

**From:** [Randi Roth](#)  
**To:** [\\*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Dermody, Bill \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Brian Alton](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Amendments to the Religious Institution Uses Code  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022 9:11:49 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

---

Dear Members of the City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input as you consider the Proposed Amendments to the Religious Institution Uses Code.

**Background.** I am the executive director of Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul. Project Home, the largest shelter for families with children in Ramsey County, is a part of Interfaith Action. Project Home is currently located in the Provincial House at 1880 Randolph. We shelter up to 100 individuals or 30 families at this site. Approximately 54% of our shelter guests are under the age of 13.

**Requested Change to Proposed Amendments.** Sec. 65.154 of the proposed amendments defines “emergency housing facility” as:

One (1) main building, or portion thereof, on one (1) zoning lot where persons who do not have housing live on a 24-hour-per-day basis until more permanent arrangements can be made, but generally for ***no longer than thirty (30) days***. (Emphasis added.)

We request that instead stating, “no longer than thirty (30) days,” the rule be changed to say, “no longer than ninety (90) days.” So we request that the definition be changed to read:

One (1) main building, or portion thereof, on one (1) zoning lot where persons who do not have housing live on a 24-hour-per-day basis until more permanent arrangements can be made, but generally for ***no longer than ninety (90) days***.

**Reason for the Requested Change.** Before COVID, Project Home provided

shelter by rotating through house of worship host sites, generally staying in each site for approximately one month (but sometimes for two months). During COVID, houses of worship largely became unavailable for shelter. Project Home adapted by moving into a year-round shelter space made possible through a partnership with Ramsey County and the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet (the Provincial House). In this new space, our average length-of-stay for a family is 83 days. In those days, the families work intensely with our Rapid Exit Social Work team to:

- obtain official documents (such as birth certificates) needed to secure rentals and more;
- establish financial institution relationships;
- ladder-up employment and education;
- tend to any unmet legal needs;
- locate and secure permanent housing destinations;
- figure out transportation and childcare for their new location;
- and more.

Changing the definition from thirty days to ninety days would conform to the reality of the emergency housing currently being provided by Project Home.

Moreover, as COVID clears or becomes manageable, Project Home hopes to work with houses of worship that wish to provide shelter to **supplement** the 100 beds of shelter at the Provincial House. Even with our current 100 beds of shelter, there is still a substantial waitlist for family shelter in Ramsey County. When houses of worship re-engage with Project Home to once again provide shelter, it is possible that some host sites will agree to provide shelter for longer than 30 days. If the rule were changed to ninety days, that would grant permission to houses of worship that may wish to accommodate families for longer than 30 days.

**Conclusion.** Thank you so much for the opportunity to comment. We are happy to answer any questions or address any concerns.

Warmly,

~Randi

**Randi Ilyse Roth (she/her/hers)**

**Executive Director**

New mailing address: [1041 Grand Avenue #312, Saint Paul, MN 55105](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1041+Grand+Avenue+312,+Saint+Paul,+MN+55105)

651-376-0184 | [INTERFAITHACTION.ORG](https://www.interfaithaction.org)



Opportunity grows and poverty recedes  
when people of faith invest themselves in effective action.

-