  
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/programs/nrp/index.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Filner, 2006. P. 75.



Hansen (2010) suggest that a “healthy” or natural vacancy rate in a market is commonly seen to be around 5%. Per the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city of Minneapolis had a rental vacancy rate of 2.3% in 2017, far below the consensus optimum rate of 5%. Per Belsky (1992), a vacancy rate this low should be exerting pressure on renter households in the area, creating a landlord’s market.

In addition to dwindling rental availability, the number of renters who are cost-burdened is also rising. Per HUD, affordable housing is that in which the occupant is “paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities.”<sup>9</sup> Even before the 2007 housing crash, the number of US households paying more than 30% on housing was on the rise. Post-recession, the cost-burdened share of renters continued to rise. In 2013, “about half of all renters in the U.S. are using more than 30 percent of their income to cover housing costs, and about 25 percent have rent that exceeds 50 percent of their monthly pay.”<sup>10</sup> As Fernald et al. say, while rent has long been a cost burden for low-income renters, even those who make median incomes are finding that their rent eats away at a more significant portion of their pay than it once did for those in the middle class.

## **Conceptual Description and Research Method**

### **Demographic Background**

This research is a study conducted in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Minneapolis is the county seat of Hennepin County, the largest city in the state of Minnesota and, as of 2017, the 45th-largest in the United States, with an estimated population of 422,331 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Minneapolis is the larger of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul, and is the 16th-largest metropolitan area in the United States. Per HUD, the Median Income in the City of Minneapolis was \$52,600 in 2017. The metropolitan area is home to 19 Fortune 500 companies, with five in Minneapolis proper. Per the city of Minneapolis, the median home sale price was \$253,000 in 2017. Per that same report, the average rent in Minneapolis in 2017 was \$1,302.<sup>11</sup> Minneapolis has a homeownership rate in 2017 of 47.4%, making the city majority renter.

### **Neighborhoods**

The two targeted neighborhoods for this study are the St. Anthony East and Beltrami neighborhoods in Northeast Minneapolis. The two neighborhoods are adjacent

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<sup>9</sup> HUD Report

<sup>10</sup> Fernald, p. 5

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcmstp-207610.pdf>

to each other and both lie several miles to the northeast of downtown Minneapolis, across the Mississippi River, and just north of the University of Minnesota. Both neighborhoods were some of the earliest in the city to be settled, and were initially part of the City of St. Anthony before being annexed by Minneapolis in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of the 81 officially recognized neighborhoods in the city of Minneapolis, Beltrami and St. Anthony East are two of the smallest geographically. The city as a whole has 52.6 percent renters, St. Anthony East has a residential population of 2,168 and Beltrami a population of 1,142. St. Anthony East has a homeownership rate of 27.3%, with Beltrami at a 42% homeownership rate. These neighborhoods are certainly majority renter, even more so than the City as a whole, with homeownership rate of 47.4%. The majority of both neighborhoods are composed of 1-4 unit residential buildings, with some low rise apartment buildings scattered throughout. St. Anthony East also contains a public housing highrise building. Additionally, there are some tracts of industrial land along the railroads that compose the southern edge of the neighborhoods.



*Figure 1: Two shaded subject neighborhoods: St. Anthony East on left, Beltrami on right. Image provided by <http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/custom/&Google> maps*

The researcher partnered with the St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association (SAENA) and the Beltrami Neighborhood Council (BNC) in this study. The BNC was formed in 1990 with the implementation of the NRP, while SAENA was formed in the 1970s, primarily to combat a proposed freeway through the neighborhood, with official 501c3 incorporation established in 1986. The BNC has an elected board of 8 members, with SAENA at 9 members. Both boards are majority homeowner in majority renter neighborhoods. Despite (or perhaps because of) this, both boards recognized the criticisms of neighborhood organizations as being homeowner dominated. Given these criticisms, the NRP's stated goals of inclusion, as well as some recent high-profile tenant-

landlord disputes in the neighborhoods<sup>12</sup>, both boards expressed an organizational desire to engage renters and identify issues of concern for the rental population. While both organizations have a long history (since NRP establishment in 1990) of offering financial programs to improve housing, these programs were targeted primarily towards homeowners, as it is the property owners who must apply for the housing improvement programs.

### **Conceptual framework**

This study sought to collect data from renters in the two neighborhoods listed above. This data will be used to guide future development of programming by the two neighborhood associations. This project focused on gathering qualitative data from the renter population, with the guiding research question being:

- What are the issues of local concern for the renter populations in these two neighborhoods?
- What are some potential neighborhood association programs to address those issues?

Answering these was accomplished by utilizing qualitative research in the form of surveys administered to resident renters.

The specific research strategy was as follows: 1) Identify target group for surveys; 2) design survey based on guiding research questions; 3) administer surveys to target group; 4) analyze themes and data from collected surveys; 5) synthesize data into final report for the neighborhood associations.

### **Questionnaire Survey and Sample**

The objective of the researcher was not to prove or disprove a hypothesis using a specific research question, as would be the case in a traditional quantitative approach. Instead, the goal of this study was to simply explore the current state of the renter population in the neighborhoods and what they felt were issues of local importance. This study was done by conducting a door-to-door questionnaire survey in the two neighborhoods between August 1 and October 31, 2017. All adult renters in the two neighborhoods were the target population for this survey, except for those residents in the Spring Street Highrise in St. Anthony East. The decision for this study was to focus on those renters in the private market. A list of all privately owned rental unit addresses in the two neighborhoods provided by the city composed the targeted population. The

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<sup>12</sup>Furst, Randy. "Court Appoints Administrator For 43 Buildings Owned By Minneapolis Landlord." *The Star Tribune*, December 18, 2017. <http://www.startribune.com/court-appoints-administrator-for-43-buildings-owned-by-minneapolis-landlord/465032223/>

researcher doorknocked addresses on this target list at different times of the day to accommodate potential varying schedules of the targeted population. There were many houses where no one answered the door when visited. When a resident opened the door, the surveyor briefly introduced himself, the research, and the survey. If the resident showed a willingness to participate in the survey, the surveyor verbally went through the survey with the resident, marking down responses on the paper survey. The survey took an average of approximately 10 minutes to complete. No incentive was offered to survey participants, and if a resident expressed disinterest in completing the survey, that address was marked off of the rental unit address sheet to ensure that no further attempts were made. The rental unit list provided by the city reflected rental licenses at the beginning of 2017 and so was slightly outdated, which led to some cases of a property being owner-occupied as opposed to rented. In those cases, the address was marked off as well.

Additionally, while the priority was on renter's views, there was a secondary push to contact landlords/owners of rental units in the neighborhoods. A different list of questions was developed for landlords to identify issues facing them and how those issues might intersect with those identified from the larger renter survey. (See Appendix D). The eleven completed landlord surveys were administered both in-person as well as over the phone and notes that were recorded were by hand. The discussions were facilitated using a semi-structured guide (Appendix A) that was developed to compliment the questions in the renter's survey, with the landlord questions being more open-ended to allow for some discussion. The specific research protocol followed for the interviews was as follows: (1) contact possible landlord respondents using publicly available rental license information provided by City of Minneapolis; (2) schedule and conduct key informant interviews (Appendix A); (3) analyze themes and relevant information from key informant interviews into this final report.

Among 345 targeted rental properties (140 in Beltrami 205 in St. Anthony East), a total of 111 (54 Beltrami, 57 St. Anthony East) completed surveys were collected with 39 total declines. Looking at what I referred to as a response rate (those who cooperated and completed the survey over rental properties initially targeted), surveys were collected from 32.17% of the renter properties in the neighborhoods. Response rates differed by neighborhood: Beltrami had 38.57%, St. Anthony East had 27.8%. With regard to landlord surveys, 11 were completed of 312 total rental property owners for a 3.5% landlord response rate.

## **Variables**

As a neighborhood satisfaction study, we included various physical, social, demographic, and sense of community variables from the existing literature. In addition, we expanded our scope to include the other physical and social factors in the neighborhood, as, noted above, the literature suggests that these other factors can very

much influence rents and affordability in a neighborhood. Table 1 lists all variables in this study. It includes 42 variables within five categories: 2 general information questions; 8 measures of physical/structural issues with the rental unit, 13 measures of management or landlord issues the resident has encountered, 6 variables about general neighborhood conditions, as well as interest in potential rental unit programs the neighborhood groups could offer. All variables were addressed in the questionnaire to the residents, as well as an opportunity for open comment at the end of the survey to gather anything else the resident may have thought was pertinent.

As mentioned, the landlord surveys were slightly shorter, with seven total questions designed to get open ended answers about their concerning issues as owners of rental property. (See Table 2 and Appendix II)

**Table 1: Renters Survey**

Category	Variable	Description
General Info	Address	Recorded for tracking progress only
	Move-in Date	Month and year renter moved into unit
	Familiar with N'hood organization	Has resident heard of BNC or SAENA
Rental Unit Physical/Structural Issues (Yes or No)	Mice	Has renter noticed presence of mice or other rodents?
	Bed Bugs	Has renter noticed presence of bed bugs or other insects?
	Mold	Noticeable mold in unit
	Leaks	Noticeable water leaks in unit
	Water Damage	Any noticeable or unrepaired water damage
	Poor Property Condition	Can refer to unit, landscaping, out buildings
	Security	Are there problems with securing and locking entry points (doors, windows)
	High Utilities	Do energy/water costs seem high?
Management/Landlord Issues (Yes or No)	Rent Increase	Has renter seen a rent increase since moving in?

	Discrimination	Any discrimination from landlord?
	Harassment	Any harassment from landlord?
	Notice to Vacate/Nonrenewal of lease	Has landlord given notice to vacate or not renewed lease for any reason?
	Infraction Notice	Any infraction notices given from landlord to tenant?
	Rental License Issues	Has rental license been revoked before?
	Facing Condemnation	Has city cited property for condemnation?
	Application/Tenant Screening	Any inappropriate/illegal screening done during application?
	Retaliation	Retaliatory behavior from landlord after bringing an issue to attention?
	Improper Notice from landlord	Landlords required to give 24 hours before entering unit
	Security Deposit Issues	High security deposit? Landlord withholding deposit?
	Unfavorable Lease	Any particularly unfavorable inclusions in lease?
	Maintenance Issues	Refers to landlord response time when maintenance needed. Does landlord responds satisfactorily.
Neighborhood Conditions (1-5 Likert Scale)	N'hood Safety	Renter ratings on safety, crime in neighborhood
	Access to Transit	Renter ratings on ease of access to public transit options
	Pedestrian/ Bike Friendly	Renter Ratings on ped/bike infrastructure in neighborhood
	Parks and public Services	Renter rating on parks/other public amenities in neighborhood
	Availability and Affordability of quality rentals	Renter rating on ease of finding affordable, quality units in neighborhood
	Likelihood to support increased	Renter rating on support for more dense residential/commercial development in

	density/development	neighborhood
Potential programs (Check if renter has interest)	Energy Efficiency Grant	Matching grants specifically for energy efficiency upgrades (new mechanical systems, solar panel installation, added insulation, window upgrades, etc.)
	Home Improvement Loan/grant	Matching loans or grants for home improvement regardless of type of project
	Security Grant	Low Cost (<\$500) matching grants for lighting, cameras, locks
	Advocacy Work (Code Enforcement, Just cause eviction, etc.)	Working with City, County, State to amend policy with regards to rental units
	Hosting tenant council	Focus groups/meetups specifically for area renters
	Referrals to tenant legal aid resources	Tenant based organizations, lawyers, or city inspectors for legal aid.
	Preserving Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Units	Focusing on saving affordable, older units from demolition or renovation to higher priced units.
	Community Events	More NA organized gatherings/ social events to interact with neighbors
	Youth Programming	Programming targeted at teens or younger childcare
	Community garden	Garden with plots able to be checked out by neighborhood residents
	Other ideas	Anything not mentioned above
Additional Comments		

**Table 2: Landlord Survey**

<b>General Info</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Recorded for tracking progress only</b>
	How long has owner had property in neighborhood?	Month and year owner bought property in neighborhood
	Familiar with N'hood	Has landlord heard of BNC or

	organization	SAENA
Issues of concern	Top issues affecting rental property	
	Top issues facing neighborhood	
Potential Programs	Energy Efficiency Grant	Matching grants specifically for energy efficiency upgrades (new mechanical systems, solar panel installation, added insulation, window upgrades, etc.)
	Home Improvement Loan/grant	Matching loans or grants for home improvement regardless of type of project
	Security Grant	Low Cost (<\$500) matching grants for lighting, cameras, locks
	Hosting tenant/landlord forums	NA hosting forums for area renters/landlords to interact
	Other	
Additional thoughts/notes		



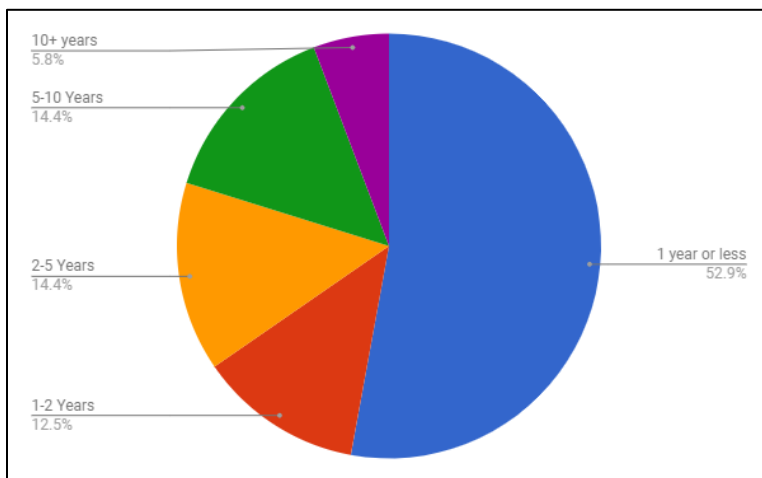
## **Results**

As mentioned above, the renter's survey contained questions in five categories: 1) general information questions; 2) physical/structural issues with the rental unit, 3) management or landlord issues the resident has encountered, 4) general neighborhood conditions, 5) interest in potential rental unit programs the neighborhood groups could offer. All variables were addressed in the questionnaire to the residents, as well as an opportunity for open comment at the end of the survey to gather anything else the resident may have thought was pertinent.

### **Move-In Date**

Among respondents, 52.8% had moved into their current rental unit within the past year, while 5.7% of respondents had lived in their unit for more than 10 years. The overall mean time for living in a unit was 2.78 years.

*Figure 2: Length of Residence*



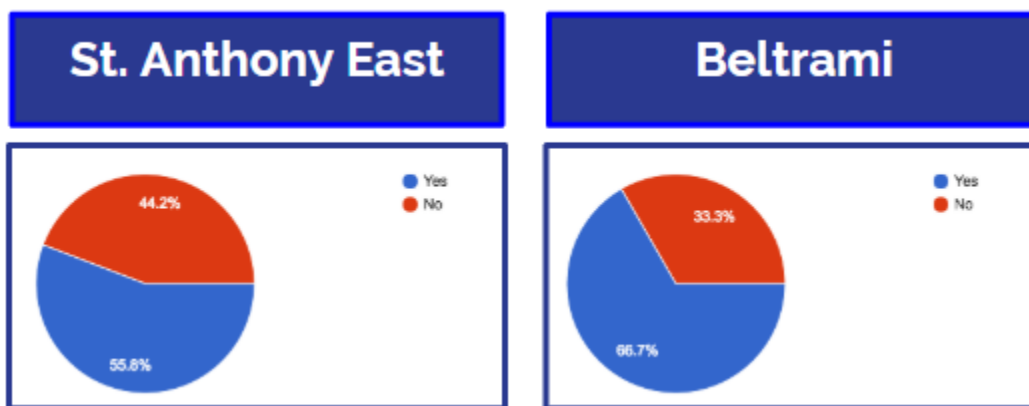
This data shows that over half of neighborhood rentals have turned over to new tenants in the last year. Hur and Bollinger (2014) note that residents with tenure, who have lived in a neighborhood for a longer period of time, are more likely to be satisfied with their neighborhood and the neighborhood association's role. It is also suggested in the literature that the active members in neighborhood association meetings and events are longtime residents. This fits with the literature that suggests renters are more difficult to engage in neighborhood activity, if renters do indeed show shorter tenure compared to homeowners. An opportunity for future research presents itself here, by asking neighborhood homeowners a similar question of how long they have lived in their current home. While this data is not available, one would imagine that homeowners would have a

longer tenure, and therefore would have more exposure to neighborhood association communications.

### **Familiarity with Neighborhood Association**

The next question asked if the respondent has heard of their local neighborhood association. Overall, 61.2% of respondents indicated they were familiar with the neighborhood association, with some differences between the two neighborhoods:

*Figure 3: Familiarity with Neighborhood Association*



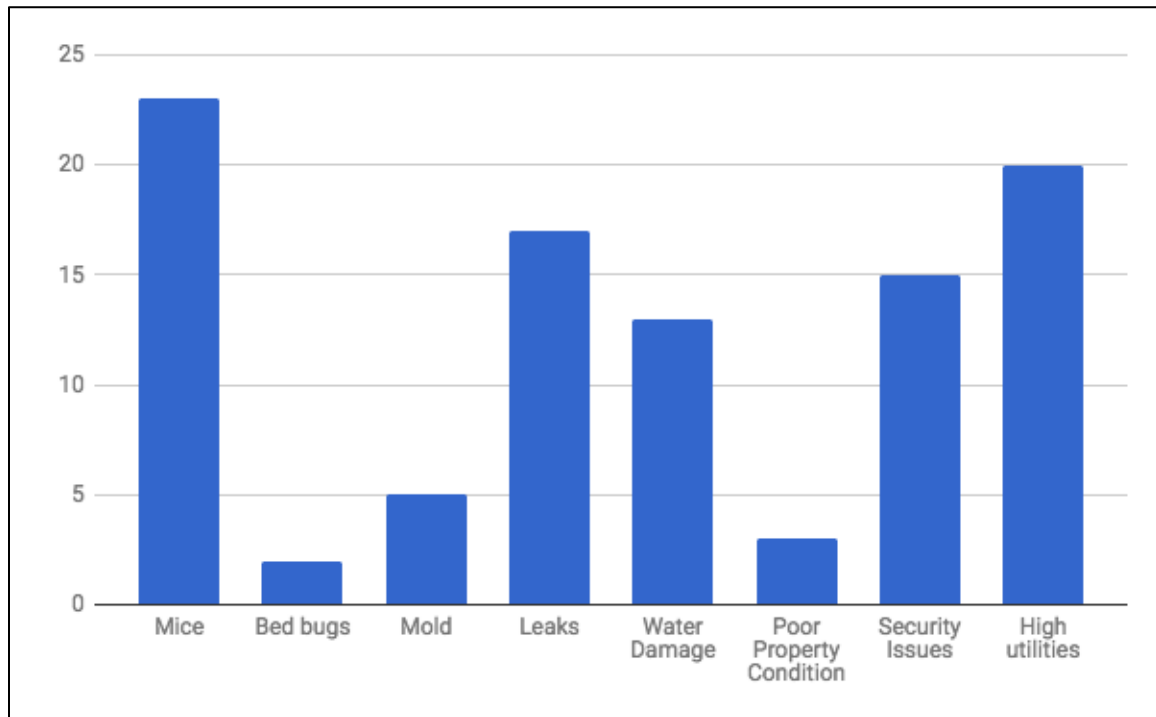
This indicates that the majority of respondents are in some way tapped in to some form of communication from the neighborhood associations. As Hur and Bollinger (2014) note, their research suggests that neighborhood association communication and activity can be a significant positive factor in residents' overall neighborhood satisfaction. While this survey did not ask how the respondent was familiar with the organization (social media, printed materials or flyers, word of mouth, etc.), the results here show that some level of communication is reaching the respondents. As renter specific programming is developed in the future, communicating the existence of those programs will be a key part of their success. This was the only question in the survey with a meaningful difference between neighborhoods, and this suggests that St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association may need to revise their communication strategies.

### **Physical/Structural Issues with Rental Units**

57 respondents (51.3%) selected at least one physical issues with their unit, with 21 respondents (18.9%) selecting multiple issues in their units. The most common issues with participants' rental units were the presence of mice or other rodents, as well as high utility costs in the unit with 21% and 18% of responses citing these issues. Other notable issues were leaks in the unit with 15% of respondents selecting this, as well security concerns with the unit (13.5% of respondents). These security issues encompassed a lack of or poor locking mechanisms on doors, windows, and other access points. It's notable that many of these issues were presented by the respondents as more of an annoyance or

inconvenience than a necessary, critical issue. Many of the respondents seemed to think of their units as generally good quality.

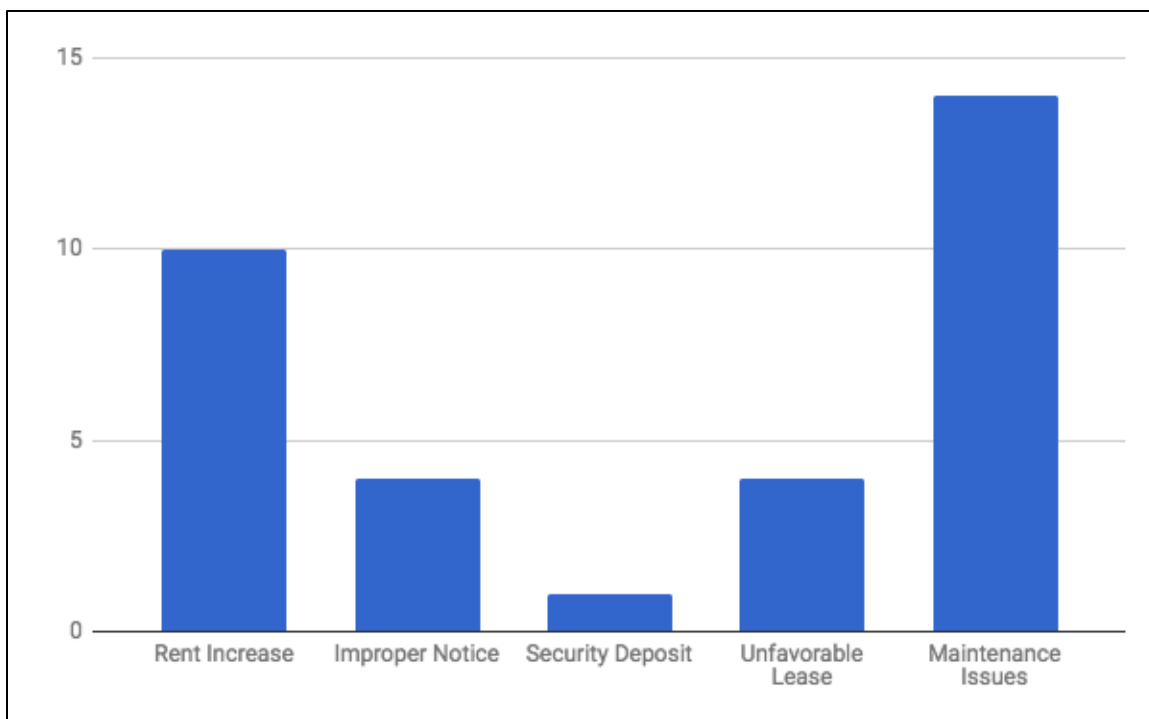
*Figure 4: Issues with Rental Unit*



### **Management Issues with the Unit**

20 (18%) respondents selected at least one issue they've had with rental unit management or their landlord, with 5 (4.5%) selecting multiple variables. The most common variable here was maintenance issues selected by 14 respondents (12.6%), followed by 10 respondents (9%) who have had a rent increase while living in their unit. Notably, there were no responses for: landlord discrimination or harassment, notice to vacate, infraction notice, rental license issues/facing condemnation, tenant screening, or landlord retaliation.

*Figure 5: Issues with Landlord or Management*



When asked to further elaborate on maintenance issues, most respondent cited landlords' delayed response to their maintenance requests. From a respondent:

“Well, look at that last question you asked. I talked about the leak in our lower level. I told my landlord about that a few months ago, and he hasn't even come out to look at it, much less do anything to fix it. That's usually the case, If it's not dire, it's going to take a while to get fixed.”

Similarly to the question above, there were no critical management issues identified by respondents here, While conducting these surveys, the researcher noticed a couple of City notices posted on the front of buildings asserting that rental licenses were revoked for those properties, including a property formerly owned by a high profile problematic landlord.<sup>13</sup> Apart from these few notices, there was no feedback from respondents about any critical management issues, nothing that would necessitate an immediate move or action on the part of city administration.

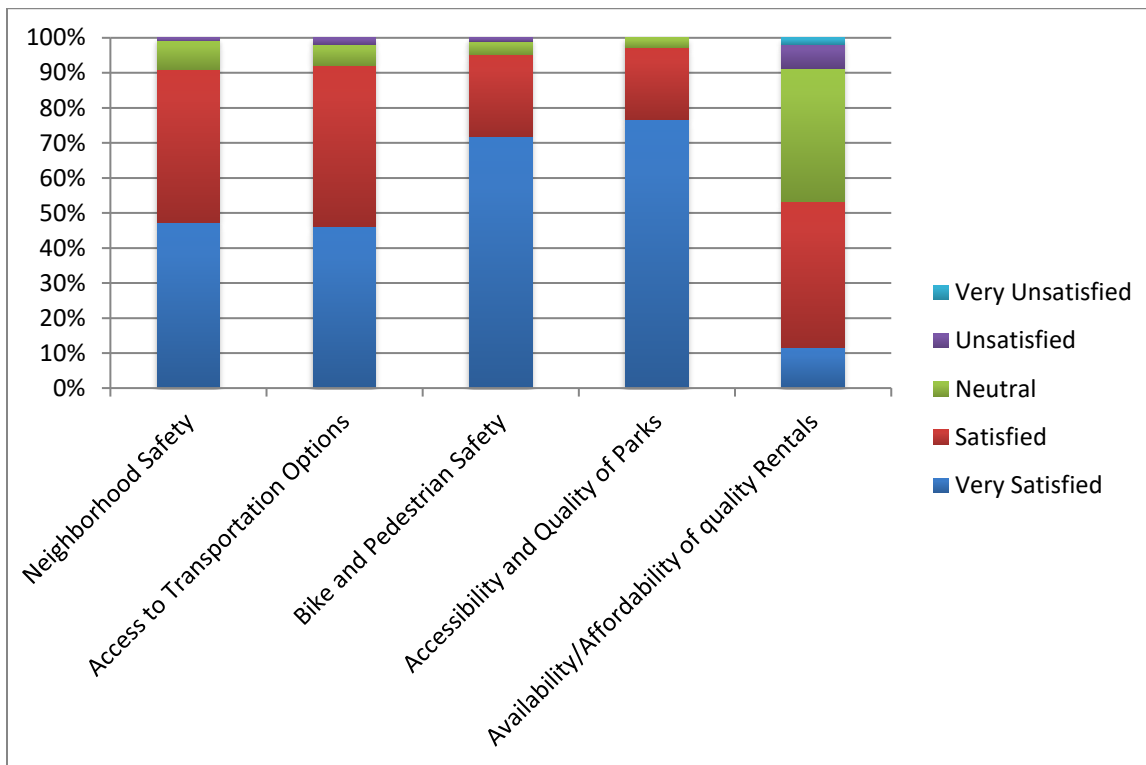
### **Neighborhood Conditions**

The survey also included variables asking respondents to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the neighborhood using the Likert Scale on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being

<sup>13</sup>Furst, Randy. “Court Appoints Administrator For 43 Buildings Owned By Minneapolis Landlord.” *The Star Tribune*, December 18, 2017. <http://www.startribune.com/court-appoints-administrator-for-43-buildings-owned-by-minneapolis-landlord/465032223/>

“very unsatisfied” and 5 being “very satisfied”. In addition to their rating on the Likert scale, several respondents added additional comments on these topics.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with Neighborhood Characteristics



Looking at these results, one can see that over 90% of residents are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with four of the questions asked above: Neighborhood Safety, Access to Transportation Options, Bike and Pedestrian Safety, and Accessibility and Quality of Parks. The literature suggests that crime and neighborhood safety is the most significant factor in residents’ neighborhood satisfaction, and that residents who were dissatisfied with regards to neighborhood crime and safety were more likely to be dissatisfied with other neighborhood conditions. While some respondents in this survey referenced some petty crime like vandalism and garage break-ins, the high levels of satisfaction here suggest high overall neighborhood satisfaction.

92% of respondents selected 4 or 5 (“satisfied” or “very satisfied”) on access to transportation options, with 2% as unsatisfied:

“One of the best things about living here is the options to get around. We’re only about a mile from downtown, and traffic is never really bad. It’s a short bus ride to downtown, and even an Uber is usually pretty sweet. I guess in an ideal world, we’d have light rail down Central Avenue, but that’s my dream.”

“The bus routes that do come around are good and go where most people need to go, but they need to be much more consistent and reliable.”

Additionally, 95% of respondents indicated their satisfaction with pedestrian and bike safety in the neighborhoods, with several respondents giving the qualifier that bike and pedestrian infrastructure was good *in* the neighborhoods, but that once outside of the neighborhoods, conditions get worse:

“I would definitely give this a 5 for in the neighborhood, but Broadway and Hennepin Avenue are really unsafe and to get anywhere outside of the neighborhood, you have to cross one of those streets. There’s basically one good spot to cross Broadway.”

These high levels of satisfaction across multiple variable suggest that renters are mostly pleased with their neighborhood, and do indeed want to live in these neighborhoods.

Responses to questions about renters’ satisfaction with the availability and affordability of quality rentals drew more varied responses. 53% of respondents selected 4 or 5 (“satisfied” or “very satisfied”) on this issue, with 8.6% of respondents replying “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied”. Rental unit availability in particular seemed to be an issue with respondents. Multiple respondents added that they felt very lucky to have gotten the unit they lived in, as finding available units in the neighborhood was so difficult:

“You have to act on a unit right away. If availability is posted for a few days, that apartment will be leased up. I called on this one two hours after it was posted online and signed my lease by the end of the day.”

“I feel a little bit stuck in this apartment. I’d love to be in a different unit, but there’s no guarantee that I’ll find anything else in the neighborhood.”

Others cited a personal relationship with a property owner or family connections that allowed them to find their unit. Additional comments on this topic focused on how rents seem relative, and that what seems expensive in one neighborhood may be considered affordable somewhere else:

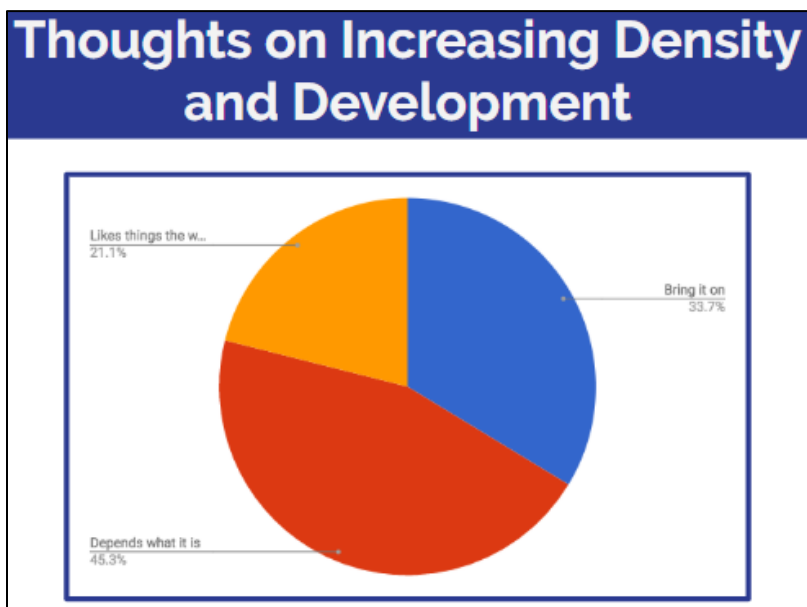
“While the rent seems a little high for the unit, this is better than when I used to live in Uptown. You’re paying for the neighborhood here.”

Respondents also added that the growing demand for rentals could be a harbinger for rent increases in the near future:

“I’ve lived in this neighborhood for 8 years in a couple of different apartments. Rents have crept up a little bit over that time, but it feels like there’s so few rentals that landlords are going to start jacking up rents soon.”

These responses fit with the renter data presented above, particularly the citywide rental vacancy rate of 2.3% in 2017 (Department of Housing and Urban Development). Rental units are in demand and go quickly when listed. Additionally, the responses earlier in the survey suggest a high level of satisfaction with many aspects of the St. Anthony East and Beltrami neighborhoods. Given this, it is logical to assume that these are high demand neighborhoods, putting more pressure on an already tight rental market

Figure 7: Attitudes on Increased Density and Development



The survey also asked respondents on their thoughts about increasing density and property development in or near the neighborhoods. These responses were grouped into three categories: Would prefer to keep things the way they are; Open to some development, depending on what it is; and those were actively welcoming and wishing for further development and density. 21 % of respondents would prefer to keep the neighborhoods the way they are:

“I really like that it feels neighborhood-y. I’d hate to see that change.”

“I love the fact that its quiet and the streets are safe.”

45% of respondents answered that it would depend on the specific development plans put forward.

“I’d love to see more mid-level apartment buildings. There’s a few like, 10 to 12 unit buildings scattered around that I like a lot. As long as it’s not huge like that (pointing to a recently built high rise in an adjacent neighborhood).”

“We really don’t need more expensive studios or corporate stores. New development needs to be accessible to people to live here.”

33.7% of respondents indicating they would welcome new development:

“People want to live here. Availability is only gonna get worse. We need to have a lot more options.”

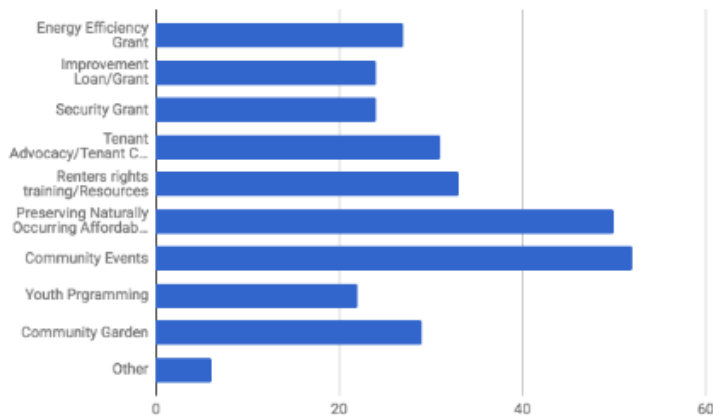
“I live in the City because I want a variety of options, both residential and commercial. If someone was anti-density, why would they live here and not just move to the suburbs?”

As noted in the literature review, particularly by Logan & Rabrenovic (1990), one of the key roles neighborhood organizations can play is in influencing zoning and land use decisions. Indeed, the influence that neighborhood organizations granted to property owners to push back on affordable multifamily developments is seen as one of the drawbacks of the Minneapolis NRP program. These results from respondents here suggest that renters may hold more flexible attitudes towards development and denser land use. It is important to note here that this question was posed to respondents in general terms, and that attitudes may change when confronted with a specific development project nearby. That said, as neighborhood organizations will continue to be outlets for land use deliberation, including renter populations may provide more nuanced discussions on the merits of proposed developments.

*Figure 8: Neighborhood association programs*



## Which of these programs would be useful for Renters?



Respondents were also asked to select potential programs that may be useful for renters going forward. The list was compiled of categories of programming that neighborhood associations have used in the past. Respondents were encouraged to select any and all programs that may apply. “More community events” was the most commonly selected option with 52 selections by respondents.

“I would love more community events to meet and chat with neighbors. I’m a transplant to Minnesota and while I sometimes recognize people on the street and we give each other a ‘hi’, I don’t know any of my neighbors’ names or what they do. It would be really fun to have those opportunities to connect with folks around here.”

Close behind with 50 responses was the idea of programming to “preserve naturally occurring affordable housing”. This housing is meant as housing that is affordable, not because of city or government subsidy, but more often units that are affordable because of their age or condition. A note from a respondent highlights some issues with this:

“I’ve lived on this street for a couple of years, and already I’ve seen at least three duplexes bought and turned into single family homes. That’s three lost units, which I know is probably a drop in the bucket, but considering how hard it can be to find an available apartment, those lost units have got to add up and it’d be good to have some them as options.”

“Tenant advocacy councils” and “renters’ rights training resources” followed with 31 and 33 selections, respectively. Multiple renters pointed out a posted ‘Renter’s rights’ flyer in their unit, adding that their landlords had posted them.

“That (the flyer) has been helpful. It just points out some things that I never thought about, like what a landlord is supposed to do. Also, I never knew that renters can get a specific tax refund in Minnesota until reading that.”

Respondents also brought up some organizations that are currently working with tenants’ rights in the area, including nonprofits like Homeline MN, Minneapolis Renters Coalition, and Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia. Respondents also mentioned the importance of any advocacy group being able to achieve real results:

“I went to one renters group thing, maybe with Homeline, but it was just people talking about how bad their apartment or their landlord was. It was just a lot of complaining, but nothing on what to actually do about it. Can we go to the City or the state to get anything changed?”

“Community garden” had 28 responses, with “youth programming” getting 21 responses. Programs designed to make physical improvements to rental units (energy efficiency grants; home improvement loans or matching grants; security grants) all received very similar numbers (22 to 24). Some additional comments from respondents focused on the fact that while these programs all sound desirable, several of these programs would require action on the part of the landlord:

“These energy efficiency grants and security grants sound great, but I couldn’t sign up for those, that would have to get initiated by the landlord right? I pay the utilities, so I’m not sure if my landlord cares about energy efficiency.”

Five respondents separately brought up programming to facilitate the transition from renting to home-ownership in the neighborhood, whether through down-payment assistance programs, or helping to finance purchase of a rental property from their current landlord.

### **Additional Comments**

The final question on the survey was an open-ended question on if there was anything else the respondent wanted to note as a concern answers can be seen in Appendix III. A few common themes were identified from these answers, with complaints about Broadway Street (the northern border street of both neighborhoods) being the most cited issue, with 23 respondents independently bringing up problems with the street. The condition and design of the street, the high volume and high speed of vehicles, noise, and lack of curbs were all issues respondents cited about Broadway Street.

“Broadway is terrible in every way. I avoid it as much as possible.”

“I live right off of Broadway and I was so excited when I moved in here with my kids because the park is right across the street, but Broadway is such a nightmare to cross that we barely go over there.”

Eight respondents referenced parking issues, particularly near businesses and commercial areas. Multiple respondents (9) also mentioned difficulties in finding pet friendly rentals, with some others (4) echoing those difficulties in finding large enough rental units for families.

“There’s so many apartments that either don’t accept dogs or have such specific breed restrictions that they might as well not accept dogs. Luckily, this landlord is a friend of my dad’s so we were able to adjust my lease to allow me to bring in my dog.”

A specific issue for respondents on several blocks in the Beltrami neighborhood is the railroad that borders several properties. Five respondents mentioned train noise as well as the railroad company’s lack of responsiveness about maintenance and clean-up. An additional nine respondents called for improvements to the Spring Street Viaduct, a street underpass below railroad tracks in the Beltrami neighborhoods.

Finally, 19 respondents answered not with a concern or complaint, but simply said that they love the neighborhood.

“I’ve lived in a few different places in St. Paul and Minneapolis, and this is my favorite neighborhood I’ve lived in so far. I love it here.”

“I know things can always get better, but on a neighborhood level, Beltrami is about as good as it gets. The park is incredible, I’m a 10 minute bike ride from downtown, and there’s good restaurants and breweries across the street. What’s not to love?”

These answers, combined with the high levels of satisfaction for different neighborhood characteristics discussed earlier, further reinforce the idea that these two neighborhoods are desirable neighborhoods for renters.

### **Landlord Survey Results**

As mentioned above, in addition to the renter surveys, there was also outreach to landlords in the neighborhoods as well. A different survey was developed for this, and surveys were conducted by phone or in person. Of the 11 landlords who responded, all were familiar with their respective neighborhood organization, with three respondents saying they have attended neighborhood organization meetings or events. Answers for

how long the respondents had owned property in the neighborhoods varied, with 7 respondents answering within the last 10 years.

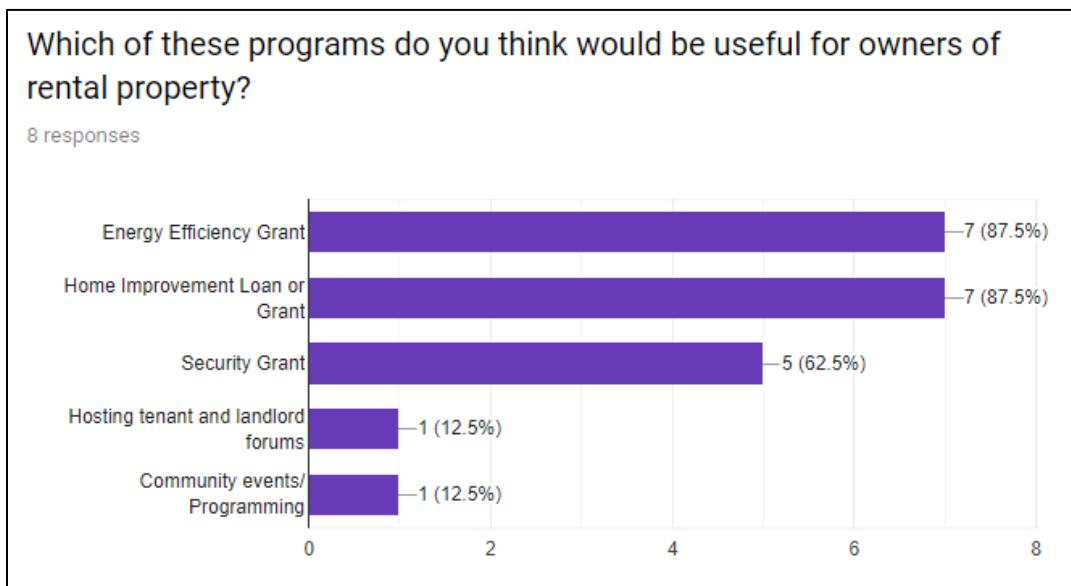
*Table 3: How long have landlords owned property in the neighborhood?*

Year respondent bought property in St. Anthony East or Beltrami neighborhoods?	N
1977	1
1999	1
2002	2
2007	1
2011	2
2012	2
2014	2

Landlords were asked to estimate how much they invested in property improvements since purchasing it. Four respondents answered less than \$10,000, with another four answering between \$10,000 and \$20,000. The three remaining respondents answered: \$50,000; \$100,000; and \$600,000 respectively. Asked to identify the top issues facing their rental units, seven respondents indicated energy and utility costs for their unit, the only answer received from multiple landlords. Other issues provided were: security issues; parking; streetscape and sidewalks; rude neighbors; and problems with city inspectors.

Landlords were asked about what they thought were issues facing the neighborhood. Neighborhood safety and petty crime were commonly mentioned issues by six of the respondents, with multiple landlords specifically mentioning the nightly closing time of neighborhood bars as an issue, as patrons leave the bar and walk through the neighborhoods. Additionally, six respondents also mentioned growing unaffordability and rising rents/home costs in the neighborhood. Other issues mentioned were: street condition/potholes; pedestrian infrastructure; and car speeds through the neighborhood, especially on Broadway Street. Finally, echoing the last question in the renter's survey, landlords were asked about possible programs that could be provided by the neighborhood associations. Seven of the eleven respondents indicated that both energy efficiency grants and a home improvement loans or grants would be useful for landlords, with five respondents indicating that security grants would be of interest as well.

Figure 9: Neighborhood Association Programs



## Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to identify neighborhood renters' issues of local concern as the two neighborhood associations begin to develop new programming to be more inclusive of the rental population. This research is unique in that it specifically focuses on renters' perspectives. Had homeowners or neighborhood residents who regularly engage with the neighborhood organizations, the "usual suspects", been targeted with these surveys, the results likely would have been different. On the whole, respondents were mostly satisfied with various aspects of their respective neighborhoods. More than 90% of respondents were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with neighborhood safety, accessibility and quality of parks, access to transit options, and bike/pedestrian safety. A slight majority of respondents reported any physical issues with their rental units, with a relative few reporting any issues with their landlord or property manager. These numbers, combined with several additional comments of respondents, speak to a high level of satisfaction with the neighborhood

Among potential new programming categories, the programs focused on physical property improvements (energy efficiency grants, home improvement loans, security grants) were met with some interest among residents. While these programs could potentially help to solve some of the physical and structural issues renters had, numerous residents pointed out that these programs would require action on the part of the landlord, not the tenant. Any physical improvements to a unit, particularly those that involve some level of financing, would require application and approval of the landlord. Given the levels of support for these programs among landlords talked to, any development of these

programs should be coordinated with an outreach campaign to landlords notifying them of the possible programs and how to apply for them.

Other programming possibilities that received respondent support were those focused on renters' rights, tenant advocacy, and organization. Communications centered on already existing rules and policies regarding renters' rights could be valuable. Additionally, neighborhood associations could work to establish tenant councils or work to put neighborhood renters in contact with already existing tenant groups with a larger footprint. Several tenants' rights organizations already exist and work across the City of Minneapolis, including the Minneapolis Renters' Coalition, Inquilinx Unidxs Por Justicia, and HomeLine MN. Tenants' rights groups could work to educate renters and landlords alike about existing policies and regulations, as well as work to advocate to changes to policies on a city or statewide level. Any of these paths would require a neighborhood organization to conduct continuing outreach to renters.

Much of the survey results, combined with the many additional comments of respondents, suggest that renters are mostly pleased with their living situation and neighborhood. The questions that received the most varied responses, as well as the most additional comments, were those about the availability and affordability of quality rental units, as well as the residents' attitudes toward increased density and property development. An opportunity for further research exists here to ask similar questions of neighborhood homeowners to note any meaningful differences in attitudes among homeowners and renters. As Goetz and Sidney (1994) note, some of the most enthusiastic neighborhood association participation is spurred by impending property development proposals, particularly those around affordable housing and dense, multifamily developments. Given the survey results on these two questions, a neighborhood association would be well served to make an effort to engage all residents, renter and homeowner alike, in future deliberations on land use and impending development. Additionally, many respondents indicated support for neighborhood association programming focused on preserving naturally occurring affordable housing. These types of housing are often affordable because of their age and condition, with older properties of lesser quality often being the most affordable rents in a neighborhood. These properties are also often targets for redevelopment or demolition as part of larger developments. Neighborhood associations should provide inclusive outlets for feedback on potential developments, particularly those that may affect already affordable units. A question for further research could examine the link between pro-density attitudes and a seeming shortage of available rental units. For instance, in periods with low vacancy rates in a market, do renters make a connection between new developments as potentially adding to the supply of rental units, perhaps addressing an available rental shortage?

Additionally, given the historical dominance of “the usual suspects” in neighborhood associations, it is interesting to note that among the proposed programming categories, “community events” was selected by the most respondents. This suggests that renters do indeed have a desire to be engaged with their neighborhoods and other residents, and build a sense of community. As Hur and Bollinger (2014) as well as Chaskin (2003) note, the more resident participation there is through active communication, interactions, and activities among residents, the more opportunities there are to strengthen the sense of community. While both the Beltrami Neighborhood Council and St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association do already host several community events and gathering, ensuring that renters are included in the planning, execution, and attendance of those events is important. However, the survey results here also suggest there may be some merit to the argument that renter populations are difficult to engage cited by Fung and Fagotto (2006) and Kane and Goodrich (2006). The majority of survey respondents had lived in their current unit for less than one year. With so many residents with that short of tenure in the neighborhood, almost constant outreach is needed on the behalf of the neighborhood associations to engage these new residents. Future studies could test the effectiveness of various communication tools and skills to better engage renters. While this survey was a good step towards engaging renters in the Beltrami and St. Anthony East neighborhoods, any future efforts or programming will require an extensive, sustained outreach campaign. Neighborhood associations should continually seek to diversify their engagement methods and strategies.

### **Limitations and Opportunities for Further Study**

There were several limitations in this project. As with any study, time constraints were one limitation in collecting surveys. While the survey collection period went on for about four months, more time could have resulted in more responses, further adding to the data in this study. Further, the survey was based on convenience sampling—a nonprobability sampling strategy where participants are selected based on accessibility (Bornstein, Jager, & Putnick, 2013); thus, the findings of this research will limit the generalization of results. Using this convenience sampling, some identified targets, particularly those in larger (more than 4-unit) buildings proved harder to access due to controlled and secure access of the buildings.

Another limitation with this study was the lack of more detailed demographic information in the survey. This exclusion was a conscious decision made with the staff of the neighborhood associations when designing the survey. Getting more data on demographic information and asking for specific socio-economic information may have allowed for more detailed analysis of these results. This survey mostly avoids concrete data points, instead focusing on residents feelings of satisfaction. As such, answers to the survey questions like “high rent” and “high utilities” are relative, and each respondent

may have a different idea of what “high” means. A more detailed survey to capture concrete data points like rent paid and actual utility costs would be good further study.

Another recommendation would be for a longitudinal study to record changes to renters’ attitudes over time, as well as tracking any other hard data points and how they may change. Additional feedback on a number of questions indicated that respondents felt certain aspects were “getting worse” or “improving” in the neighborhood. A longitudinal, multi-year study to track these changes in attitudes is the next step to more accurately get a sense of renters’ issues of local concern. Additionally, similar data collection could be done across different neighborhoods in the City of Minneapolis to draw a comparative analysis of renters’ issues across the city. Issues of local concern in these two neighborhoods in Northeast Minneapolis may be quite different than issues in other parts of the City. As noted above, there was a lack of critical rental unit or management issues captured in these surveys, suggesting good quality of rental units. Renters in neighborhoods with poorer quality rental units or landlords may have different priorities and needs than these respondents.

Another recommendation would be conducting a similar survey, particularly with the same questions on neighborhood characteristics, with homeowners in the neighborhoods as well. As evidenced in the literature review, there is historically a divide among homeowners and tenants within the same neighborhood. While parts of this survey related to renter issues may not apply, certain questions can be answered regardless of owner or renter status. Getting this data to analyze any stark differences in attitudes among renters and homeowners would be a particularly valuable addition to the established neighborhood association literature.



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## Appendix I

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Suite #: \_\_\_\_\_

Move-In Date? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you familiar with the Beltrami Neighborhood Council/the St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association?

- No       Yes      What have you heard?  
 Have you ever attended any of our meetings or events?  
 What did you think of them?

Have you faced any of these livability Issues in your home?

- Mice
- Bed Bugs
- Mold
- Leaks
- Water Damage
- Poor Property Condition
- Security (Doors, Windows, Lighting, etc.)
- High Utilities (Poor Insulation, Inefficient Appliances, etc.)

Have you faced any of these management Issues in your home?

- Rent Increase or High rent
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Notice to Vacate/ Nonrenewal of lease
- Infraction Notice
- Rental License issues
- Facing Condemnation
- Application or Tenant Screening
- Retaliation
- Improper Notice
- Security Deposit
- Unfavorable Lease
- Maintenance Issues

Explanation/Note





Appendix II  
Landlord Survey

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you owned/rented property in the Beltrami or St. Anthony East neighborhoods? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you familiar with the Beltrami Neighborhood Council/the St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association?

           What have you heard?  
No      Yes      Have you ever attended any of our meetings or events?

What did you think of them?

What do you think are the top issues affecting your rental property? (Examples: High energy costs, security, tenant issues, structural problems)

What do you think are the top issues facing the Beltrami or St. Anthony East Neighborhoods? (Examples: safety, access to transportation, affordability)

Which of these programs do you think would be useful for owners of rental property?

- Energy Efficiency grant
- Home Improvement Loan or Grant
- Security Grant
- Hosting tenant and landlord forums

Are there other resources or programs we could provide that would be helpful for you?

Any additional notes or thoughts?