

March 17, 2019

Honorable Chair Keny-Guyer and committee members,

This #1 in a series of comments and documents that support **Rational, Evidence-Based Transit-Oriented Development**.

***House Bill 2001 is neither rational nor evidence-based.***

I have been active in supporting TOD for many years, including doing the analysis that led to the Eugene City Council and Lane Transit District (LTD) selecting an alignment for the West Eugene EmX Extension (WEEE) that would maximize the future benefit of bus rapid transit service for businesses, housing and multiple-use development. Please watch the following three-minute video, which presents the analysis that I did.

<https://youtu.be/jmO-bFGEs7g>

I'm pleased to report that WEEE is now in operation, and the W. 6th/7th Ave. corridor is "ripe" for appropriate redevelopment, including medium- and high-density housing. I live approximately a ten-minute walk from a WEEE station and along with other residents of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors appreciate access to frequent, efficient transit.

Unfortunately, as you may be aware, the City of Eugene Planning and Development Department has stonewalled on moving ahead with the steps necessary to promote TOD development on this ideal corridor. I understand that the proponents of HB 2001 have also lost their patience with cities, including Eugene, dragging their heels. But HB 2001 is most definitely not the right solution. It would not achieve its goals, it is utterly the opposite of *transit-oriented*, and it would punish decent single-family homeowners, even though they were among the advocates who supported EmX, including on W. 6th/7th Aves.

More on the history ... Concurrently with the WEEE alignment analysis, I co-chaired the Envision Eugene "Multiple-Use Development" Committee that produced the attached recommendations. Please read these, as I believe you will see they are concrete, practical and set the right goals and principles for success. The recommendations were affirmed by the full Envision Eugene "Community Resource Group" and, in large part, were incorporated into the Envision Eugene "pillars" (policies) that the Eugene City Council approved in March, 2011.

Since that time, the Eugene Planning and Development Department has done *nothing* to follow through.

Even earlier than this focus on a BRT transit corridor, I collaborated in 2005 with past city councilor, Bonny Bettman, to develop the "Opportunity Siting" policy, which the City Council adopted as a "primary policy to guide development in and around multiple-use centers." The attached document explains the policy. Following up in 2008, I led a two-day "Opportunity Siting" workshop for forty or so residents of the **Jefferson Westside Neighbors (JWN)** city-chartered neighborhood organization. The attached document provides some notes and the "OS Map" that we produced. JWN residents identified dozens of sites in our neighborhood, including close to the WEEE service, that have a high potential for higher-density residential development.

We urged the Eugene Planning and Development staff to initiate a process to implement "OS" and move forward on one or more sites. But the staff completely ignored our request, even after the Eugene Planning Commission supported our request.

I also collaborated in 2015 with my subsequent city councilor, George Brown, to write new provisions into the city ordinance authorizing the Multiple-Use Property Tax Exemption (MUPTe) program to include a requirement for "workforce housing." We also included a requirement that, before an area (including the WEEE corridor) was "opened" for MUPTe applications, the relevant comprehensive plan policies addressing the area must be updated. The JWN has requested that the city initiate this public process to update our "refinement plan" (the applicable element of the comprehensive plan) so that MUPTe could be used as an incentive for residential development along the WEEE corridor; but staff has again refused.

During 2008 to 2011, as a member of the Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment Citizen Advisory Committee, as well as a member of the Envision Eugene Community Resource Group, I (and others) "hammered" the Eugene Planning Division staff to do a *credible* assessment of housing "need" and potential "capacity" (i.e., buildable lands inventory) and then develop realistic policies and programs to address the need, particularly at the "workforce" and "low income" levels. The staff did nothing in that regard, and instead used a totally useless, "dumbed down" approach with patently bogus tactics to create "phantom density" so that Eugene could skate by statutory requirements. Sadly, DLCD not only didn't conduct a diligent review, DLCD actually *commended* the City on its process.

I hope from this brief history, you understand that a) your assessment of some cities' bad faith and dysfunction in regards to housing needs is right on the mark, at least with respect to City of Eugene; and b) I and others have worked hard and intelligently to get the city to do the right things, but the staff has continually thwarted our best efforts.

As a consequence, we would welcome action to break the staff "blockade" and move ahead with the plans we've worked on. However, HB 2001's extremely simplistic and counterproductive approach would instead *crush* all the work we've done and expose our neighborhood to the worst sorts of predatory redevelopment, while accomplishing *nothing* in regards to housing affordability.

In testimony to follow, I'll augment my prior testimony on HB 2001 to provide additional, real-world evidence of the significant harm that HB 2001 would do to good folks who are owner-occupants of modest houses in our beautiful, much-loved neighborhood. And, we are not by any measure the only ones in the "crosshairs" of HB 2001.

Thank you for your respect for citizens and consideration of these comments.

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