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February 27, 2023

Oregon State House of Representatives  
Housing and Homelessness Committee

Re: HB 2984 – Commercial to Residential Conversion

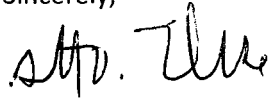
Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

I would like to voice our strong opposition to HB 2984. This bill would have multiple detrimental effects on our community:

1. Community Planning – this bill would promote very bad planning, or would undo good planning. Every town carefully determines which uses should be in which areas. This is the essence of planning. Typically, industrial, commercial and residential uses are separated, with careful consideration given to interfaces between zones. This bill would just throw out planning that typically involves many hours of staff work, citizen involvement and approval by the town's governing body. This bill would potentially place residents in "islands" between commercial uses, which it not good if not properly planned. It could also jeopardize existing commercial businesses that may peacefully coexist with other businesses, but could be seen as a nuisance by residents.
2. Parking Standards – parking standards are in place for a very simple reason – a site should take care of its parking needs without causing problems for adjacent properties. Under this bill, a small office, with a handful of parking spaces, could be converted to a residential use, not have nearly enough parking and force the new residents to either park in unsafe spaces or on an adjacent property, which is trespassing. This also sets up different standards for similar housing projects, which is fundamentally unfair.
3. System Development Charges – towns do not charge system development charges (SDC) just because. They are necessary to keep our utilities, streets, parks and other facilities operating at an acceptable level. Not charging system development charges negatively impacts citizens and businesses if a community cannot provide proper services. Like the above, it also sets up an inequity by charging one project and not another.

Some of the items in this bill would be reasonable for a city to consider, but they should not be imposed by the State, which then does not have to deal with any of the negative effects. The ability to produce housing is strictly limited by the State of Oregon. Oregon develops almost all of the rules governing growth, which in many ways limits the availability of housing and pushes up housing prices. Passing bills like this that harms cities with random "fixes" to our housing issues accomplishes little and doesn't address systemic issues with our land use system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.D. McClure". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott D. McClure  
City Administrator  
City of Turner