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May 30, 2019

**Chair Ginny Burdick**  
**Vice-chair Herman Baertschiger Jr.**  
**Senate Committee on Rules**  
**Oregon State Capitol**  
**900 Court Street NE**  
**Salem, Oregon 97301**

### **Testimony of the City of Salem in Opposition of Senate Bill 10**

Dear Chair Ginny Burdick, Vice-Chair Herman Baertschiger Jr., and Members of the Committee,

The City of Salem supports the state's goals of increasing housing affordability and availability and appreciates the intent of SB 10, which would direct higher-density housing around frequent transit service. The City, however, has concerns with SB 10 and therefore opposes the bill.

#### **Ongoing Comprehensive Planning Project**

For the first time in decades, the City of Salem is working on a community-wide project to update our Comprehensive Plan. The Salem City Council has appropriated significant funding toward this multi-year project, which kicked off last fall. Called Our Salem, the project is driven by the community's desire to establish a vision for growth and development in Salem that is current and cohesive. It is through the Our Salem project that discussions about the location of future higher-density housing will and *should* occur. The community has already decided that "access to frequent transit" is a priority and should be considered as the City updates the Comprehensive Plan.

SB 10, as originally introduced and as proposed to be amended, could jeopardize the success of the Our Salem project by hamstringing local decision-making and mandating the drastic upzoning of established neighborhoods. Initial analysis of SB 10, for example, indicates that some built-out single-family neighborhoods such as those along Market Street NE would need to be upzoned. This could erode the public's trust in local planning and not only harm ongoing planning efforts but future ones as well. The bill goes against one of the touchstones of the statewide planning system, Goal 1, Citizen Involvement.

#### **Transit Planning Versus Comprehensive Planning**

Transit service alone should not dictate where growth and density occur. While the City coordinates with the transit district Cherriots, SB 10 essentially puts the transit district in the driver seat. Cherriots may have different priorities (or a more narrow set of priorities) than the Salem community as a whole when it makes decisions about where frequent service should be provided. Current transit service demands and revenue considerations, for example, could drive the district's decisions.

On the other hand, comprehensive planning – aligned with statewide planning goals – allows communities like Salem to consider numerous factors when charting its future. Communities can consider the tradeoffs of different decisions. This is what Salem is currently doing through the Our Salem project. Through scenario planning, the City and community are considering access to frequent transit *in addition* to numerous other factors such as housing affordability, employment mix, and bicycle and pedestrian use. Cherriots is and will continue to be part of the discussion about how Salem should grow.

### **Housing Affordability and Availability**

In addition, the City is diligently working to increase housing affordability and availability even as it continues the Our Salem project. Based on our recent housing needs analysis, the Salem area is projected to have a deficit of 207 acres of land designated as multifamily in 2035. The City is working on a project to reduce barriers to multifamily development by lowering parking requirements for multifamily housing, creating more flexible design standards, and reducing process for multifamily projects. This project is expected to encourage more multifamily development while maintaining neighborhood compatibility and public involvement in the land use process.

This multifamily housing project was made possible by the Department of Land Conservation and Development's new Oregon Housing Planning Program, which was funded by the state legislature during the 2018 session. It is this type of technical assistance from the State that helps communities like Salem to work toward the shared goal of increasing housing affordability and availability while engaging the local community in the decision-making process. In contrast, SB 10 mandates maximum densities and does not appear to provide the necessary technical assistance or funding to impacted communities.

### **Conclusion**

The City is working to increase housing opportunities in Salem through ongoing projects, including the Our Salem project to update our Comprehensive Plan. We are committed to thoughtful planning that engages the public and reflects community priorities, including transit access and housing affordability. We share the State's goals of encouraging more housing in Oregon, and we recognize that proposed amendments to SB 10 look to provide some flexibility in the implementation of the proposed law. However, we remain concerned about the bill's unintended consequences and strongly believe we can accomplish the greater goals of providing housing with transit access without SB 10. We encourage you to provide Salem and other cities the opportunity to continue the good planning work we've started.

Sincerely,



Chuck Bennett  
Mayor of Salem

cc: Steve Powers, City Manager