

To the Members of the Housing Committee—

I am writing in support of HB 2001, which I believe is a crucial way of ensuring that Oregon cities meet their obligations under Statewide Planning Goal 10.

Goal 10 requires that cities plan for “needed housing units at price ranges and rent levels which are commensurate with the financial capabilities of Oregon households and allow for flexibility of housing location, type and density.” Despite this, Oregon cities have zoned most of their residential land to permit only one type of housing: detached single family housing. While this type of housing meets the needs of many, it does not meet the needs of all Oregonians. It is also an increasingly expensive housing type, due to the scarcity of buildable lots.

In order to meet Goal 10, cities often plan for housing diversity by zoning for large apartment buildings, often on busy roads. While it is good that we plan for this type of housing, four story apartments do not meet the needs of all Oregonians either. Many people desire to live in smaller scale buildings, or in more traditionally “residential” neighborhoods. Mid- or high-rise construction is also more expensive to build, due to the more stringent building code requirements, the need to provide elevators, etc. For this reason it is very tough to rely on this type of housing to meet the needs of lower to moderate income Oregonians. Middle housing can help deliver lower priced housing by sharing the cost of buildable land between multiple homes, while using the same construction methods as single family homes.

In Oregon cities large and small we see “middle housing” in older neighborhoods, which were built before we banned this type of housing. Often times the only clue that the structure houses two, three or four families, rather than one, is the presence of multiple mailboxes or more than one front door. Duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes are a type of housing that Oregonians are familiar and comfortable with. It is unfortunate that they are largely now illegal to build. For these reasons I support HB 2001.

Regards,

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