

Fair Housing Convenings:

Tenant Protections
Policy Engagement
Summary Report



City of Saint Paul
Office of Financial Empowerment

August 2019

Acknowledgements

Engagement sessions were hosted in partnership with The Department of Planning and Economic Development and the Saint Paul City Council. This report was issued by the Office of Financial Empowerment at the City of Saint Paul.

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Many thanks to Amal Abdi, Gabriela Olvera, Ikram Koliso and Rachel Walch from the City of Saint Paul for their support in engagement sessions and report. **Most importantly, deep gratitude is given to participants who attended the engagement sessions!**

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Background: The City of Saint Paul and Fair Housing

The City of Saint Paul is proactively focused on housing protection and rooting out discrimination against protected classes in homeownership, renting, and housing financing.

Protected classes are those identified by the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and in Saint Paul’s City Charter, including: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, familial status, age, ancestry, creed, public assistance status, marital status, and sexual or affectional orientation.

Fair Housing Foundations

The City of Saint Paul is focusing on three areas as we advance a Fair Housing strategy centered on rooting out housing discrimination, including housing access, [affirmatively furthering fair housing](#)¹, and anti-displacement.

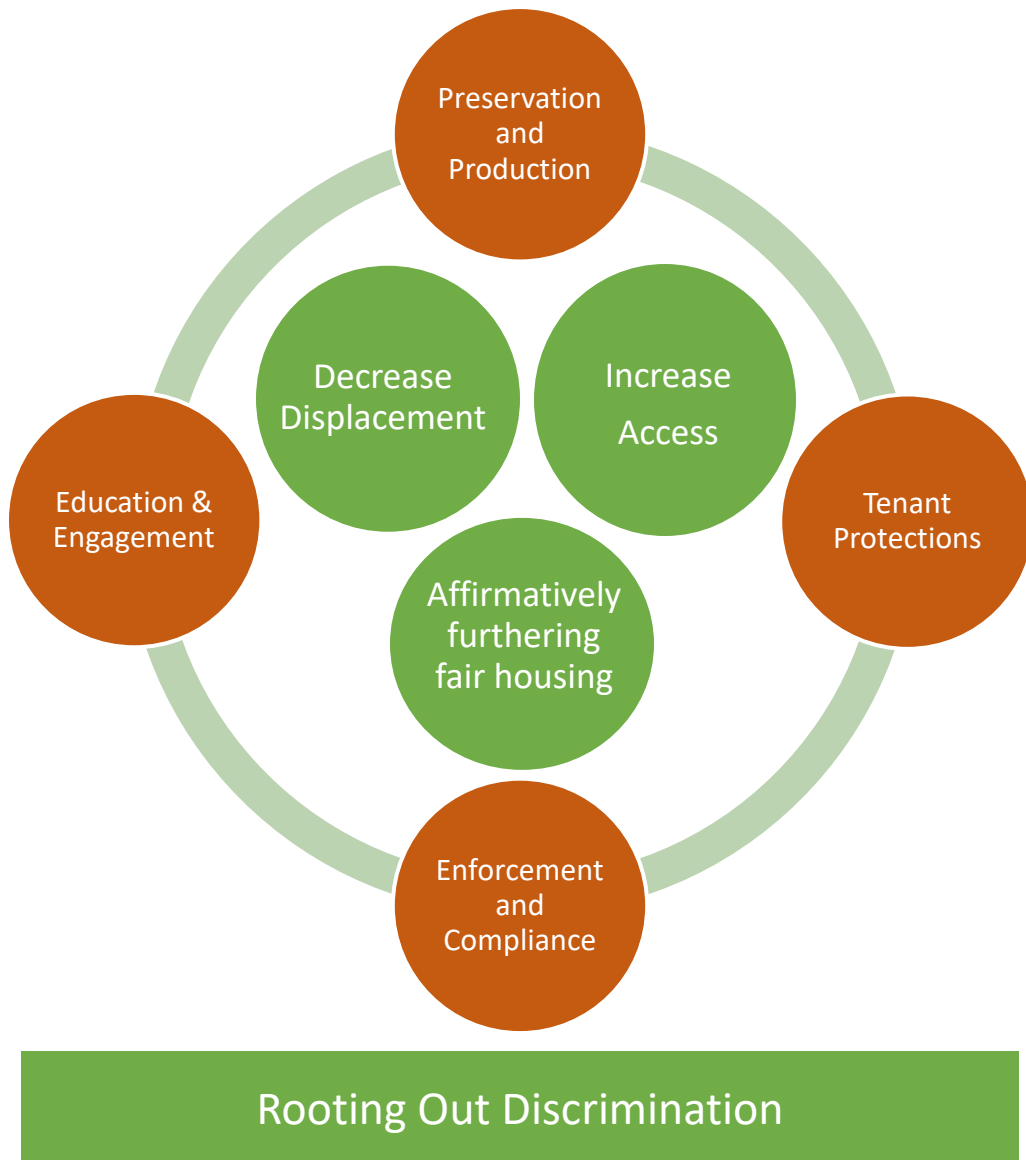


¹ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) is a legal requirement that federal agencies and federal grantees further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act. AFFH means “taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.” <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/affh/>

Approach to Fair Housing in the City of Saint Paul

The City of Saint Paul has identified four areas where we have the sphere of influence to advance fair housing, including:

- 1) Preservation and production
- 2) Tenant protections
- 3) Enforcement and compliance
- 4) Education and engagement



Fair Housing: Race Equity and Economic Justice Imperatives

Saint Paul has made a historical shift in the make-up of our city's population, with over 50% of residents identifying as renters² and as people of color³. Saint Paul also recognizes that our \$28,763 per capita income gap and 32.7% homeownership gap between white residents and residents of color further perpetuates the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on communities of color. As a result, 36.7% of all households and 50.9% of renter households are cost burdened.⁴

To build a city that works for all of us, we must ensure that everyone has a safe, stable and affordable neighborhood to live in. The City is committed to building an equitable and inclusive city that will eliminate structural inequities in city processes and policies, and ensure timely and relevant access to services, resources and opportunity for every person in Saint Paul.

Purpose of Fair Housing Engagement

In Saint Paul, we recognize the urgency in addressing our critical housing needs. The City of Saint Paul is committed to creating space for authentic engagement that holds the complexity of the housing landscape and lifts the voices of those closest to the issues to build a Saint Paul that works for everyone.

In fall 2019, the City of Saint Paul is authoring a Fair Housing Policy Agenda focused on tenant protections. As part of this process, the City is hosting stakeholder engagement sessions in two phases:

1. Round 1: Completed in summer 2019 - Problem identification and ways the broader community can align contributions to a goal
2. Round 2: Stakeholder impact analysis of proposed policies and strategies – Fall 2019

This report is a summary of the results from Round 1 of engagement.



² <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

³ <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/racial-equity-metrics>

⁴ Cost Burdened= Paying more than 30% of your income on housing costs
<https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/city/st-paul>

Engagement Process

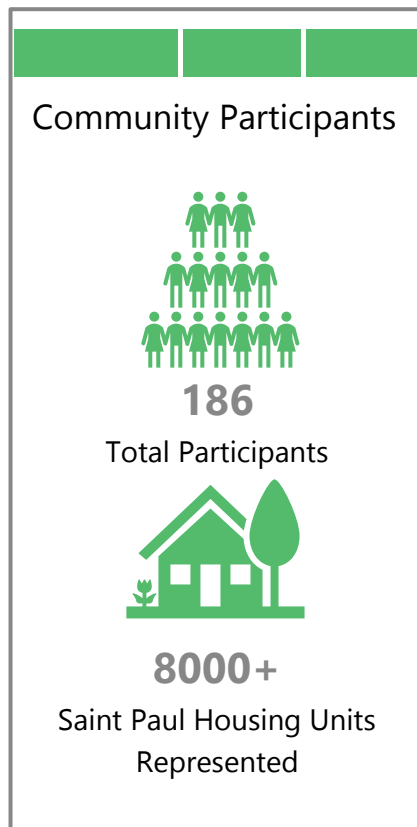
City staff connected with a wide range of industry stakeholders including community members (renters, homeowners, unsheltered), community and housing advocates, community organizations, housing providers (for-profit and non-profit), and neighboring jurisdictions to engage around viable and sustainable tenant protections policy throughout the summer of 2019. The Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) hosted 3 housing conversations with the community to gain perspective on the top three housing barriers they are personally facing or by someone they know, engaging **98 individuals**.

Additionally, seven interactive engagement sessions were hosted in each City Ward in partnership with City Councilmembers which engaged **71 participants** and one session was hosted with Saint Paul landlords in partnership with the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association hosting **17 property managers and staff**. These sessions were a continuation of conversations which have taken place across the city and the region to identify housing needs and create a space to gather detailed and actionable stakeholder-specific solutions and strategies.

Attendees provided input on what role each stakeholder – landlords, tenants, the City and other identified sectors – can play to achieve fair housing in relation to the goals of:

- Increase knowledge about tenant rights and responsibilities.
- Increase housing access and decrease barriers.
- Increase housing stability and decrease displacement.
- Increase community input and engagement.

The goals were posted on the wall and attendees wrote their ideas underneath the relevant stakeholder group for each goal or engaged in a round table discussion to capture their input. The groups took a deeper dive into the goals through a debrief conversation and heard personal experiences of community members. Examples of the prompts used in engagement sessions are included in the Appendix.



Fair Housing Convenings *At-a-glance*

The City of Saint Paul hosted stakeholder convenings to learn the community's priorities and how to align contributions to reach our housing goals. This community input will help inform the Fair Housing Policy Agenda focused on tenant protections.



Of the 7 Ward convening participants...



26
Renters



24
Homeowners



8
Organizations



5
Potential Renters



5
Landlords



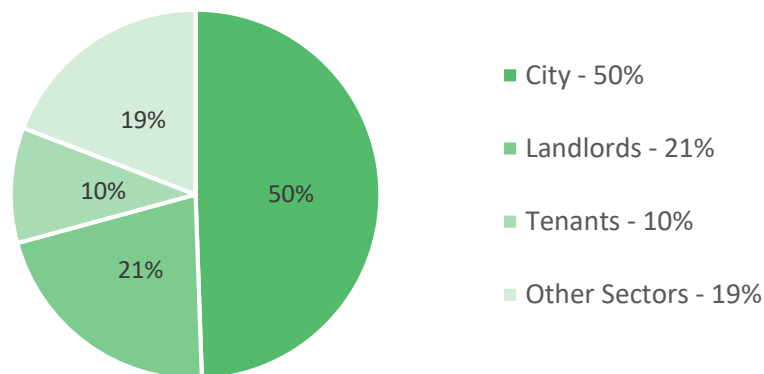
58
Saint Paul Residents

Note: Sign-in sheets were optional at the ward convenings, so we did not fully tabulate the entire number of ward participants

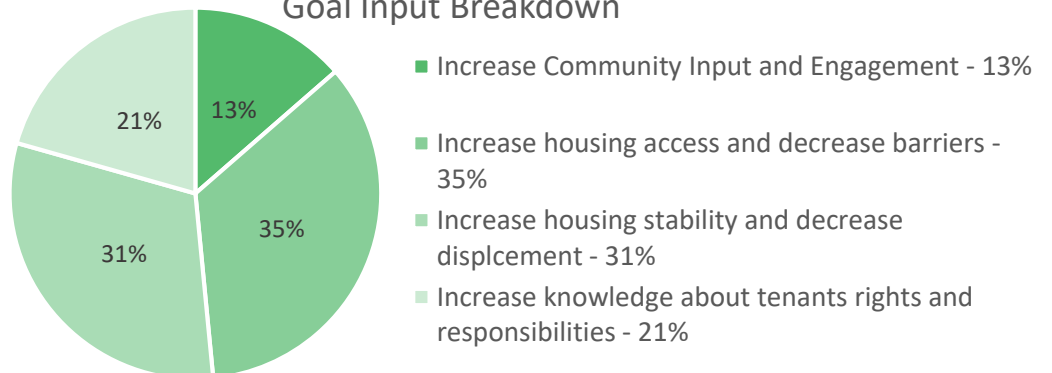
Response Themes

- 26% Education, Outreach and Engagement
- 21% Tenant Screening
- 15% Housing Preservation and Production
- 11% Rental Costs
- 9% Partnerships, Investments and Coordination
- 9% Enforcement, Compliance and Accountability
- 9% Addressing Power Dynamics and Narrative

Stakeholders Who Could Take Action



Goal Input Breakdown



What Participants Shared

Participants shared not only their personal experiences being a tenant, advocate, or landlord, but they also their vision for what fair housing can look like in Saint Paul. **Participants shared the most concern around the goals: *Increase access and decrease barriers and Increase stability and decrease displacement.*** The sessions were convened around the topic of tenant protections, but participants shared concerns about housing needs more broadly. Though some of these concerns fall outside of the scope of tenant protections policy agenda, all feedback shared at the convenings is captured in the themes detailed below.



Theme 1: Education, Outreach and Engagement

Participants expressed an overwhelming need for easy access to information about housing rights and laws written in plain language. This theme emerged more than any other theme identified in the engagement sessions, with 26% of the data inputs related to this theme. Participants also identified the following opportunities related to this theme:

- Increase opportunities for tenant and landlord education on housing rights and responsibilities
- Get information to and engage community members where they are located:
 - At home/apartment building
 - Community events
 - Housing court
 - Resource hubs
- Some landlords identified that they can be helpful in getting information to tenants on renter rights and responsibilities (though no specific strategy for doing so was identified)
- Create transparency in City policy processes and timelines to increase community awareness and engagement to support and inform policy change

- Increase navigational support for residents so they can access available programs and resources to fully exercise their rights

Theme 2: Tenant Screening

Tenant screenings were another area of concern for participants, with 21% of all feedback provided relating to issues with tenant screening criteria, security deposits, and rental housing applications. Issues tenants face and expressed during the sessions include:

- Criminal history, credit score, and previous evictions are the top three barriers in screening practices identified across all engagement sessions
- The need to address the eviction process:
 - Short timeline from eviction notice to eviction limits opportunity to resolve issues
 - A tenant's record is impacted before their case is finalized
 - Increased desire for mediation and eviction prevention services by both tenants and landlords
 - Evictions are time consuming, costly, and often a last resort for landlords
- Large security deposits are unaffordable (for example, double and triple deposits in response to an imperfect credit, housing, criminal, and other backgrounds)
- Lack of clarity in the application process results in tenants searching for housing and paying multiple application fees to ultimately be denied (for example, unclear tenant selection criteria encourages potential tenants to apply for housing where they do not meet the background requirements resulting in unnecessary application fees paid and applicant denials)
- Section 8 discrimination - limited housing choice for voucher holders (for example, landlords are not required to accept a voucher which limits voucher placement and housing choice for the lowest income residents)
- Residents without social security numbers have limited access to housing opportunities and experience increased vulnerability as a result of limited options related to housing choice

Theme 4: Rental Costs

The cost of rent is an increasing burden, especially for the 59% of renter households in Saint Paul earning less than 60% of the area median income (AMI). Of those households, 75% are cost burdened, paying more than 30% of their income in rent and 39% paying more than half of their income in rental costs.⁵ Session participants are feeling this squeeze and stated:

- Costs of rent are too high – many residents are demanding rent control
- Incomes are not keeping pace with rental costs and there needs to be a press for cross-sector strategies to increase wages and job availability for Saint Paul residents
- Housing affordability requirements often create a barrier and may need reconsideration, including:

⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uFvqAfut4LWly0YGdyAAsmvJb0GMS3so/view>

- Rent-to-income ratio needed to qualify for housing
- Area Median Income (AMI) structure is regional and not local

Theme 5: Partnerships and Service Coordination

Saint Paul is not an island and should not operate as such – participants see opportunity for the City to work collaborative with neighboring jurisdictions and other sectors to protect tenants and provide supportive resources. These include:

- Increase collaboration across sectors and jurisdictions to increase access to supportive programs and support policy change:
 - Increase awareness of mission driven community organizations, the services provided and target market served to streamline access
 - Identify which level of government has jurisdiction over specific policy change or services (city, county, state, federal) to better support cross sector change
- Increase coordination and resources for need-based programs such as:
 - Emergency assistance (for example, the timeline for receiving emergency assistance is often longer than the timeline needed to secure security deposits and rent assistance)
 - Increase legal support and eviction prevention services
 - Support increased funding for community organizations providing support
 - Consider alternate financial resource options for rental assistance outside of emergency assistance
- Pilot programs to increase housing access such as second chance programs for residents returning to the community after incarceration

Theme 6: Enforcement, Compliance and Accountability

Participants showed interest in the City increasing its enforcement, compliance, and accountability for consumer protection of renters to ensure everyone has a safe place to call home. In particular, participants see opportunities to:

- Increase capacity for compliance and enforcement regarding:
 - Repairs
 - Complaint investigations
 - Housing inspections
- Need for proactive accountability mechanisms
 - Easy access to landlord and property rating and compliance history
 - Explore landlord screening comparable to tenant screening

Theme 7: Preservation and Production of Housing

Participants see preservation and production of housing as another area of impact in the housing market. Housing options which fit the financial and household needs is imperative when 59% of renting households earn less than 60% of the area median income (AMI). Issues participants raised during the sessions are:

- Demystify Area Median Income (AMI) guidelines
- Review zoning requirements to eliminate additional production barriers
- Create pathways to homeownership
- Incentivize and create deeply affordable housing options

Theme 8: Addressing the Renter-Landlord Power Dynamic & Renters as Second-Class Citizen Narrative

The City of Saint Paul has made a historical shift to over 50% of residents renting their homes.⁶ Participants see an opportunity for tenant protections to address the power dynamic between renters and landlords which renters often feel favors landlords, and to center renters in the narrative of tenant protections.

- Narrative work:
 - Center the voices of renters
 - Address the root causes of the housing crisis: Racism, redlining, segregation, restrictive/racial covenants, exclusion
- Address the imbalance of power between landlords and renters:
 - Reframe the narrative of “renters as less than equal community members”
 - Provide proactive protections against retaliation and displacement

The City heard many different types of housing needs from participants during the engagement sessions outlined in this report. The City recognizes that the policies for tenant protections are but one important piece of a broader landscape of housing strategies. It is acknowledged that it will take a mix of policy, program, investment, among many other strategies to ensure a housing market that works for everyone in the City of Saint Paul.

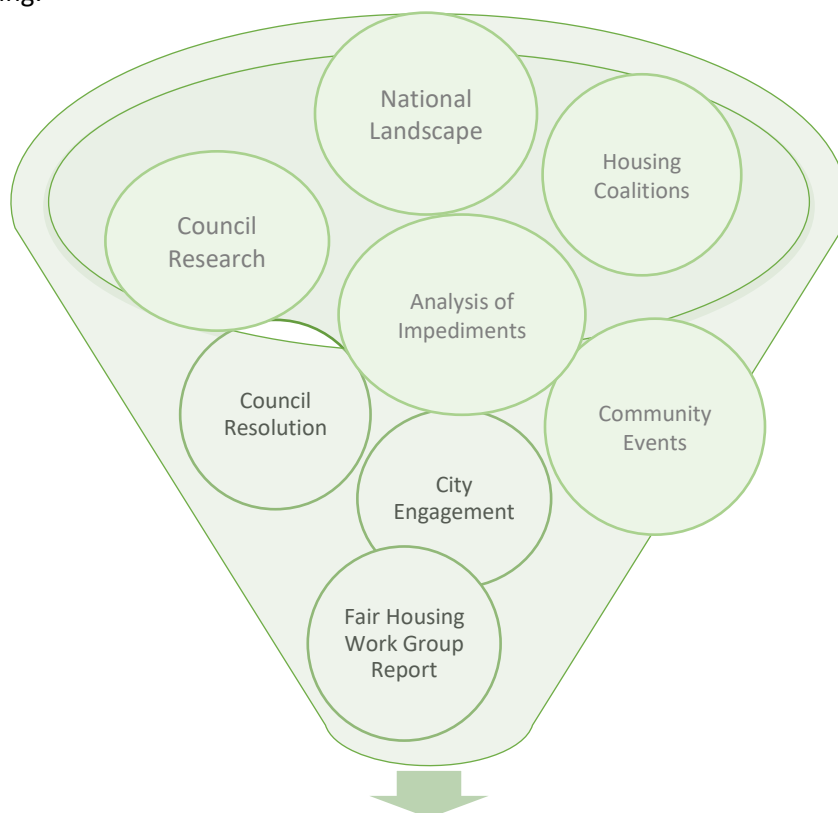
⁶ <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmmk>

Next steps



- City staff will conduct a policy assessment in preparation for the second round of engagement with community. See Appendix for draft template of policy assessment that the City will use.
- The second round of engagements will include stakeholder impact sessions to solicit additional input on the proposed policy recommendations.
- After completion of the two rounds of engagement sessions, City staff will finalize draft ordinance language and make final policy recommendations to the City Council.

Inputs leading to recommended policy priorities. City staff are working to identify and recommend specific tenant protections policies to meet the needs of our community and support the foundations of our fair housing work. This engagement report is just one of several inputs the City is using to guide recommended policy priorities. There are a number of other inputs guiding our recommended policy priorities, including:⁷



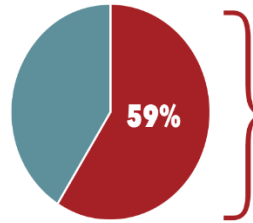
Recommended Policy Priorities

⁷ See Appendix

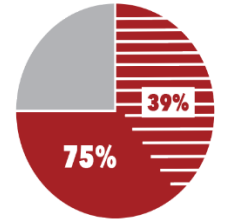
Appendix

RACE	BLACK	NATIVE	LATINO	ASIAN	WHITE
% of households that are renters	83%	67%	66%	62%	41%
Number of households that are renters	13,460	505	4,610	7,018	32,424
% of renter households earning less than \$25,750	53%	n/a	n/a	50%	35%
% of renter households earning less than \$42,900	77%	n/a	n/a	75%	59%
What households can afford to spend on housing	\$659	\$891	\$946	\$1,002	\$1,519

n/a = data withheld as sample size is too small, large margin of error



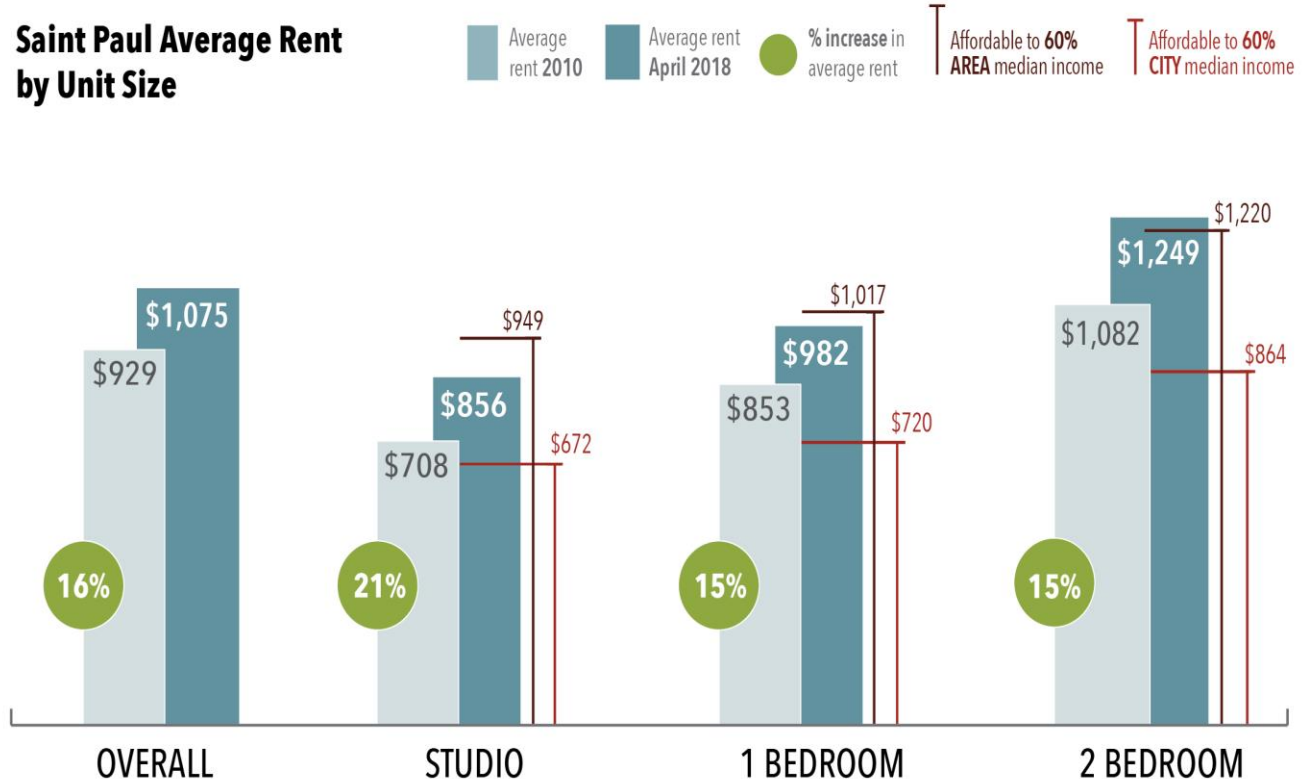
In St Paul, 59% of renter households (33,380 families) **earn less than 60%** of area median income



Of those households, **75%** pay more than 30% and **39%** pay more than half of their monthly income on housing

Market Watch: Saint Paul MHP

Saint Paul Average Rent by Unit Size



Market Watch: Saint Paul MHP



Appendix

Displacement

Displacement occurs when housing or neighborhood conditions force residents to move out of a neighborhood they currently occupy, or prohibit people from moving into a neighborhood that previously would have been accessible to them. In presenting its gentrification study, CURA identifies four forms of displacement, originally described by Peter Marcuse in Washington University’s Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law:

Last-Resident Displacement: A low-income household “involuntarily” displaced from a housing unit they otherwise could afford;

Chain Displacement: Multiple low-income households displaced from the same housing units over time as the neighborhood changes;

Exclusionary Displacement: Low-income residents prevented from moving into a neighborhood by rising housing costs; and

Cultural Displacement: When family, friends, local businesses are forced to leave and rents rise. This puts pressure on similar families to leave as well.⁸

Access

Generally, fair housing planning involves striking a balance between opening up communities of opportunity so people wishing to move can choose housing there while at the same time investing in communities of high poverty so that they too become areas of choice with access to the opportunities people desire in order to thrive. Unfairly limiting the access people of color or other protected class members have to a full range of housing and neighborhoods illegally restricts their housing choices and the related range of amenities different neighborhoods offer. Simultaneously, fair housing barriers may also exist when resources and opportunities are disproportionately limited in areas where persons of color and other protected class members live now. In its recently-adopted Assessment of Fair Housing framework, U.S. HUD asks grantees to examine neighborhoods and the relative access they offer to residents of different races and ethnicities on several dimensions: school proficiency, poverty, transit access and transportation costs, proximity to jobs and local labor market conditions, and environmental health.⁹

Area Median Income¹⁰

HUD's Area Median Income for a family of four for the Minneapolis-Saint Paul-Bloomington Metropolitan Statistical Area			
*The 80% of Area Median Income limit is capped at the U.S. national median family income			
AMI	2019	2018	2017
Area Median Income	\$100,000	\$94,300	\$90,400
80% of Area Median Income	\$75,500*	\$71,900*	\$68,000*
60% of Area Median Income	\$60,000	\$56,580	\$54,240
50% of Area Median Income	\$50,000	\$47,150	\$45,200
30% of Area Median Income	\$30,000	\$28,300	\$27,100

⁸ Marcuse, Peter. *Gentrification, Abandonment, and Displacement: Connections, Causes, and Policy Responses in New York*. (1985) Washington University Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law. Volume 28 p. 195.

⁹ <https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Projects%20and%20Initiatives/Draft%20III%20Addendum.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://metro council.org/Communities/Services/Livable-Communities-Grants/2017-Ownership-and-Rent-Affordability-Limits.aspx>

Appendix

[2014 Analysis of Impediments and Addendum](#)

The Analysis of Impediments must identify the causes for housing disparities, factors that reduce fair housing choice, the distribution of affordable housing (publicly funded and naturally occurring), displacement that disproportionately affects protected classes, the effects of gentrification on protected classes, integration and segregation, and disparities in access to opportunity as defined by HUD. This fair housing planning is required of communities that receive certain funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Addendum specifically addresses housing discrimination, gentrification and displacement, barriers to housing choice, and the conditions of segregation and integration in the seven-county area that includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties in Minnesota.

[Fair Housing Work Group Report March 2018](#)

In 2015, the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul were named in a fair housing complaint (now resolved) alleging the analysis and findings of their HUD-required Analysis of Impediments were deficient. In 2016, the cities entered into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement with HUD which required the preparation of an Analysis of Impediments Addendum to provide a more robust analysis focusing on segregation and integration, areas of concentrated poverty and areas of opportunity. In 2017, Saint Paul City Council and Mayor Christopher Coleman directed the creation of a Fair Housing Workgroup to make policy and budget recommendations to the Mayor and Housing and Redevelopment Authority with the goal of eliminating housing disparities, lowering barriers to affordable housing, and ensuring access to economic opportunity in the City of Saint Paul. This report is in response to the City Council Resolution 17-2064 directing staff of the Fair Housing Workgroup to develop a Fair Housing Strategic Plan to present to the City Council on March 28, 2018.

[Council Resolution 18-1204 July 2018](#)

Calling for action to create and preserve housing that is affordable at all income levels, address racial, social and economic disparities in housing, and create infrastructure needed to stabilize housing for all in Saint Paul.

[Office of Financial Empowerment - Fair Housing Update August 2019](#)

The Office of Financial Empowerment presented a Fair Housing update to the City Council immediately following the first round of engagement on Fair Housing and Tenant Protections. The presentation focused on creating on common understanding of Fair Housing both broadly and within the City, an update on the engagement process and Inputs and filters for advancing policy recommendations.

[Council Research Report - Tenant Protections August 2019](#)

Council research presented their findings regarding several tenant protections concepts identified in the July 2018 resolution which council committed to exploring in 2019.

Template: Engagement Session Prompts

Goal: Increase knowledge about tenant rights and responsibilities			
Themes: Limited knowledge and/or access to local, state and federal housing laws and resources			
What could be the role of...in addressing this issue?			
Landlords/Property owners	Tenants / Prospective tenants	City	Other sectors

Goal: Increase housing access and decrease barriers.			
Themes: Rising rental costs, tenant screening criteria, security deposits, application fees and process, mobility			
What could be the role of...in addressing this issue?			
Landlords/Property owners	Tenants / Prospective tenants	City	Other sectors

Goal: Increase housing stability and decrease displacement			
Themes: affordable properties, evictions, condemnations, repairs, rising rental costs			
What could be the role of...in addressing this issue?			
Landlords/Property owners	Tenants / Prospective tenants	City	Other sectors

Goal: Increase community input and engagement			
Themes: more opportunity for community to shape and inform the cities policies and programs			
What could be the role of...in addressing this issue?			
Landlords/Property owners	Tenants / Prospective tenants	City	Other sectors

Template: Policy Assessment

Policy Name	
Description:	
Policy development considerations	
Indicator/Result	Saint Paul residents live in stable, safe and affordable communities.
Fair Housing Category	<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation and Production <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant Protections <input type="checkbox"/> Education & Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Enforcement & Compliance
Case Statement	What do we know about the problem that this policy will impact? Race equity Economic justice
Ordinance Specifics	
Cost	
Who is impacted (Constituencies, Wards)	
Stakeholders (For and Against)	
Whose sphere of influence	
Engagement strategy	
Policy implementation / monitoring considerations	
City Capacity	
Community Capacity/Partnerships/Delivery	
Highest Leverage Impact	
Strategy	
Political Feasibility	
Legal	
Education	
Messaging/Narrative	
Readiness/Level of Implementation	
Timeline implementation	
Recommendation	