



February 11, 2019

Representative Keny-Guyer, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing

Re: Environment Oregon supports House Bill 2001

Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a statewide environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water and open space. We are in support of House Bill 2001.

As Oregon wrestles with the best ways to increase housing stock and manage population growth, it's crucial that state and local governments make choices that protect the state's precious outdoor spaces and reduce carbon emissions. Promoting compact urban development helps reduce home energy use, sprawl, and transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, and a key component of compact urban development is "middle-housing" options like duplexes and cottage clusters. That's why we support House Bill 2001, which would change single-family zoning rules and promote greener, more dense housing options in Oregon cities.

Green Zoning

As the impacts of climate change become ever more apparent, cities and states are looking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as quickly and in as many ways as possible to limit the damage. Fighting sprawl and encouraging density by promoting the "middle housing" options between detached single-family homes and apartment buildings is a key tool for making the state's zoning greener while also providing much-needed housing stock.

The environmental benefits of compact, high-density development with more housing units per unit of area are widespread¹:

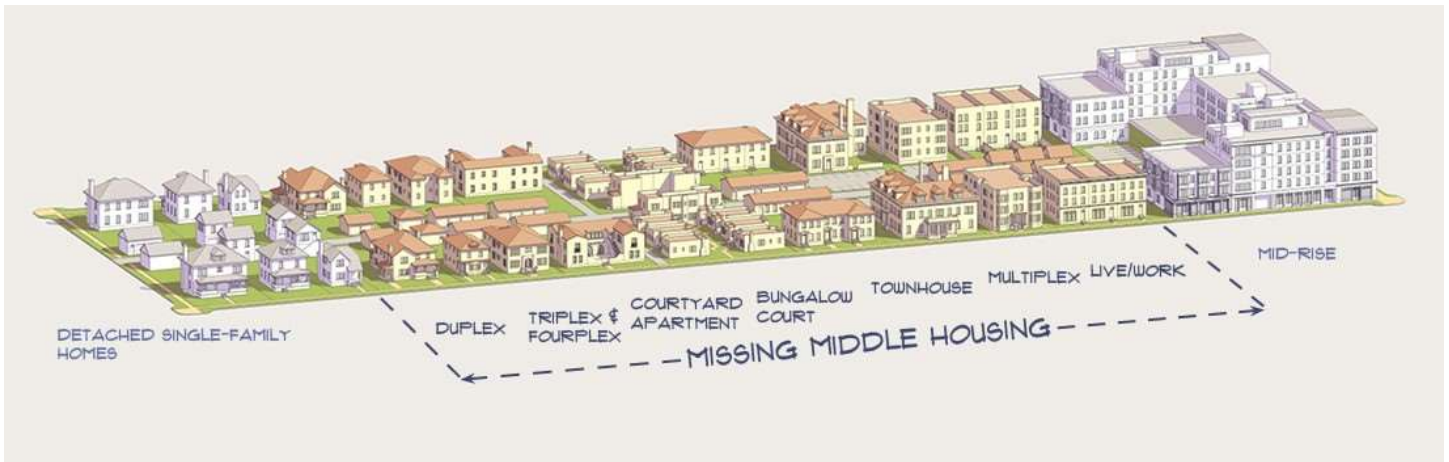
- Less energy required in the building process
- Decreased transportation emissions by reducing driving and encouraging low-carbon transportation options
- Reduced sprawl, allows cities to add housing stock without expanding into surrounding natural areas
- Protects water and air by reducing paved area, land conversion, and miles driven in urban areas



Promoting compact, high-density development requires a variety of policy solutions, but one hurdle to clear is the current dominance of single-family zoning, which requires many parcels to contain only one single-family unit, preventing compact development by discouraging "missing middle" housing options (shown below)².

¹Eshel, Katherine, et al. *Growing Greener*. Environment Texas, 2017, *Growing Greener*, environmenttexas.org/sites/environment/files/reports/Growing%20Greener.pdf.

² Parolek, Daniel. *Missing Middle Housing*. 2015, missingmiddlehousing.com/dev/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Missing-Middle-Housing-Responding-to-the-Demand-for-Walkable-Urban-Living-by-Daniel-Parolek.pdf.



House Bill 2001 requires cities and counties of a certain size across the state to allow for at least one of these middle housing types in areas currently zoned exclusively for single-family housing. Increasing the amount of middle housing available will allow the state to add housing stock without extending urban growth boundaries into surrounding farmland and natural areas, and situating new housing closer to urban cores (as opposed to the periphery) helps increase access to transit and reduce vehicle miles driven³.

For these reasons, Environment Oregon supports House Bill 2001.

Thank you for considering this important issue and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Celeste Meiffren-Swango
State Director, Environment Oregon

³Ewing, Reid H. *Growing Cooler: Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*. Urban Land Institute, 2008.