



June 17, 2020

The Honorable Mitra Jalali
Councilmember
City of Saint Paul, Minnesota
15 Kellogg Blvd W
Saint Paul, MN 55102

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Councilmember Jalali,

The Saint Paul Area Association of REALTORS® (“SPAAR”) is a professional association representing more than 7300 REALTORS® who live and work throughout the Twin Cities. Many of our members are residents of Saint Paul, and many more work with clients who buy and sell homes in the community.

SPAAR is pleased to note several changes in Version 4 (V4) of Ordinance 20-14, Creating Chapter 193 of the Legislative Code (Title XIX) pertaining to Tenant Protections. SPAAR believes V4 incorporates significant improvements from previous drafts and works toward our shared goals of increasing housing access and affirmatively furthering fair housing.

Sec. 193.02

SPAAR supports educating both tenants and landlords about proper property maintenance and code requirements, their rights and recourse in cases where maintenance is necessary or where other disagreements exist, and on positive landlord-tenant relationships.¹ We believe Section 193.02 furthers this goal and are proud to support it.

Sec. 193.05

REALTORS® understand the value of well-kept property and believe it is important to make sure rental properties are safe and adequately maintained.² The amendment to Section 193.05(7) will remove barriers to code compliance and SPAAR is glad to see its inclusion.

Sec. 193.12

The housing choice voucher program helps the most vulnerable in our community, low-income families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market³ and we believe addition of Section 193.12 encourages landlord participation in the program. Landlords who participate in the voucher program must pass stringent housing quality standards and SPAAR supports landlord compliance with their duties to applicable state and federal laws.

Sec. 193.04

SPAAR believes all communities in the region have an integral role to play as the Twin Cities

¹ SPAAR Rental Property Position Statement. <https://spaar.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/position-rental-property-statement.pdf>

² *Id.*

³ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet



expand and that local units of government should consider regionality in their policies.⁴ The inclusion of Section 193.04(4) would harmonize Saint Paul's screening guidelines with the City of Minneapolis and is a positive addition to the ordinance.

Sec. 193.06

Section 193.06 aligns with SPAAR's goal to promote the preservation of existing housing stock⁵ and SPAAR supports providing preservation buyers the opportunity to acquire and maintain NOAH housing. We believe changes to the definition of affordable housing buildings will ensure greater compliance with this provision, a welcome improvement in V4.

Secs. 193.10 and 193.13

SPAAR is wholly supportive of Sections 193.10 and 193.13. In [our June 1 letter](#), we urged the city to provide data to the public that would support the passage of this ordinance. While we continue to believe that each provision should be assessed individually, SPAAR is pleased to see efforts by the city to understand the cumulative effect of the ordinance on the landlord-tenant dynamic and include relevant stakeholders in the ordinance's implementation.

Conclusion

While SPAAR maintains objections from [our June 1 letter](#), we believe V4 includes noteworthy improvements and will include votes related to V4 of Ordinance 20-14 in our 2020 How They Voted Scorecard. We appreciate your willingness to engage with our members on this issue and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Khayree Duckett
Government Affairs Director
Saint Paul Area Association of REALTORS®

CC: The Honorable Jane L. Prince, Member of City Council
The Honorable Nelsie Yang, Member of City Council
The Honorable Rebecca Noecker, Member of City Council
The Honorable Amy Brendmoen, City Council President
The Honorable Dai Thao, Member of City Council
The Honorable Chris Tolbert, Member of City Council
Noel Nix, Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Community Engagement

⁴ SPAAR Regional Growth Position Statement. <https://spaar.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/position-regional-growth-policy.pdf>

⁵ SPAAR Housing Opportunity Position Statement. <https://spaar.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/position-housing-opportunity-statement.pdf>