

February 20, 2024

To: Chair Port and Members of the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee

Re: Support for SF 3964 and SF 3980

Support More Affordable and Abundant Homes

From Minneapolis to Moorhead, from Winona to Warroad, a place to call home is a basic need for all Minnesotans. Most of us want to live near friends, family, jobs, and where we play. 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 build, 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 allow building only large homes with large yards. Small apartments are often restricted to buildings on busy roads. We represent a large, diverse, and growing coalition who cares about Minnesotans having access to abundant, accessible, and affordable homes.

We are supporting these bills because they will:

1. Provide local jurisdictions choice to maintain local character while setting consistent rules across Minnesota cities and allow more duplexes, townhouses, and other types of missing middle housing. These homes will give families more choices to live in a home that is more attainable and meets their needs.
2. Allow more homes to be built near our best transit networks and incentivize climate friendly development of new homes.
3. Allow homes to be built wherever cities already allow stores and offices. Minnesotans need more affordable homes, and more choices about the kind of home they can buy.

These bills have the opportunity to change how we plan for housing, and set Minnesota on a path to affordable and abundant homes.

Signed,

Neighbors for More Neighbors
ISAIAH
Minnesota Housing Partnership
Move MN
Sierra Club
SEIU Healthcare MN & IA
Sustain Saint Paul