



CITY OF GRESHAM

February 8, 2019

House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Se. NE, HR 50
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2001

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

The City of Gresham has worked very hard to have a wide range of housing options for its residents, and shares Speaker Kotek’s aspirations for Oregon families to have safe and affordable housing options at every level. To this end, Gresham has been very successful in developing housing options across the affordability spectrum.

- Gresham has over 40,000 housing units, and nearly half of those are multi-family dwellings.
- 3,204 of Gresham’s housing units are attached row-housing.
- 1,412 of Gresham’s housing units are duplexes.
- 2,746 of Gresham’s housing units are triplexes or quads.
- In total, 7,362 (around 18 percent) of Gresham’s housing units are “middle” housing.

With some conditions, missing middle housing of various types is allowed in five out of seven of Gresham’s low-density residential zoning areas. Gresham also has a program to pilot middle housing developments in areas that are not currently allowed by zoning. More importantly, a significant share of Gresham’s residential zoning is currently zoned for mixed use and multi-family residential, meaning that a wide array of housing types are allowed, and that development will occur in a way that achieves density.

We also understand that Gresham’s story is not necessarily a story shared in every jurisdiction in Oregon. Ideally, legislation aimed at increasing middle housing options would endeavor to differentiate between jurisdictions that can demonstrate success, and those that are

overwhelmingly zoned for low-density, single family housing. In cases where success in this space can be demonstrated, it makes sense for jurisdictions to fully maintain local control, so they can continue building their communities in ways that make the most sense to their residents.

This nuance could be achieved in the legislation by establishing thresholds at which the statutory provisions would begin to apply. Percentage of a jurisdiction's single family housing and percentage of a jurisdiction's middle housing seem like natural points of consideration. The accompanying chart, based on the best data we could access, seeks to demonstrate how those thresholds might distribute in jurisdictions larger than 10,000 residents across the state.

The best legislation is narrowly focused to achieve solvency as precisely as possible. It is our hope that HB 2001 can be refined to discern between communities that are very balanced and offer a wide range of housing options, and those that do not, and in the case of the former, allow those communities to retain local control so they can continue their success.

Sincerely,

Eric Chambers
Government Relations Director