

April 30, 2025

Senator Tou Xiong, Chair
Members of the State and Local Government Committee
1200 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Opposition to SF 2229 and Support for Local Government Authority

Dear Chair Xiong and Members of the State and Local Government Committee:

The undersigned members of the Coon Rapids City Council wish to communicate their concerns with SF 2229 as the legislation proposes to strip a local government's ability to make basic and essential decisions about residential development projects that have wide ranging effects on public infrastructure, demands for local services and much more. Our concerns with this bill include:

- The elimination of resident input before city councils or planning/zoning commissions. The bill requires cities to establish and adhere to an administrative review and approval process for residential developments, limiting the process to no more than two community meetings and prohibiting public hearings prior to approval.
- Removal of reasonable local planning and zoning standards, which ensure development compatibility and scale. The bill prohibits cities from imposing residential design standards that exceed the State Building Code, including regulations related to exterior materials, decks/balconies/porches, garage dimensions, roof pitch and the number and placement of windows.
- Prohibiting the ability for cities to condition the approval of a residential building permit, conditional use permit, subdivision development, or planned unit development on the creation of a homeowner's association or requiring services, features, or common property that would necessitate one.
- Limiting cities to requiring no more than one parking space per residential unit. Each development proposal has its own unique circumstances and parking needs that should be considered during the approval process.
- The creation of significant implementation challenges for our city, increasing costs for taxpayers and complicating zoning and land-use planning, all without guaranteeing more affordable housing or increased development.

As we understand it, the stated goal of this legislation is to remove obstacles to the development of affordable housing. In 2021, Coon Rapids held a perfect 100 in the Metropolitan Council's "Housing


Performance Score" assessment. Over 27% of housing in the City is available as rental, a full third of those are affordable to 80% of lower AMI in addition to 30% of the City's ownership units being affordable to 80% or lower AMI.

As a nearly fully developed suburb, Coon Rapids lacks the large, open tracts of land to add significant housing developments. However, the City has added over 1,000 units of multi-family and townhome units in the past 10 years. Nearly half of those units have some form of income restriction and are affordable households to those earning 60% of area median income or below in several cases. What was important during the negotiations for these projects was the City's ability to make decisions that held to established principals of design, density, parking and access to amenities to name just a few.

Each project carried with it unique circumstances that needed to be considered and that could only be understood by going through an in-depth process with the developer and the members of the public most impacted by the development. We contend that these developments were only made better by this process for both the developer and the public. This legislation seeks to eliminate aspects of that process on the potential for short-term gains on the number of housing units available, but at the cost of thoughtful and sustainable development that benefits the community and the future residents of the development. Therefore, we ask that you vote against this legislation.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues on alternative approaches that include a local government perspective to create a more flexible approach to meet the state's housing needs. Thank you for your consideration and for representing Coon Rapids. If you would like to discuss this matter, please reach out to us directly or contact Matt Stemwedel, City Manager, at mstemwedel@coonrapidsmn.gov or 763-767-6486.

Sincerely,

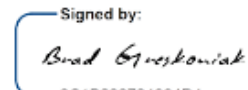
Signed by:

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Mayor Jerry Koch

Signed by:

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Councilmember Pat Carlson

Signed by:

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Councilmember Sean Novack

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Councilmember Brad Greskowiak

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Councilmember Brian Armstrong

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Councilmember Chris Geisler