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CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Congregate Living Zoning Study

Fort Road Federation Transportation & Land Use Committee
October 1, 2025



Today's Presentation

- **Planning Commission's Questions**
- **Congregate living in St. Paul**
 - **Types**
 - **Minimum separation distances**
- **Recent issues**
 - **Conversions of sober houses to supportive housing**
 - **Large sober houses**
- **Discussion**



Planning Commission questions for the public

- How many adult residents should be permitted in a sober house?
- How far should sober houses be separated from each other?
- How far should supportive housing and certain other staffed congregate living with services be separated from each other?
- Will these definitions make it easier for facility operators to know which category of congregate living they fall under in St. Paul?



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Congregate Living in St. Paul: Select Categories

- Sober House
 - For those recovering from chemical dependency
 - Financially self-supporting
 - No services on-site
 - Like a family
- Supportive Housing Facility
 - For those recovering from chemical dependency, or with mental illness or handicaps
 - Usually receive government funding
- Shelter for Battered Persons
- Licensed Correctional Community Residential Facility
- Overnight Shelter
- Emergency Housing





Congregate Living in St. Paul: How Many? (2021)

- Sober House: 59
- Supportive Housing Facility: 59
- Shelter for Battered Persons: 5
- Licensed Correctional Community Residential Facility: 5
- Overnight Shelter: 2
- Emergency Housing: 5



Congregate Living in St. Paul: Minimum Separation Distances

- Sober House
 - 330' from each other
- Supportive Housing Facility, Shelter for Battered Persons, Licensed Correctional Community Residential Facility, Overnight Shelter, Emergency Housing
 - 1,320' from each other in most of the city
 - 600' from each other in downtown









Why do we have minimum separation distances?

- To maintain a “normal community setting”
 - Primarily for the benefit of the residents, to avoid recreating an institutional environment



Recent Issues: Conversions of Sober Houses to Supportive Housing

- Seek variances from 1,320' minimum separation
- Funding stream has changed (in at least some cases)



Recent Supportive Housing separation distances proposed via variance applications:

- 43'
- 513'
- 558'
- 588'
- 736'
- 804'
- 850'
- 944'
- 960'
- 999'

3 approved, 1 withdrawn, 6 denied (4 appealed to CC, 2 of those appeals denied and the others are on hold for moratorium)



Recent Issues: Large Sober Houses

- One potential operator sought 30+ residents
 - Current zoning regulations and reasonable accommodation practices may have allowed it
 - Is this beneficial for the residents? (or neighbors?)



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Congregate Living Zoning Study

www.stpaul.gov/planning and navigate to Current Activities

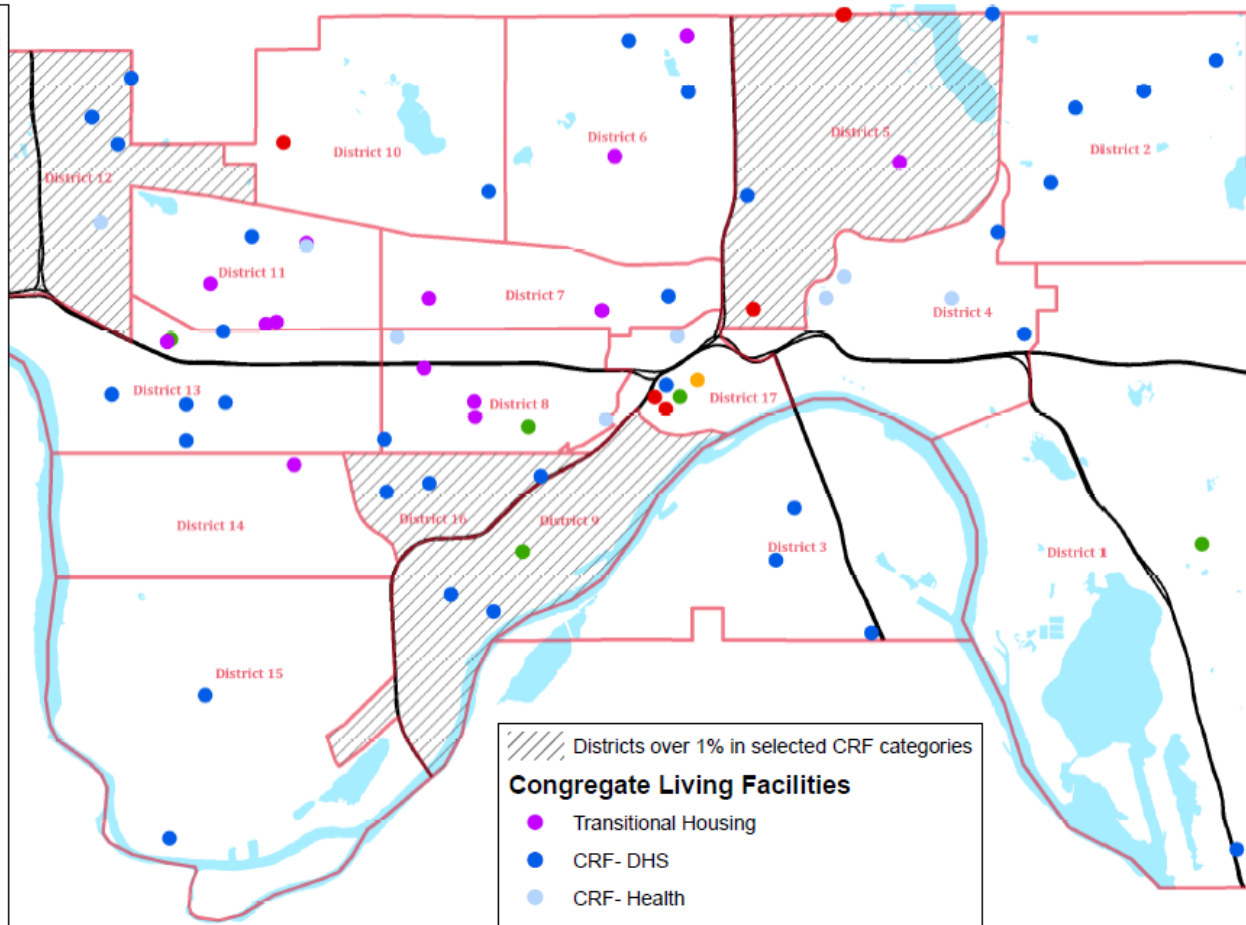
Contact: Bill Dermody, Current Planning Manager
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Document Path: K:\GIS\Projects\CommunityResidentFacilities\2015 Comm_Res2015.mxd



Congregate Living Facilities



Source: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Safety & Inspections

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Sober Houses

