

From: Melissa Wenzel <melissa.a.wenzel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 9, 2021 12:23 PM
To: Yang, Nelsie (CI-StPaul) <Nelsie.Yang@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Parking minimums: support eliminating minimums?

Dear Council Member Yang,

I am a Board of Director of Sustain Saint Paul, and we support the proposed ordinance to eliminate parking minimums. We thank you for the work you have put into this important change. We believe full elimination of parking minimums helps everyone -- renters, homeowners, small business owners, developers, and city planning staff. Option 2 is the best option for the following reasons:

Parking minimums make housing expensive.

When we build parking spaces, we dedicate resources to housing cars instead of human beings. On average, mandatory parking adds \$142/month to a tenant's monthly rent. That's roughly a week's worth of groceries for a family of four. They are forced to pay that \$142 whether or not they own a car simply because the developer was forced to build mandatory parking. Saint Paul is experiencing a housing crisis, and a full elimination of parking minimums is a powerful tool in our toolbox for building more affordable housing throughout the city.

Economic vitality depends on people, not cars.

Letting businesses dedicate less space to cars allows them to dedicate more space to their products and customers. That's good for the commercial tax base. The residential tax base also grows when more of a site can be dedicated to homes instead of parking. Housing projects can do the same, using less space for parking and more space for homes. More housing also means more customers for our local businesses. Everyone wins.

We are facing a climate crisis because we incentivize driving.

Transportation is now the leading source of carbon emissions in our city. The car-centric way our city has developed over the past 80+ years is literally killing us through noise, poor air quality, climate change, and traffic crashes. If the city is serious about meeting its climate goals for 2040, we must stop incentivizing driving. Eliminating parking minimums is an essential step towards these goals. The choice is clear. Full elimination of parking minimums helps everyone -- renters, homeowners, small business owners, developers, and city planning staff. It keeps housing costs down. It cuts costs for small businesses. It adds to the customer base and tax base. It's more equitable. It removes artificial incentives for driving. It reduces administrative time and expense for city staff or developers. It improves the health of our climate. Everyone wins.

We know that the council and city staff have worked hard on this issue. We appreciate your efforts to improve our city in this way. **Thank you and please vote for this change to fully eliminate parking minimums.**

Sincerely,

Melissa Wenzel,
Sustain Saint Paul Board of Director