



April 15, 2024

The Honorable Kari Dziedzic
95 University Avenue W
Minnesota Senate Bldg,
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Dziedzic and Members of the Senate State and Local Government and Veterans,

Minnesota Housing Partnership co-convened the Affordable Housing Supply Workgroup in 2024 to develop policy recommendations to create more homes of all kinds in all parts of the state. SF 4254 is a reflection of one of the key recommendations from the workgroup's report *Revitalizing Minnesota: A Call for Statewide Land and Zoning Reforms*.

Many of today's local government policies and everyday practices, currently permitted by state policies, perpetuate segregation. These restrictive growth policies are rooted in racist policies established, enacted, and enforced to exclude Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and disabled residents. We believe that it is time to end regulatory deference and state enforcement of these outdated, discriminatory tools.

Zoning and land-use policies make building more expensive, challenging, and time-consuming. Those who suffer the consequences of these exclusionary and restrictive growth policies are our most vulnerable neighbors, our lowest-income neighbors, and even workers in the most in-demand jobs. Minnesota faces an increasing housing shortage, and the trajectory of other states shows just how detrimental it can be to local communities and the state's economy when housing construction cannot keep pace with demand and prices continue to rise.

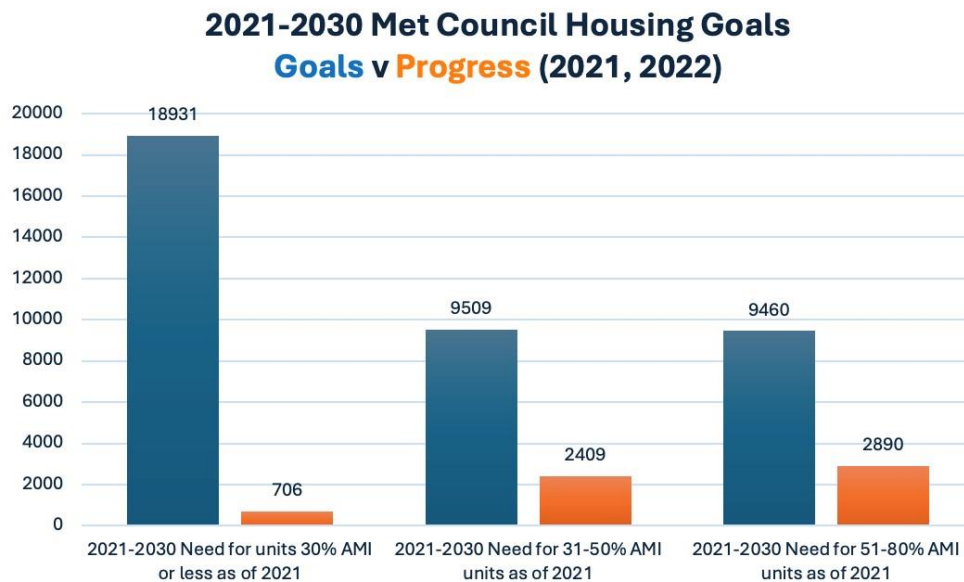
Multifamily is a critical part of a state's diverse housing stock. It serves an essential role in a community. Multifamily and mixed-use projects spur economic vitality. Economic activity follows people, and we need to create more homes if we want vibrant, financially sustainable communities. Multifamily generates direct and indirect taxes that support the fiscal health of a community. Multifamily homes near amenities enhance the quality of life for residents and contribute to vibrant communities. Multifamily and mixed-use spaces are environmentally sustainable.

On the surface, SF 4254 is a bill about homes. Because housing is the foundation for thriving lives and communities, SF 4254 is about everything. Where we live impacts nearly every other outcome in our lives. SF 4254 will not only add more homes, but it will also change education and health outcomes and it will enhance our communities.

Barriers to developing affordable housing exist statewide. We can point to examples in the metro and Greater Minnesota. Rural and metro subject matter experts contributed to MHP and Habitat for Humanity's *Revitalizing Minnesota* report. Across the state, affordable projects are delayed and significantly modified at great cost and, even, completely derailed. SF 4254 is a critical systems change solution that could change the way resources can be deployed statewide to ensure more equitable outcomes and more people of safe, stable, dignified homes in the communities of their choice.

Sincerely,

Libby Murphy
Director of Policy



While cities are adding affordable units to their communities, the region is falling short of its goals.

