



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Julie Fitzgerald Opposing HB 3072:

Proposed Legislation Preempts Local Land-use Planning, Removes Public Input, Uses Ambiguous Phrasing that Can Harm Long-term Urban Development

Scheduled for public hearing on March 4, 2021, before the House Committee on Housing

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Wilsonville, I submit this testimony in opposition to HB 3072.

The proposed bill would preempt careful local-planning efforts for appropriate Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expansions that by law require significant citizen engagement. HB 3072 commands that a “local government shall amend its comprehensive plan or land use regulations” in spite of prior citizen-engaged planning efforts to site appropriate land-uses within the UGB urban reserve areas. The bill does not provide for any public engagement opportunities to provide input to a sudden change in the UGB, which by such omission violates land-use planning Oregon Goal 1: Citizen Involvement.

The bill fails to clearly define terms. For example, the bill references “workforce commercial” as a land-use term for which there is no definition in law or common practice.

The proposed legislation appears to have the effect of siting “workforce housing” locations on the UGB edge. This kind of policy harms both the intended beneficiaries of such a policy—lower-income residents seeking affordable housing—and the greater community. Wilsonville believes that it is problematic to site affordable housing on the UGB edge due to the general lack of walkability and public transit services to provide ready-access to key commercial retail facilities, including grocery and important social services that are generally located toward the city core areas. Rather than being sited on the UGB edge where transportation barriers and food deserts are likely outcomes, Wilsonville believes affordable workforce housing should be located in city locations that can empower people with residences along transit corridors and near healthy grocery and other helpful retail and social services needed by lower-income residents.

Placing affordable housing on the UGB edge forces lower-income residents to spend limited financial resources on operating a vehicle to travel for all essential services. In essence, congregating affordable housing into low-income housing projects on the UGB edge appears to be a policy unintentionally favoring the creation of “suburban slums” that harm all residents of a community, rather than integrating affordable housing developments within the generally more desirable areas of the community.

The City of Wilsonville respectfully urges the committee to table HB 3072. Affordable housing is a critical issue but this bill takes a unreasonable approach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Fitzgerald".

Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor
City of Wilsonville