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To: [*CI-StPaul](#); [Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Cc: [Jon Grebner](#)
Subject: ORD 25-59 Traditional Neighborhood (T) District Zoning Study.
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City Council Members:

SEIU Healthcare MN & IA represents over 50,000 healthcare workers, including thousands who live in St. Paul. On their behalf, I encourage you to Vote Yes on ORD 25-59, although it is a missed opportunity to provide more housing and better access to good paying jobs.

By relaxing pointless municipal restrictions on housing construction, especially since the areas are mostly on transportation corridors, this measure allows the construction of more multi-family housing. That brings down the cost for everyone in St. Paul. This is especially important to our members who can't afford cars and must rely on public transport to get to jobs at United Hospital or HealthPartners clinics.

Yet, on the whole, this step falls far short of what we need to dramatically reduce the cost of housing. As the report notes, "as of 2019, 5.7% of Saint Paul acreage was zoned T". We need zoning reform on a much larger scale.

In particular, we join those who call on the city to immediately start work on a new zoning study to pursue the following:

- Rezoning land along arterial and collector streets in Saint Paul into the T Districts (including but not limited to high-frequency transit routes)
- Simplifying the Zoning Code by sunsetting the Business districts and the Vehicular Parking district (perhaps consolidating them into the T Districts)
- Identifying formerly commercial buildings that are currently zoned in the H Districts and rezoning them into T Districts (to re-enable commercial uses in the future)
- Adding language to the H Districts that would enable small-scale commercial land uses within them (e.g. corner stores and Accessory Commercial Units) under certain conditions

When staff undertakes a future zoning study, we hope that they will not see the need to pursue outdated and harmful notions, like the value of "context sensitive" (Staff Memo, page 6) development. Development is good if it meets the housing and commercial needs of current and future residents. It matters not, if such development matches the "context" of existing buildings.

Rick Varco
Political Director

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