

Dear HHS Committee,

I hope this email find you well.

I am writing to you to express my concerns over SB 2001, a proposal to eliminate R-1 residential zoning across the state. While I share concerns about housing affordability, this proposal has a serious loophole that will exclude most existing and future residential housing while protecting the low density of largely white, upper middle class, suburban homeowners. **The problem is that any legislated changes to zoning will not apply to developments with CC&Rs (Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions).** Not only will this allow the affluent in their pricy subdivisions and gated communities to maintain their privilege, it will ensure that any future developments will incorporate CC&Rs to shield them from contributing to solving our housing needs through increased density. Worse, built-out urban neighborhoods that are largely middle and working class and with more diverse populations will bear the brunt of increased density and the resulting gentrification. This is hardly a remedy for social inequity and the legacy of exclusionary zoning and is frighteningly similar to the discredited “urban renewal” efforts of the 1960s.

The culprit here isn't single-family detached housing, but the broader economics of wages not keeping pace with the costs of development. In order for denser infill to occur in built-out neighborhoods, existing housing would have to be removed. Much of this marginal housing stock, including many rentals, is on the affordable side of the scale. Developers will go where the land is cheapest and new housing costs (absent the economies of scale for large green field development) between \$150 and \$175 psf *excluding* land and development fees. New housing is more expensive and less green than existing housing and does not pencil out, absent subsidy, as affordable in the general or technical sense. Urban neighborhoods will gentrify and poorer residents, especially renters, will be forced out.

For context, I already live in the densest neighborhood with the widest variety of housing in Eugene. From my house I can see apartments, duplexes, ADUs, as well as single family homes. 75% of the residents in my neighborhood are renters. So, this is not about NIMBY self-interest, but creating solutions that work. Neighborhoods vary greatly within cities, let alone across the state. Portland is far different from any other Oregon city. Solutions are best applied on a very local level with considerable resident buy-in. A major concern is that legislative overreach will generate a backlash that stymie more effective measures. We need less stick and more carrot from Salem.

In Jefferson Westside, our neighborhood association Jefferson Westside Neighbors (JWN), took on creating special area zoning (SAZ) that maximized land use while minimizing negative impacts. These efforts were spurred by dubiously enacted up-zoning that resulted in neighborhood degrading, poorly conceived infill. Hundreds of residents took part and the results were clear and objective standards applauded by both the Planning Commission and the City Council. Our SAZs have repeated upheld as clear and objective as written and, actually, would be compliant under the proposed

guidelines in SB 2001. Informed residents *chose* this path and the particulars fit with the neighborhood. Under State Planning Goal 1, this is ethical way to address housing needs, not via legislative fiat.

A vast majority of Oregonians realize that we need to act, both in the short and long term, to modernize residential zoning. People have children, relatives, friends, and employees impacted by high shelter costs. We get it. If you inform and empower people they can find opportunities for sensible multifamily infill that won't cannibalize our much-needed marginal housing stock or degrade neighborhood social stability. Better and greener yet, is to reimagine and repurpose existing structures. Many homes in JWN have been converted to multi-family apartments. There are better, cheaper, and greener and more democratic solutions that can be found in our neighborhoods, not in Salem. Give us the support to find our own solutions.

Still, this does not solve the metrics that make new housing unaffordable. We can take pressure off the overall market from the bottom instead of the top by creating more subsidized affordable housing. That is the expensive and inconvenient truth and the sooner we “embrace the suck” and decide on how we plan to pay to house our lowest income residents the better.

[971 W. Broadway, Eugene. 541-844-1929]

Sincerely,
Ted M. Coopman, Ph.D, Chair,

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