Accessible Housing Marketing Initiative Final Report

PREPARED FOR MINNESOTA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY AND FAIR HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION COUNCIL

June 16, 2005

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Introduction

In March 2004, HousingLink was selected by the Fair Housing Implementation Council to conduct the Accessible Housing Marketing Initiative. This initiative was designed to determine the mismatch between households needing accessible housing and the current utilization rate of accessible housing units by households with such needs in the Twin Cities metro area. This issue was raised as one of the impediments in the Metro-wide Regional Analysis of Impediments and Action Guide.

The purpose of the Accessible Housing Marketing Initiative was to connect as many people who need the accessible features to the housing that meets their needs in an easy, efficient manner. Over the past year, HousingLink worked to build general awareness of its services and tools available to help people with disabilities locate accessible housing. In doing so, HousingLink increased the usage of its Housing Referral Service among people with disabilities and housing providers with accessible units. Their usage of the service allowed HousingLink to gather and report information on the supply of and demand for accessible housing in the Twin Cities metro area.

This report includes the findings from an analysis of the supply and demand of accessible rental housing for those who used HousingLink's services between August 1, 2004 and April 30, 2005. It also includes a summary of stakeholder feedback and project learnings.

Part I
Housing Referral Service: Supply and Demand of Accessible Rental Housing

In August 2004, HousingLink began tracking the supply of and demand for rental housing with accessibility features through its Housing Referral Service. HousingLink collected information on the demand for accessible units from Housing Referral Service registrants who were looking for accessible rental units with one or more accessibility features. At the same time, HousingLink collected information on the supply-side from property managers who had accessible units that were available for rent. Both the supply and demand of accessible units were tracked based on the need for and availability of the following seven accessibility features:

- No-step approach to the building and unit
- Roll-in shower
- Automatic door opener to the building
- Grab bars in the bathroom
- 32" passageway clearance
- Easily-operated door handles
- Assisted or congregate living

Characteristics of participating households with accessibility needs

Demographic characteristics

- Overall, 132 households[1] registered in HousingLink's Housing Referral Service indicated that they needed one or more of the accessibility features described above. This represents 15% of all households registered in Housing Referral Service during this time period.
- The average household size for this group was 2.17.
- The majority of registrants (87%) had incomes at or below 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- 42% percent of the registrants had incomes at or below 15% of the AMI.
- The average household income was $12,218. This is slightly below the federal poverty level of $12,830 for a 2-person household living in the United States.
- 90% of the households registered needed a one-bedroom (52%) or two-bedroom (38%) unit.

Accessibility features needed

- A no-step approach, grab bars in the bathroom and easily-operated door handles were the most-frequently chosen accessibility features by registrants.
- 40% of the registrants indicated that they needed at least six of the accessibility features listed in HRS.

Accessibility feature	HH needing this feature
No-step approach	80%
32" passageway clearance	54%
Easily-operated door handles	63%
Grab bars in bathroom	80%
Automatic door opener to building	57%
Roll-in shower	50%
Assisted or congregate living	43%

[1] Between August 1, 2004 and April 30, 2005

- About 2/3 of the registrants needed housing with three or more accessibility features.
- About 50% of the registrants said they needed the combination of threshold features: a no-step approach to the building and unit, a 32" passageway clearance *and* grab bars in the bathroom.

Location characteristics

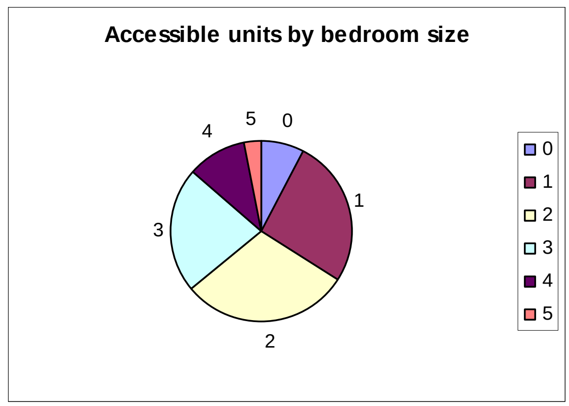
- Over half of the households lived in Hennepin County and over a quarter in Ramsey County at the time of registration.
- The cities were most frequently selected as places to relocate were Bloomington, Richfield, and St. Louis Park. All of these cities are within Hennepin County.

Characteristics of rental housing opportunities with accessibility features

Housing opportunities are defined as either a vacancy or waiting list opening. Housing providers listed a total of 504 housing opportunities with accessibility features through HousingLink between August 1, 2004 and April 30, 2005. Of these 504 listings, 487 were actual vacancies and 17 were waiting list openings.

Rent and unit size

- 75% of the units were located in either Hennepin (49%) or Ramsey (26%) Counties.
- The average rent for the vacancies with accessibility features was $974.
- The average rent was the highest in Washington County ($1097) and the lowest in Scott County ($752).
- Only 3% of the housing opportunities were targeted to households at or below 30% AMI.
- Over one-half of the units had either one or two bedrooms.



Accessibility feature	% with this feature
No-step approach	66%
32" passageway clearance	48%
Easily-operated door handles	46%
Grab bars in bathroom	38%
Automatic door opener to building	35%
Roll-in shower	17%
Assisted or congregate living	3%

Accessibility features offered

- Among the vacancies with at least one accessibility feature, 8% included six or more accessibility features
- 40% included three or more accessibility features
- 20% of the units included the combination of threshold features: a no-step approach to the building and unit, a 32" passageway clearance *and* grab bars.
- Two-thirds of the units included a no-step approach and about one-half had a 32" passageway clearance.
- Roll-in showers and congregate living were offered less frequently than the other five features.
- 13% of all housing opportunities listed with HousingLink[2] contained one or more accessibility features.

[2] Between August 1, 2004 and April 30, 2005

Geographic distribution of accessible rental housing supply and demand listed with HousingLink

Using data from the Housing Referral Service, HousingLink developed a series of maps to show the distribution of housing opportunities relative to the location preferences of people in need of housing with accessibility features. Each figure contains a map of the Twin Cities seven-county metro area.

Housing opportunities and location preferences

The first set of maps (maps 1 through 3) show the distribution of housing opportunities with at least one accessibility feature relative to the location preferences of registrants in HousingLink's Housing Referral Service who need housing with at least one accessibility feature. When registering with the Housing Referral Service registrants select all of the cities or counties that they would prefer to live in. These location preferences are shown through a graduated color scheme, with dark blue indicating cities that were selected most frequently as a location of choice and light yellow indicating areas chosen less frequently. The location preferences in these maps were obtained by dividing the number of households who chose each city by the total number of registrant households indicating a need for at least one accessibility feature. The points on the map represent the location of housing opportunities with at least one accessibility feature. Subsequent maps in the first set include the location of bus routes (map 2) and metro area transit services including bus routes, paratransit services and light rail lines (map 3).

The maps show that the location of housing opportunities listed with HousingLink generally correspond to the location preferences identified by people registered with HousingLink's Housing Referral Service. The majority of housing opportunities are located in Minneapolis and its inner ring suburbs and in St. Paul. These areas were also selected as preferred locations more frequently than other parts of the Twin Cities. Cities in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott and Washington Counties were chosen less frequently and also contain the fewest number of housing opportunities.

With a few exceptions, the housing opportunities with at least one accessibility feature appear to be located on or very close to the bus routes in the Twin Cities. The vast majority of housing opportunities are also located within the geographic areas serviced by paratransit operators including Metro Mobility and other dial-a-ride providers.

Housing opportunities and location preferences for three key accessibility features

The second set of maps (Maps 4 through 6) show the location preferences of registrants in Housing Referral Service needing, at a minimum, 1) a no-step approach, 2) a 32" passageway clearance and 3) grab bars in the bathroom relative to the housing opportunities that include a minimum of the same three features.

These three features were chosen because they are considered "threshold" features because they offer a fundamental starting point in access to housing and in the ability to maintain independence. While not everyone with a disability needs a no-step entrance or 32" passageway clearance, those in a wheelchair absolutely require these features to gain access to their building and unit. Grab bars provide the next level of accessibility because they provide the ability for some people with disabilities to live independently.

The location preferences are shown through a graduated color scheme, with dark purple indicating cities that were selected most frequently as a location of choice and light blue indicating areas chosen less frequently. The location preferences in these maps were obtained by dividing the number of households who chose each city by the total number of registrant households indicating a need for the three accessibility features. The points on the map represent the location of housing opportunities that include, at a minimum, the three accessibility features. Subsequent maps in this set include the location of bus routes (map 5) and metro area transit services including bus routes, paratransit services and light rail lines (map 6).

Overall, the maps of housing opportunities and location preferences by the three key accessibility features are similar to the first set of maps. However, there are small differences in the locations preferences and the number of housing opportunities. The largest number of registrants from this subset chose Minneapolis and many of its inner-ring suburbs as their location of preference. The distribution of housing opportunities is similar to the pattern of location preferences. However, the actual number of both registrants needing and housing opportunities with a no-step approach, a 32" passageway clearance and grab bars in the bathroom is markedly lower than those with one or more accessibility features.

Nearly all of the housing opportunities appear to be located on or very close to the bus routes in the Twin Cities. With the exception of two housing opportunities, all are also located within the geographic areas serviced by paratransit services such as Metro Mobility and other dial-a-ride providers.

Analysis of data

Income and rent disparity

A comparison of the household income of registrants in need of accessibility features with the average rents of the vacancies listed with the service shows a wide disparity between earnings and affordable rent. The average household income for registrants during the period of study was $12,218. During this same time period, the average rent was $974. A household would need to earn approximately $35,000 a year for this rent amount to be affordable.

The data on housing opportunities with accessibility features also shows that a very limited number of units were targeted for people at or below 30% of the area median. While 87% of the registrants in the Housing Referral Service who need accessible housing had incomes at or below 30% AMI, only 3% of the accessible housing opportunities were targeted to this income level.

These findings are consistent with the results from HousingLink's survey of service providers who help people with disabilities find housing. In this survey, respondents ranked finding a unit with rent that is affordable without a subsidy as the most difficult characteristic to find when assisting clients who are looking for affordable housing.

Mismatch between accessibility features needed and those available

HousingLink's data indicates that there is a mismatch between the accessibility features needed by registrants and those that are offered in units listed with HousingLink. The greatest differences exist between the need for and availability of grab bars in the bathroom, roll-in showers, and assisted or congregate living.

Accessibility feature	HH needing this feature	Units with this feature
No-step approach	80%	66%
32" passageway clearance	54%	48%
Easily-operated door handles	63%	46%
Grab bars in bathroom	80%	38%
Automatic door opener to building	57%	35%
Roll-in shower	50%	17%
Assisted or congregate living	43%	3%

While looking at gaps that exist between the need for and availability of individual features is useful, it does not give a complete picture. People with disabilities often need a combination of these features. Forty percent of the registrants in this study indicated that they needed six or more accessibility features. However, only eight percent of the housing opportunities listed with HousingLink include six or more features. About 50% of the registrants said they needed the combination of features identified as threshold features: a no-step approach to the building and unit, a 32" passageway clearance, and grab bars in the bathroom. However, only 20% of the housing opportunities listed with HousingLink include this set of features.

Location

The close relationship between the location preferences of registrants and the available housing opportunities is one of the more surprising findings in this analysis. The impetus for collecting data on the supply and demand of accessible units developed out of the growing awareness in the disability community that there is a mismatch between the supply and demand of accessible units. One possible explanation for this mismatch was that the available units were not located where people with disabilities either wanted, or were able, to live. The data collected by HousingLink, shown in the maps included in this report, show that the location preferences of households needing accessibility features in HousingLink's Housing Referral Service closely parallel the housing opportunities with accessibility features listed in this service.

Data and Limitations

The data on the demand for rental housing with accessibility features used in this report was obtained through people who had access to, and voluntarily registered with, HousingLink's Housing Referral Service. Data on housing opportunities with accessibility features was obtained from housing providers who listed their vacancy or waiting list opening with HousingLink between August 1, 2004 and April 31, 2005. The data was not obtained using random sampling and therefore cannot be generalized to the population as a whole. For this reason, the data collected from this project does not represent the supply of and demand for accessible housing in the general population, including the ratio of accessible units to people needing such units. Rather, the information in this report should be considered as an exploratory study on a topic, the supply of and demand for accessible housing, for which data is otherwise unavailable.

PART II
Summary of feedback from stakeholders

The purpose of the Accessible Housing Marketing Initiative was to connect as many people who need the accessible features to the housing that meets their needs in an easy, efficient manner. Therefore, a large portion of HousingLink's effort for this initiative involved developing and implementing a marketing and outreach plan. HousingLink has worked to increase the use of its services by people with disabilities, service providers who help people find accessible housing and housing providers who have units with accessibility features. Some examples of these outreach efforts include presenting information at conferences, such as the Nursing Home Relocation and Housing Conference, placing ads and an article in Access Press, and sending direct mailings to housing providers.

HousingLink gathered feedback on its Accessible Housing Marketing Initiative, as well as on broader accessibility-related topics, through three formal evaluations tools. These tools include: 1) two surveys sent to county waiver leads and others who serve clients in need of accessible housing; 2) a survey of housing providers who use HousingLink's vacancy listing service; and 3) interviews with disability community representatives, service providers and members of the Fair Housing Implementation Council. The following section will focus on the feedback gained from stakeholders through these formal evaluation tools.

Benchmark survey

HousingLink conducted two surveys with service providers who serve people with disabilities. The first survey was administered in October 2004 to identify baseline information on awareness of HousingLink resources. A follow-up survey was conducted with the same group in May 2005 to assess the short-term impact of HousingLink's Accessible Housing Marketing Initiative.

An email link to the survey was sent to CAC, CADI and TBI Waiver Leads in the seven-county metropolitan area, as well as to MCCD (Minnesota Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities) for inclusion in its weekly e-newsletter. The Waiver Lead group was given a short set of instructions to forward the message to staff and contracted service providers.

Forty-two service providers completed the first survey and 32 completed the second. The total number of service providers eligible to complete the survey is not known, therefore HousingLink is unable to determine a response rate for the two surveys. Also, while the survey was sent to the same population, the respondents for each survey were not known and may vary between the two surveys.

Information about the respondents:

- The majority of the respondents in both surveys provide service in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. A few respondents in each survey said they provide service either in Greater Minnesota or statewide.
- When asked how often they served clients looking for accessible housing, respondents of both surveys chose "several times a year" more than any other option.
- The majority of respondents from the first survey described their current skill level in helping people find housing with accessibility features as "fair" (40%) or good (37.5%).

- Topics on accessible housing that are of use to the respondents include 1) a description of the available housing options, 2) information on available rental housing with accessibility features, and 3) how to pay for the addition of accessibility features.

Some key findings about use of HousingLink services from these two surveys include:

- Almost half of the respondents in the second survey said they had used HousingLink services to find accessible housing in the past year compared to 35% of respondents in the first survey.
- The percentage of respondents who had used Housing Referral Service, Directories of Housing and HousingLink's website increased from the first to second survey.

HousingLink Resource	**Use in the past year Oct 04 Survey N=42**	**Use in the past year May 05 Survey N=32**
Directories of housing	23%	**53%**
HousingLink website	26%	**44%**
Housing Referral Service	7%	**16%**
Vacancy list (PMVR)	24%	19%

Experiences of service providers who help others find accessible housing
In the second survey, respondents were asked a series of questions about their experiences helping clients locate accessible housing.

- Respondents cited the following characteristics as **most difficult** to find when assisting clients in need of accessible housing:
  - Rent that is affordable without a subsidy (61%)
  - Appropriate housing in location of choice (58%)
  - Rent that is affordable with a subsidy (48%)
  - A landlord that will accept tenants with poor credit or rental histories (45%)
- 68% responded that most of their clients who need accessible housing also need a housing subsidy to make their rent affordable.
- 39% of the respondents said that most of their clients currently have a housing subsidy.
- The majority of respondents said that their clients were able to find housing that meets their accessibility needs in their preferred location either sometimes (58%) or occasionally (35.5%).

HousingLink 2004 Housing Provider Survey

In summer 2004, HousingLink surveyed a sample of housing providers who had used its services in the past year. The survey was sent to 370 housing providers. HousingLink received 196 surveys back, for a response rate of 53%. The survey included questions about the use of and satisfaction with HousingLink's services, as well as a series of questions about accessible housing. With the exception of questions about accessible units, the survey results apply to the service overall.

Demographic information

- The majority of housing providers who responded to the survey are responsible for leasing ten units or less.
- 58% own or manage properties in Hennepin County and 48% have properties in Ramsey County. A smaller percentage said they own or manage properties in Anoka County (12%), Dakota County (10%), Washington County (7%), Scott (6%) and Carver (2%).
- A little over one-half of the respondents describe the properties they own or manage as duplexes or multiplexes. Over 40% describe their properties as single-family homes and slightly over a quarter describe their properties as apartments.
- About one-half of the respondents have been using HousingLink's vacancy listing services for over a year.

Effectiveness of HousingLink's Vacancy Listing Service

- About one-third of the housing providers who responded to the survey ranked HousingLink as somewhat more effective (17%) or very effective (17%) compared to the other marketing and advertising tools that they use.
- HousingLink was the fourth most common response (at 10%) to a question asking housing providers what they thought was the most effective way to market their vacancies. The Star Tribune/Pioneer Press (34%), a sign at the property (26%), and word of mouth (11%) were the top responses to this question.

Experience with accessible units

- 22% of the survey respondents manage accessible units.
- 52% of the housing providers with accessible units responded that leasing accessible units required the same effort as non-accessible units, 34% said it was more difficult and 14% said it was easier.
- Among the respondents with accessible units, 19% said they regularly rent out accessible units to people who do not need accessibility features because they are unable to find a tenant with accessibility needs.
- 40% said that they occasionally rent accessible units to people without accessibility needs
- 61% of respondents said that they do not have a requirement that a tenant be required to relocate within the property if a person who needs the accessible unit applies to the property.

Feedback from disability community representatives, service providers and members of the Fair Housing Implementation Council

HousingLink gathered feedback from representatives of the disability community and members of the Fair Housing Implementation Council (FHIC). Interviews were conducted either over the phone or in person with eight people from these two groups. Five of the people interviewed provide direct service to people with disabilities. The following is a summary of the feedback obtained in these interviews. The feedback from these interviews provides valuable insight into both the use of HousingLink's housing search tools and potential directions for increasing outreach efforts and awareness of HousingLink's services among the disability community.

Use of HousingLink's Housing Search Tools

Preference for HousingLink's Online Directory

One of the goals of HousingLink's Accessible Housing Marketing Initiative was to increase the participation in Housing Referral Service (HRS) among people with disabilities. However, feedback from service providers suggests that HousingLink's Online Directory is more effective than HRS at meeting the needs of people with disabilities who are looking for affordable housing. This preference may be due to recent changes to the Online Directory, which include the listing of vacancies for subsidized properties and refined search criteria.

One of the service providers interviewed made the following comment:

> *I use [the online directory] with almost every housing call… It is a really efficient and thorough tool. It matches the needs of people who are calling.*

Several of the people interviewed commented that the Online Directory was particularly useful in helping clients with immediate housing needs.

Obstacles to use of HRS

The use of Housing Referral Service varied among those interviewed, but was overall much lower than expected. The most frequent user of the service registers clients about once or twice a week. Others use it less frequently. Housing Referral Service offers the benefit of providing custom-matched referrals, which can be particularly helpful for people with specific accessibility needs. However, feedback from some service providers suggests that, for various reasons, Housing Referral Service is not meeting their needs or does not meet the needs of their clients.

The service providers interviewed offered several reasons why they don't use the Housing Referral Service, including:

- The majority of vacancies listed in HRS are for private market units that clients cannot afford
- Other HousingLink tools are more efficient and/or effective in meeting clients' needs
- It is too hard to use and/or staff lack computer skills
- Clients do not want their information in a database
- Services are provided in home-based or other community settings where staff do not have computers

Increasing outreach efforts and expanding awareness of the accessibility initiative

The disability community representatives and FHIC members interviewed provided recommendations about outreach and marketing activities that would further the visibility of HousingLink's accessibility-related services. HousingLink conducted outreach to increase the use of its services by people with disabilities, service providers who help people find accessible housing and housing providers who have units with accessibility features. Some examples of these outreach efforts include presenting information at conferences, such as the Nursing Home Relocation and Housing Conference, placing ads and an article in Access Press, and sending direct mailings to housing providers.

Getting the message out

Many of the people interviewed commented that HousingLink should continue to get its message out to the disability community.

> *Service providers, relocation service coordinators, social workers, county case managers - you need to hit these groups over and over again.*
>
> *Once the work is out there in the community it will be a common notion, but I don't think you've quite reached that point yet.*

Use marketing strategies to increase visibility

Several of the people interviewed recommended specific strategies for increasing visibility, including ongoing ads in *Access Press,* direct mail and getting other organizations to include a link to HousingLink's website. Several people identified specific conferences and workshops that would help HousingLink raise awareness within the disability community.

> *People most times make decisions over a long period of time. Decisions are not typically immediate unless they are in a jam. So, continue with the ads in* Access Press.
>
> *Use a broad strategy. You could do mass mailings to any number of disability groups…most disability organizations have a list.*

Groups to reach

When asked what people need to know about the accessibility initiative, three groups were mentioned: nursing home/rehab discharge planners, property managers, and higher income people with disabilities.

> *I wonder about Sister Kinney and rehab facilities in general, like Bethesda and the U of M. They usually have discharge planners – part of their job is to work with the transition to independent living.*
>
> *I see a gap in people who are market-rate, accessible clients.*
>
> *I think that it is important to talk with (property) managers in MHA [Minnesota Multi Housing Association]. As much as we serve people with disabilities, we have landlords who say they don't have customers. We hear anecdotally that people are renting accessible units to able-bodied people. I think MHA does a great job of educating people.*

Obstacles to obtaining housing

While the interview questions did not directly address the issues people with disabilities face in trying to obtain housing, several comments on this topic came up in the interviews. These comments echo concerns about the lack of income, and poor credit and rental histories that came up in HousingLink's survey of service providers who help people with disabilities find housing.

> *The biggest gap I see is (the lack of) subsidized places that will accept bad credit/rental histories. One possible solution is to have an organization do a master lease.*

Property managers tell me that frequently applicants for the accessible units do not have the income to be eligible for the units (in their tax credit properties). People are okay if they have a voucher. If they don't, they can't afford the unit.

Sometimes there are people with disabilities that have trouble calling the landlord. People with physical and verbal difficulties, also people with mental health issues, can have trouble talking with strangers.

Summary of project learnings

Value of support of AHIE in shaping the initiative
One of the key learnings from this project is the immense value that comes from collaborating with others in the disability community. The Accessible Housing Information Exchange, a multi-agency group focused on improving access to information about housing for people with disabilities, provided ongoing feedback and support to HousingLink throughout this initiative. Early in the project, AHIE members worked with HousingLink to help define the key accessibility features. Through connections made by AHIE members, HousingLink was able to gain direct access to the disability community and helped us to forge relationships that would otherwise have taken months, if not years, to establish. And, the Disability Linkage Line, a member of AHIE, served as the primary access point to the Housing Referral Service for people with disabilities.

Members also supported HousingLink in several other ways, including coauthoring an article in *Access Press* and providing a list of contacts for the survey of service providers and providing ongoing input on issues that came up along the way. The support of this group had a fundamental influence on HousingLink's ability to develop and implement this initiative.

Participation of housing providers
Prior to the beginning of this project, HousingLink was aware that housing providers were concerned about filling their accessible rental units. However, we were uncertain if this concern would translate to support of the project and use of HousingLink's services. What we found was that housing providers were both supportive of the project and very willing to list their accessible units. Overall, housing providers were appreciative of the opportunity to market their accessible units to people who need them. Several housing providers also volunteered to serve on an advisory group. This support has resulted in a great collaborative effort, which helped to ensure that HousingLink's services include the greatest possible number of vacant accessible units listed in the referral service.

Focus on accessibility features
One of the more important things learned in this project was the importance of focusing on the need for accessibility features rather than whether people define themselves as having a disability. We heard from service providers that when they would ask their renter clients if they had a disability, the response was "no". Yet, if they asked the same client if they needed grab bars or other accessibility features, they would say "yes". People in need of accessibility features may not define themselves as having a disability. Providing information on accessibility features allows people to make decisions on their housing based on individual needs rather than collective definitions.

Use of HousingLink's Housing Search Tools

One of the important findings from this project was feedback about why the use of Housing Referral Service was much lower than expected. At the beginning of the project, HousingLink expected that 20-50 households requesting at least one accessibility feature would register for the service each month, for a total of 450 households by the end of this project. However, only 132 households in need of accessibility features registered in the service between August 1, 2004 and April 30, 2005. Interviews with service providers suggest several reasons that the numbers were lower than anticipated, including a preference for other HousingLink housing search tools, a lack of affordability of market-rate units in the service, and differing levels of access to and skills with computers. HousingLink will continue exploring these issues in future months to identify how its housing search tools can better meet the needs of both service providers and their clients in need of accessible housing.

Many questions about renting accessible units to people who do not need the accessibility features

There is limited awareness among both housing providers and advocates of the state law that requires housing providers to make accessible units available to qualified households that need accessible housing. The law applies in situations where an accessible unit is occupied by a household not needing the accessibility features *and* the housing provider has another suitable unit available for that household to move into. Some housing providers are aware of the law and have legally positioned themselves to implement it by incorporating language in their leases that requires households needing the accessibility features to move if a qualified household needing accessibility wants the unit. Even though some housing providers are positioned to follow the law related to making units available, they may not have systems in place for advertising and marketing currently occupied accessible units in such a way that households needing accessible units can find them.

There is more work to be done

Though HousingLink has worked diligently to increase the awareness of its services among the disability community, there is still more work to be done. The outreach efforts used in this initiative have been successful at broadening awareness, but will require an ongoing effort so that HousingLink's services are common knowledge within the disability community. Future outreach efforts will likely include some of the same strategies, targeted to the same groups so that we achieve greater awareness through repeated exposure. However, HousingLink would also like to establish connections with new segments within the disability community, such as those with higher incomes who are looking for market rate accessible units. Continued outreach efforts are dependent on the availability of funding.

Supply of and demand for accessible housing listed with HousingLink

The close relationship between the location preferences of registrants and the available housing opportunities listed with HousingLink is one of the more surprising findings in this project. The impetus for collecting data on the supply and demand of accessible units developed out of the growing awareness in the disability community that there is a mismatch between the supply and demand of accessible units. One possible explanation for this mismatch was that the available units were not located where people with disabilities either wanted, or were able, to live. HousingLink data suggests that the mismatch is between the accessibility features needed by registrants and those that are offered in units. The greatest differences in HousingLink's data were between the need for and availability of grab bars in the bathroom, roll-in showers, and assisted or congregate living.

Finally, among those listing with HousingLink, there also appears to be a significant disparity between the rent for accessible units and the rent households are able to afford.

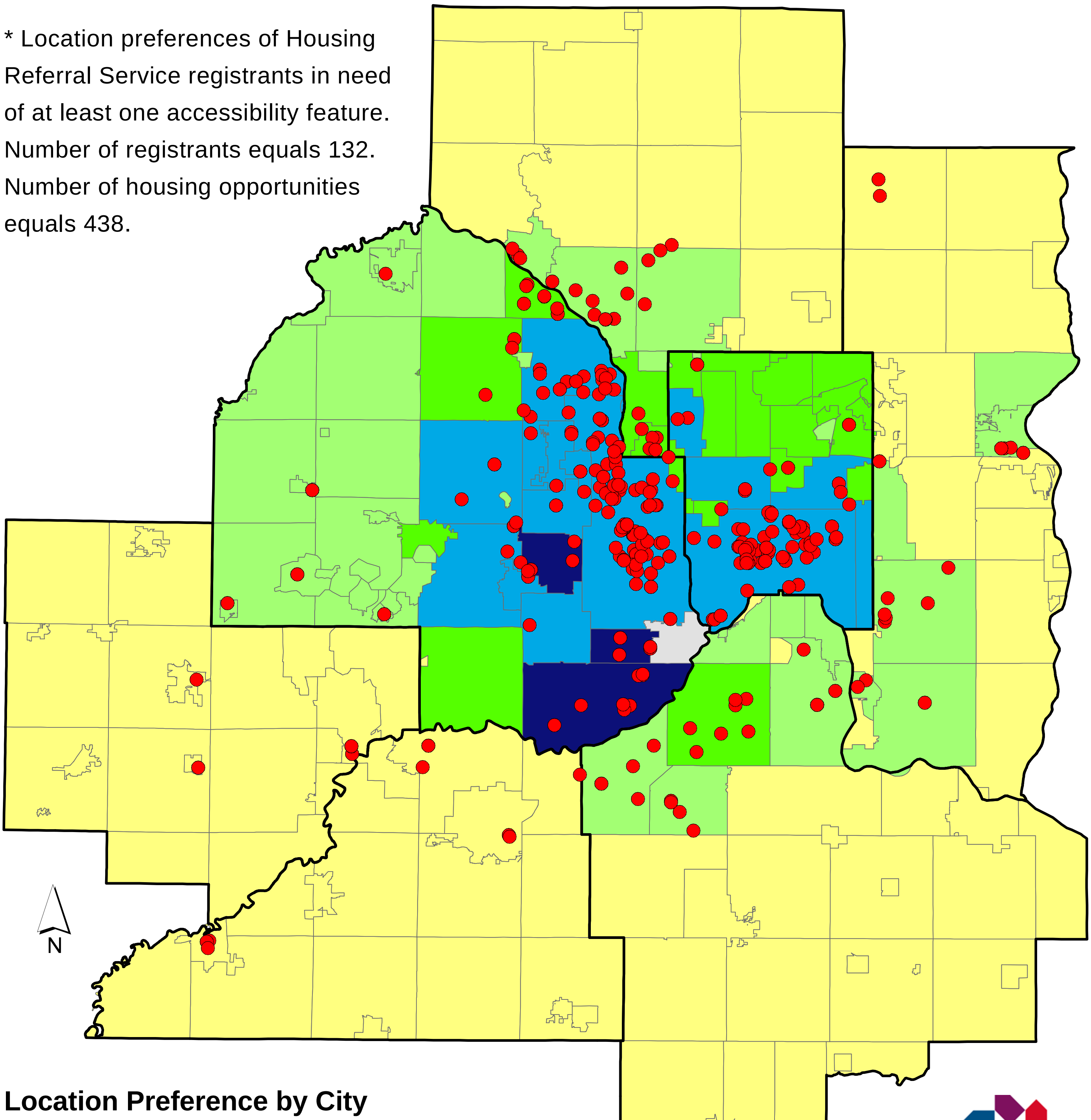
Recommendations

HousingLink recommends that people use the information and findings in this report when applicable for policy decisions on and discussions about housing for people with disabilities and for the aging population.

Supply and Demand of
Accessible Rental Housing Listed with HousingLink

Housing opportunities and location preferences *

* Location preferences of Housing Referral Service registrants in need of at least one accessibility feature. Number of registrants equals 132. Number of housing opportunities equals 438.



Location Preference by City

- 38.0% - 52.3%
- 26.6% - 37.9%
- 19.0% - 26.5%
- 11.5% - 18.9%
- 6.1% - 11.4%
- Housing opportunity with at least 1 accessibility feature

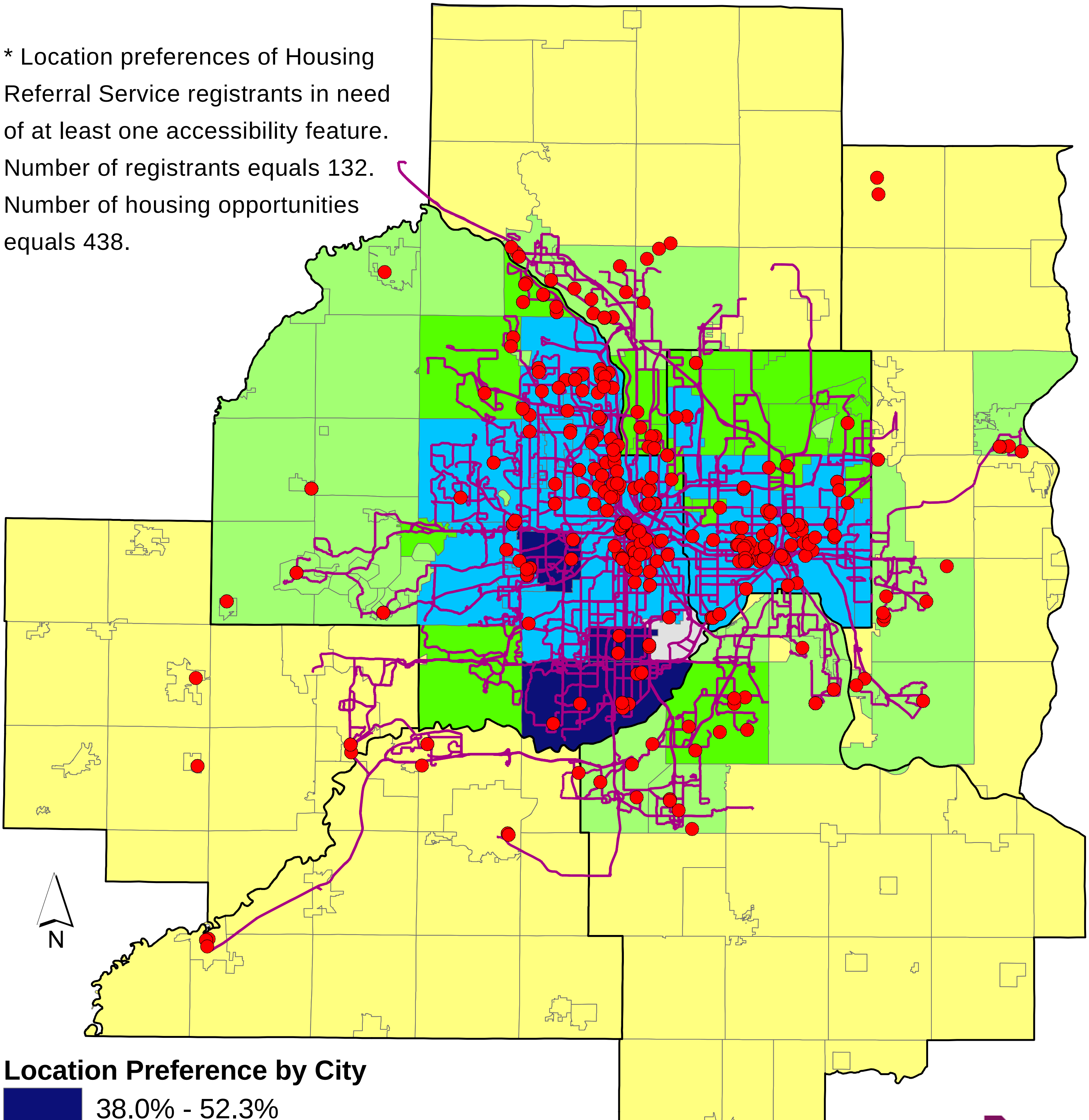
HousingLink
Data Source: HousingLink
Production Date: June 8, 2005
Cartographer: Birgit Mühlenhaus

Map 2

Supply and Demand of Accessible Rental Housing Listed with HousingLink

Housing opportunities, location preferences, and bus routes *

* Location preferences of Housing Referral Service registrants in need of at least one accessibility feature. Number of registrants equals 132. Number of housing opportunities equals 438.



Location Preference by City

- 38.0% - 52.3%
- 26.6% - 37.9%
- 19.0% - 26.5%
- 11.5% - 18.9%
- 6.1% - 11.4%

Bus Route

Housing opportunity with at least 1 accessibility feature

HousingLink

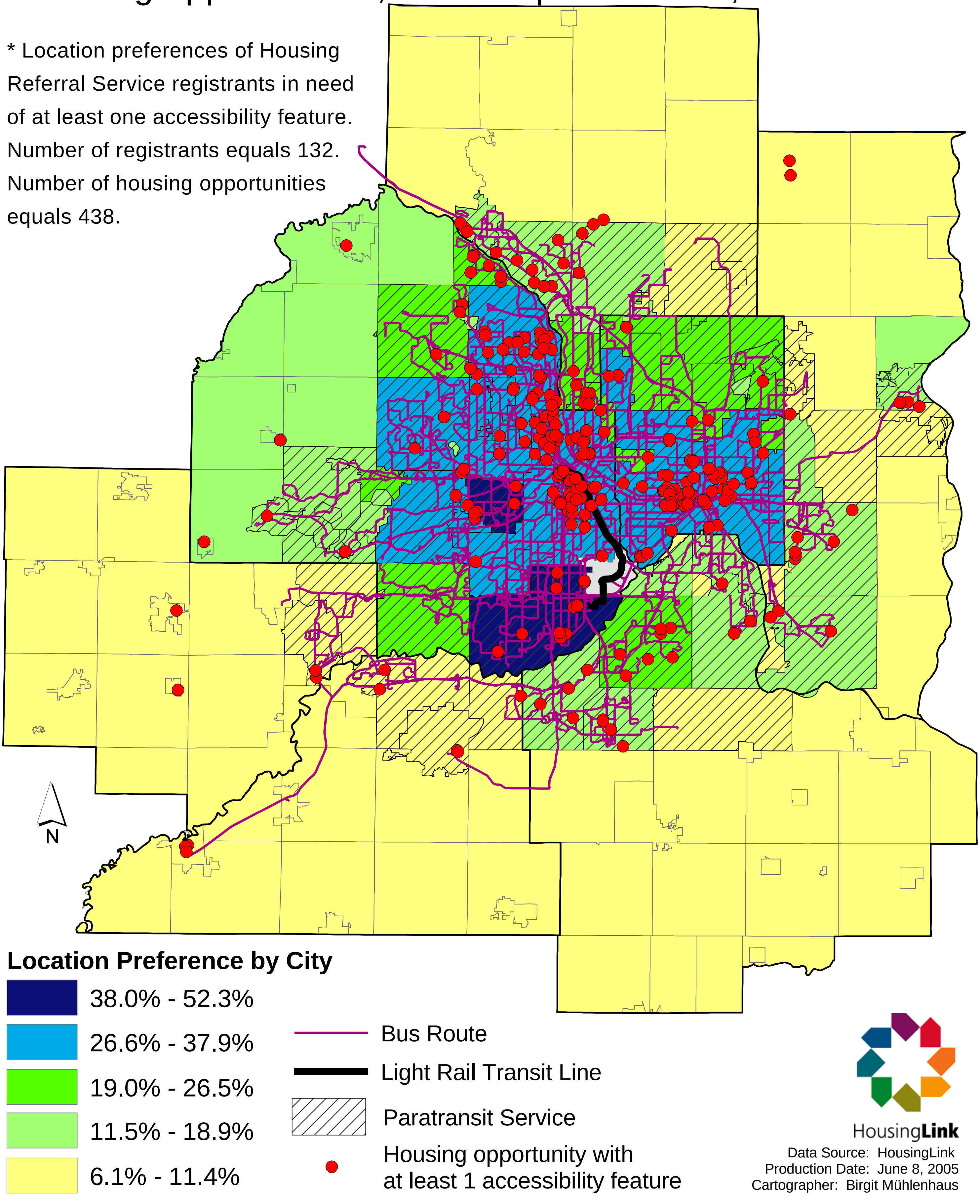
Data Source: HousingLink
Production Date: June 8, 2005
Cartographer: Birgit Mühlenhaus

Map 3

Supply and Demand of Accessible Rental Housing Listed with HousingLink

Housing opportunities, location preferences, and transit *

* Location preferences of Housing Referral Service registrants in need of at least one accessibility feature. Number of registrants equals 132. Number of housing opportunities equals 438.



HousingLink

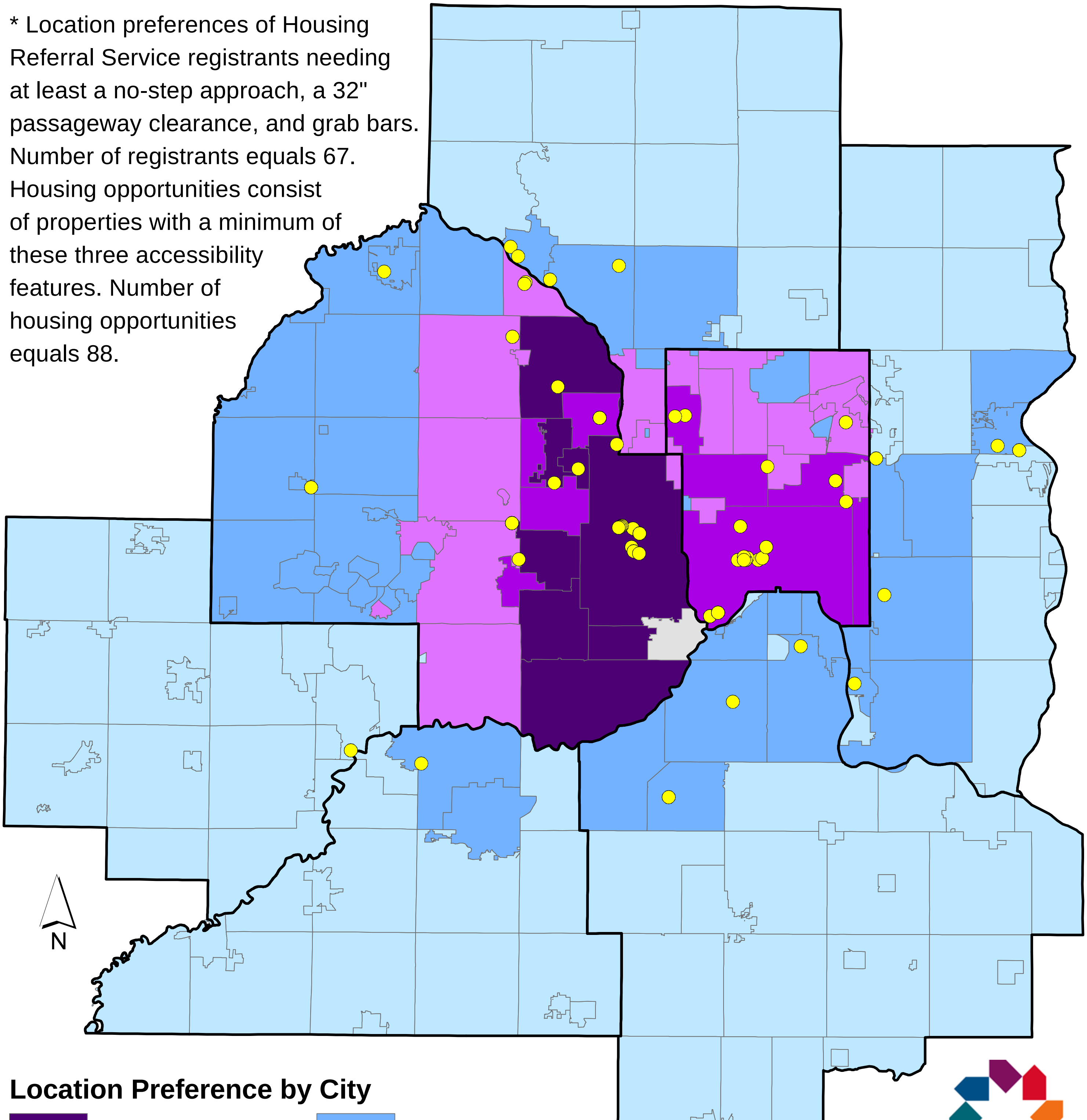
Data Source: HousingLink
Production Date: June 8, 2005
Cartographer: Birgit Mühlenhaus

Map 4

Supply and Demand of Accessible Rental Housing Listed with HousingLink

Housing opportunities and location preferences for three key accessibility features *

* Location preferences of Housing Referral Service registrants needing at least a no-step approach, a 32" passageway clearance, and grab bars. Number of registrants equals 67. Housing opportunities consist of properties with a minimum of these three accessibility features. Number of housing opportunities equals 88.



Location Preference by City

- 41.9% - 56.7%
- 31.4% - 41.8%
- 22.5% - 31.3%
- 13.5% - 22.4%
- 7.5% - 13.4%
- Housing opportunity with three accessibility features

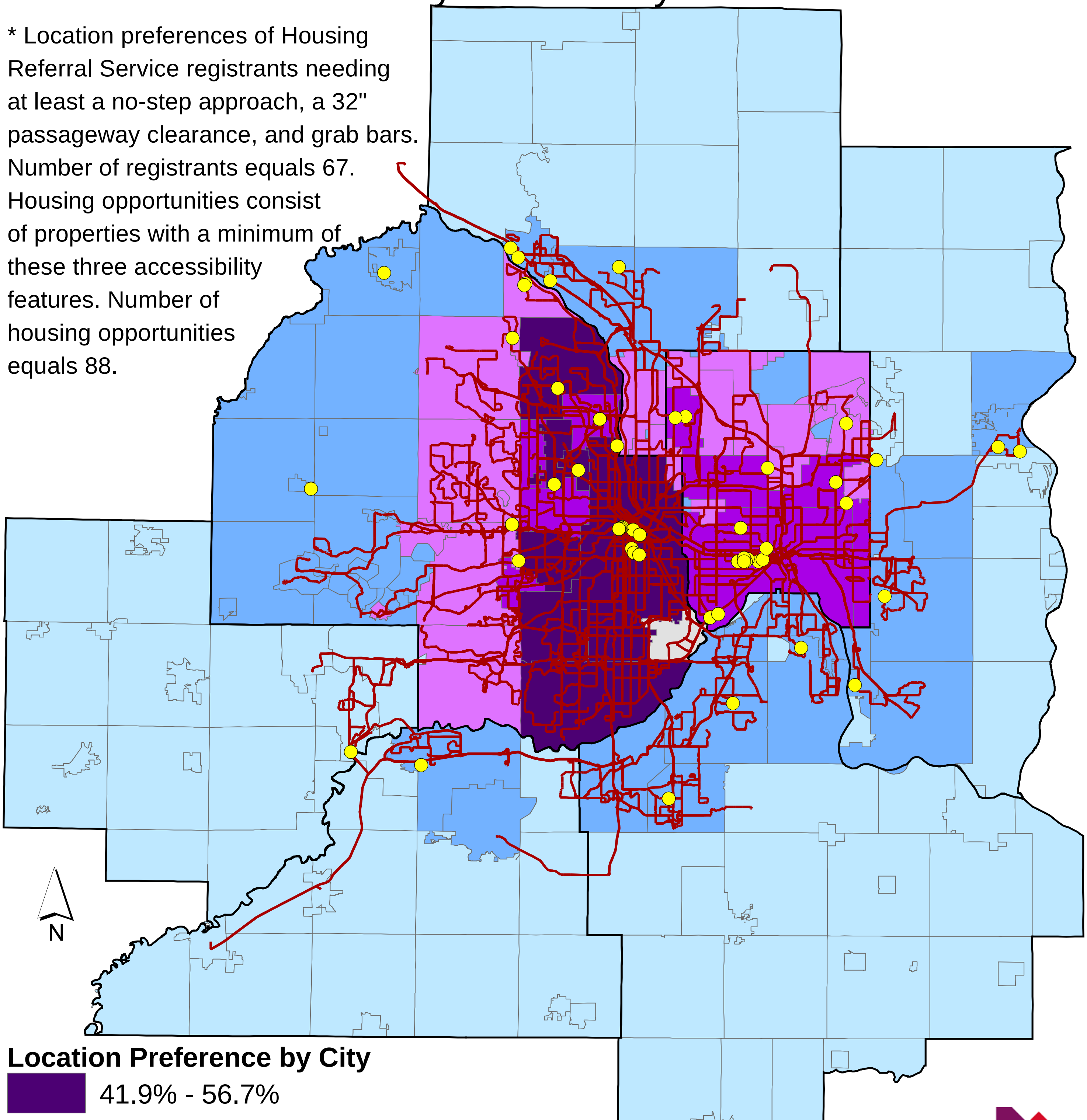
HousingLink

Data Source: HousingLink
Production Date: June 8, 2005
Cartographer: Birgit Mühlenhaus

Supply and Demand
of Accessible Rental Housing Listed with HousingLink

Housing opportunities, location preferences, bus routes - for three key accessibility features *

* Location preferences of Housing Referral Service registrants needing at least a no-step approach, a 32" passageway clearance, and grab bars. Number of registrants equals 67. Housing opportunities consist of properties with a minimum of these three accessibility features. Number of housing opportunities equals 88.



Location Preference by City

- 41.9% - 56.7%
- 31.4% - 41.8%
- 22.5% - 31.3%
- 13.5% - 22.4%
- 7.5% - 13.4%

- Bus Route
- Housing opportunity with three accessibility features

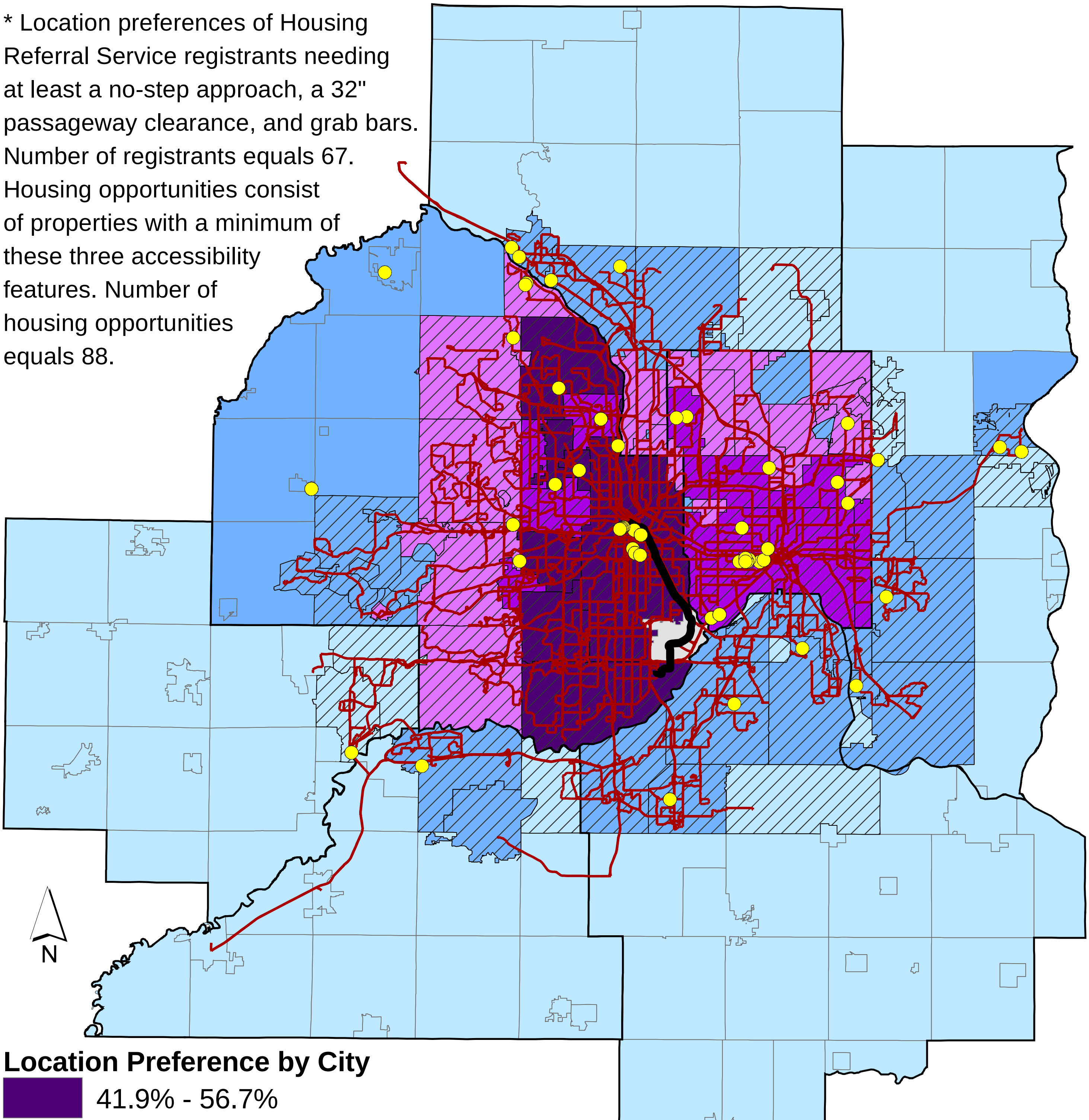
HousingLink

Data Source: HousingLink
Production Date: June 8, 2005
Cartographer: Birgit Mühlenhaus

Supply and Demand
of Accessible Rental Housing Listed with HousingLink

Housing opportunities, location preferences, transit - for three key accessibility features *

* Location preferences of Housing Referral Service registrants needing at least a no-step approach, a 32" passageway clearance, and grab bars. Number of registrants equals 67. Housing opportunities consist of properties with a minimum of these three accessibility features. Number of housing opportunities equals 88.



Location Preference by City

- 41.9% - 56.7%
- 31.4% - 41.8%
- 22.5% - 31.3%
- 13.5% - 22.4%
- 7.5% - 13.4%

- Bus Route
- Light Rail Transit Line
- Paratransit Service
- Housing opportunity with three accessibility features

HousingLink

Data Source: HousingLink
Production Date: June 8, 2005
Cartographer: Birgit Mühlenhaus