



BETTER AGENTS ♦ BETTER COMMUNITIES
SAINT PAUL AREA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

REALTORS® understand that rental housing is a vital segment of the real estate and housing markets. A vast majority of people will rent housing at some point in their lives. Rental property often serves as transitional housing for those saving and preparing for homeownership. Property conversion to rental can help stabilize housing markets and communities during economic downturns. Rental properties are also an important component of the state's property tax base, paying in at a slightly higher rate than homesteaded properties.

For residents and communities, it is important to make sure rental properties are safe and adequately maintained. REALTORS® certainly know the value of well-kept property. It is important to remember that a property's status as rental does not automatically imply deferred maintenance or blight. Many rental properties are very well maintained, just as many owner-occupied homes have deferred maintenance. The reasons for deferred maintenance are varied and the property's status as owner-occupied or rental is not the sole determining factor. Furthermore, an individual's status as a renter does not automatically imply they are any better or worse citizens than those who own and occupy their properties. Rental regulations come in many forms; we have written statements on the most common types of ordinances that municipalities may enact.

Rental Density Caps – The REALTORS® Associations oppose rental density caps implemented citywide or neighborhood-by-neighborhood. These caps restrict private property rights by limiting what property owners can do with their residences. Such policies are inherently unfair because they confer private property rights to a limited few while simultaneously denying the same rights to others. Rental density caps often result in vacant buildings, due to the inability of an owner to sell or to rent the property to tenants. Density caps may even result in discriminatory feelings or actions toward certain populations, such as students or young families. Density caps can also have the undesired impact of damaging housing affordability by limiting the availability of housing units within a neighborhood or city.

Rental Property Management – Accurate recording of residential occupancy types for the purposes of resident and general public safety is acceptable, as long as such requirements do not add financial burden to property owners or tenants.

Rental Inspections – We oppose any type of city-mandated property inspections without due cause to believe problems exist on the property. Every effort should be made to enforce existing municipal property maintenance codes equally upon all properties, regardless of occupancy type.

Tenant and Landlord Education – We support incentive programs that encourage good landlord and tenant behavior rather than punitive systems. We support programs to educate 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. We seek compliance with all applicable state and federal laws pertaining to the duties of landlords and tenants. This education may come in such forms including but not limited to: classes, written information printed and/or online, counseling, or community outreach programs.

The REALTORS® Associations of the Twin Cities believe that rental housing should be viewed through the lens of private property rights, similar to other types of housing. As cities see a rise in rental units, both built and converted, there may be some push to add rules and regulations to those properties. The REALTORS® Associations want to ensure that all property and occupancy agreements can be handled freely, while keeping in mind the safety and security of residents and the surrounding neighborhoods.