

Dear MN Legislators,

We write to you as local elected leaders from communities across the state of Minnesota. We each stepped up to serve, sometimes at great personal sacrifice, because we care deeply about our neighbors and our communities and we bring that care to every conversation we have and decision we make about housing and development in our communities.

We are writing to you because we support the Multifamily Housing bill (HF4010/SF3980/SF1370) and ask that you work to ensure its passage this year. We do not speak on behalf of our entire cities, but want you to know that individual local elected leaders from around the state support this important action. We must address our state's housing and affordability crisis, where 49% of Minnesota renters are cost burdened by their rent and we are over 100,000 homes short of what Minnesotans need.

This disproportionately impacts families of color due to our worst-in-the-nation racial disparities in homeownership rates for Black and White households. All of this is apparent in our local contexts. We know it is harder and harder for working people, young families, and retirees to afford their home. We do not want to lead cities where teachers, firefighters, nurses, and anyone else who makes less than \$60,000 a year has no way to put down roots in our community. The status quo isn't working for most Minnesotans, and the tools we have locally are inadequate to meet this statewide need.

This moment requires action from you, our partners at the legislature, because no single municipality can solve this crisis on our own. This year's proposed Multifamily Housing bill could help our communities by:

- Allowing more homes to be built around our community so families of all income ranges can find the housing they need where they want to live
- Increasing overall housing supply which has been shown to help stabilize housing costs, allowing the people we care about to afford to still live here
- Reducing emissions and vehicle-miles-traveled by allowing more people to live closer to their work, school, family, and amenities, with additional incentives to build near transit
- Reducing suburban sprawl by allowing greater density in already developed areas
- Reducing the number of steps - and time - needed to approve a housing project that already aligns with our city's comprehensive plan and zoning requirements We want to build a state where every Minnesotan - regardless of income, skin color, or zip code - can afford and find the type of home they want to live in, in the community they want to live in.

We're asking for your help this year to move us closer to that reality.

Thank you,

City Council Member Gretchen Lee, Badger
Commissioner Joe Gould, Beltrami County
City Council Member Marquita Butler, Brooklyn Center
School Board Member Jessica Schwinn, Centennial School District
Mayor Amáda Márquez Simula, Columbia Heights
City Council Member Rachel James, Columbia Heights
City Council Member Azrin Awal, Duluth
City Council Member Wendy Durrwachter, Duluth
City Council Member Mike Mayou, Duluth
City Council Member Paula Mielke, Falcon Heights
School Board Member Jen Westmoreland, Hopkins
City Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, Minneapolis
City Council Member Katie Cashman, Minneapolis
City Council Member Andrea Jenkins, Minneapolis
City Council Member Dr. Kimberly Wilburn, Minnetonka
City Council Member Patsy Foster-Bolton, Minnetonka
City Council Member Clark Gregor, Plymouth
City Council Member Julie Pointner, Plymouth
City Council Member Ben Whalen, Richfield
City Council Member Aaron Wagner, Robbinsdale
City Council Member Kelly Rae Kirkpatrick, Rochester
City Council Member Molly L. Dennis, Rochester
City Council Member Sue Budd, St. Louis Park
City Council Member Margaret Rog, St. Louis Park
City Council President Mitra Jalali, St. Paul
City Council Member Anika Bowie, St. Paul
City Council Member Hwa Jeong Kim, St. Paul
City Council Member Robyn Gulley, West St. Paul

April 10, 2024

To: Chair Klevorn
House State and Local Government Committee

Re: Support for HF 4010

From Minneapolis to Moorhead, from Winona to Warroad, a place to call home is a basic need for all Minnesotans. Many of us want to live in areas close to jobs, transit, grocery stores, and restaurants that are walkable. Few of us enjoy spending too long in traffic, or want to see our forests, lakes and farms paved over. For too long, planning rules have made it difficult for Minnesotans to buy or rent the kind of homes they want in the places they want to live.

When courts rejected racial covenants that prevented Black and Brown families from buying homes, cities made building affordable homes harder. For example, many cities restrict apartment buildings only to certain parts of town, rather than allowing them on main streets and transit corridors, which would create more walkable communities.

We are a volunteer-lead organization representing a growing collection of Minnesotans who care Minnesotans having access to abundant, accessible, and affordable homes. We strongly support HF 4010 because it could allow more homes to be built in areas zoned commercial and in turn will:

1. Provide local jurisdictions a floor to allow more homes in their communities close to jobs and transit while maintaining local character and responding to local circumstances, while setting consistent rules across Minnesota cities and allow more apartment homes and mixed use development. These needed homes will give more Minnesotans an opportunity for a home close to jobs, transit, and grocery stores.
2. Allow more homes to be built near our best transit networks and on main streets across the state, incentivizing climate friendly development of new homes, and helping to create more walkable communities with vibrant main streets.
3. Bring more local tax revenue by allowing more apartment homes to be built wherever cities already allow stores and offices. Needed homes in communities will increase the local tax base and support local, small businesses who will be able to rely on new residents in close proximity to support their businesses.

Minnesotans need more affordable homes, and more choices about the kind of home they can buy. This bill represents an opportunity to change how we plan for housing, and set Minnesota on a path to affordable and abundant homes.

Neighbors for More Neighbors