

HB 3482: Support Housing by supporting churches develop excess land

House Committee on Housing John Calhoun 3.22.2023

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

I am an elder at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in southwest Portland. As with many churches our membership has dropped since the 1950's when we acquired land for a parking lot. As a result we have land that is not fully utilized and would like to see a portion developed for housing. We would like to play a part in easing the housing crisis in our city.

When we first approached the city of Portland we were told about the fees and permits necessary for zoning changes. The costs can become significant and prohibitive for a church that does not have a major endowment. HB 3482 would be helpful in getting past that barrier.

In our case, the land we are considering is more appropriate for workforce housing than low income rental property. We have a little more than 1/2 acre to build upon in a residential neighborhood. A few townhouses would work, but would unlikely be enough to manage as low-income rentals. However, we all know that under market workforce housing is needed as much as low-income housing if we are going to address our housing crisis.

We would like this committee to pass HB 3482, but also consider broadening the coverage to include non-rental property for workforce housing.