



90 Madison Street, Suite 300 Denver, Colorado 80206 303-388-1100 www.jres.com

Apartment Perspective

News and Analysis about the Denver Metropolitan Area Apartment Market

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Overview

Denver's apartment vacancy rate dropped slightly to 4.9% through the first quarter of 2012, down 0.5% from year end 2011, according to the first quarter 2012 Denver Metro Apartment Vacancy and Rent Survey conducted by Jennifer L. Von Stroh and Ron L. Throupe, Ph.D. for the Apartment Association of Metro Denver (AAMD). Overall vacancy rates have steadily decreased over the past two years. Reported vacancy for this same period in 2010 was 6.5% and one year ago it was 5.5%. Vacancy rates have not been this low since pre 9/11 when vacancy posted a level of 4.7%. Gradually, vacancy increased to a high of 8.1% in 2008.

Vacancies in new construction (built since 2005) decreased more than half since 2010 to 6.0%, the lowest rate ever posted for this segment of the market. All other age related apartment segments report vacancy rates less than 5.5%. Pre and post WWII buildings report vacancy rates below 2.5% while buildings constructed between 2000 and 2004 report vacancy at 4.4%. 1970s and 1980s vintage buildings are reporting the highest vacancies of 5.3% and 5.4% respectively.

The average rental rate increased another 2.3% from \$932 at year-end 2011 to \$953 for the first quarter 2012. Overall, the average rental rate has increased 7.2% from year end 2008. The median rental rate is reported at \$892, an increase of 10.0% from 2009 when it was reported at \$811.

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Metro Denver Economy

Colorado was recently ranked as the third most economically competitive state by the Beacon Hill Institute. According to the most recent economic survey compiled by the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (Metro Denver EDC), Denver's economy is climbing steadily out of post-recession lows. Employment is on the rise, home sales are increasing and residential building permits have doubled, all indicating strong economic growth. Overall, 13 of Metro Denver's 18 monthly economic indicators have moved in a positive direction.

Bloomberg Businessweek recently placed three universities— University of Denver Daniels College of Business, the University of Colorado Boulder Leeds School of Business and the Colorado State University College of Business as "Best Undergraduate Business Schools". University of Colorado Boulder, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, University of Colorado Denver, University of Denver and Colorado School of Mines were named "America's Best Graduate Schools 2013" in various categories by the U.S. News & World Report. The Metro Denver EDC reports "Excellent higher education facilities are critical to the region's employers, which are growing at a faster-than average pace."

Statewide unemployment reduced slightly from year-end 2011 at 7.9% to March of 2012 at 7.8%. National unemployment also decreased slightly to 8.2% from 8.5% at year-end 2011.

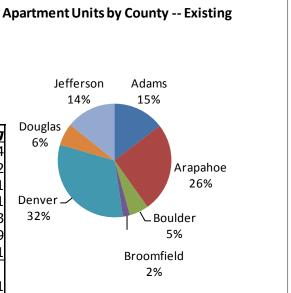
Metro Denver Apartment Market

According to Pierce Eislen, the metropolitan Denver apartment market contains a total of 178,831 existing units in buildings or communities of at least 50 units as of March 31, 2012. The United States Census Bureau defines the metropolitan Denver area as Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson coun-

ties. This inventory excludes public housing, on-campus student housing and apartments limited solely to senior residents. Changes in the total number of units occur with construction of new apartments and removal of units from the rental inventory by condominium conversion or demolition.

In addition to the existing inventory, 6 communities with 1,301 units were started during the first quarter of 2012.

County Existing 25,974 Adams Arapahoe 45,962 Boulder 9,761 Broomfield 3,591 Denver 56,933 11,259 Douglas Jefferson 25,351 Total 178,831



An additional 23 apartment projects with 3,597 units were under construction in metro Denver on March 31, 2012. Pierce Eislen reports another 7,506 units are anticipated for construction by year-end 2012. Many of those are likely not to actually start construction or be developed as apartments. According to Pierce Eislen, construction of 430 units was completed during the first quarter of 2012.

	Vacancy	Average	Construction	
Year	Rate	Rent	Starts	Absorption
2012*	4.9%	\$953	1,301	1,807
2011	5.4%	932	3,029	1,556
2010	5.5%	909	1,406	6,827
2009	7.7%	875	1,438	4,069
2008	7.9%	889	2,099	(3,254)
2007	6.1%	860	5,521	4,644
2006	7.0%	850	1,632	2,709
2005	7.9%	848	494	8,126
2004	10.0%	822	504	607
	Totals		17,263	27,091

* First Quarter 2012

To put the amount of new construction into perspective, metro Denver experiences net absorption of about 5,000 to 6,000 apartment units in a long-term "normal" year. According to the Denver Metro Apartment and Vacancy Survey, 1,807 units were absorbed during the first quarter of 2012 above the net absorption of 1,556 reported for all of 2011. 2010 absorption levels were above the norm while 2009 was below. 2008 experienced the second largest negative absorption over the last decade.

The number of units absorbed in the first quarter of the year is nearly equal to the

number of units started in 2009 and 2010 combined. It will take the market sometime to return to historic "normal" level of absorption as supply is limited. It is estimated 2,600 units will be completed in 2012, 4,000 in 2013 increasing to 6,000 in 2016. Speculation exists among some market participants that the market will become overbuilt in the next five years; however the estimated number of completed units over the next several years remains below the long term average absorption levels. The slowed construction practiced by developers in 2009 and 2010 will eventually impact the apartment market because supply will not meet demand as the economy continues to recover. It appears based upon the number of current and planned starts for 2012, developers are anticipating continued improvement in the apartment market.

(Continued on page 3)



Metro Denver Apartment Market (continued)

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Vacancy continues to decrease and is reported at 4.9% for the first quarter, down 2.8% from 2009. The limited supply of new units has been cited as one of the biggest factors in the strength of the apartment market.

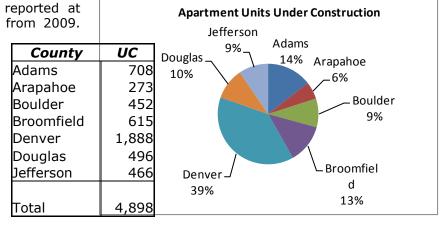
County

County

Adams**

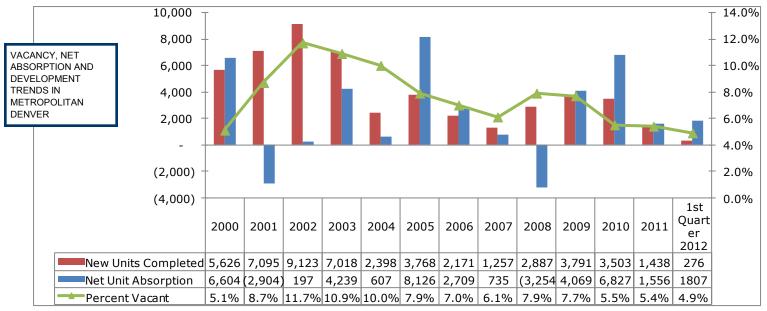
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From the early 1990s until early 2001, the vacancy rate in metropolitan Denver trended in the 4% to 5% range, allowing rental rates to increase and encouraging developers, investors, and lenders to start new apartment properties. As the economy slowed in 2001 and finally fell into recession, demand declined and



the vacancy rate rose as new units came on line with a negative net absorption. This trend continued through 2009 as well. However, improvement was noted in 2010 and continues well into 2012. The recovery is expected to continue well into the foreseeable future. All but two of the 37 individual sectors report vacancy rates of 6.7% or below with 16 of them at or below 4.0%. Five of the individual sectors range between 6.0% and 6.7%.

Vacancy may nudge upward slightly over the foreseeable future until unemployment levels decrease and the local economy continues recovery. Metro Denver EDC reports employment across all industries was up 2.2% in February for metro Denver. Although 78% of the area employers are not planning to increase the size of their workforce, they do not plan to lay off employees either. Furloughs are expected to remain in place especially in the government sector as state and local governments continue to struggle to balance budgets. Balancing government budgets will remain difficult due to decreases in sales tax and real estate tax revenue.



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Note: Vacancy rates are as of the 4th quarter of each year.



Metro Denver Apartment Market (continued)

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Following the financial crisis in 2008, financing became difficult to obtain particularly conventional financing. Government backed financing appeared to be the only readily available vehicle for apartment construction and as a result the majority of the new construction underway and recently completed is affordable rather than market rate. Government backed financing, in particular U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is in such great demand, that approval times have been lengthened greatly slowing development as well.

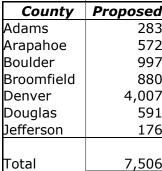
County	Under Construction	Proposed		
Adams	708	283		
Arapahoe	273	572		
Boulder	452	997		
Broomfield	615	880		
Denver	1,888	4,007		
Douglas	496	591		
Jefferson	466	176		

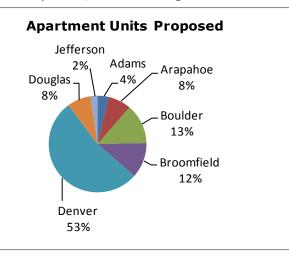
However, as the banking industry adjusted to new federal regulatory requirements and improved their position—preserving capital, removing problem loans and raising new capital—banks are now in a position to loan. Banks are becoming aggressive and competition for new loans is tremendous. Because of the strong apartment market, conventional financing for new communities is becoming more readily available.

As the apartment market continues to improve with increasing rents and stabilizing vacancy rates, and financing becomes more

readily available developers are moving forward with plans once put on hold. Over the past year, developers have sought and ob-

tained development approval and begun construction in all of the metro area counties. Perhaps most noticed has been the 1,670 units which have been announced for construction in mixed use transit oriented projects nearby the Union Station transit hub under construction by the Regional Transportation District. Based upon the 4,898 units currently under construction, the 7,506





units proposed and typical absorption of 5,000 to 6,000 units annually, the market may be in equilibrium. Not all of the proposed projects will begin construction over the next year.

According to data provided by Pierce Eislen, developers completed 3 projects with a total of 430 units in the first quarter of 2012. Pierce Eislen includes apartment rental projects when they are 100% complete including all phases. The Von Stroh and Throupe data reports a total of 276 units completed in the first quarter of 2012. Methodology used by Ms. Von Stroh and Dr. Throupe accounts for units that become ready for lease regardless of management decision to actually lease the units.

According to Pierce Eislen 86% of the new construction is market rate while the remaining 14% is partially or fully affordable housing. Of the 7,506 units proposed, nearly 90% are market rate, 4% are mixed market rate and affordable and nearly 7% are fully (100%) affordable communities.

Vacancy rates from county to county also vary widely depending mostly on supply added to the market. Boulder/Broomfield and Jefferson Counties with limited new supply added, report vacancy rates of 3.9% (Continued on page 5)



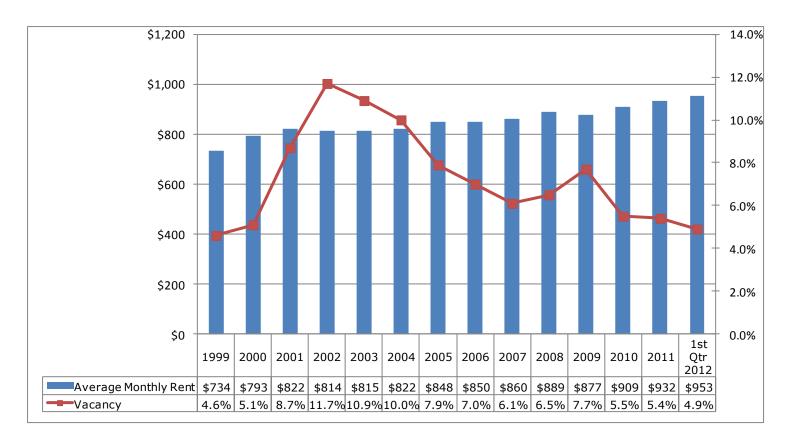
Metro Denver Apartment Market (continued)

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and 3.8% respectively. Counties with more new development report vacancy rates near or above the metro average. Denver County with the largest amount of new construction reports a vacancy rate of 4.2%. Adams, Douglas and Arapahoe counties report vacancy rates of 4.5%, 4.9% and 6.3% respectively.

Following a slight decrease in 2009, average rental rates have increased steadily since 2010 to \$953/month on average through 1st quarter 2012. The quoted rental rates used by Pierce Eislen and Von Stroh/AAMD do not take into consideration the value of specials and concessions being offered by many apartment communities. Economic vacancy is reported by Von Stroh/AAMD at 14.0%. The highest economic vacancy posted was near 25% between 2003 and 2005 with decreases beginning in 2006. Economic vacancy has remained near the 16% level since last quarter of 2007. The median rental rate is reported at \$892 up from \$846 in 2010.

Average rental rates quoted in the Apartment Association report may be somewhat inflated due to the periodic addition of new communities upon their completion, most of which have rental rates above the metro average. Uncounted in these averages is the increasing effect of special deals, reduced or eliminated security deposits and other concessions meant to retain or attract residents. Rental rates are usually quoted with water and sewer costs included but with the tenant paying for electricity and natural gas. Effective rental rates are lower due to incentives.





Apartment Sales During 2011/2012

Sale activity of large of apartment communities continues to improve. During the first quarter of 2012, investors purchased 17 apartment communities with 50 or more units in the seven county Denver metro area. According to Costar, sales volume totaled \$261.97 million for 3,645 units or \$71,871/unit average. In 2011, a total of 64 apartment communities of 50 or more units sold for a total sales volume of \$1.5 billion.

The 2011 sales volume outpaced 2007 when 59 apartment communities were purchased with a total dollar volume over \$1.4 billion. In 2010, sales volume totaled \$533.6 million for 7,926 units equivalent to \$67,323/unit. In 2009 only 20 communities totaling \$282.9 million with an average unit price of \$70,267 sold. This is less than half of the sales volume experienced in 2008 with 44 transactions totaling \$650.9 million.

2006 was a record setting year as the apartment sale volume reached \$1.9 billion up 26.0% from \$1.5 billion in 2005. Buyers remain a mix of "big money" or investment grade buyers such as REITS and small local investors seeking good investment opportunities.

Forecast 2012/2013

Overall, the apartment market is expected to continue to improve. With all but one of the submarkets at or below 6.7% vacancy rental rates are expected to continue to climb. Rental concessions for existing product will be limited if offered at all with only new construction product likely offering incentives. Employment stability reported by the majority of area employers will aid in pushing rental rates higher. Continued limited supply of new product will aid in absorption as well.

The single family housing market including the shadow market will continue to plague the apartment market. Speculation abounds regarding a second "wave" of foreclosures as litigation surrounding "robo signing" has concluded. Banks which were holding off on filing foreclosure proceedings have now begun to file which will increase the number of active foreclosures. Investors continue to acquire single family residences for investment purposes. Much of the available financing has been provided by government backed financing including FHA, VA and other programs. If conventional financing becomes more readily available, absorption of the oversupply of single family homes for sale will impact the apartment rental market.

Apartment sales are expected to continue to increase as investors continue to see the Denver market as a well-positioned market. Reduced financing availability will continue to hamper acquisitions particularly with the high demand for HUD financing with slow loan processing, but reduced vacancy rates and increasing rental rates will continue to spur interest. The apartment market is expected to remain stable and slowly improve over the foreseeable future.

Methodology

Information provided in this report is obtained from published sources such as Pierce Eislen, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, CoStar.com and the Apartment Vacancy and Rental Survey. James Real Estate Services, Inc. also conducts independent research.

James Real Estate Services, Inc. makes every attempt to ensure accuracy but information cannot be guaranteed. Comments, suggestions and any corrections should be directed to Bill James, editor of the Apartment Perspective, at 303/316-6768 or bjames@jres.com.



Addenda

The following lists include:

Apartment communities:

- Started during the 1st Quarter of 2012.
- Completed during the 1st Quarter of 2012. Under construction as of March 31, 2012.

Apartment Communities Started—1st Quarter 2012							
NAME	STREET	SUBMARKET	COUNTY	UNITS	DEVELOPER		
3100 Pearl AMLI at Interlocken Broadstone Gardens @ Cherry Crk Encore Highpointe Park Mount Nebo Regency at RidgeGate	3100 Pearl Parkway 25 International Court 250 South Jackson Street E. 98th Ave/Grant Street 11000 East 14th Avenue Halstead Lane/Ridgegate Circle	Boulder Broomfield Denver Central Thornton Aurora e Lone Tree	Boulder Broomfield Denver Adams Arapahoe Douglas Total	319 343 161 220 50 208 1,301	ReyLenn Properties AMLI Residential Alliance Residential Co Encore Enterprises MGL Partners Regency Residential Ptnrs		

Apartment Communities Completed — 1st Quarter 2012							
NAME	STREET	SUBMARKET	COUNTY	UNITS DEVELOPER			
Alta Aspen Grove Phoenix on the FAX South Lincoln Senior Tower	7317 S. Platte River Parkway 7101 East Colfax Avenue 1099 Osage Street	Littleton Denver East Denver Central	Arapahoe Denver Denver Total	280 Wood Partners 50 Sherman & Associates 100 Denver Housing Authority 430			



Apartment Communities Under Construction—1st Quarter 2012

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NAME	STREET	SUBMARKET	COUNTY	UNITS	DEVELOPER
		_			
21 Fitzsimons Phase II	2100 N. Ursula Street	Aurora	Adams	188	The Pauls Corporation
2020 Lawrence	2020 Lawrence Street	Denver Central	Denver	231	Zocalo Community Dvlpmnt
Arbour Square	14770 Orchard Parkway	Westminster	Adams	300	McWhinney
Arista Uptown	11465 Uptown Avenue	Broomfield	Broomfield	272	Smith/Jones Partners
Arvada Station	10068 West 52nd Place	Arvada	Jefferson	378	Embrey Partners
The Aster Town Center	3131 Roslyn Street	Denver East	Denver	225	Forest City Enterprises
Bluff Lake	3100 Hanover Street	Denver East	Denver	92	Mercy Housing
Botanica Eastbridge	2870 Geneva Street	Denver East	Denver	118	Forest City Enterprises
High Mar	4990 Moorhead Avenue	Boulder	Boulder	59	Boulder Housing Partners
Highland Bridge Lofts	1582 Boulder Street	Denver Central	Denver	130	Holland Partners
Highland Park	2424 W. Caithness Place	Denver West	Denver	126	Heitler Development
Josephine Commons Senior	E. Baseline/ N. 119th St	Lafayette	Boulder	74	Boulder County Housing Auth
Legends at Lowry	9611 E. 5th Avenue	Denver East	Denver	152	MDC Holdings
The Logan	NWC E. 6th Ave/Logan St	Denver Central	Denver	57	Forum Real Estate Group
The Manhatten, Phase II	1851 Bassett Street	Denver Central	Denver	134	General Investment & Dvlpmnt
Meridian	S. Meridian/E. Oswego	Lone Tree	Douglas	288	Shea Properties
Prospect on Central	1861 Central Street	Denver Central	Denver	57	Central Street Investors
Renaissance West End Flats	5050 West Colfax Avenue	Denver West	Denver	101	Colo Coalition for the Homeless
Residences at Franklin Park	1535 Franklin Street	Denver Central	Denver	91	Central States Development
Savoy at Hampden Towne Center	3645 South Dallas Street	Aurora	Arapahoe	168	Equity Residential
Shops & Apts @ Observatory Park	2100 S. University Blvd.	Denver South	Denver	213	Urban West Group
Villages @ Westerly Creek	10745 E. Kentucky Ave.	Aurora	Arapahoe	55	Aurora Housing Authority
Wheat Ridge Town Center	4340 Vance Street	Wheat Ridge	Jefferson	88	Wazee Partners
			Total	3,597	



	Apartment Com	munities I	Propos	ed	
NAME	STREET	SUBMARKET	COUNTY	UNITS	DEVELOPER
1050 South Broadway	1050 South Broadway	Denver South	Denver	261	Fore Property Company
11th Ave/Gaylord St Apts.	1065 Gaylord Street	Denver Central	Denver	110	MGL Partners
121st & Perry	W. 121st Place & Perry Street	Broomfield	Broomfield	209	Wasatch Premier Cmmts
1490 Delgany Street	1490 Delgany Street	Denver Central	Denver	285	The Opus Group
20th & Little Raven	2135 19th Street	Denver Central	Denver	242	AMLI Residential
20th & Chestnut	1959 19th Street	Denver Central	Denver	314	Loftus Development
250 Columbine	250 Columbine Street	Denver Central	Denver	80	Western Development Group
999 17th	999 17th Street	Denver Central	Denver	250	Shea Properties
Allied Broomfield	Via Varra/Northwest Parkway	Broomfield	Broomfield	374	Allied Realty Services
Alta Harvest Station	W. 118th Ave/Wadsworth Blvd	Broomfield	Broomfield	297	Wood Partners
Avondale	1401 Irving Street	Denver West	Denver	70	Del Norte Neighborhood
Belleview Station	NWC E. Belleview/S. Quebec	Denver South	Denver	352	Holland Partners
Blake Street Station	38th St/Walnut Street	Denver Central	Denver	60	Urban Land Conservancy
Cadance at Union Station	17th Street/Chestnut Place	Denver Central	Denver	219	Zocalo Community
Colfax & Irving	3290 West Colfax Avenue	Denver West	Denver	60	Urban Land Conservancy
Denver Union Station	16th Street/Wewatta Street	Denver Central	Denver	300	Holland Partners
Evans Station Lofts	2140 South Delaware Street	Denver South	Denver	50	Urban Land Conservancy
Flatirons Village	900 28th Street	Boulder	Boulder	59	Education Realty Trust
Flats at Lincoln Station	9365 Station Street	Lone Tree	Douglas	102	Neibur Development
Grove Street	1570 Grove Street	Denver West	Denver	63	Monroe Group
Grandview Meadows Ph IV/V	950 Grandview Meadows Dr	Longmont	Boulder	200	M. Timm Development
Gunbarrel Town Center	6685 Gunpark Drive	Boulder	Boulder	251	O'Connor Group
The Highland	2785 N. Speer Boulevard	Denver West	Denver	326	Allied Realty Services
Highland Square	3200 Lowell Boulevard	Denver West	Denver	150	RedPeak Properties
Kettle Lake	4805 South Monaco Street	Denver South	Denver	300	Shea Properties
Kent Place	E. Hampden Ave/S. University	Englewood	Arapahoe	300	Forum Real Estate Group
Lamar Station	6150 West 13th Avenue	Lakewood	Jefferson	176	Lakewood Housing Authority
Mariposa II	W. 10th Ave/Navajo Street	Denver West	Denver	93	Denver Housing Authority
Mill Village	E. Ken Pratt Blvd/East 3rd Ave	Longmont	Boulder	229	Frontier Companies
Safeway Redevelopment	707 East South Boulder Road	Louisville	Boulder	160	Loftus Development
Shea Highlands Ranch	1800 Shea Center Drive	Highlands Ranch	Douglas	208	Regency Residential Partners
Sky Ridge	E. Lincoln Avenue/I-25	Lone Tree	Douglas	281	Martin Fein Interests
University Station	1901 Buchtel Boulevard	Denver South	Denver	60	Mile High Development
V272	158 Inverness Drive	Englewood	Arapahoe	272	Metropolitan Homes
Veranda Highpointe	E. Hampden Ave/S. Locust St	Denver South	Denver	362	Forum Real Estate Group
Village at Thorncreek	E 128th Ave/Washington St	Thornton	Adams	283	Catalina Development Co.
Violet Crossing	4474 Broadway Street	Boulder	Boulder	98	Palmos Development Co.
			Total	7,506	

