



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

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April 23, 2021

Luis Rangel Morales, Chair
Saint Paul Planning Commission
25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Homeless Services Zoning Study

Chair Morales and Members of the Saint Paul Planning Commission:

On behalf of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, I write to thank you for your leadership on the Homeless Services Zoning Study and to express our support for the proposed Zoning Code amendments which establish “homeless services facility” as a permitted use.

As a housing, emergency shelter and direct services provider, Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis serves more than 23,000 men, women, children and families annually. Many of these individuals seek emergency shelter, housing and supportive services at our Dorothy Day Place campus, which opened in Saint Paul’s Ward 2 in the fall of 2019, just a few months before COVID-19.

Local government and community partnerships have been critical to our ability to continue safely serving those in need during the pandemic, and they will remain critical long after COVID-19 has passed. We welcome additional partners in this work, so that we may collectively strengthen service delivery for the thousands of individuals working toward housing stability in our community.

The proposed Zoning Code amendments will help address the current demand for daytime services by allowing services providers like Freedom House to operate post-COVID-19, creating more opportunities for people experiencing homelessness to access them. Recognizing the extent of the housing and homelessness crisis and that not all individuals who experience homelessness utilize emergency shelter, we encourage you to also consider permitting service facilities beyond the half-mile radius of an overnight shelter to further reduce barriers to service across Saint Paul.

Adopting the amendments prompted by the Homeless Services Zoning Study is one small action the Commission can take today to ensure adequate supports are in place for those who find themselves in crisis. And by intervening with critical support services early, we can improve the public health, safety and general welfare of the broader community, too.

Catholic Charities serves those most in need. We are a leader at solving poverty, creating opportunity, and advocating for justice in the community.

We thank you, again, for your leadership on the Homeless Services Zoning Study and look forward to continuing to work with you and our city partners to better support our unhoused and housing-insecure community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorna Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lorna Schmidt
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