

Data-Driven Affordable Housing Investment

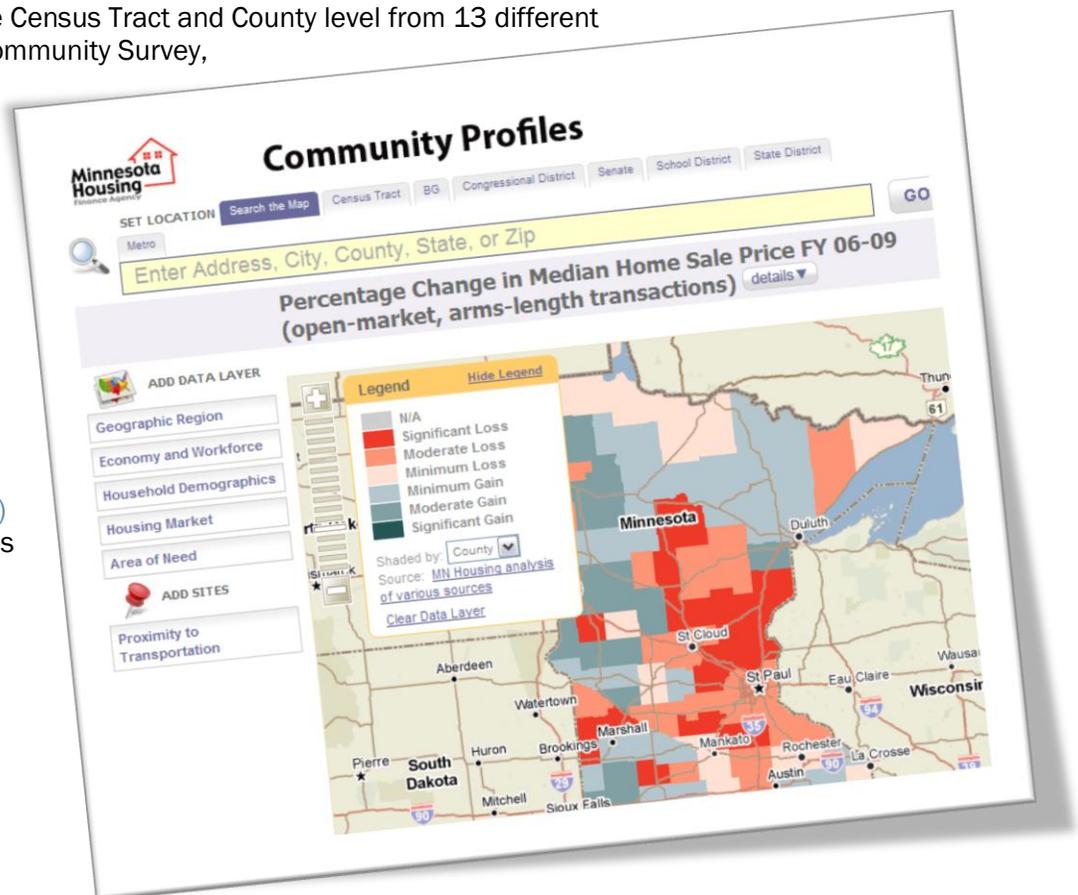
Minnesota Housing uses data and Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis in an effort to maximize effectiveness and impact of investment decisions. The community profiles and funding allocation Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) activities are two recent examples of data-driven targeting. This document describes the data used in these activities as well as some lessons learned.

Minnesota Housing's Community Profiles | www.mnhousing.gov/communityprofiles/

About the Data: Indicators at the Census Tract and County level from 13 different sources such as the American Community Survey,

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), LPS Applied Analytics (foreclosure data), Minneapolis Area Association of Realtors, and more. A few key data sources publicly available include:

- US Census, American Community Survey, Decennial Census, data tables (www.factfinder2.census.gov) and geographic boundary files (www.census.gov/geo/ www.tiger/tgrshp2010/tgrshp2010.html)
- Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (www.mngeo.state.mn.us), MetroGIS DataFinder (www.datafinder.org)



Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP3) | www.mnhousing.gov/resources/apply/nsp/

About the Data: Several criteria were used to target areas for NSP3 funding allocation including areas with significant foreclosure impact, access to transit or jobs, existence of rental housing, and marketability. A few key data sources publicly available include:

- Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed a comprehensive set of data for NSP3 which can be found at the HUD user website (www.huduser.org/nsp/nsp3.html)
- Local Employment Dynamics through the US Census Bureau for current jobs data, (lehdmap.did.census.gov)

Lessons Learned

- **Comparing different geographies.** It is possible to analyze data from incompatible geographies. Minnesota Housing developed a crosswalk for allocating minor civil divisions to tracts and used an existing crosswalk table from HUD for allocating zipcodes to tracts (www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/usps_crosswalk.html).
- **Always evaluate data for fitness for use.** For example, Minnesota Housing would find current residential vacancy data useful in many analyses. HUD provided aggregated USPS administrative data on address vacancies, but reporting discrepancies in rural areas that skew results in certain analyses. Note, however, HUD is currently re-evaluating the data for future release (www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/usps.html).
- **Interactive tools for data browsing do not need to be developed in house.** Minnesota Housing contracted with a vendor, PolicyMap, to create an interactive web-based mapping tool for substantially less investment than developing in house (www.policymap.com).

Tools Used

- For desktop GIS analysis and mapping; ArcGIS v10 and Python scripting are used. For data processing; Microsoft Excel, Access and IBM's SPSS are used.
 - See ESRI's non profit grant program and membership for lower cost desktop GIS (www.esri.com/nonprofit/arcgis-desktop.html).

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Minnesota Housing finances and advances affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income Minnesotans to enhance quality of life and foster strong communities