A Socioeconomic Impact Analysis
of the City of Lakes Community Land Trust

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Acknowledgements

This project was far from an individual undertaking.
I can only hope that my actions and words combined
can relay a modicum of the intense gratitude I feel.

Staci and the CLCLT team, for all that you've built, all your guidance, and for making room for me and the oversized bike.

My academic advisors and mentors: **Joel, Kurt, Revel, Carey, Greg, among so many others.**

My friends and colleagues.

My family, my Lark.

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Introduction 1

Abstract

The City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCLT) has facilitated access to equitable housing for hundreds of disadvantaged Minneapolis households. By acquiring land and stewarding it for the purpose of perpetually affordable homeownership, the CLCLT has demonstrated an effective method by which decommodification can remedy the allocative failures of private housing markets. This report demonstrates the effectiveness of the CLCLT in its processes and outcomes, providing insight into why, how, where, and for whom said programs operate. Based on the evidence provided in this report, I conclude that the CLCLT is a measurably distinct tool for housing affordability in Minneapolis, but not without vulnerability. I put forth several proposals that would deepen its impact and ensure that its scaling up occurs in a manner that is consistent with housing justice principles.

Background

This research examines the specific nature of the CLCLT in Minneapolis, as a non-contiguous ("scattered-site"), homeownership-focused community land trust. The CLCLT has existed for 25 years, and has grown to steward more than 400 housing units– predominantly single-family detached homes– permanently affordable. The CLCLT is one of the largest homeownership-focused community land trusts in the United States. This status has been facilitated mostly through their Homebuyer Initiated Program, in which an initial affordability investment by the CLCLT enables buyers to access traditional mortgages at greatly reduced costs in exchange for agreeing to CLCLT stewardship of the property's land.

The CLCLT is a shared-equity housing model. They own the land, but their homeowners exercise a set of responsibilities that are nearly indistinguishable from the typical responsibilities of any other conventional homeowner. CLCLT homeowners own the improvements that sit on the land, and pay a small ground lease fee to the CLCLT each month. In scenarios where CLCLT homeowners sell their homes, they earn back 100% of what they've paid into their mortgage– including any qualified capital improvements– plus 25% of the home's increase in value. Homeowners are also supported by the CLCLT in the long-term, especially with upkeep and maintenance. Using deed restrictions and resale formulas, the CLCLT is able to ensure the housing units they steward remain affordable essentially in perpetuity. A one-time affordability investment permanently lowers the purchase price of the home, on the condition that the homeowner deeds the specific legal requirements set by the CLCLT to sustain the property's perpetual affordability.

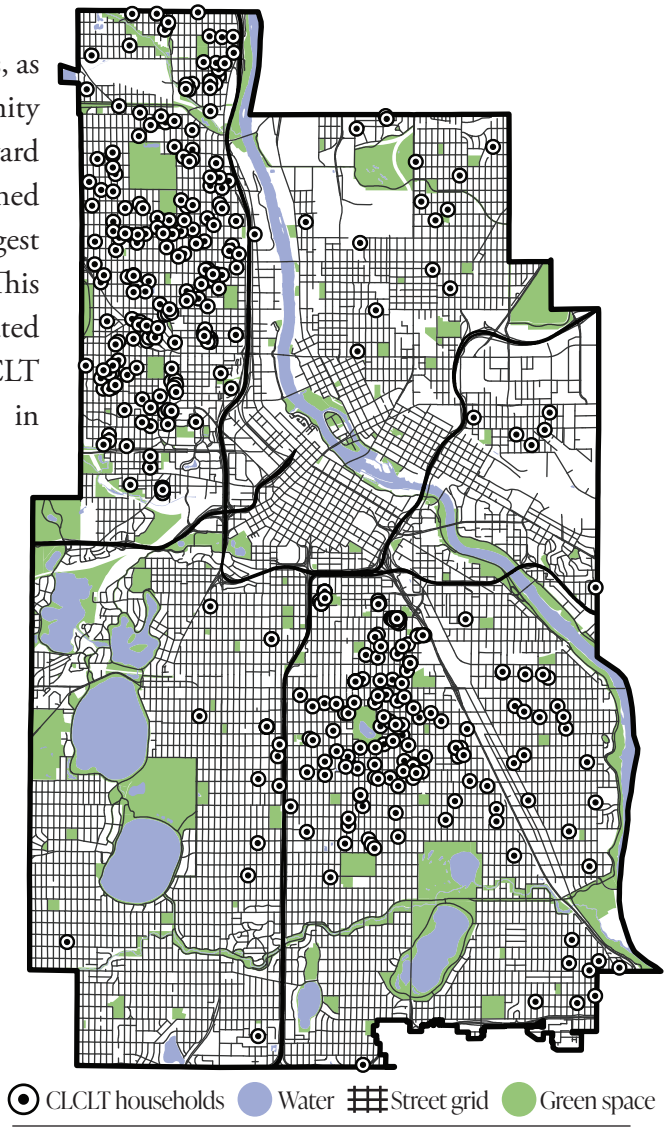


Figure 1.0: All 421 CLCLT households (as of February 2025) as they are located within Minneapolis.

Relevance

Chiefly, this report was designed to function as an insightful research package for the CLCLT, accompanied by illuminating contributions to the wider community land trust literature. Though the CLCLT is no stranger to community land trust scholarship[1][2][3][4], it has not been the subject of a comprehensive case study. A case study such as this one provides unique value to the CLCLT, policy makers, and the wider housing justice movement. For community land trusts, the question of how to scale up and provide more permanent affordability has become increasingly ubiquitous. So, too, has the question of which methods of doing so are most appropriate. If, in these discussions, an organization fails to demonstrate a thorough understanding of their community members, their future endeavors may not be ones that represent the best interest of their constituents. Well-informed decision making is critical. Therein lies the importance of a comprehensive demographic analysis of the CLCLT community, and an analysis of the outcomes associated with the organization's programs. This research has yielded significant discoveries that warrant future explorations of their own, and it is another hope of mine that I, or other housing justice-oriented researchers, can use this work as a launching pad to perform more scholarship that serves the movement well.

Methods and Data

This report is a quantitative analysis. The CLCLT conducts an annual homeowner survey in which they receive rich amounts of qualitative feedback from homeowners regarding a wide array of topics. This report complements the heavily qualitative annual survey quite well. Second, in a context where community land trusts have become increasingly professionalized[5], the more objective nature of a quantitative approach to data analysis fortifies the CLCLT's ability to communicate with partners and stakeholders who rationalize their decisions according to such terms. Another reason for this approach was my desire for a general consistency in the report's content. I used limited comparative analysis in this report, mostly due to a strict standard I set for when such analysis would be contextually appropriate.

The sources of data used in the report's graphics can be accessed and verified in the graphics' full versions provided in the Appendix. Data concerning CLCLT households are from the organization's official records, which I was given access to during our research partnership. With these records, I combined established datasets they provided to me with data I recorded and verified with Staci Horwitz, the CLCLT's Operations Director. Another item worth noting concerns the statistical analysis performed for this report. There are many metrics for which the CLCLT has data on all of its current and past homeowners. For the vast majority of CLCLT data I used, this was the case. This provided greater degrees of certainty and simplicity to the research I performed. I did not have to perform statistical estimations through margins of error, population sampling, or other techniques. I acknowledge that there are certain limitations to these methods, and to the assumptions I performed this work under. I aspire for future research to further challenge and work to alleviate these conditions.

Household Demography | 3

Breakdown

This section explores the present reality of CLCLT homeowners along metrics including race, income, and location. This section is intended to be highly descriptive, but also analytical in its examination of why certain results were yielded. Placing these findings in the context of Minneapolis in a comparative analysis was key to this demography. A primary goal here was to show what CLCLT households look like in relation to the aforementioned metrics, but also to investigate factors past and present that may exert significant influence on these households today.

Demographic Basics

Race and Ethnicity

CLCLT homeowners are majority-nonwhite. This reality stands in stark contrast with the general Minneapolis homeowner population, which is more than three-quarters white. At the beginning of 2025, there were approximately 420 households within the land trust. 408 of them had racial and ethnic identity data gathered by the CLCLT. As the results of this first step relate to the wider context of Minneapolis, CLCLT homeowners are (1) much more diverse than Minneapolis in general and (2) even more comparatively diverse than the Minneapolis homeowner population. Black / African-Americans are represented at a four times greater rate as CLCLT homeowners than they are in the general Minneapolis homeowner population.

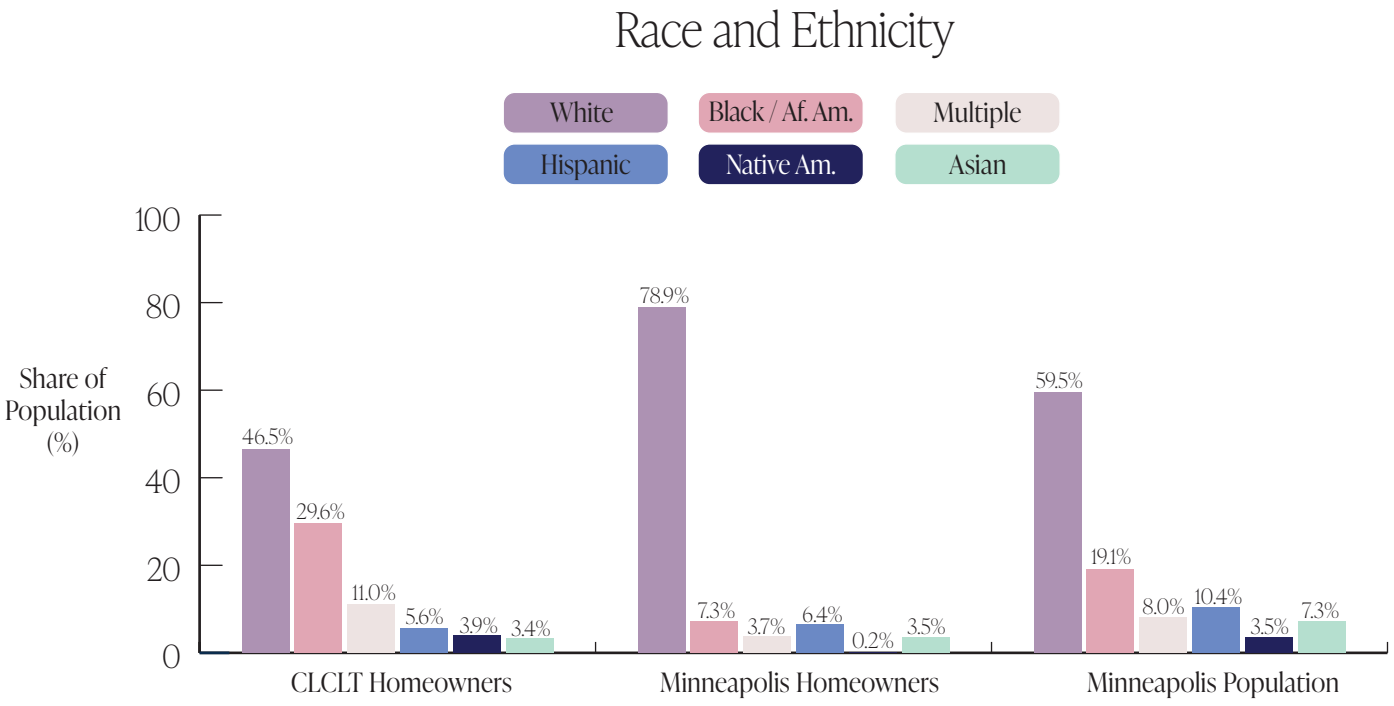


Figure 1.1: Pronounced disparities exist between the racial and ethnic identities of the Minneapolis general population, the Minneapolis homeowner population, and the CLCLT homeowner population. Nonwhite Minneapolitans are significantly overrepresented as CLCLT homeowners relative to both other groups. The most significant distinctions are seen in the much greater representation of Black / African American Minneapolitans in the CLCLT homeowner population. In short, the racial and ethnic groups typically shut out of homeownership opportunities in Minneapolis actually comprise the majority of the CLCLT homeowner population.

Household Size and Family Features

CLCLT households also feature standout characteristics relative to citywide averages of household size, single-female head of household frequency, first-time homeownership, and the frequency of households raising children. Because the CLCLT programmatically intends to make homeownership opportunities affordable for households that are priced out of the market, its rate of first time homebuyers is not entirely surprising, but still serves as evidence of its effectiveness in achieving this goal. Since much of the displayed CLCLT data was recorded at the time of closing, the inferences from this data must be made appropriately. The CLCLT does not gather year-over-year information on whether its homeowners are raising children, but the snapshot provided in the data here still illustrates a stark difference relative to typical timelines of homeownership.

If 85.7% of current CLCLT households are first time homebuyers, and 46.1% of current CLCLT households were raising children when they moved into their land trust home, this suggests a high rate of pre-existing parenthood among households that moved into a CLCLT home. There were 387 (92%) of 421 current CLCLT households with adequate data for these measurements. This data revealed that 206 (53%) of these households were single-female headed. The rate of female-headed households supports the hypothesis that single mothers buying a home for the first time are a common feature of the CLCLT homeowner population. The average size of current CLCLT households at move-in time has also tended to be larger than the citywide average household size of 2.12 people, giving further legitimacy to the CLCLT as a family-friendly operation.

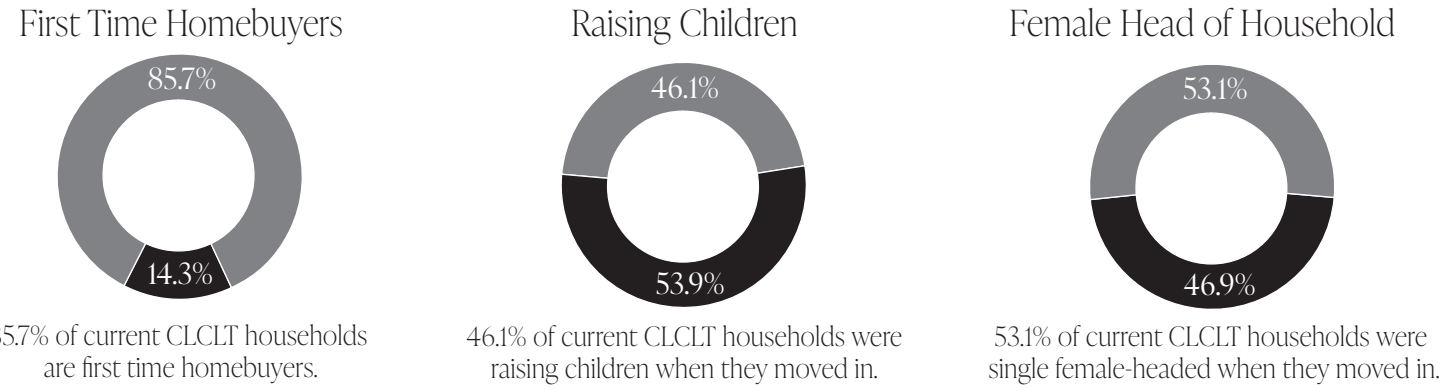


Figure 1.2: The observed tendencies among CLCLT households to be disproportionately first-time homebuyers, raising children at the time of moving in, and single-female headed supports the hypothesis that single women and mothers have been among the more frequent beneficiaries of CLCLT homeownership opportunities.

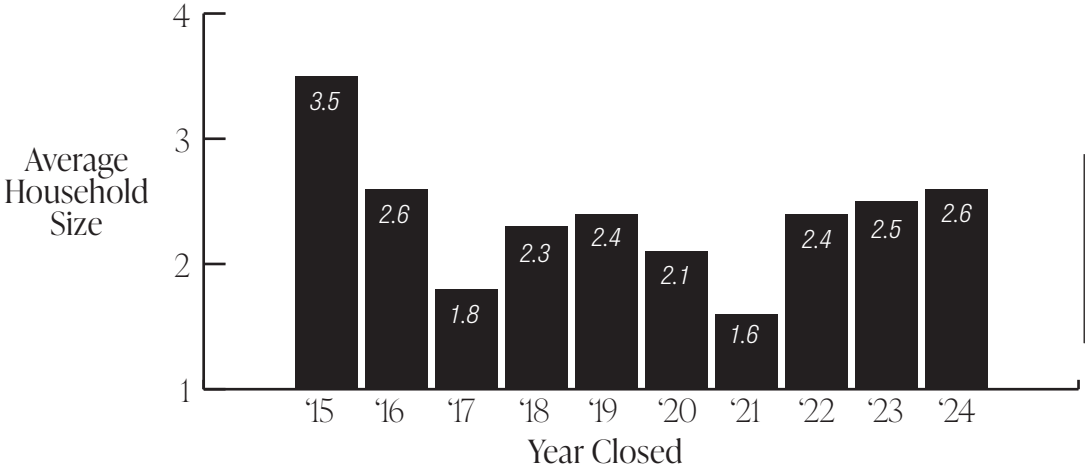


Figure 1.3: For the majority of the past 10 years, the average size of newly-formed CLCLT households tended to be larger than the citywide Minneapolis average household size of 2.12 people.

Area Median Income (AMI)

The past 10 years (from 2015 to 2024) saw 350 closings on CLCLT homes. This 350 figure includes both resales and new homes entering the land trust. The CLCLT requires a one-time income qualification for all prospective homebuyers. Buyers must qualify as earning under 80% of the Twin Cities' Area Median Income. Because of this requirement, the CLCLT has recorded the income levels of all its homeowners at the time of closing. Buyers do not have to income qualify at any point after this initial sub-80% AMI qualification. Recording homeowners' income levels as AMI offers a unique benefit when comparing these figures over time. Whereas comparing gross incomes over time requires tedious inflation adjustments, the nature of AMI being relative to one year at a time provides a much simpler avenue for comparing the relative income levels of new CLCLT homebuyers over time. As the Economic Benefit Analysis shows in greater detail, the fact that CLCLT homebuyer AMI levels have been kept steady around 53% is a noteworthy achievement when it is placed in the wider context of a housing market where the growth in home prices tends to outpace the growth in household incomes[1].

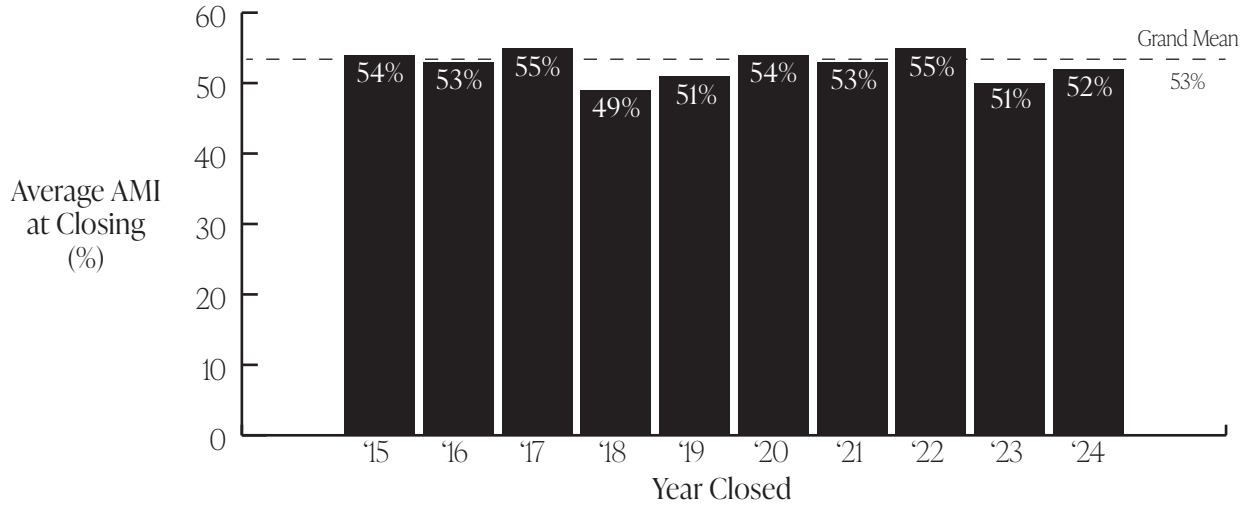


Figure 1.4: The above measured decade of CLCLT closings revealed a minimal shift in AMI levels of buyers at closing. Though the CLCLT sets its maximum income qualification level for buyers at 80% of the area median income, its significant affordability assistance and other intentional measures have greatly contributed to the average AMI of buyers over the past decade never exceeding 55% in any given year. The average AMI of a buyer in this decade was around 53%. To put this in perspective, in 2025 the median income (or 100% AMI) in the Minneapolis - St. Paul - Bloomington metropolitan area was $92,700 for a one-person household, $105,950 for a two-person household, $119,200 for a three-person household, and $132,400 for a four-person household. 53% of these figures equates to a one-person household earning $49,131, a two-person household earning $56,154, a three-person household earning $63,176, and a four-person household earning $70,172. Access to homeownership is typically far out of reach for regional households situated in these positions on the income spectrum.

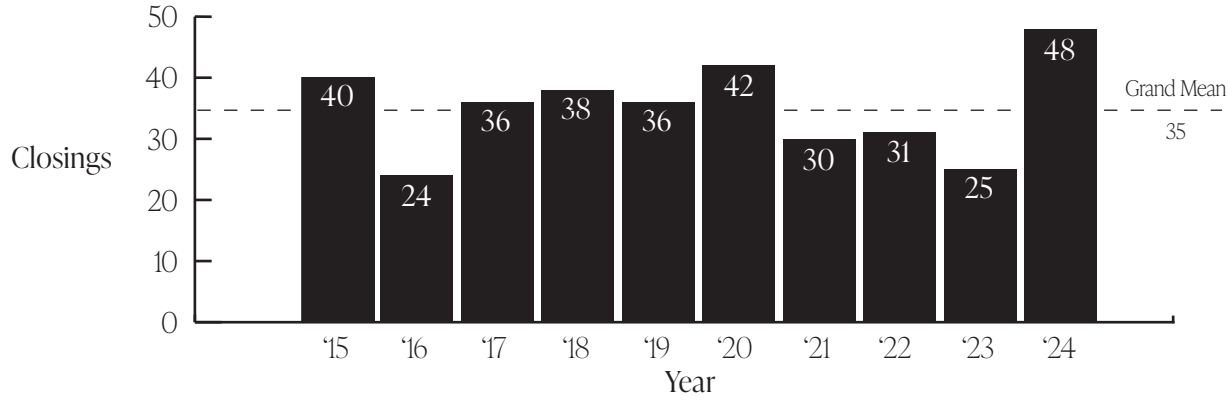


Figure 1.5: Closings on CLCLT households (new entries and resales) from 2015 to 2024. There were 350 total, averaging 35 per year. There was no correlation between average AMI at closing (Figure 1.4) and the amount of closings in any of these 10 given years. The CLCLT demonstrably increased its total number of housing units in this timeframe, and they did so while maintaining these homeownership opportunities at a steady AMI level. The processes that have produced these outcomes are examined in further detail in the Economic Benefit Analysis.

Spatial Analysis

The first step of a spatial analysis of current CLCLT households can be seen in Figure 1.6. Geocoding all 421 current CLCLT addresses (as of February 2025) into ArcGIS Pro revealed very clear clusterings of CLCLT households in North Minneapolis and South-Central Minneapolis. Adding just three basic mapping layers– the city's green space, water bodies, and streetgrid– suggests that the city's freeway system exerts significant influence on the locations of CLCLT-viable land. Again, because the CLCLT is a scattered-site community land trust it does not inherently limit its operations to any geographic region of the city. And yet, the very first step of this analysis quickly revealed one clear external influence that appears to confine CLCLT operations to specific areas of the city.

It then became logical for this research to also explore external and internal factors that influence CLCLT operations. Another clear observation of Figure 1.6 brings into question the very name of the City of Lakes Community Land Trust– there are virtually no CLCLT addresses situated anywhere near the lakes that are most closely associated with the "city of lakes" identity of Minneapolis. These lakes– Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, Bde Maka Ska, and Lake Harriet– form a chain within the west and southwest neighborhoods of the city.

This inconsistency between the "city of lakes" moniker and the reality of where CLCLT households are located added another layer to this research. This simple analysis suggests Minneapolis may not necessarily be a "city of lakes" for CLCLT households. The next questions became quite clear. What might explain the observed clusterings? There does appear to be a strong correlation between freeway placement and CLCLT household location, but this basic visualization explains neither the absence of CLCLT households from certain neighborhoods, nor their presence in others. The next several visualizations reveal strong external social, economic, and historical influences on the present-day residential patterns of CLCLT households.

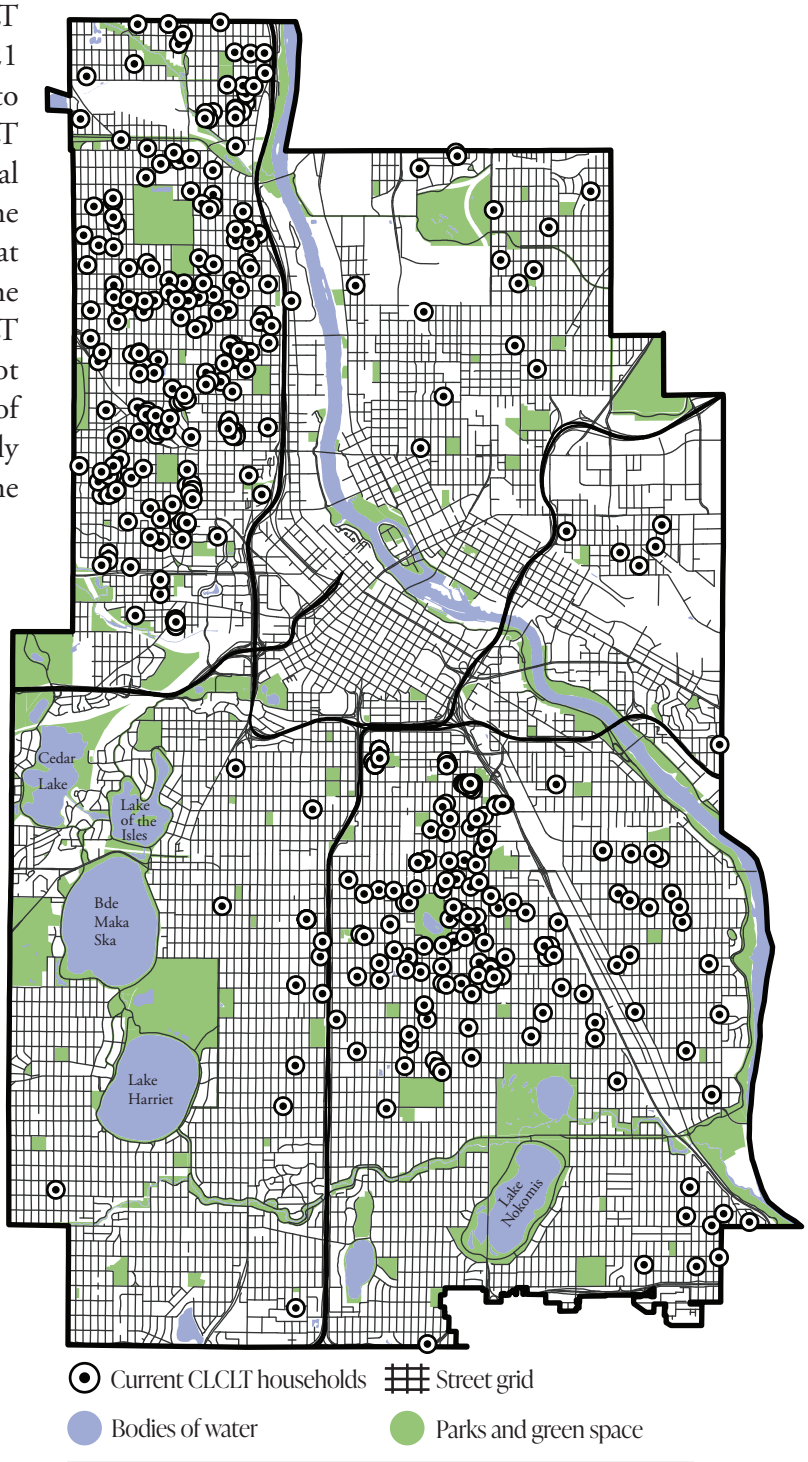


Figure 1.6: The location of all 421 CLCLT household addresses as they are situated within Minneapolis (as of February 2025).

Redlining Examination

Redlining is one of the most notorious influences on modern-day housing patterns. Because, as the household demography showed, CLCLT households tend to be much lower-income and much less white than the citywide average, and because, in general, formerly redlined and yellowlined areas tend to suffer from lasting structural violence associated with poverty and nonwhiteness, this examination was an important one to make. The street grid layer of Figure 1.7 has been modified to more accurately represent what it looked like at the time. So, too, has the city's municipal border. In fact, as in many such cases, redlining was often a precursor to freeway construction. The redlined strip down the middle of South Minneapolis ended up being the segment through which I-35W was plowed.

Plotting the current CLCLT addresses over the city's redlining map yielded observable tendencies in the HOLC-graded areas in which CLCLT households live today. The plurality (206) of the 415 plotted addresses sit in yellowlined areas. Just two CLCLT addresses today sit in areas that were designated as the "best" by the federal government in 1934. Just about 1 in every 10 CLCLT households today sits in an area that was redlined.

Though clearly influential on modern residential patterns, including those of CLCLT households, the correlation between HOLC grading and CLCLT household clustering is not a statistically perfect one. The relationship is complicated by the significant portion of CLCLT households situated in areas that were bluelined. So, since it can be confirmed in this instance too that a major program of residential segregation such as redlining does indeed have modern ramifications, but not ones that tell the whole story, the next steps in the research were to visualize the modern spatial patterns of race and income in Minneapolis and how CLCLT households relate to said contexts.

HOLC Grade	CLCLT Households	Percent
A	2	0.5%
B	165	39.8%
C	206	49.6%
D	42	10.1%
Total	415	100%

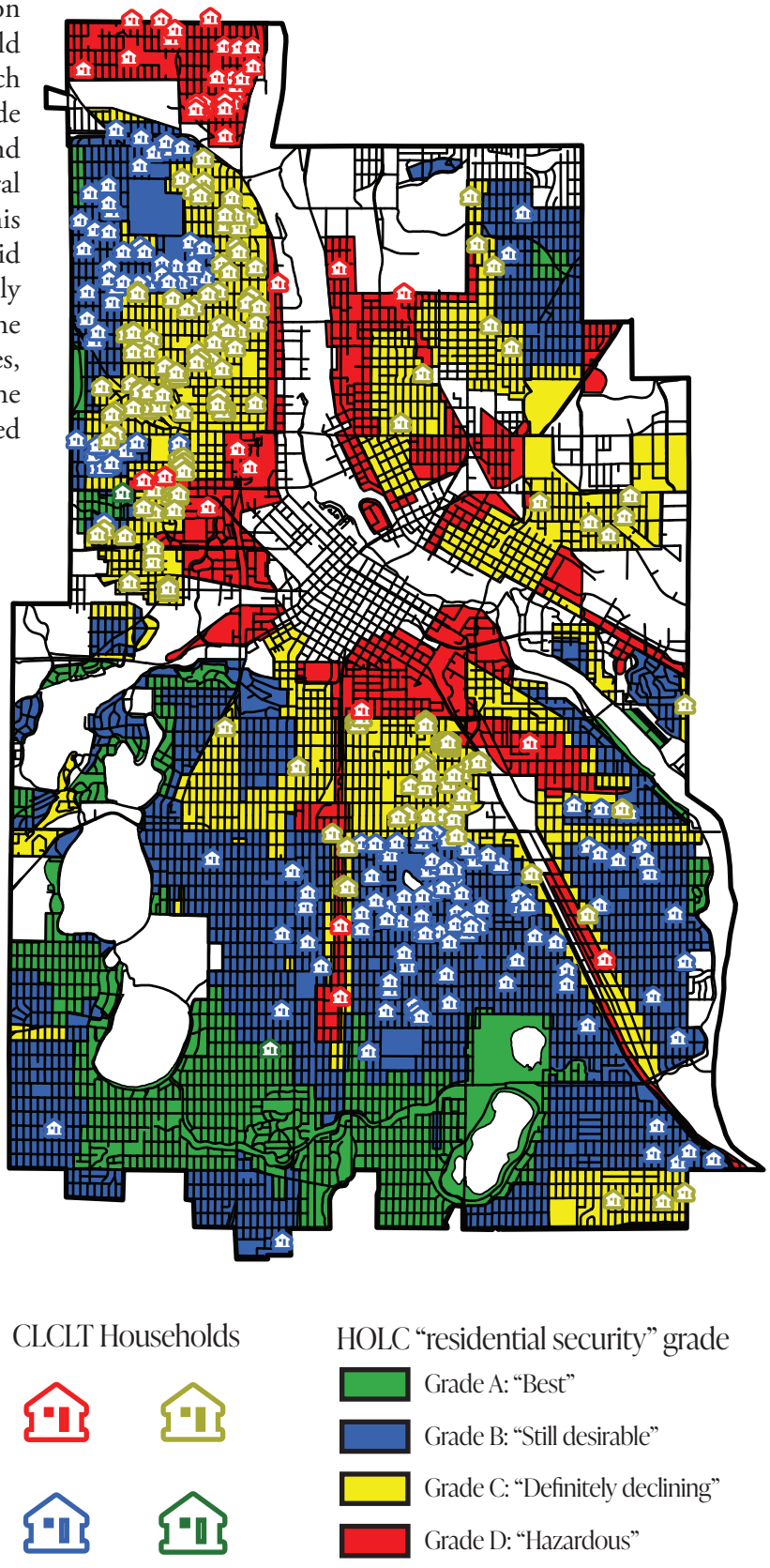
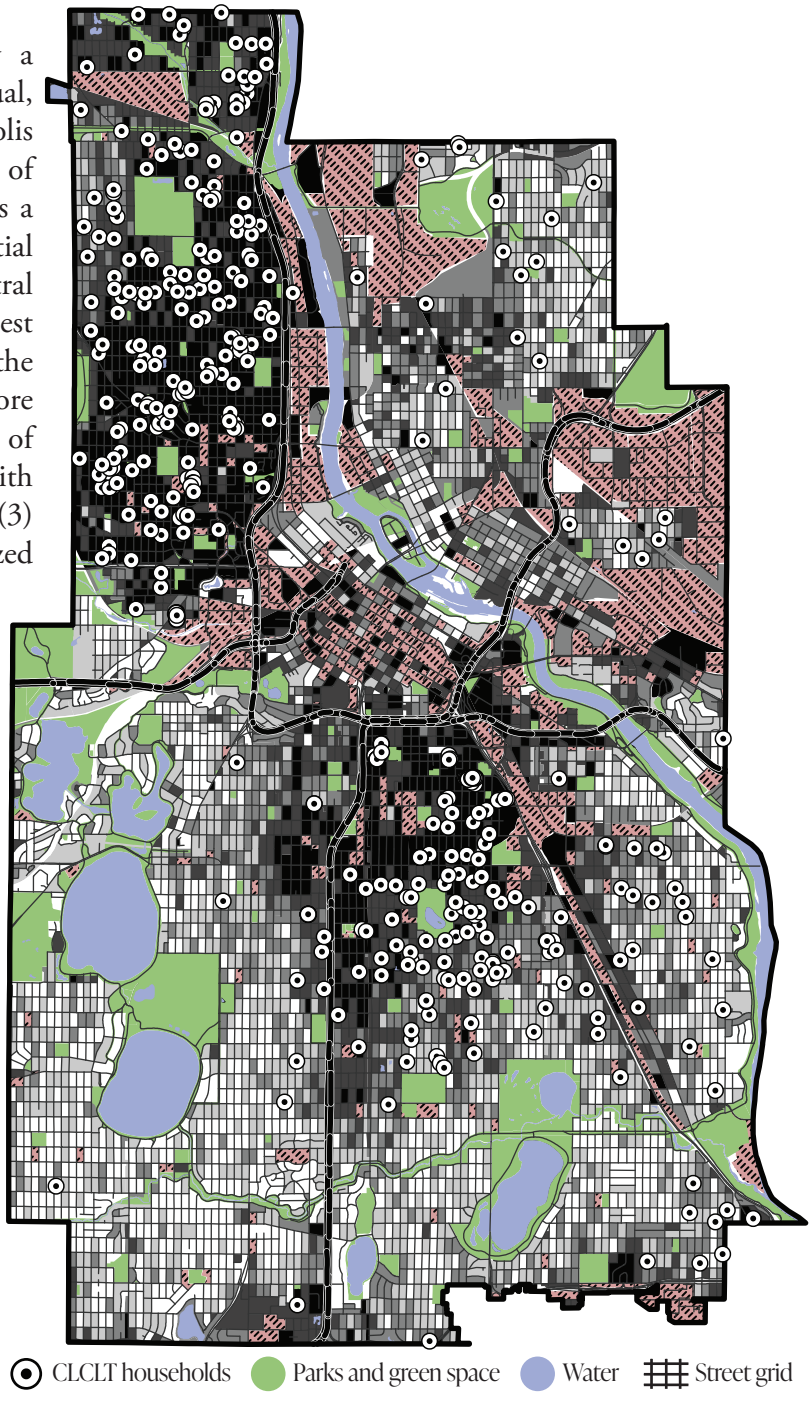


Figure 1.7: Present-day CLCLT households color-coded by their corresponding location within the 1934 Home Owners' Loan Corporation residential security map. Also measured are the amount of CLCLT households in each area (A,B,C,D) and their respective percentage of plotted CLCLT households.

Identity and Space

Quintiles are an effective method of measuring how a population is divided up (into five equal categories of equal, or approximately equal, numbers). Dividing the Minneapolis street blocks into quintiles based on their percentages of nonwhite residents according to the 2020 Census reveals a striking contrast between white and nonwhite residential patterns in the city. North Minneapolis and South Central Minneapolis are home to the city blocks with the highest rates of nonwhite households, and strongly correlate with the CLCLT household locations. CLCLT households therefore can be understood as (1) having much higher rates of nonwhite residents, (2) being located in areas of the city with much higher concentrations of nonwhite residents, and (3) confined by a freeway system of a demonstrably racialized nature.

An important step in the methods of this specific analysis was identifying and excluding city blocks that were either unpopulated, or whose residents were majority-institutionalized. This step eliminated major, misleading outlier blocks that were situated in the lowest and highest quintiles of nonwhite population rates. Approximately a dozen city blocks ranking in either the fourth or fifth quintiles of nonwhite population rate were excluded after it was discovered that a majority of their residents were institutionalized. On the other hand, certain chunks of North and Northeast Minneapolis are actually entirely unpopulated due to their usages as industrial corridors. Without excluding these blocks from the dataset, there would have been many populated city blocks of relatively few nonwhite residents sorted into higher quintiles than genuinely appropriate. Because such a strong correlation exists between city blocks' nonwhiteness and the location of CLCLT households, measuring the degree to which household income might also correlate came next.



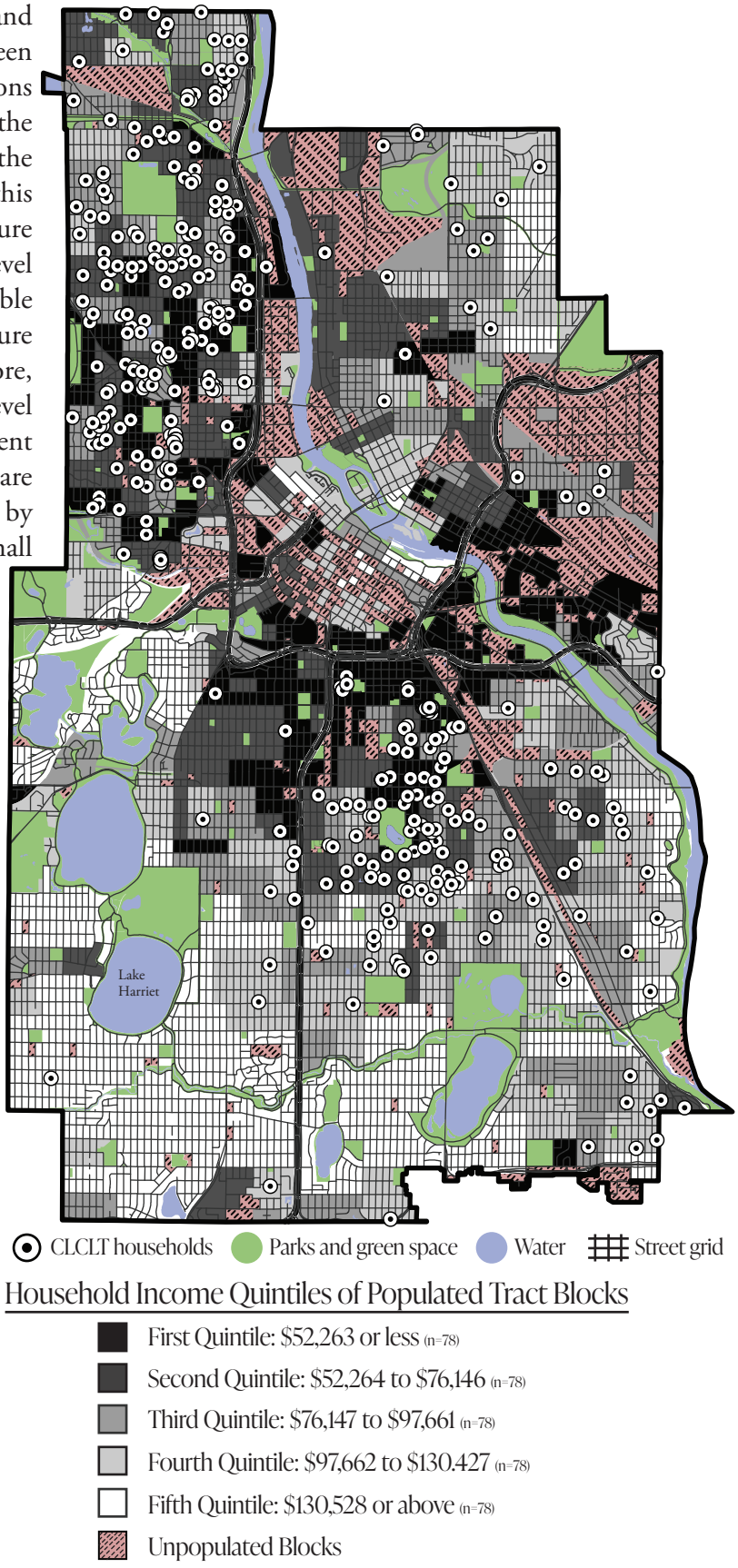
Block Nonwhite Quintile	CLCLT Households	Percent
1	16	3.8%
2	28	6.7%
3	43	10.2%
4	133	31.7%
5	200	47.6%
Total	420	100%

Figure 1.8: Present-day CLCLT households geocoded over Minneapolis street blocks color coded into quintiles of nonwhite population percentage. The thresholds of each quintile, as well as the amount and percentage of CLCLT households in each quintile are provided in the table and key.

Income and Space

Though weaker than the one between street blocks and CLCLT household locations, the correlation between Minneapolis Census Blocks and CLCLT household locations is still a moderately strong one. The difference between the spatial scales of the decennial Census versus those of the American Community Survey posed a slight limitation to this analysis. The 2020 decennial Census did not measure household income, so the data available in its micro-level Redistricting Blocks, seen in Figure 1.8, are not compatible with an intention such as this one (Figure 1.9) to measure small-scale spatial variances in household income. Therefore, the American Community Survey's Census Tract Block level data seen in Figure 1.9 are the smallest scale at which recent (2020-2024) measurements of household income are geocodeable. The Census Tract Blocks color-coded by quintiles of household in Figure 1.9 are still units of a small enough scale to show neighborhood-level variations, but nonetheless do not account for the micro-level variations that are visible in Figure 1.8.

There is still an observable effect of freeway placement on household income, though it is not as pronounced as it was on racial and ethnic residential patterns as Figure 1.8 demonstrated. CLCLT households most often live in Census Blocks of the two lowest household income quintiles. Southwest Minneapolis holds the vast majority of residential areas that are situated within the top quintiles of household income. Lake Harriet appears to be a southern threshold past which household incomes quickly start climbing. In general, household incomes tend to be much higher around the chain of lakes, calling again into question the inclusivity of Minneapolis as the "city of lakes." Once more, data was excluded from Census Blocks that were either unpopulated or majority-institutionalized.



Block HH Income Quintile	CLCLT Households	Percent
1	85	20.2%
2	144	34.2%
3	112	26.6%
4	67	15.9%
5	13	3.1%
Total	421	100%

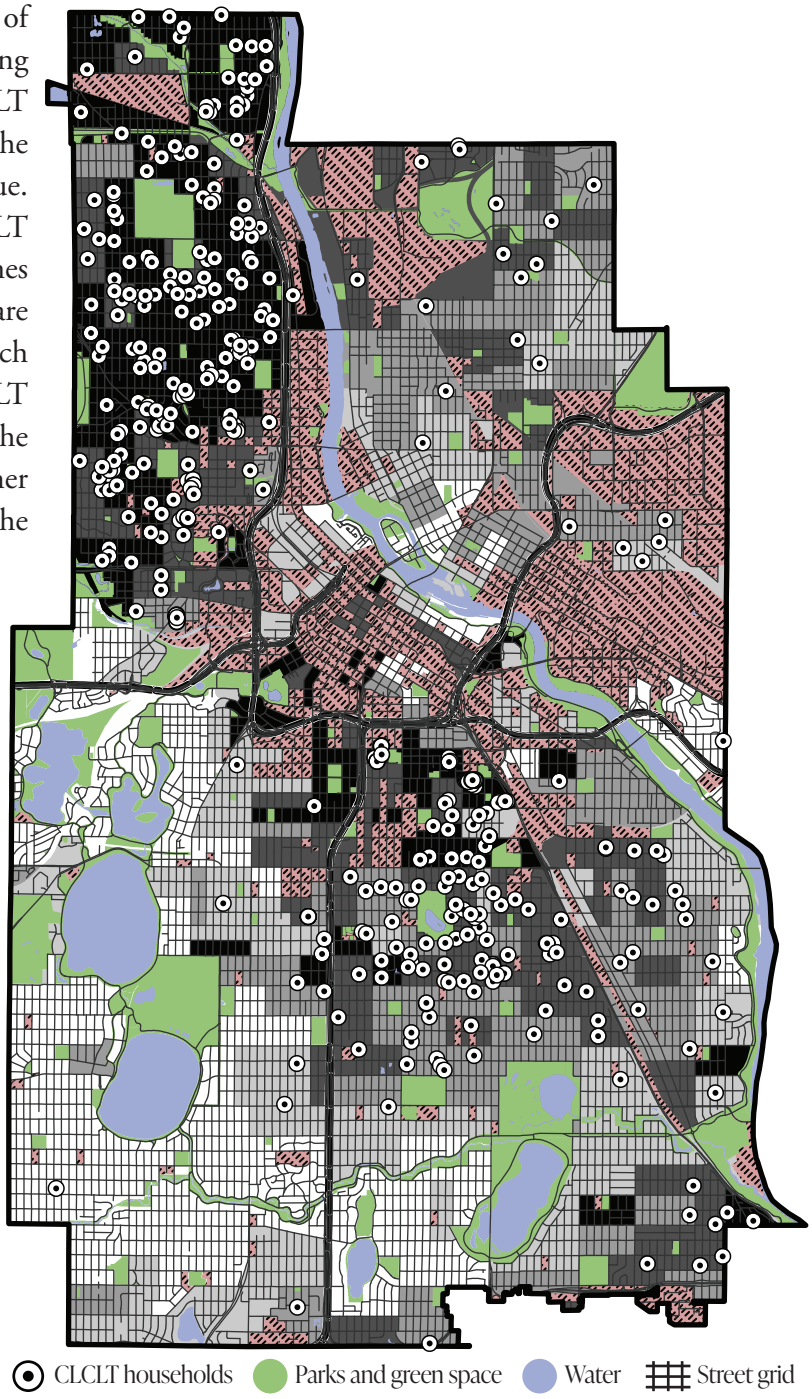
Figure 1.9: Present-day CLCLT households geocoded over Minneapolis Census Blocks color coded into quintiles of household income. The thresholds of each quintile, as well as the amount and percentage of CLCLT households in each quintile are provided in the table and key.

Home Values and Space

When Minneapolis Census Blocks are sorted into quintiles of their median owner-occupied home values, another strong correlation becomes visualized. As of 2025, 77.9% of CLCLT households were located in Census Tract Blocks of the bottom two quintiles in median owner-occupied home value. This additional layer of context now confirms that CLCLT households are not just poorer, less white, and living in homes of lower values than citywide averages, but also that they are situated within areas of the city that tend to follow such patterns. In short, it can be comfortably stated that CLCLT households tend to be of similar socioeconomic statuses as the neighborhoods within which they are situated. Said another way, there are few "outlier" CLCLT households along the metrics that have been measured thus far in this report.

The findings of this specific analysis likely yielded such a strong correlation due to the specificity with which it was able to be performed. Essentially all CLCLT households are owner-occupied. The 2024 five-year ACS has data on the median home values of owner-occupied units all the way down to the Census Block level. After confirming which Census Blocks were (1) unpopulated, and (2) without any (or virtually any) owner-occupied units, the set of Census Blocks that was broken into quintiles was one highly appropriate for this research question.

The findings of this spatial analysis both answer important questions, and raise other questions of their own. Yes, the residential patterns of CLCLT households are influenced by racial and wealth disparities across Minneapolis. Yes, the CLCLT targets its operations toward marginalized people and spaces. What, though, do their programs accomplish within this context, and what are the implications of this confinement for scaling up?



Block Home Value Quintile	CLCLT Households	Percent
1	202	48.0%
2	126	29.9%
3	62	14.7%
4	29	6.9%
5	2	0.5%
Total	421	100%

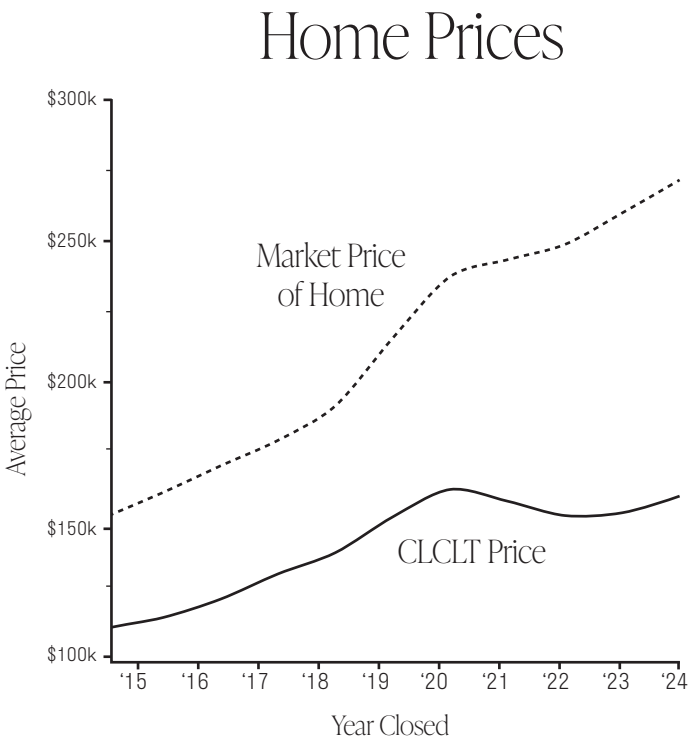
Figure 1.10: Present-day CLCLT households geocoded over Minneapolis street blocks color coded into quintiles of median owner-occupied home value. The thresholds of each quintile, as well as the amount and percentage of CLCLT households in each quintile are provided in the table and key.

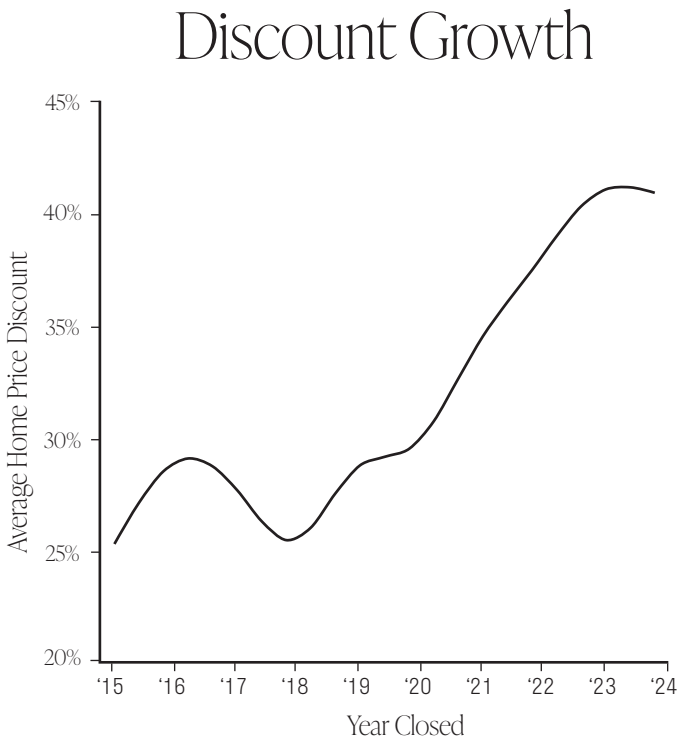
Breakdown

This section explores several economic characteristics of CLCLT operations, mostly along the lines of affordability, wealth building, and cost burden. These metrics are foremost in mainstream evaluations of the effectiveness of a community land trust, but not the end-all-be-all. This section also identifies internal and external influences on the observed outcomes of its analysis.

Home Prices & Discount Growth

The average price for which CLCLT homeowners purchased their homes grew an average of 3.3% per year between 2015 and 2024, from approximately $116,000 to approximately $160,000. In that same timeframe, the average amount they would have required to purchase their homes on the market grew an average of 5.8% per year, from approximately $154,000 to approximately $272,000. CLCLT prices (1) increased at a much slower rate than the market would have demanded and (2) also sold at greater discounts despite this overall increase in sale prices. Additionally, the average savings households have incurred due to CLCLT affordability assistance in this period was significant. The average monthly principal + interest payment (PI) in the mortgages of CLCLT homes bought during this period was $686. If these same homes were sold on the market, instead, the average monthly PI payment would have been $1,112 per month. This represents a 38% difference. Though it is appropriate to assume most CLCLT households would not have been able to qualify for market-rate mortgages on their homes without affordability assistance, the hypothetical market conditions their homes would have been subjected to are worth noting.





Figures 2.1 (left) and 2.2 (right): Though home prices steadily increased between 2015 and 2024, CLCLT sale prices in the same timeframe actually became discounted at a greater rate. The average difference between a home's market price and what the CLCLT homeowner paid for it in 2024 was 41%, which represented an increase of more than 16 percentage points from 2015, when it was 26%. The CLCLT's resale formula, resale restrictions, and greater amounts of affordability assistance for buyers have all contributed to this phenomenon.

Wealth Building

Discussions surrounding the degree to which wealth building occurs in shared or limited-equity models of housing, such as community land trusts, are often (1) framed counterproductively, and (2) rife with orthodox assumptions about property, land, and economics that themselves have greatly contributed to the housing unaffordability crisis. Ideological detractors of the community land trust model often frame the discussion surrounding decommodified housing as one in which this well-intentioned practice actually does more harm than it does good by limiting the ability of the most vulnerable residents to build wealth that they could've been building under hypothetical free market conditions. This is a mainstream "pragmatic" argument against decommodified housing. Although policy narrative experts generally advise against engaging in such a discussion in which the terms were set by an issue's ideological detractors, the degree to which wealth building occurs in CLCLT homes had not yet been measured by the organization. The following relationship between homeowners' years of tenure and the inflation-adjusted net proceeds they received in typical resale circumstances was discovered.

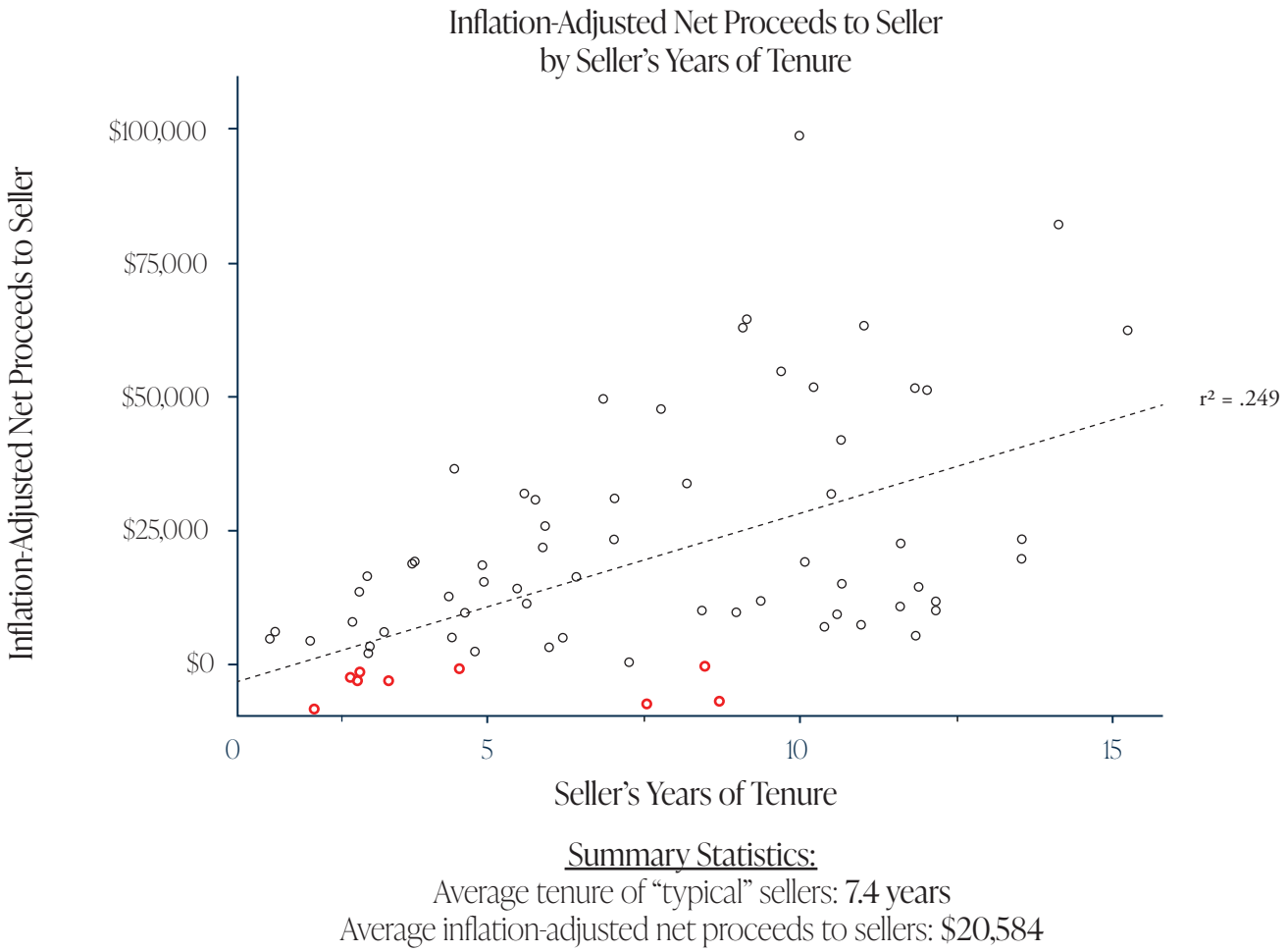


Figure 2.3: Inflation-adjusted net proceeds to seller by seller's years of tenure. Resale data are shown from 70 "typical" resale circumstances, in which one CLCLT homeowner sells their home to the next. There is a clear, positive, linear relationship between sellers' years of tenure and the inflation- adjusted net proceeds they received upon selling their land trust homes. For sellers, every one-year increase in tenure has been associated with a $3,041 increase in inflation-adjusted net proceeds in typical resale circumstances. Nine net-negative resales have occurred, seen in red. On average, these resales occurred before the sellers had reached five years of tenure, and none of them occurred after a seller reached nine years of tenure. Inflation adjustments were made to April 2025 dollars.

Cost Burden

Housing cost burden among current CLCLT households is slightly difficult to measure. Though CLCLT internal data contains the typical ingredients of a housing cost burden analysis, such as monthly household income and typical homeowner expenditures on housing (PITI)*, these measurements were taken at the time the buyer closed on the home. The CLCLT does not annually measure the income of each and every single one of their households. The initial measurement of household income for every household is specifically for the one-time pre-purchase qualification. Be that as it may, a useful analysis of the initial rates of housing cost burden among CLCLT households can still be performed. Understanding the typical portion of CLCLT household incomes that were projected to be spent on housing expenses still provides useful insight into the degree to which the CLCLT programs prepare homeowners for a financially secure housing experience. In general, none of the measured demographics are cost burdened on average, and current CLCLT households bought their homes averaging a projected 27% of their gross monthly income going toward housing costs.

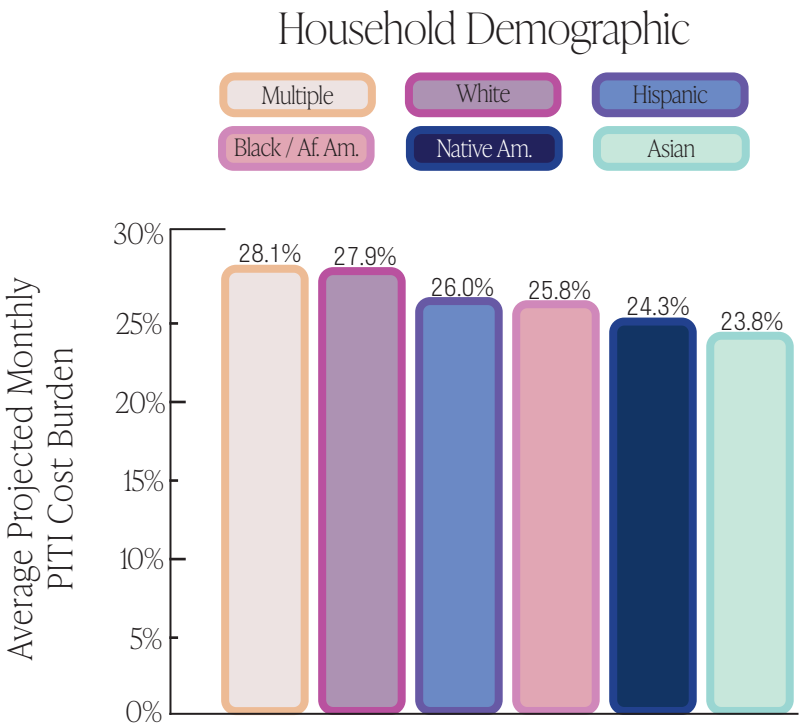


Figure 2.4: Average projected monthly housing cost burden by the major demographic categories of current CLCLT households. There is a relatively even distribution of average projected housing cost burden across the measured demographics.

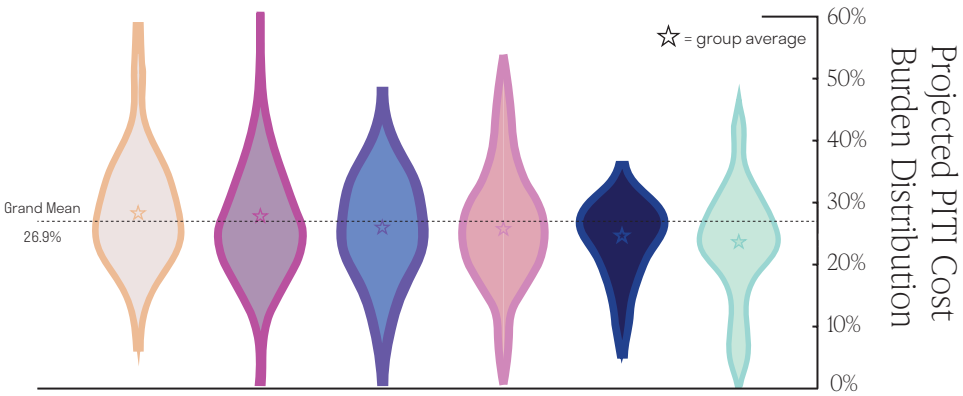


Figure 2.5: Projected cost burden spreads among the major demographic categories of current CLCLT households. The wider areas of each shape represent the more common cost burden rates for households of each demographic.

*Note: "PITI" is an acronym for **P**rincipal, **I**nterest, **T**axes, and **I**nsurance. It is the sum of these four housing expenditures. PITI does not include costs such as utilities, but it is nonetheless serviceable as a measurement of typical homeownership costs.

Conclusion 14

Concerns

Though the evidence of this report strongly supports the idea of the CLCLT as an effective housing justice initiative, the CLCLT is not without its vulnerabilities, and neither are its households. First, I suggest that strong attention must be paid to the relationship between incoming households' AMI levels and their housing cost burden. There is a clear, moderate, and negative correlation between current CLCLT households' AMI levels at the time they moved in, and their housing cost burden. Lower-AMI CLCLT households are housing cost burdened at disproportionately higher rates than higher-AMI CLCLT households. Though this relationship is likely not as pronounced as it is in market-rate conditions for households of these AMI levels, it is still one that poses a greater threat to the housing security of households at the lower end of the AMI spectrum. Even though most current CLCLT homeowners did not move in to their home as "cost burdened," and that none of them moved in being "severely cost burdened," according to the orthodox definitions, for analytical and organizational purposes it would be useful for the CLCLT to maintain a relatively up-to-date record on the relationship between homeowners' cost burdens and AMI levels. Data from the time of move-in is useful, but the costs of homeownership are not static, and neither are incomes. The following relationship was observed between the AMI levels of "typical" incoming CLCLT households and their projected housing cost burden based on their verified household income at the time.

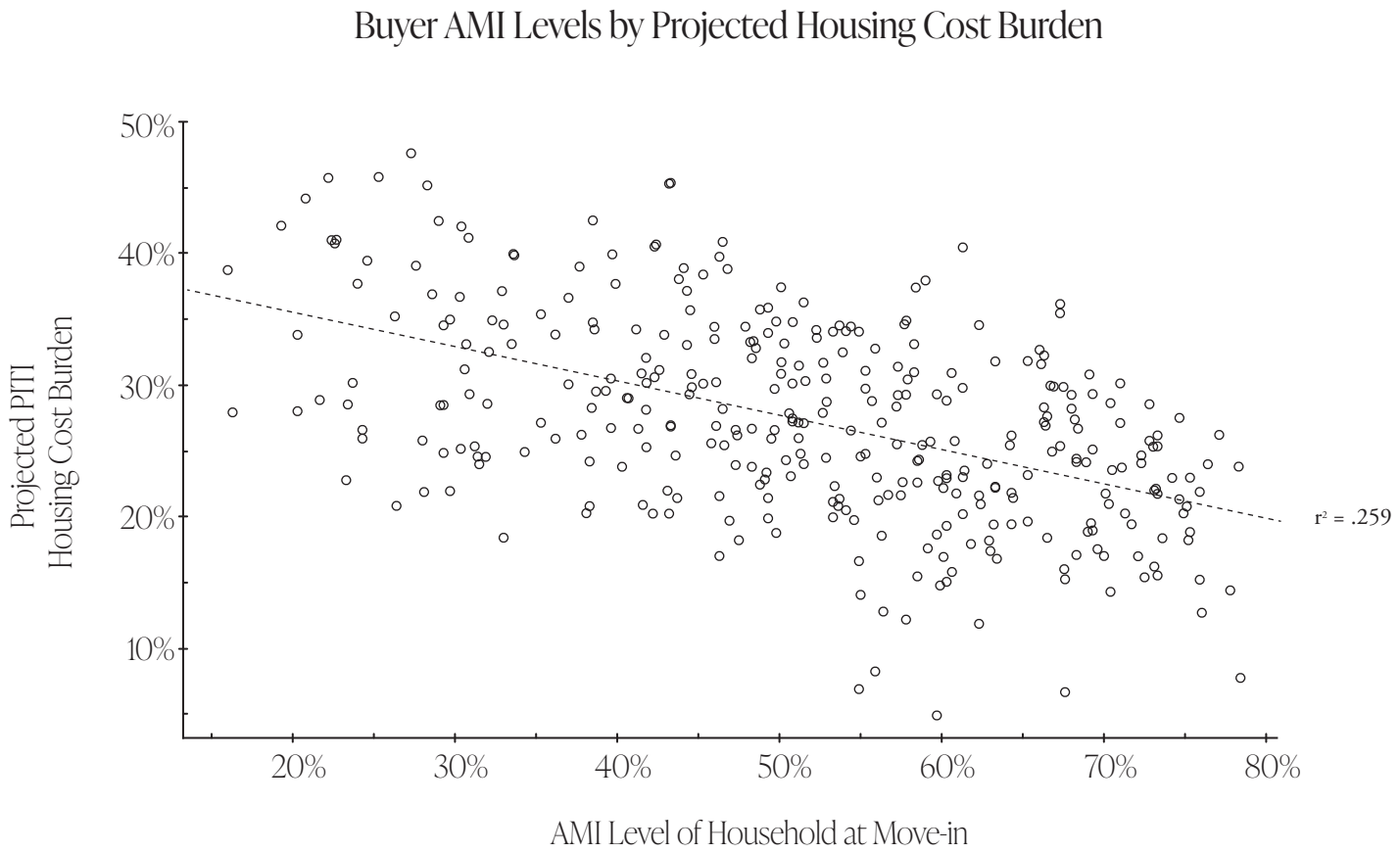


Figure 3.1: Current CLCLT homeowners' move-in AMI levels by their projected move-in time PITI housing cost burden, in qualified scenarios. The 343 plotted "qualified scenarios" exclude current CLCLT homeowners who "moved in" to CLCLT homes through programs of foreclosure prevention, and predominantly include homeowners who acquired their homes through the CLCLT Homebuyer Initiated Program, or homeowners who purchased properties developed by the CLCLT itself. Every one-percent increase in AMI level of buyers in these qualified scenarios was associated with a .25-percent decrease in their projected housing cost burden rate.

Recommendations

Basics of Where and Why

I argue that future CLCLT expansions should continue occurring within areas that have existing clustering patterns (North Minneapolis and South Central Minneapolis). This is both because of and despite the *de facto* filtering process that already confines CLCLT operations to these areas of the city. On the practical side of things, as the report's data has shown, the prevailing home values and household incomes that currently exist within these areas of Minneapolis are suitable for replicable acquisition processes that have gotten the CLCLT to this point. For ideological reasons, an effective way to challenge the patterns of segregation that exist in Minneapolis is to provide marginalized communities with wealth building mechanisms– of which homeownership is but one of many– despite the decades-long process of confinement that continues playing out today. In order for a greater challenge to be posed to racial capitalism and for more comprehensive, far-reaching attempts at decommodification to occur, there must be an improved satisfaction of the material needs of the most vulnerable residents. This is why I do not feel that it is entirely counterintuitive for a "functionally decommodified" form of housing that I described earlier to simultaneously serve as a conditional wealth building mechanism.

Freeways (and more) Without a Future

Certain evidence presented in this report demonstrated the problematic nature of the freeway system in Minneapolis. Its placement through the redlined heart of South Minneapolis and its decoupling of North Minneapolis from the rest of the city exercises tangible influence over CLCLT clustering patterns. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) has initiated several processes in which reconfiguration proposals are being considered for certain segments of freeways and highways that they say "devastated communities"[1]. Proposals vary quite widely in intentions, and MNDOT has demonstrated inconsistencies between their rhetoric and their actions, but the genuine opportunity exists for a significant reduction in the footprint of the highways and freeways that segregate the city. The CLCLT should expend real organizational capacity toward putting its mission at the heart of these redesign proposals.

There are strong existing proposals[2][3] for significant, equitable reimaginings of I-94 between Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and of Highway 55 through North Minneapolis. There is a real chance for these discussions to result in serious momentum toward an I-35W redesign through South Minneapolis. In 2023 alone, two segments of high-speed roadways in Minneapolis were named as "Freeways Without Futures,"[4] and they are surely not the only ones in the city worthy of the designation. The CLCLT sits within an advantageous proximity to these opportunities.

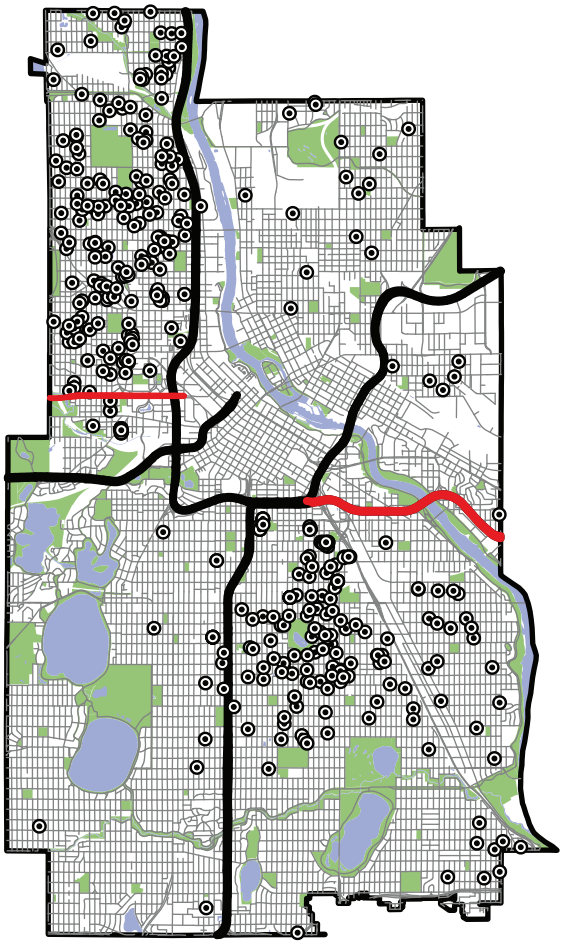


Figure 3.2: I-94 and Highway 55 MNDOT segments being redesigned, highlighted in red. The I-94 portion runs over the Mississippi. Highway 55 is the other.

Takeaways

As far as contemporary US programs of "affordable housing" go, providing hundreds of quality, stable, and affordable homeownership opportunities for households averaging around the 50% AMI range is a rarity. From the metrics of affordability examined by this report, the CLCLT in the past decade has actually been able to provide more expensive homes at greater discounted rates for buyers within the same AMI range. Within the realm of community land trusts– where it has become increasingly common to see homeownership targeted more toward households earning 80%, or even up to 120%, AMI in order to minimize necessary subsidies and maximize eligible participants– the CLCLT's consistent 50% to 55% average AMI of buyers over the past decade is a testament to the depth of their affordability ambitions. Especially at this rung of the income ladder, these are households at disproportionately higher risks of displacement and homelessness, and most other forms of structural violence associated with poverty and nonwhiteness. The CLCLT has been able to provide real opportunities for long-term material security for hundreds of them. Few, if any, market-rate homeownership opportunities exist for these residents in Minneapolis. The few opportunities that might exist would likely leave these residents as first-time homebuyers fending for themselves with properties in disproportionate need of significant repair. The stewardship services of the CLCLT provide clear evidence that decommodifying land provides a genuine opportunity to build lasting, equitable housing opportunities.

There is demonstrable wealth building that occurs in CLCLT households solely on the measurement of net proceeds that have gone to sellers in resales. "Wealth building," I argue, should be considered as a much more multifaceted concept than this. For one, the security that comes with relatively stable housing costs, instead of unpredictable market-rate rent increases or required annual income recertification below a certain level, is both material and psychological. The positive externalities of the CLCLT's programs are unique to it as a model of housing; let alone of affordable housing. The spatial component of this report revealed important distinctions that need to be made about the processes and outcomes of CLCLT operations. Their programs target marginalized residents where they currently live, which is why CLCLT household socioeconomic characteristics tend to track quite closely with their surrounding areas'. The context of Minneapolis as a city with housing patterns marked by segregations of race and wealth functions quite clearly as an external influence that funnels CLCLT operations into specific areas. There is little randomness to the "scattered site" approach the CLCLT takes. Though as this form of noncontiguous entity the CLCLT theoretically holds no geographic bias in its selection of land and housing units to steward, this report has demonstrated how citywide socioeconomic disparities perform a *de facto* selection process on their behalf. This reality means that, for now, CLCLT programs are attempting to build wealth in disinvested areas not through an influx of affluence, but by providing existing residents with the means to do so.

The holy grail of an equitable urbanization project is development without displacement. If the CLCLT can continue removing land from the market, especially in areas where marginalized Minneapolitans currently live, and stewarding it for the purpose of perpetually affordable housing, while also continuing to offer the programs that assist homeowners with rehabilitation and other necessary capital improvement projects, they are situated as well as any homeownership-focused community land trust in the United States to scale up their operations in a manner that is more than a singularly-focused pursuit of more units, and one that is in line with housing justice principles.

References

Introduction

1.) Nelson, K. et al. (2020) 'The Commodity Effects of Decommodification: Community Land Trusts and Neighborhood Property Values', Housing Policy Debate, 30(5), pp. 823–842. doi: 10.1080/10511482.2020.1768573.

2.) Schneider, J. K., Lennon, M. C. and Saegert, S. (2023) 'Interrupting Inequality Through Community Land Trusts', Housing Policy Debate, 33(4), pp. 1002–1026. doi: 10.1080/10511482.2022.2055614.

3.) Martin, D. G. et al. (2024) '"I don't think anybody's ever been to scale:" the imperative for growth and the implications of scale for Community Land Trusts in Minnesota, USA', Urban Geography, 45(10), pp. 1761–1779. doi: 10.1080/02723638.2024.2336843.

4.) Martin, D. G. et al. (2020) 'Meanings of limited equity homeownership in community land trusts', Housing Studies, 35(3), pp. 395–414. doi: 10.1080/02673037.2019.1603363.

5.) Williams, O. (2019). The Problem With Community Land Trusts. Jacobin, [online], 7 Jul. Available at: https://jacobin.com/2019/07/community-land-trusts-clts-problems.

Household Demography

1.) Hembre, E., Horowitz, B., Starling, L. and Maxine Xu (2023). Lower-income home shoppers in Twin Cities area saw fewer options, higher costs in 2024. [online] Minneapolisfed.org. Minneapolis, MN: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Available at: https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2025/lower-income-home-shoppers-in-twin-cities-area-saw-fewer-opti

Conclusion

1.) Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), 2026. Rethinking I-94 — Minneapolis to St. Paul. Available at: https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94

2.) Our Streets Minneapolis, 2026. Twin Cities Boulevard. Available at: https://www.ourstreetsmn.org/initiative/twin-cities-boulevard

3.) Our Sreets Minneapolis, 2023. Bring Back 6th Avenue. Available at: https://arcg.is/vfTHa

4.) Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), 2023. Freeways Without Futures 2023 — Minneapolis-Saint Paul. Available at: https://www.cnu.org/highways-boulevards/freeways-without-futures/2023#MSP

Appendix

Figure 1.0

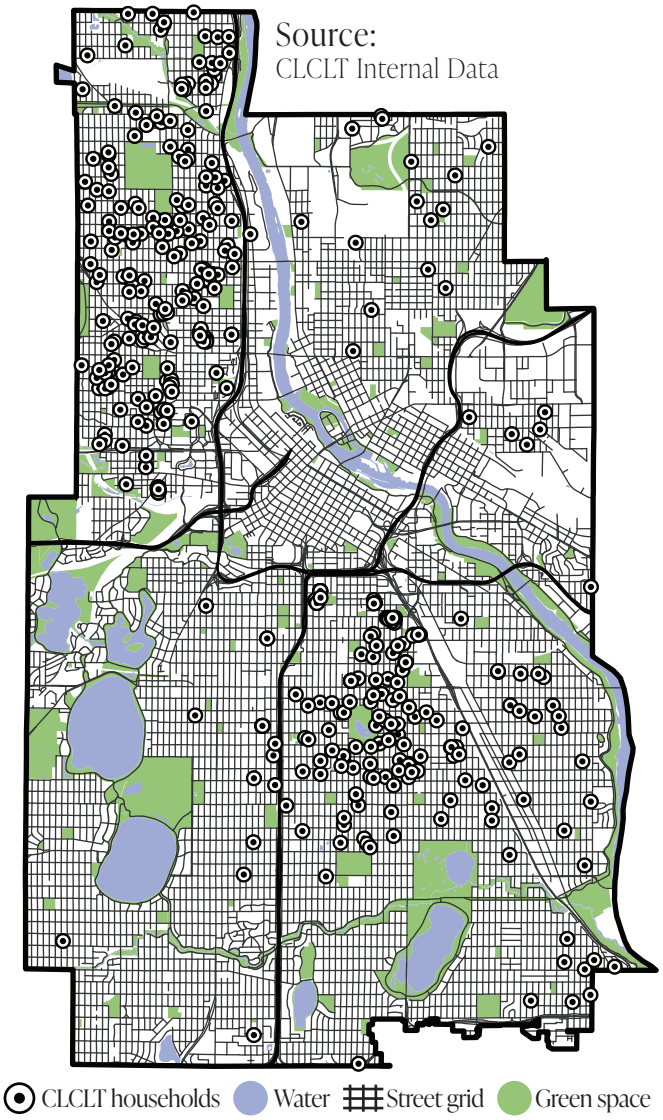
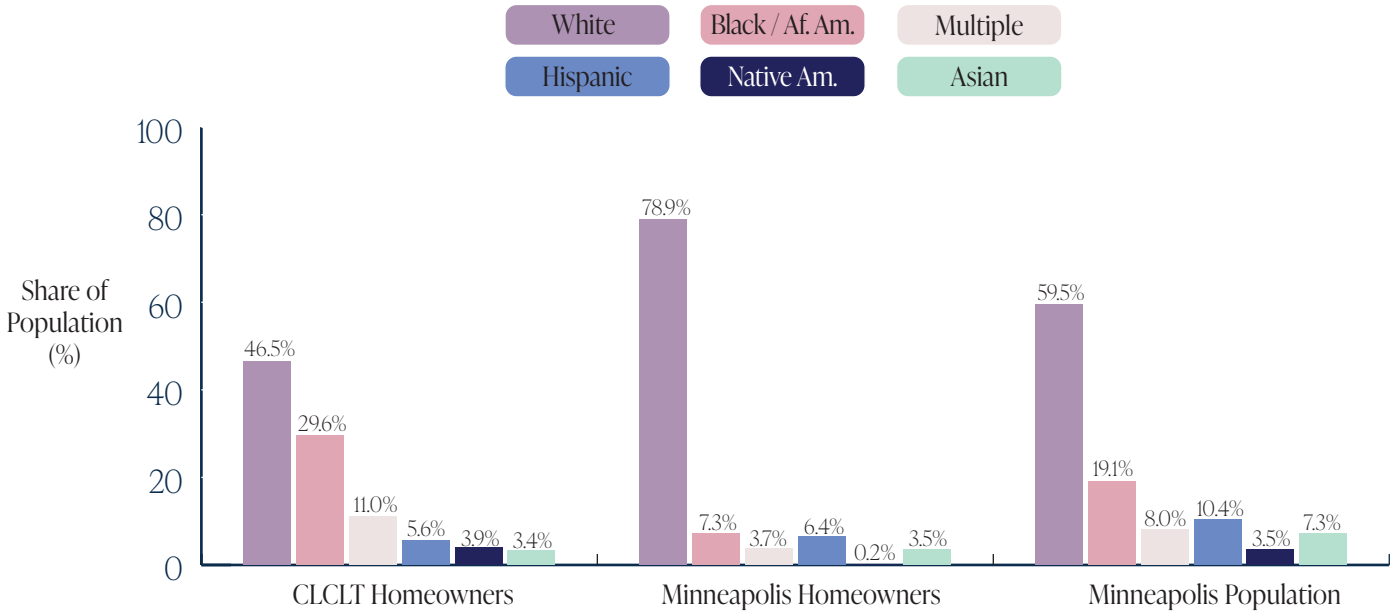


Figure 1.0: All 421 CLCLT households (as of Spring 2025) as they are located within Minneapolis.

Figure 1.1
Race and Ethnicity



Sources:
Minneapolis Population: 2020 Census
Link (Hispanic/Latino): https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDHC2020.P9?q=minneapolis+race
Link (all other groups): https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALPL2020.P1?g=160XX00US2743000
Minneapolis Homeowners: 2023 ACS 1-year Estimates
Link: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2023.S2502?q=owner+occupied+race+minneapolis&g=160XX00US2743000

Figure 1.2
Source:
CLCLT internal data

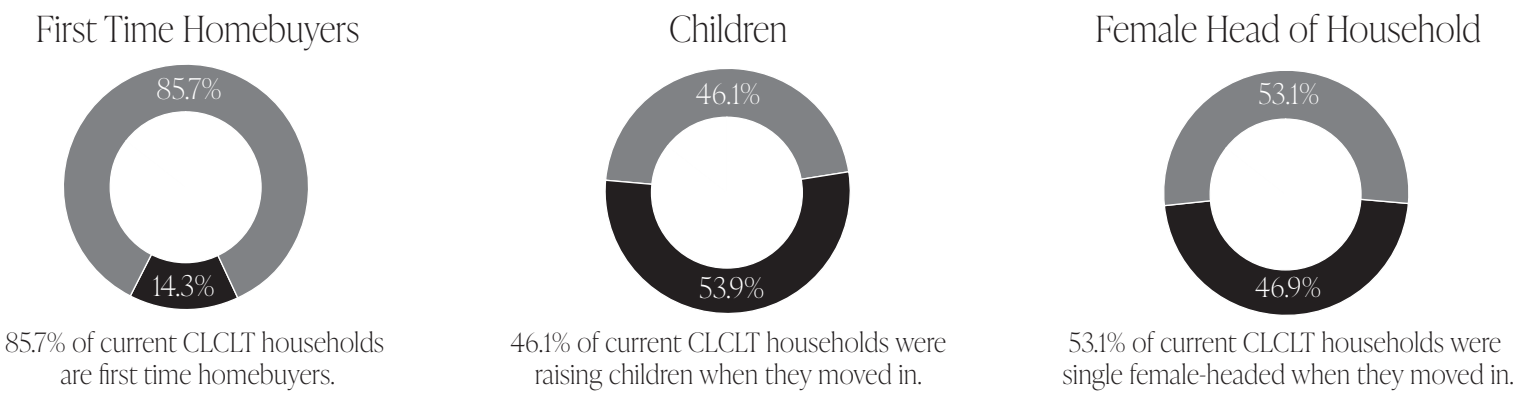


Figure 1.2: The observed tendencies among CLCLT households to be disproportionately first-time homebuyers, raising children at the time of moving in, and single-female headed supports the hypothesis that single women and mothers have been among the more frequent beneficiaries of CLCLT homeownership opportunities.

Figure 1.3

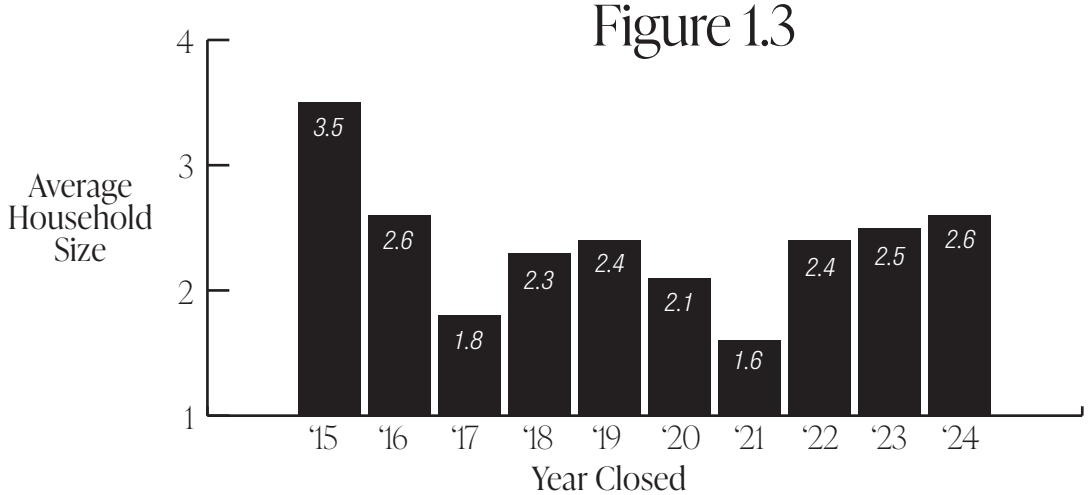


Figure 1.3: For the majority of the past 10 years, the average size of newly-formed CLCLT households tended to be larger than the citywide Minneapolis average household size of 2.12 people.

Source:
CLCLT internal data
Minneapolis Household Size: Census Facts
Link: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/minneapoliscityminnesota/INC110224

Figure 1.4

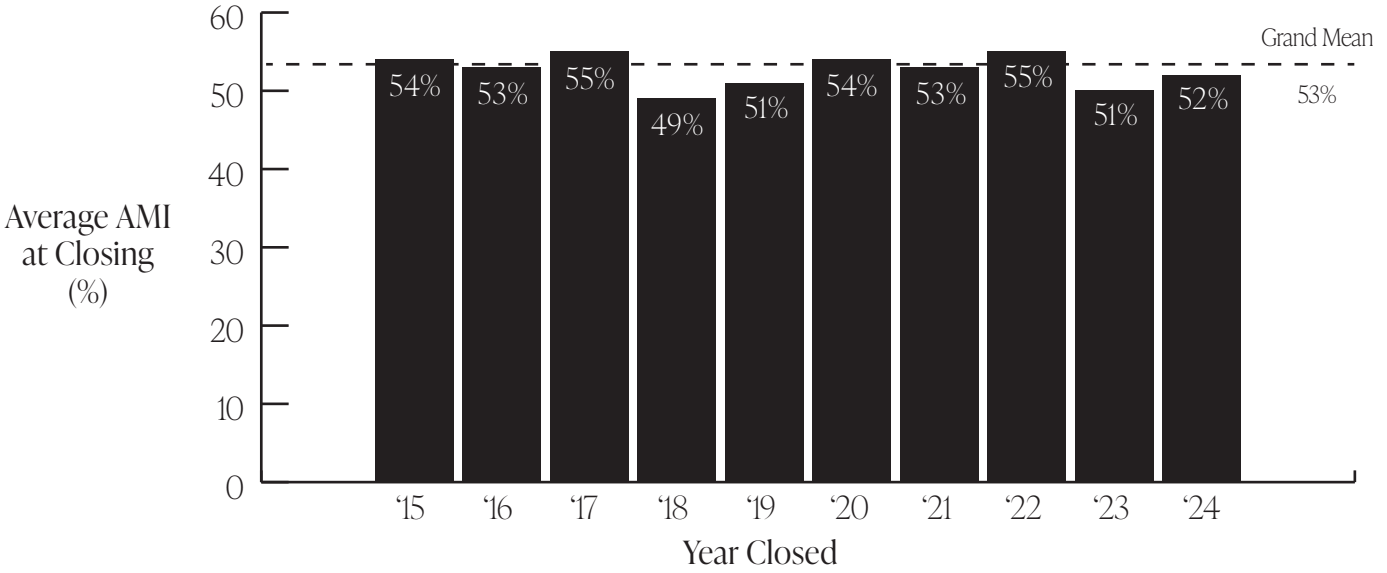


Figure 1.4: The above measured decade of CLCLT closings revealed a minimal shift in AMI levels of buyers at closing. Though the CLCLT sets its maximum income qualification level for buyers at 80% of the area median income, its significant affordability assistance and other intentional measures have greatly contributed to the average AMI of buyers over the past decade never exceeding 55% in any given year. The average AMI of a buyer in this decade was around 53%. To put this in perspective, in 2025 terms, the median income (100% AMI) in the Minneapolis - St. Paul - Bloomington metropolitan area was $92,700 for a one-person household, $105,950 for a two-person household, $119,200 for a three-person household, and $132,400. 53% of these figures amounts to a one-person household earning $49,131, a two-person household earning $56,154, a three-person household earning $63,176, and a four-person household earning $70,172. Access to homeownership is typically far out of reach for regional households situated in these positions of the income spectrum.

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
Metro AMI 2025 Limits: NeighborWorks Home Partners
Link: https://nwhomepartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-AMI-Chart-Effective-05.12.2025.pdf

Figure 1.5

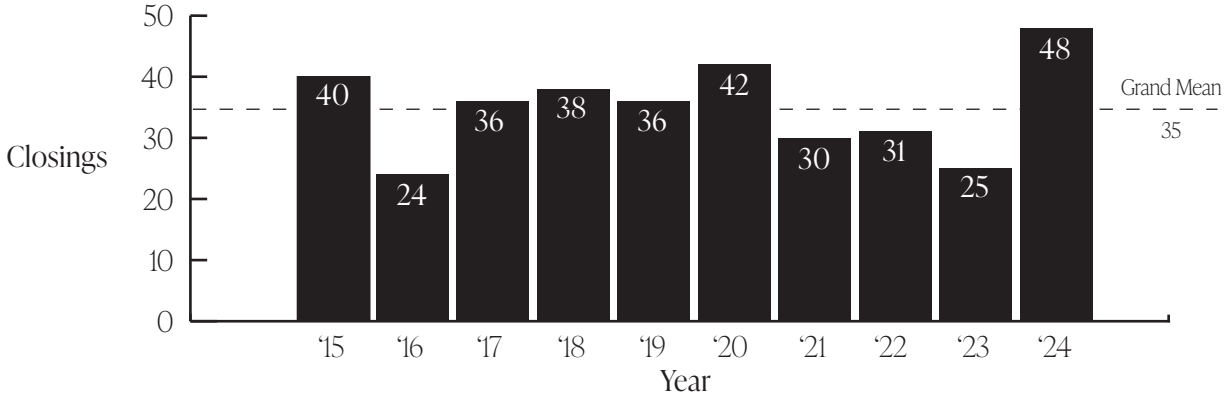


Figure 1.5: Closings on CLCLT households (new entries and resales) from 2015 to 2024. There were 350 total, averaging 35 per year. There was no correlation between average AMI at closing (Figure 1.4) and the amount of closings in any of these 10 given years. The CLCLT demonstrably increased its total number of housing units in this timeframe, and they did so while maintaining these homeownership opportunities at a steady AMI level. The processes that have produced these outcomes are examined in further detail in the Program Outcome Analysis.

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data

Figure 1.6

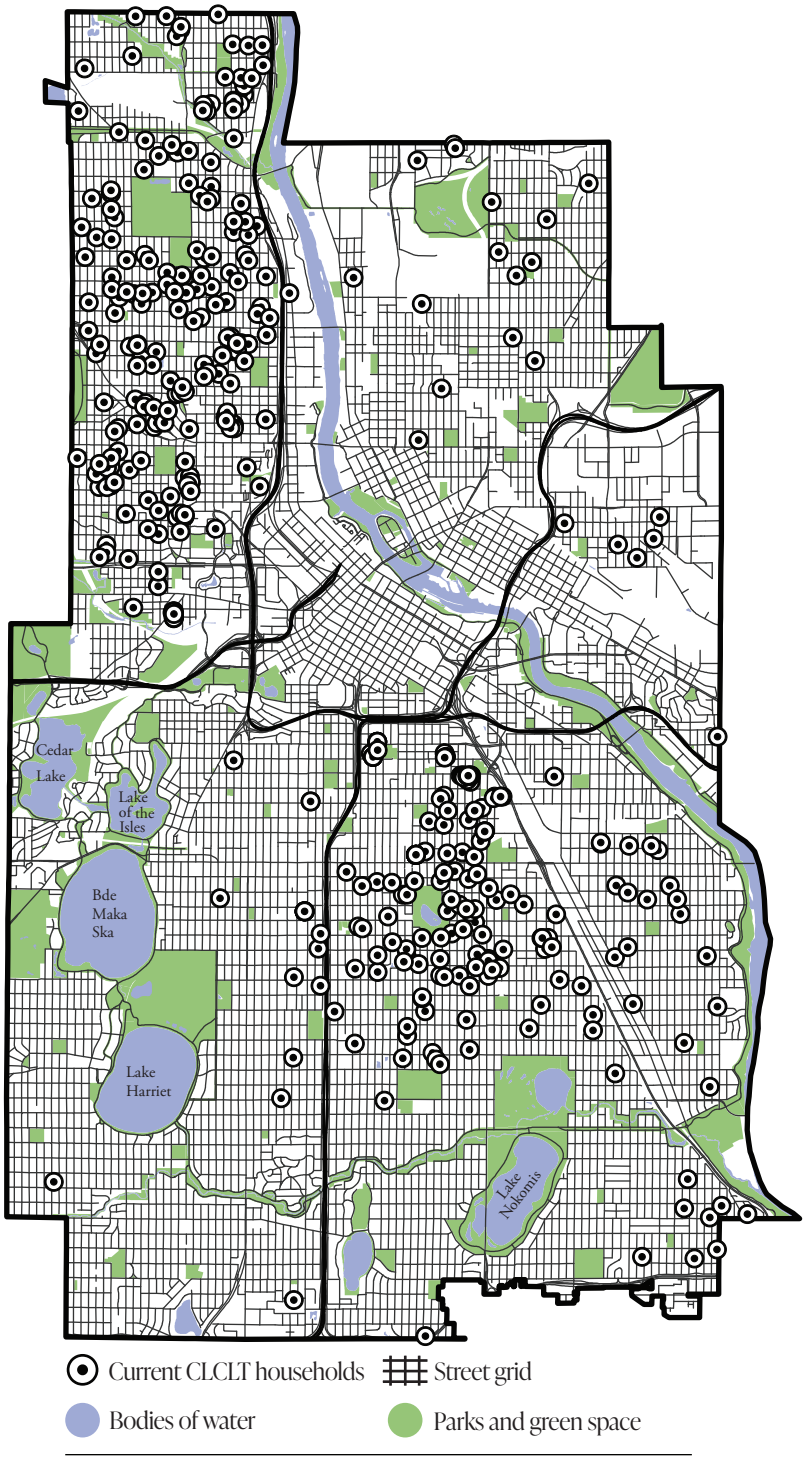
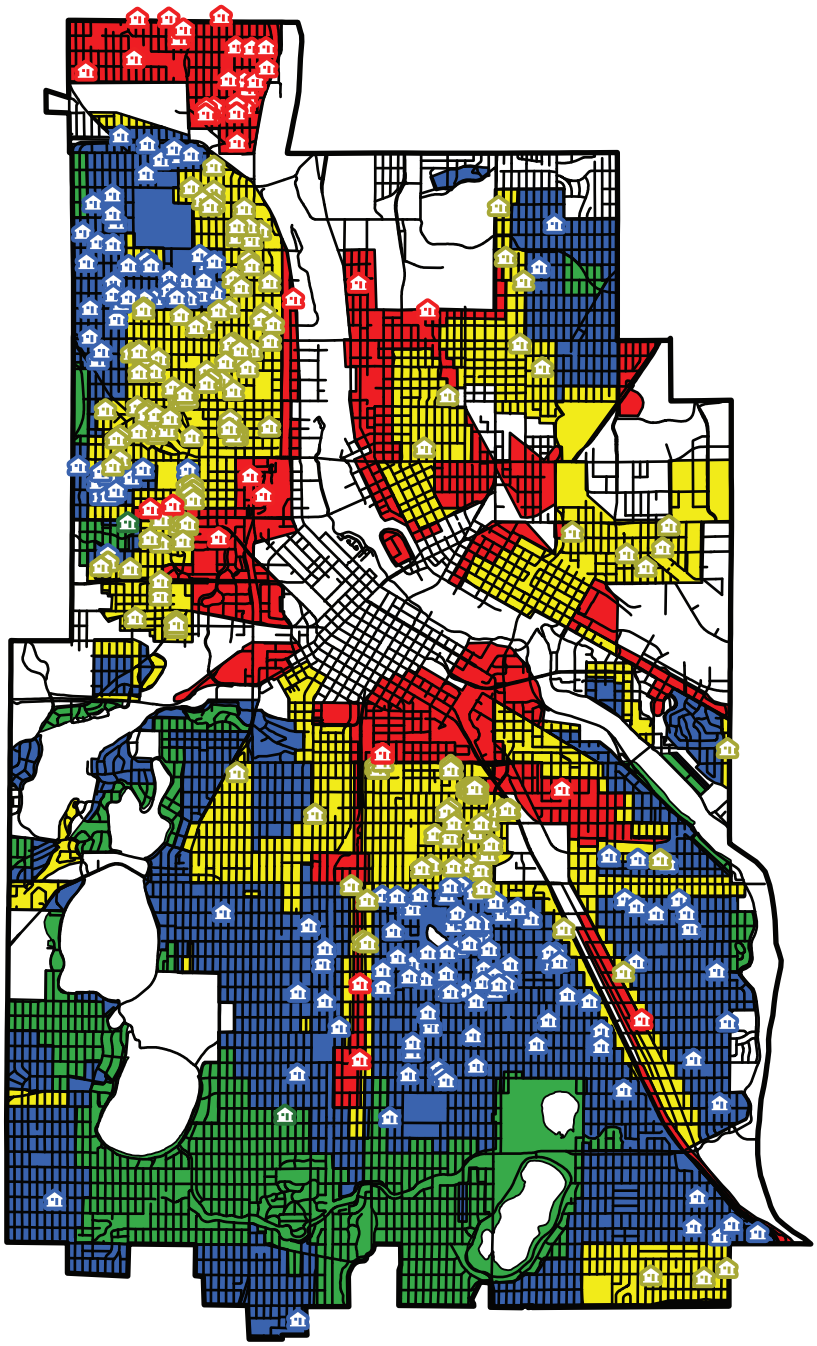


Figure 1.6: The location of all 421 CLCLT household addresses as they are situated within Minneapolis (as of February 2025).

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
ArcGIS Layers:
Metropolitan Council Open Data

Figure 1.7



Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
ArcGIS Layers:
Metropolitan Council Open Data
Mapping Inequality

HOLC Grade	CLCLT Households	Percent
A	2	0.5%
B	165	39.8%
C	206	49.6%
D	42	10.1%
Total	415	100%

CLCLT Households

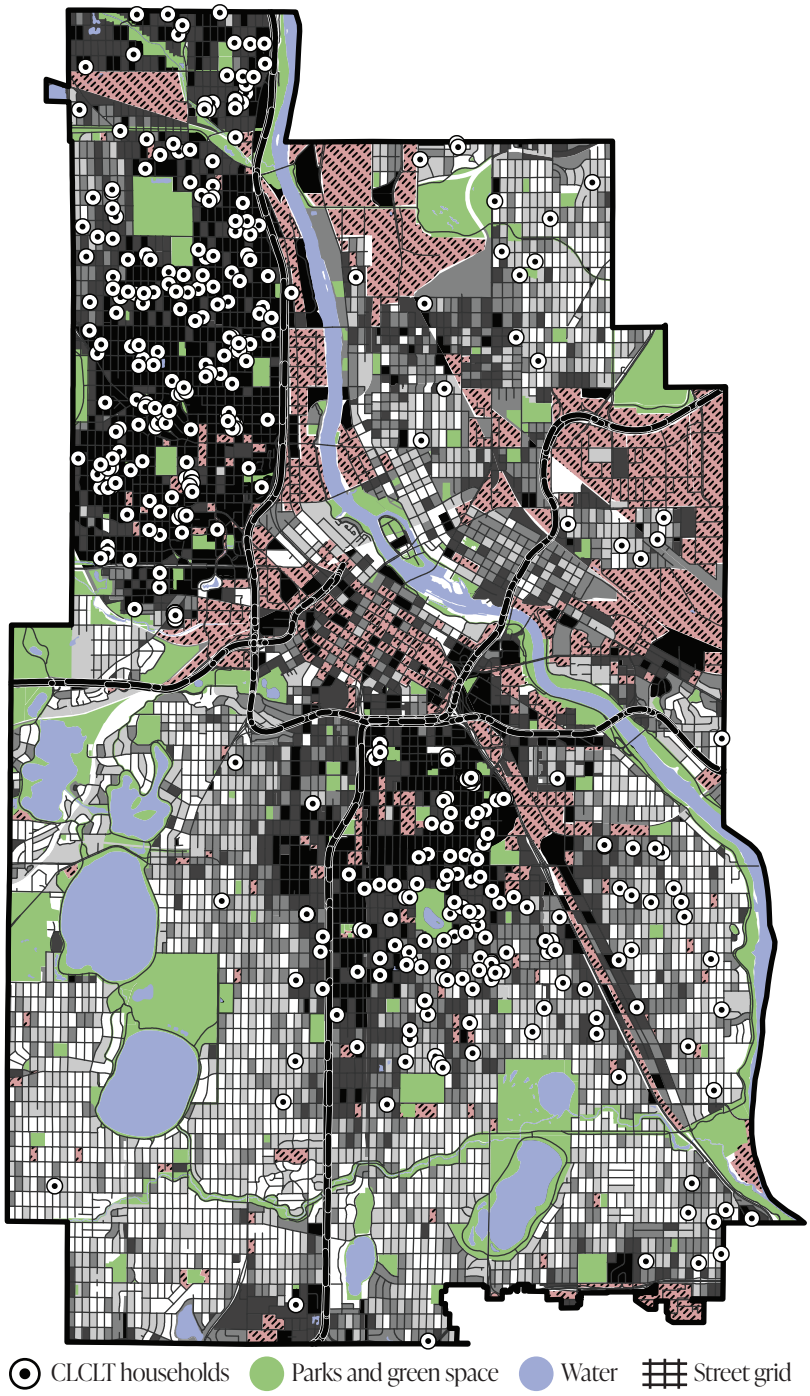
HOLC "residential security" grade

- Grade A: "Best"
- Grade B: "Still desirable"
- Grade C: "Definitely declining"
- Grade D: "Hazardous"

Figure 1.7: Present-day CLCLT households color-coded by their corresponding location within the 1934 Home Owners' Loan Corporation residential security map. Also measured are the amount of CLCLT households in each area (A,B,C,D) and their respective percentage of plotted CLCLT households.

Figure 1.8

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
ArcGIS Layers:
Metropolitan Council Open Data
MN Census 2020 Redistricting Blocks



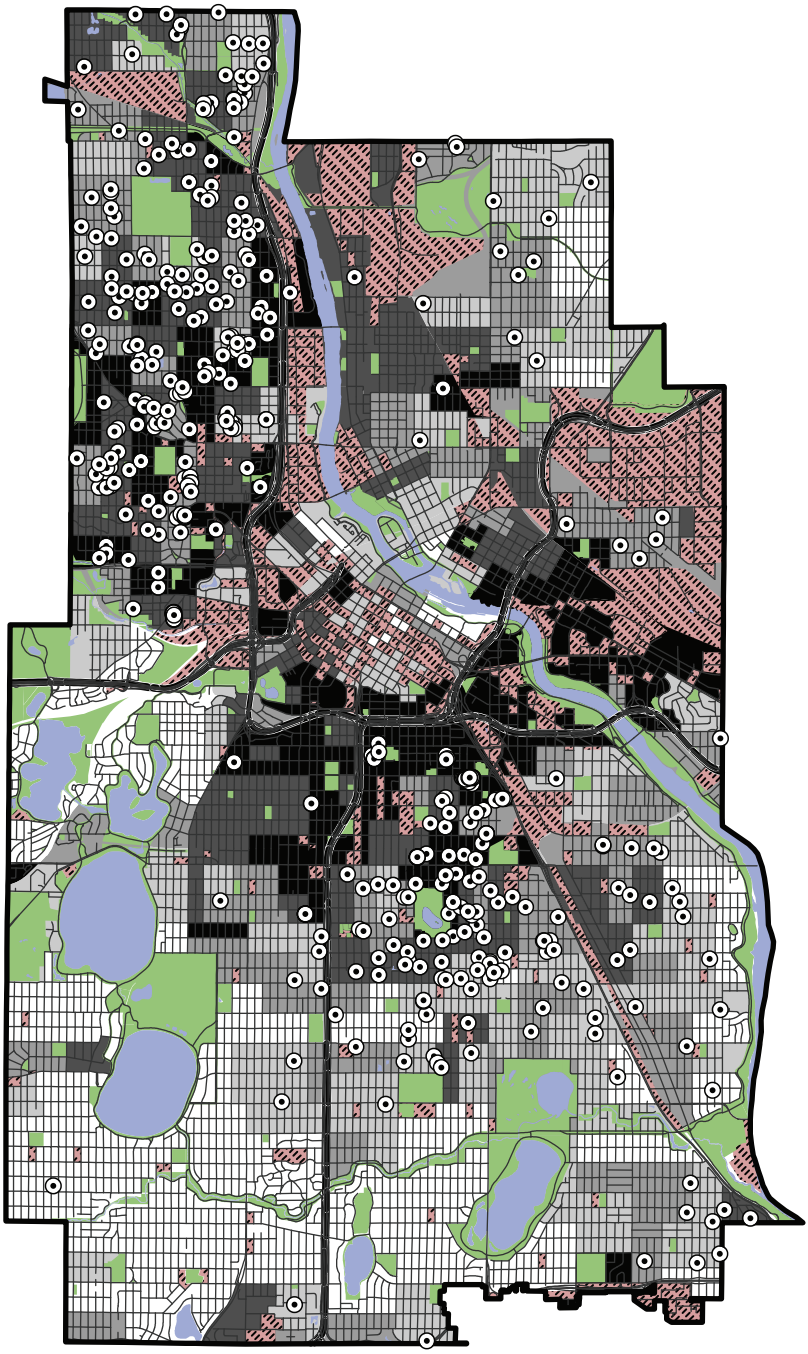
Block Nonwhite Quintile	CLCLT Households	Percent
1	16	3.8%
2	28	6.7%
3	43	10.2%
4	133	31.7%
5	200	47.6%
Total	420	100%

Nonwhite Quintiles of Populated Street Blocks

- First Quintile: 0% to 13% nonwhite (n=955)
- Second Quintile: 13% to 22% nonwhite (n=972)
- Third Quintile: 22% to 37% nonwhite (n= 959)
- Fourth Quintile: 37% to 67% nonwhite (n=932)
- Fifth Quintile: 67% to 100% nonwhite (n= 932)
- Unpopulated blocks

Figure 1.8: Present-day CLCLT households geocoded over Minneapolis street blocks color coded into quintiles of nonwhite population percentage. The thresholds of each quintile, as well as the amount and percentage of CLCLT households in each quintile are provided in the table and key.

Figure 1.9



Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
ArcGIS Layers:
Metropolitan Council Open Data
Social Explorer Geocoded Census Tract Blocks and 2023 and 2024 five-year ACS data

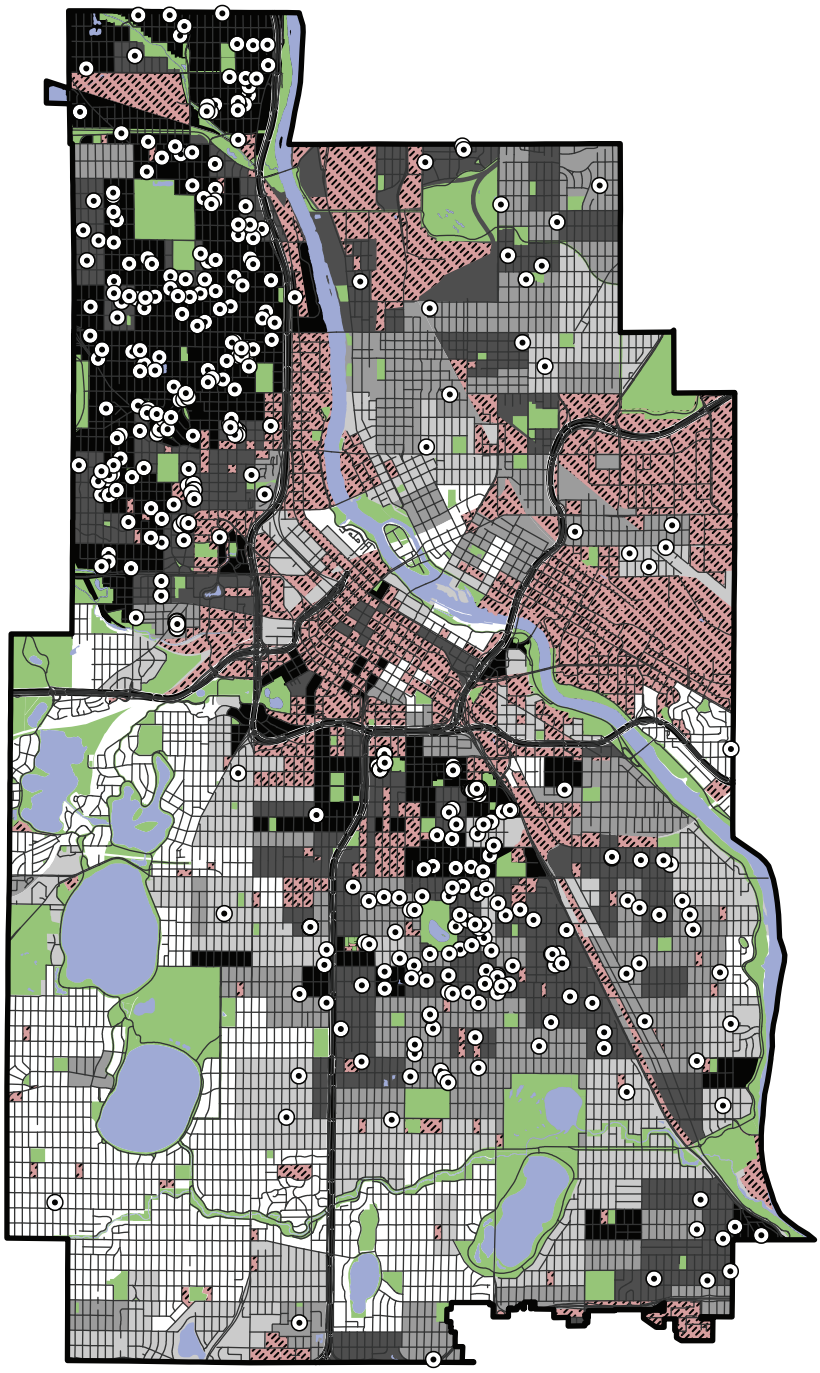
Block HH Income Quintile	CLCLT Households	Percent
1	85	20.2%
2	144	34.2%
3	112	26.6%
4	67	15.9%
5	13	3.1%
Total	421	100%

Household Income Quintiles of Populated Tract Blocks

- First Quintile: $52,263 or less (n=78)
- Second Quintile: $52,264 to $76,146 (n=78)
- Third Quintile: $76,147 to $97,661 (n=78)
- Fourth Quintile: $97,662 to $130.427 (n=78)
- Fifth Quintile: $130,528 or above (n=78)
- Unpopulated Blocks

Figure 1.9: Present-day CLCLT households geocoded over Minneapolis Census Blocks color coded into quintiles of household income. The thresholds of each quintile, as well as the amount and percentage of CLCLT households in each quintile are provided in the table and key.

Figure 1.10



Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
ArcGIS Layers:
Metropolitan Council Open Data
Social Explorer Geocoded Census Tract Blocks and 2023 and 2024 five-year ACS data

Home Value Quintiles of Populated Tract Blocks

- First Quintile: Under $273,900 (n=69)
- Second Quintile: $273,901 to $328,800 (n=69)
- Third Quintile: $328,801 to $372,500 (n=69)
- Fourth Quintile: $372,501 to $467,100 (n=69)
- Fifth Quintile: Above $467,101 (n=68)
- Data not applicable

Block Home Value Quintile	CLCLT Households	Percent
1	202	48.0%
2	126	29.9%
3	62	14.7%
4	29	6.9%
5	2	0.5%
Total	421	100%

Figure 1.10: Present-day CLCLT households geocoded over Minneapolis street blocks color coded into quintiles of median owner-occupied home value. The thresholds of each quintile, as well as the amount and percentage of CLCLT households in each quintile are provided in the table and key.

Figure 2.1

Home Prices

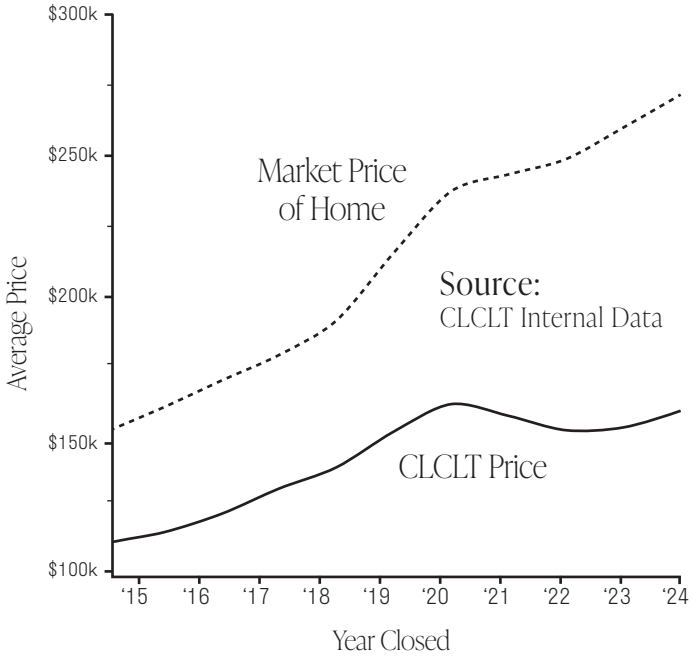
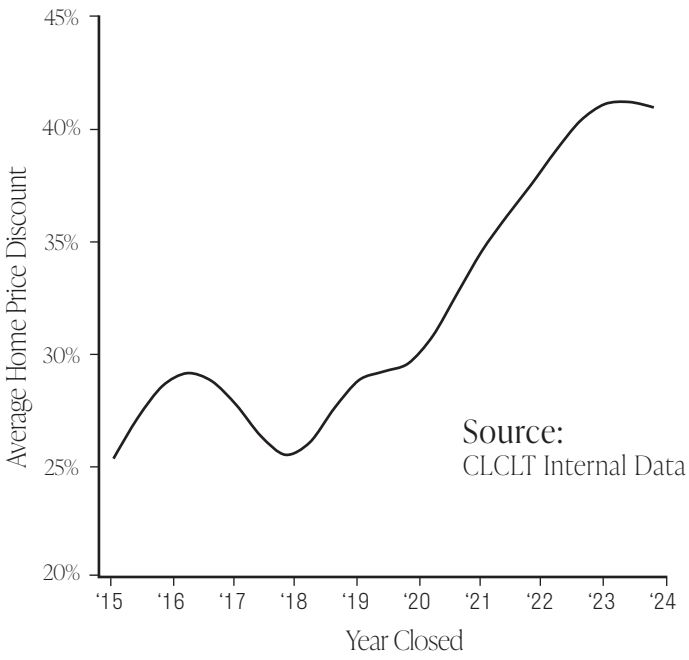


Figure 2.2

Discount Growth



Figures 2.1 and 2.2: Though home prices steadily increased between 2015 and 2024, CLCLT prices in the same timeframe actually became discounted at a greater percent. The average difference between a home's market price and what the CLCLT homeowner paid for it in 2024 was 41%, which represented an increase of more than 16 percentage points from 2015, when it was 26%. The CLCLT's resale formula, resale restrictions, and greater amounts of affordability assistance for buyers have all contributed to this phenomenon.

Figure 2.3



Summary Statistics:
Average tenure of "typical" sellers: 7.4 years
Average inflation-adjusted net proceeds to sellers: $20,584

Figure 2.3: Inflation-adjusted net proceeds to seller by seller's years of tenure. Resale data are shown from 70 "typical" resale circumstances, in which one CLCLT homeowner sells their home to the next. There is a clear, positive, linear relationship between sellers' years of tenure and the inflation- adjusted net proceeds they received upon selling their land trust homes. For sellers, every one-year increase in tenure has been associated with a $3,041 increase in inflation-adjusted net proceeds in typical resale circumstances. Nine net-negative resales have occurred, seen in red. On average, these resales occurred before the sellers had reached five years of tenure, and none of them occurred after a seller reached nine years of tenure. Inflation adjustments were made to April 2025 dollars.

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
Inflation adjustments: CPI inflation calculator

Figure 2.4
Household Demographic

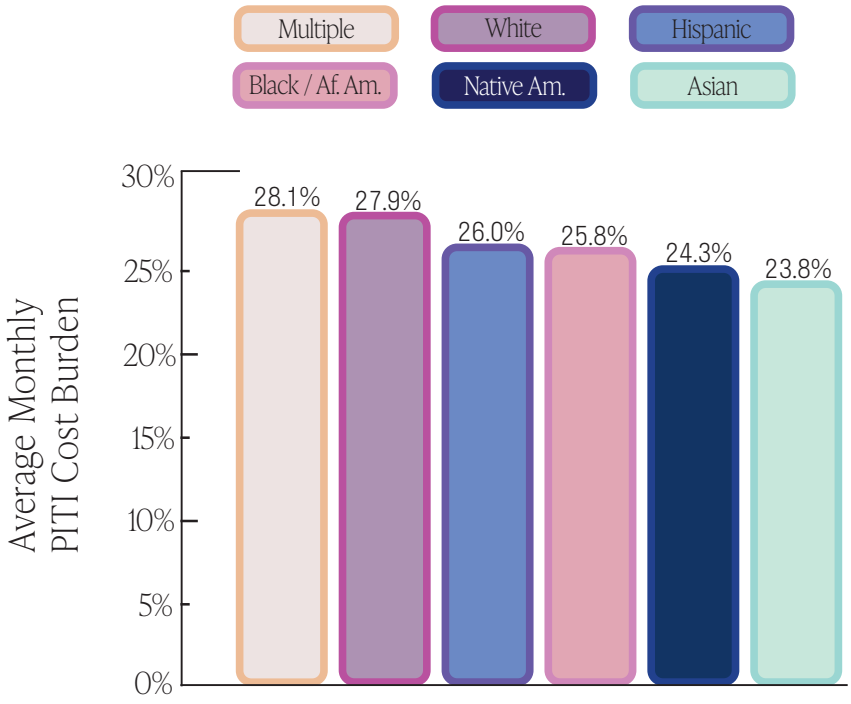


Figure 2.4: Average monthly housing cost burden by the major demographic categories of CLCLT households. Note: "PITI" stands for the combined housing expenditures on Principal, Interest, Taxes, and Insurance. There is a relatively even distribution of average housing cost burden across the measured demographics.

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data

Figure 2.5

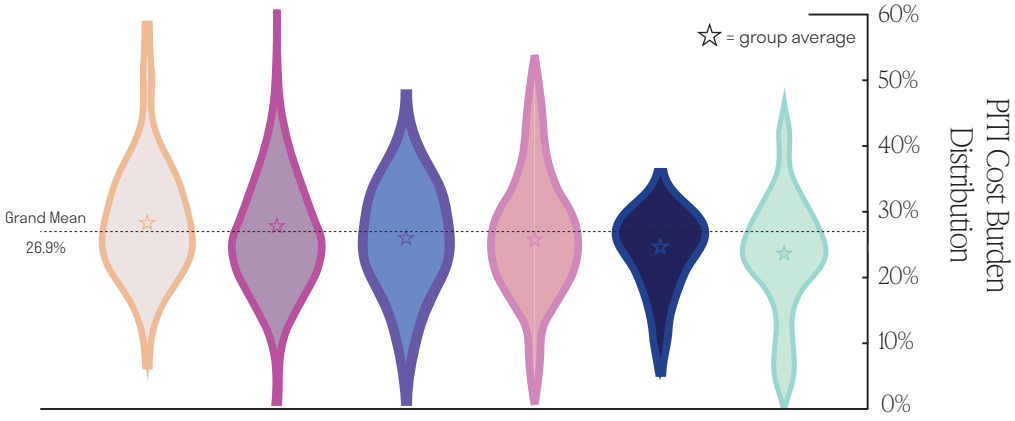


Figure 2.5: Cost burden spreads among the major demographic categories of CLCLT households. The wider areas of each shape represent the more common cost burden rates for households of each respective demographic.

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data

Figure 3.1

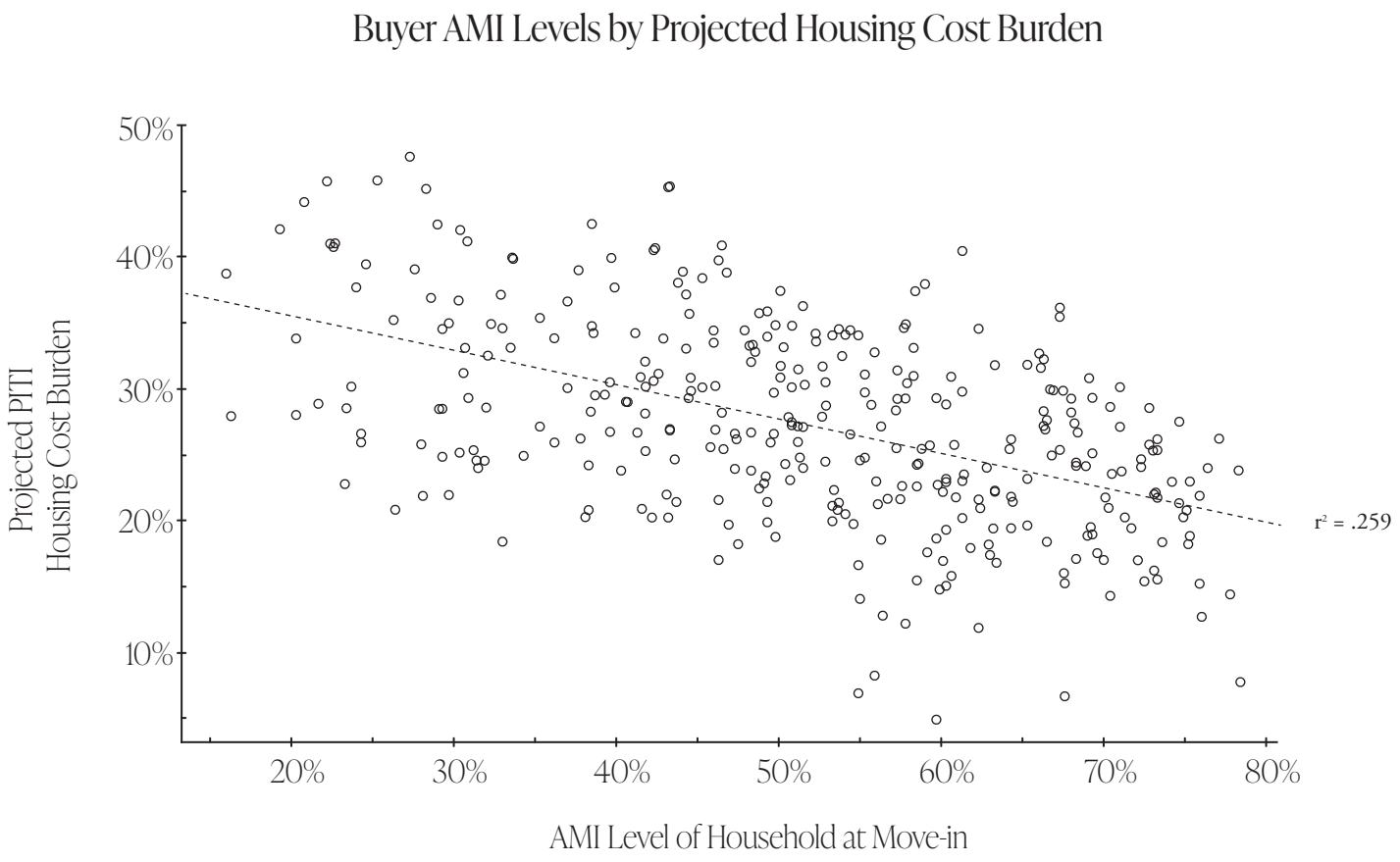


Figure 3.1: Current CLCLT homeowners' move-in AMI levels by their projected move-in time PITI housing cost burden, in qualified scenarios. The 343 plotted "qualified scenarios" exclude current CLCLT homeowners who "moved in" to CLCLT homes through programs of foreclosure prevention, and predominantly include homeowners who acquired their homes through the CLCLT Homebuyer Initiated Program, or homeowners who purchased properties developed by the CLCLT itself. Every one-percent increase in AMI level of buyers in these qualified scenarios was associated with a .25-percent decrease in their projected housing cost burden rate.

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data

Figure 3.2

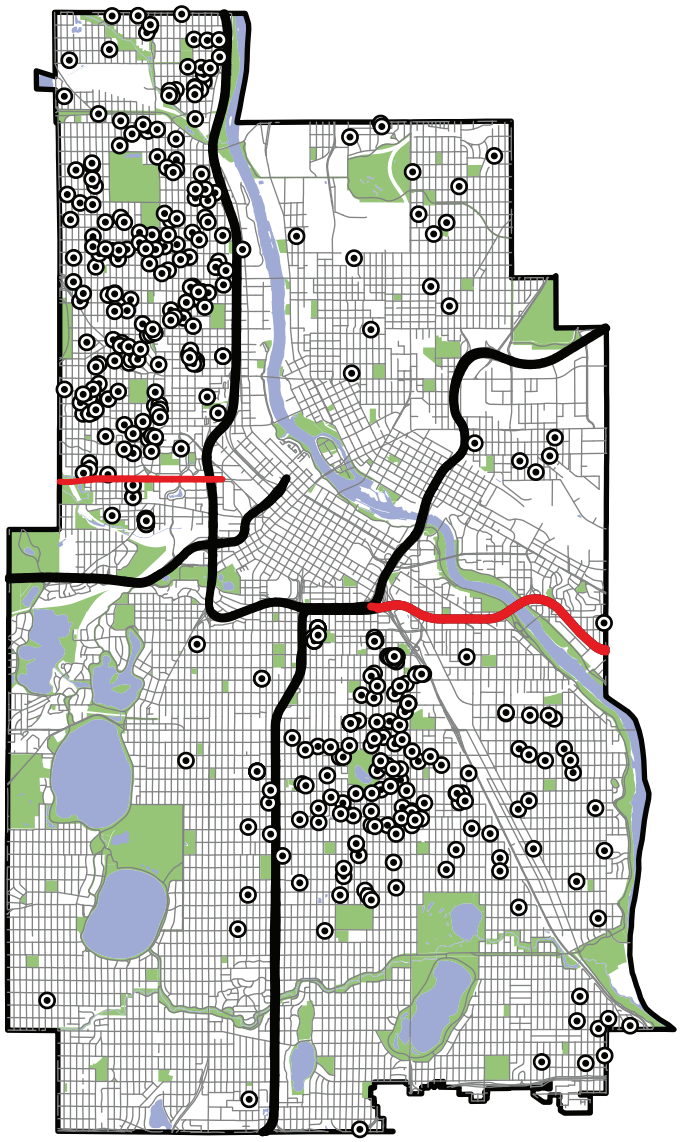


Figure 3.2: I-94 and Highway 55 MNDOT segments being redesigned, highlighted in red. The I-94 portion runs over the Mississippi. Highway 55 is the other.

Source:
CLCLT Internal Data
ArcGIS Layers: Metropolitan Council Open Data