

City of Minneapolis
Request for Committee Action

RCA #: RCA-2026-00574

TO COMMITTEE(S):

#	Committee Name	Meeting Date	Submission Deadline
1	Public Health, Safety & Equity	Jun 17, 2026	Jun 4, 2026

FROM: City Council

LEAD STAFF: Brandon Garcia

PRESENTED BY: Council President Elliott Payne,
Council Member Jason Chavez,
Council Member Soren
Stevenson, Council Member
Aurin Chowdhury, Council
Member Aisha Chughtai, Council
Member Robin Wonsley

SUBJECT:

Adult bathhouses and sex venues: Health and sanitation ordinance

ACTION ITEM(S)

#	File Type	Subcategory	Item Description	Public Hearing
1	Ordinance	Code Amendment	Passage of Ordinance amending Title 11, Chapter 219 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances	Yes

#	File Type	Subcategory	Item Description	Public Hearing
			relating to Health and Sanitation: Contagious Diseases, amending provisions pertaining to venereal diseases and high-risk sexual conduct.	

PREVIOUS ACTIONS

[2023-00991 - High risk sexual conduct ordinance](#)

[2024-00704 - Analysis of other cities' policies and regulations that relate to the zoning, licensing, operation, and regulation of sexually oriented businesses or services](#)

WARD / NEIGHBORHOOD /ADDRESS

#	Ward	Neighborhood	Address
1.	All Wards		

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

According to an article published by Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), In 1979, the largest raid on an adult bathhouse in United States history occurred in Minneapolis. Historians and activists cite the increased police surveillance of adult bathhouses, panic during the AIDS crisis, and city redevelopment and gentrification all acted as forces that led to the prohibition of adult bathhouses in 1988.

These ordinance amendments seek to advance the work for developing a legal, regulatory framework for adult sex venues and bathhouses. Amendments seek to remove language that will not affect any power of health code enforcement by the City. Building standards are removed and moved to Title 13, Chapter 267 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Licenses and Business Regulations: Amusements, where other similar physical space and maintenance requirements for adult entertainment centers are already located. These building standards contain provisions that explicitly prohibit construction, use, design, or operation for the purpose of engaging in or permitting person to engage in sexual activity on commercial

premises; these building standards were developed to protect adult entertainers from nonconsensual sexual encounters. These amendments do not automatically "legalize" adult sex venues/bathhouses nor do they remove any power from the Minneapolis Health Department to enforce any existing code. Amendments seek to modernize and align code language now for the eventual licensing framework; eliminating barriers to implementation, aligning terminology, and removing contradictions. Contingent upon the development of an adult sex venues code, the High-Risk Sexual Conduct ordinance will be amended again to add exemptions for establishments that meet the minimum standards of the adult sex venues code.

Public health advances over the nearly 40 years since the prohibition of adult bathhouses and sex venues in Minneapolis have resulted in greater interventions to reduce the spread of infectious diseases, including STIs and HIV. In 2018, Minneapolis joined the Fast Track Cities Initiative with the goal of advancing HIV awareness, testing, and treatment. The amendments to this ordinance will support the work for reaching a greater amount of residents and developing further access points to testing, treatment, and other interventions. These amendments were informed by information provided in the 2024 Policy & Research Division report on "Regulations of Adult Bathhouses and Adult Sex Venues," which provided a landscape analysis and analysis of code necessary to be amended to legalize and regulate these venues.

Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA)

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

DOES THIS IMPACT ONE OF THE CITY'S GOAL AREAS?

Policy Goals

- PUBLIC HEALTH

Operational Goals

- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DESCRIBE THE IMPACT ON SELECTED GOAL AREAS.

These amendments advance the work of legalizing and regulating adult bathhouses and sex venues. The "ban" on bathhouses led to these venues moving outside of the formal municipal regulatory space, with less opportunities of public health enforcement and interventions. By beginning the work of developing a regulatory framework for these venues, the Health Department will have greater opportunity to track and intervene, if necessary, to enforce Health code and promote public health practices. The amendments to the code maintain the Health Department's authority to enforce all existing health code, with a pathway to develop a public health-centered regulatory framework for adult bathhouses and sex venues in the future. This code, along with others were used to criminalize and surveil patrons of adult bathhouses, mainly of whom were LGBTQ+ individuals. The amendments to this code begin the work of repairing historic wrongs of discrimination against marginalized communities in Minneapolis.

WHO PARTICIPATED IN COMPLETING THIS ANALYSIS?

The Ward 1 Office.

SECTION 2: DATA

LIST THE SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIES THAT WILL BE IMPACTED AND THE RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF CONSTITUENTS IN THOSE AREAS:

These amendments will impact all residents in the City of Minneapolis.

WHAT DOES AVAILABLE DATA TELL YOU ABOUT HOW CONSTITUENTS FROM BIPOC COMMUNITIES CURRENTLY RELATE TO THE DESIRED OUTCOME COMPARED TO WHITE CONSTITUENTS?

The amendments seek to make technical changes that will allow for the legalization and regulation of adult sex venues and bathhouses. Through the regulation of these venues, greater

access to public health services and interventions will be made to all residents. A 2025 report published in the AMIA Annual Symposium Proceedings Archive indicates that BIPOC communities receive less access to services and healthcare, with disparities greater for LGBTQ+ BIPOC residents. This bias can result in these communities to receive lower quality care or avoidance of seeking care altogether. These amendments seek to support the development of adult sex venues that can act as another access point to healthcare services, including STI/HIV testing which will support public health goals and reaching often marginalized communities.

WHAT DATA IS UNAVAILABLE OR MISSING? HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN ADDITIONAL DATA?

Not applicable.

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

USING THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IAP2) [PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM](#), WHICH PARTICIPATION STRATEGY(S) WAS USED WHEN ENGAGING THOSE WHO WOULD BE MOST IMPACTED?

- INFORM
- CONSULT
- INVOLVE
- COLLABORATE
- EMPOWER

DESCRIBE THE ENGAGEMENT AND WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Impacted communities were directly engaged through several monthly meetings, regular correspondence, and community town halls. The Safer Sex Spaces Coalition, a group formed of community members, the Aliveness Project, and OutFront MN have held monthly meetings and two town halls to engage with community and receive feedback on proposed changes. The coalition were regularly consulted on updates and language, ensuring that community voices were centered in the legislative process.

SECTION 4: ANALYSIS

HOW DOES THE OUTCOME FOR THIS ORDINANCE, AMENDMENT, OR POLICY HELP THE CITY ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY?

The ordinance amendments will continue the work of destigmatizing communities and correcting for the ban that was enacted in 1988. The ordinance is part of the process of developing a regulatory framework for adult bathhouses and sex venues, which will provide for greater public health interventions at these venues. This will support the work of reaching marginalized residents and supporting public health goals.

SECTION 5: EVALUATION

HOW WILL IMPACTS BE MEASURED? WHAT ARE THE SUCCESS INDICATORS AND PROCESS BENCHMARKS?

Not applicable.

HOW WILL THOSE WHO ARE IMPACTED BE INFORMED OF PROGRESS OVER TIME?

Nationally, adult bathhouses and sex venues act as points of STI/HIV testing and treatment. If these same provisions are adopted in the City of Minneapolis, progress can be measured along the City's public health goals and reaching goals as a Fast Track Initiative City, with the goal of mitigating the spread HIV, removing stigma, and expanding access to treatment.