

2 May 2024

To: Members of the Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Committee

The City of Minneapolis supports the statewide prohibition of minimum parking mandates to advance state and city climate action and housing affordability goals.

Minnesota, much like the rest of the US, is experiencing a housing shortage. At the same time, our planet is experiencing warming due in huge parts to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—with transportation being the number one source of GHG emissions in the state—and the destruction of forested lands, grasslands, and wetlands that would otherwise sequester carbon.

To address these issues, at the state and municipal levels, Governor Walz signed the Climate Action Framework and Mayor Frey signed the Climate Equity Plan. Both climate plans' top goals include improving multimodal transportation systems that reduce emissions and congestion, building sustainable affordable housing, and maintaining resilient landscapes.

Starting in 2009, the City of Minneapolis enacted a series of policy changes that reduced then eventually—with unanimous support from all Councilmembers and the Mayor—eliminated minimum parking requirements in 2021. From 2017 to 2022, Minneapolis, due in part to eliminating parking minimums, experienced success in adding to its housing supply while keeping rent growth low. More than 50 cities, including St. Paul and Duluth, have eliminated off-street parking minimums as of early 2024.

Removing parking minimums would enable the development of affordable housing across the state for cheaper and for more units in the same plot of land. It would not only create more walkable communities but also protect natural lands from being turned into swaths of concrete. According to a 2022 study, "Socially Optimal Transport Prices and Markets Principles: Strategies and Impacts," planning reforms that include removing parking minimums, "would reduce consumer and businesses costs, including congestion delays, parking subsidies, crash damages, and general taxes." Cities with differing housing markets that have removed parking minimums such as Buffalo, NY and Seattle, WA, have seen overall increases in housing supply and reductions in construction costs.

Eliminating parking minimums is not about taking away the ability to build parking. In fact, it would not prohibit developers from planning and building parking as they deem fit for each project. In passing this legislation, Minnesota would lead other states, much like how Minneapolis has led other cities nationwide, in aggressively tackling housing shortages and climate change. Part of Minnesota's Climate Action Framework was to create land management systems that protect natural lands like wetlands, grasslands, and forests. Removing parking minimums would not only enable the development of affordable housing across the state and create more walkable neighborhoods, but also protect natural lands.

Thank you,



Katie Cashman