



Memorandum

Date: January 25, 2022
To: Eugene Mayor and City Council
From: Eugene Planning Commission
Subject: Recommendation for Middle Housing Code Amendments

The members of the Eugene Planning Commission are pleased to present our formal recommendations for the City of Eugene's implementation of House Bill 2001 (2019) for middle housing. As Eugene's Planning Commission, we view this process as an opportunity to serve our community, effectively implement a new state law and seriously plan for our community's future. We have been committed to bringing you the best possible set of middle housing recommendations, based upon information learned through the technical analysis process of the last 18 months and through a constant commitment to what we heard in a robust public engagement process.

House Bill 2001 is a landmark zoning reform bill. This piece of legislation affords the opportunity for City officials, staff, and the community to invite current and future Eugeneans into all corners of our neighborhoods and to offer them housing choices of all shapes and sizes. A home is a home regardless of the number of dwelling units, and neighborhoods are made better when they encompass a diversity of neighbors. Although the land use code is, on its face quite technical—we all know that it's more than that. It's a manifestation of a community's values and a blueprint for the future. Zoning is not just a document or map; it is emotional, personal and it can become divisive. As a Commission, we have worked hard to both hear and carefully consider all the voices raised as we've crafted a recommendation for your consideration.

As the City of Eugene's Citizen Involvement Committee, early on in the process, we approved a Public Involvement Plan that aimed to elevate voices not usually heard during planning processes. The middle housing public engagement process exemplified excellence in reaching and informing a broad cross section of our community, not just the most vocal. The process demonstrated a commitment from City staff to raise the bar, elevate voices, reconcile our State's and local zoning code's history of exclusion, and implement amendments that center on equity. The Commission enthusiastically supports this robust and broad outreach process that was inclusive and representative of the interests of: renters, homeowners, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, people of all ages and abilities, and people from all Eugene neighborhoods. For many, this was their first time getting involved with a City process, much less a land use planning process. The Planning Commission urges you to assign the same value to all of these voices as to those you may hear more frequently.

Even though much of the proposed code is an implementation of state requirements, some community members have asked why Eugene is proposing to do more than the state's minimum standards required

to comply with House Bill 2001. While waiting for the finalization of State administrative rules for implementation, City staff worked with community members to establish the following eight Guiding Values and Principles:

- Equity and Access to Housing
- Broad Dispersal of Middle Housing
- House Options of All Shapes and Sizes
- Compact, Efficient Housing
- Sense of Belonging
- Opportunities to Build Wealth
- Interconnectedness of Housing Solutions
- Vibrant Neighborhoods

Every part of our recommendation has been informed by those foundational Guiding Values and Principles, resulting in a proposed code that treats the entire City equitably, encourages lower cost and Affordable housing, and takes steps to begin solving the housing crisis for the next generation. Our recommendation was not formed without context; we considered other plans and policies such as the Envision Eugene Pillars, Climate Action Plan 2.0, and the Eugene Transportation System Plan. We believe our recommendation honors the results of public engagement and public testimony, in addition to recognizing the importance of adopted City plans and policies.

As mentioned, much of the proposed code meets the minimum standards. In cases where the proposed code does exceed minimum standards, it does so to incentivize smaller housing types, lower-cost housing, income-qualified housing, transit-oriented development, and flexibility for already-developed sites. Eugene is not alone in proposing to exceed the minimum standards. We are joined by the Cities of Albany, Bend, Gresham, Milwaukie, Newberg, Portland, Salem, and Springfield. The minimum standards were intended to act as a floor, not a ceiling. While the changes may seem vast to some, in reality, they will result in incremental change over many years. Eugene must be bold and act with the foresight to take big steps now to even begin to see results in the coming decade. There is no doubt that this project will result in our neighborhoods looking a little different over time, but it will also result in welcoming more neighbors into our wonderful communities and effectively planning for future generations.

However, even with taking these important, necessary steps, the implementation of House Bill 2001 will not be enough. Our community must continue the work to end the housing crisis in other ways. While the proposed code encourages lower-cost dwellings and some income-qualified housing, it is only one piece of the puzzle. We strongly encourage you to build on this work through the Housing Implementation Pipeline, which recommends the establishment of an Anti-Displacement Plan, in addition to exploring additional incentives for much needed, income-qualified housing.

The Planning Commission also asks that the City Council commit to monitoring the results of these proposed code amendments to determine whether and how the amendments meet the goals of the middle housing project, whether as part of growth monitoring or some other process. This will better equip all of us with crucial knowledge about the kind of housing built after the code changes and incentives are in place. Together, we can implement a code that makes our community more accessible to everyone. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity, and we are proud of the work of the community, staff, and Commission.

We look forward to following the community conversation about middle housing as it comes before the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to provide policy guidance on this important project and its outcomes; as a Commission, we take very seriously our role as the City of Eugene's Citizen Involvement Committee. We appreciate and value collaborating with you on planning efforts that seek to remove barriers to housing affordability, availability, and diversity and increase equity across the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Beeson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ken Beeson, Chair & Middle Housing Resource Committee

Tiffany Edwards

Lisa Fragala, Middle Housing Resource Committee

Dan Isaacson, Vice Chair

Chris Ramey

Kristen Taylor, Middle Housing Resource Committee