

March 18, 2019

Honorable Chair Keny-Guyer and committee members,

This is the third and final in a series of comments and documents that support **Rational, Evidence-Based Transit-Oriented Development**.

***House Bill 2001 is neither rational nor evidence-based.***

Proponents of this bill make rosy predictions of how this will be nothing but beneficial in offering "housing choice" and reducing housing costs. Even proponents, however, have had to walk back initial claims that "middle housing" will improve "housing affordability" because the evidence is that what would get built would be upper middle and high end condos and rentals.

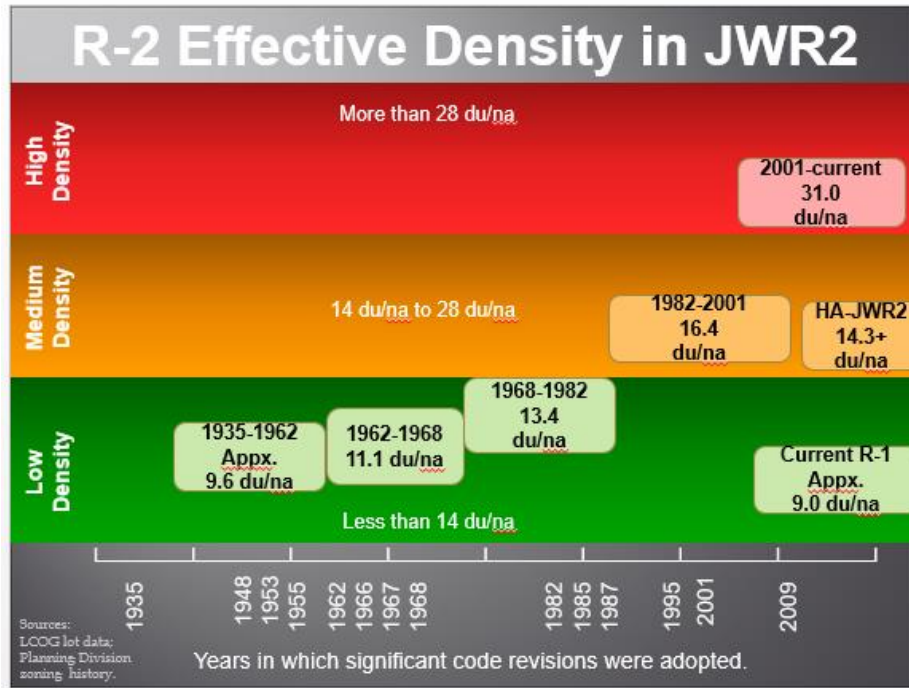
Proponents have also totally ignored the concerns and evidence about the impact of *displacement* on neighborhoods of color and other lower-cost residential areas.

This installment provides on-the-ground, *hard* evidence of the significant negative impacts of top-down dictating of increased density and what really gets built as "middle housing" in neighborhoods that are under stress from disinvestment.

From decades of experience and the resulting data, the evidence is unequivocal --- HB 2001 would produce very few additional dwellings, but they would significantly exacerbate exodus and disinvestment in close-in, older, single-family neighborhoods.

The neighborhood known for decades as the "Westside" was mostly built out in the 1920s and 1930s with modest one or 1-1/2 story houses, set close to each other and forming what at the time would have been called a "working man's" neighborhood. Prior to 1935, the area was mostly unzoned. In 1935 Eugene adopted its second residential zone, the R-2 "Two-Family" zone that, unlike the existing R-1 zone allowed 2 dwellings on all lots, as well as some other forms of apartments (e.g., two-over-two fourplexes). The minimum lot size per dwelling of 4,500 square feet resulted in mostly single-family dwellings on small and medium-sized lots, with a healthy mix of duplexes or primary dwelling and ADU. The effective net density of about 9.6 dwellings per acre until 1962.

Beginning in 1962, in a misguided attempt to "prevent sprawl," the R-2 zone was changed to allow all forms of dwellings, including apartments, maximum density was increased, minimum lot size and setbacks were reduced and building height was increased. Here's a graphical depiction of the resulting density:



By 2001, this "stealth" upzoning resulted in most of the single-family lots allowing a 40-foot high duplex or triplex to be built in the rear yard, looming over adjacent properties small backyards.

The three exhibits from the "Gallery of *Mything* Middle Housing" show a sample of what got built -- low-end rentals with significant negative impacts on adjacent households.

This unrestrained infill development didn't actually produce a significant number of new dwellings; however, it seriously exacerbated economically-mobile households moving out of the neighborhood and a continuation of the disinvestment that was leading to the deterioration and destabilization of entire blocks within the neighborhood.

In 2005, residents of a subarea of Westside and the R-2 zone embarked on a resident-driven project to quantify the conditions, as well as produce a detailed analysis of development. The full report is attached, and the following conclusion is described on page

*"This research suggests that, in the study area, Eugene's infill policy over the past two decades or so has failed to produce substantial benefit in reducing pressure for sprawl, yet has had substantial negative impacts and destabilized previously healthy functioning of parts of this pedestrian-friendly, close-in residential neighborhood."*

Obviously, this research represents a small area with specific history and present conditions. However, no one open to legitimate evidence could fail to see that the result of mindless upzoning, such as HB 2001 dictates can have very different effects in different locations. Yes, in some cases, the dictated zone changes may produce benefits; but in many others the results are likely to be displacement and/or disinvestment and destabilization.

HB 2001 is not founded at all on sound evidence, planning principles or democratic citizen involvement.

In the end, HB 2001 makes about as much sense as Trump's "beautiful wall." It's a gift to developers with the worst motivations to "mine" older neighborhoods, and appears to be driven by zealots and gullible individuals who have been so easily exploited by the developers.

If adopted, HB 2001 will be as much a blight on the legislative "landscape" and Oregon's vaunted planning framework as the most rapacious developer could cause.

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