

Submitter: Brad Dennis

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

I live in North Albany, a part of Benton County that became a part of the City of Albany in 1991. At that time, sewer tanks were failing and annexation was one way to solve the problem. By a slim margin, citizens voted to annex to the City on the condition that the zoning remained at ¼ acre lots. After annexation, city sewer was extended to North Albany and development has been proceeding in an orderly manner for 30 years.

Then, the Oregon legislature decided that they wanted to strip cities' local authority to regulate zoning by passing HB 2001 (2019), which created middle housing. There are still sizable tracts of land in North Albany and suddenly we see green fields of proposed subdivisions, sized at ¼ acre lots, being converted to townhouses with 4 times as many units as what zoning would allow for. Recently, a 22 unit subdivision was converted to 80 units without regard to already-heavy traffic on Gibson Hill Road and North Albany Road and U.S. Hwy 20.

Citizens and the City are powerless to locally control the density in our neighborhoods, because of the control exerted by the State in HB 2001. This is causing great congestion on the 2-lane road used by 10,000 citizens who exit onto Hwy 20. The undersized road does not seem to be a reason for denying these 4x developments.

I recommend that the committee amend HB 2138 to:

1. Make clear that middle housing is intended for infill into lots that existed at the time that HB 2001 was signed into law (or at the latest June 30, 2021), rather than allowing middle housing developments on wide-open green fields.
2. Allow cities to deny middle housing petitions based on inadequate infrastructure, such as roads.
3. Include the provisions of HB 3847 with regard to providing funding for infrastructure related to middle housing
4. Expand the radius for giving notice to neighboring property per SB 737