



UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL

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June 4, 2020

Dear Mayor Carter and Saint Paul City Councilmembers,

The Union Park District Council (UPDC) supports the [SAFE Housing Tenant Protections](#) currently being considered by the St. Paul City Council.

Saint Paul is now a majority-renter city; 53% of Union Park residents are renters.¹ As we face COVID-19, stability for renters is more important than ever. Tenant protections are critical to reducing barriers to housing access and stability.

Union Park has seen significantly more development in recent years, particularly with the redevelopment around Allianz Field. Our renter community increasingly faces challenges to staying here, including rising rents, our citywide affordable housing shortage, stagnant wages, and historic and current housing discrimination.

Tenant protections are a racial equity and economic justice issue. Renters are disproportionately people of color and indigenous peoples; renters of color are also disproportionately housing cost-burdened.² Right now, countless renters cannot access housing because of discriminatory screening practices that further harm communities of color already denied opportunities due to redlining and predatory lending. Government actions played a significant role in creating our current discriminatory housing system. Passing these tenant protections into law would be an important step towards creating a more just and equitable local housing system in the City of Saint Paul.

UPDC has increased our renter engagement as a district council: we've held renter happy hours, worked with the Ward 4 office and other district councils to hold a Renter Voice Summit in April 2019, and have been working to deepen our relationship with our neighbors at Skyline Tower. Our Committee on Land Use and Economic Development 2020 work plan includes focusing on supporting and engaging renters, and supporting affordable housing in Union Park. Additionally, UPDC recently created a task force to develop an equitable development score card—inspired by our partners at the West Side Community Organization. As we explore how UPDC can support equitable development in Saint Paul, we appreciate the need for policies like these tenant protections to help people access and stay in their homes.

¹ [MN Compass Union Park Neighborhood Profile](#)

² [Minnesota Housing Partnership, Market Watch: Saint Paul](#)

We know that addressing our housing crisis will take many strategies. Expanding access to housing through tenant protection policies is only one of them. UPDC supports the City's efforts to increase production and preservation of affordable housing throughout Saint Paul.

Thank you for your time, and for your service to the City of Saint Paul.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brandon" and last name "Long" clearly distinguishable.

Brandon Long
Executive Director

cc: Office of Mayor Melvin Carter
Kirstin Burch, Fair Housing Coordinator, Office of Financial Empowerment
Muneer Karcher-Ramos, Director, Office of Financial Empowerment
Kate Rodrigues, Housing Policy Coordinator, Planning & Economic Development
Kayla Schuchman, Housing Director, Planning & Economic Development
Mitra Jalali, Ward Four Saint Paul City Council Member
Dai Thao, Ward One Saint Paul City Council Member