

Create Abundant Housing in Minnesota with Consistent Rules HF2140/SF2231



Who we are: Neighbors for More Neighbors stands up for secure, abundant homes for all Minnesotans. We envision a future where we all find homes we love in neighborhoods we choose. Those neighborhoods may include great transit, a community where family and friends are neighbors, or complete neighborhoods with walkable errands and jobs. Every Minnesotan - Black, White, and Indigenous, Minnesota born or newcomer, small town and city-dweller - should have a place to call home in our communities.

Like the rest of the nation, Minnesota has a severe housing shortage.

Today, Minnesota is a patchwork of local zoning laws that restrict and prohibit homes and drive up construction costs. These long-standing policies are blocking Minnesota from creating needed homes. With too few homes, everyone pays more for housing. Many people have to either accept poor quality homes, double up with friends or family, or move away. Local zoning laws that restrict and prohibit homes drive up construction costs.

Part of the solution is legalizing Missing Middle Homes by creating consistent rules that allow more homes types to be built. Sharing land and infrastructure costs helps reduce the sales or rental price. Changing the existing rules allows Minnesotans to equitably access the types of homes that work best for them and their families. Builders and developers can more easily work in different communities with a statewide standard, speeding home production across Minnesota. **HF2140 / SF2231 would create predictable regulations that allow more homes to be built in existing neighborhoods close to jobs and family.**

Zoning History

Apartment bans and large lot requirements were first introduced as a seemingly neutral way of keeping lower-income families and non-white families out of predominantly white cities and suburbs. The introduction of these requirements into city codes closely followed Supreme Court and civil rights legislation that declared explicit racial discrimination in housing unconstitutional.

What is the problem?

In most Minnesota communities nearly all home types are banned, except for one-family-homes on oversized residential lots - the most expensive home type. In the Twin Cities alone, there are effectively bans on everything but single detached homes on nearly 90% of land. This has happened through municipal policies that control the size of the home, or outright bans on building multiple homes per lot.



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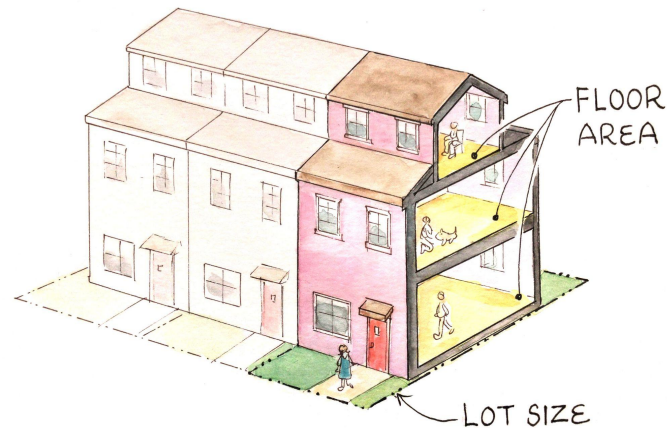
HF2140/SF2231

These “single family zoning” policies or “apartment bans” restrict the choices Minnesota families can make about the kind of home they live in. **These rules increase home costs and mean families often have to move out of their community when they have kids or as they age.**

- Most cities don’t allow smaller multi-family home types like duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and fourplexes in single family neighborhoods. This limits the home choices for community members in all stages of life.
- Mandating a large amount of land for each home forces new homes to take up open space and farmland. This transforms our open spaces and farm land into sprawling areas with high sewer, road, and other maintenance costs. Sprawl forces Minnesotans to spend more time traveling and less time doing the things they love.
- Cities often separate homes away from places for work and play, using zoning to force only one “use” per area. This increases travel time, and prevents spontaneity and community connections.

What is the policy proposal? Set consistent baseline zoning rules.

- Allow at least two homes on every residential property in Minnesota. Either as a duplex or by including at least one Accessory Dwelling unit per lot. Reinforce state investment in communities by allowing more homes - up to four - near streets built with state infrastructure spending, or Municipal State Aid Streets.
- Ensure home construction is not subtly banned through overly restrictive technical rules and regulations that limit the type of homes that can be built.
- Allow more mixed uses, i.e. residential with commercial, so that more people can live closer to work and the grocery store.



How Consistent Zoning solves the problem:

- Enables a variety of homes at a variety of prices that share land and infrastructure costs. These shared costs lower the per-home cost and create homes which are more attainable for everyday Minnesotans.
- Ensures families can remodel their home to meet their needs when circumstances change, allowing multi-generational living. Places for grandparents to live with their family.
- Compact cities and towns help protect the environment. They stop sprawl, fight climate change, and preserve agricultural land and wild spaces. Compact cities also help city finances. They reduce town expenditures on sewer, transportation, and amenities, both for construction and maintenance.

Where else has this been implemented?

Similar policies have passed in other states. Montana (SB 528, SB 323); Washington (HB 1110); Vermont (ACT 250); and Oregon (HB 2001), Arizona (HB 2721), Maine (LD003)