

Submitter: Paul Bilotta

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3746

Over the past few years, the State Legislature has enacted a remarkable amount of regulatory reform in response to the Housing and Climate crises. These are critical challenges for our state and we appreciate the high priority the Legislature has placed on addressing these issues.

Regulating land use is always about trade-offs and in order to transform our communities to address these two issues, there will naturally be a need for increases in height, density and promotion of a more compact urban form. That is all understood and supported. Corvallis has even exceeded some of the state mandates - for instance with Middle Housing, Corvallis added a bonus ADU unit which raises the number of possible units on a lot from 4 to 5 and we have no upper limit on the number of cottages that can be in a cottage cluster. We also changed our downtown zoning to allow buildings up to 123 ft. in height, which is significantly taller than what is required by the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rules. We eliminated off-street parking requirements city-wide.

We are seeing positive change occurring in Corvallis in response to both state and local regulatory reforms. In 2024, Corvallis saw more affordable housing developing in one year than we have seen developed in all previous years combined. Over 400 units, and we aren't stopping there with more than 200 additional affordable units expected to get started soon.

In our Downtown, the market is now responding to the increased height and local regulatory reforms. Last month, the City Council approved a tax exemption for 92 new apartments in an 8-story building downtown. Additional developers from across the country are actively acquiring downtown properties to put together their own redevelopment sites for buildings of similar height, so more substantial projects will likely be announced in the coming months.

However, there is one repeated concern that has accompanied all of this new development - the lack of opportunity for home ownership. Developers have indicated that Corvallis would be an attractive market for condominiums. Community members have expressed a desire to live in taller, downtown buildings but don't want to lose their existing benefits of home ownership. Both parties point to the need for liability reform as the barrier. Our community members shouldn't have to choose between living in climate and housing friendly building forms or home ownership. Liability reform is desperately needed to solve this problem.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Paul Bilotta  
Community Development Director  
City of Corvallis