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June 1, 2021

Salem Planning Commission City Council
C/O Eunice Kim (EKim@cityofsalem.net)
555 Liberty Stree SE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Implementation of HB 2001

Dear Commissioners,

1000 Friends of Oregon is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to working with Oregonians to support livable communities. Our membership includes Salem residents who support the mission and values of the Oregon land use program. Among these values are the provision of housing that meets the needs of all members of our communities.

In the 2019 Legislative Session, 1000 Friends worked with a coalition of partners to pass HB 2001, commonly known as the “middle housing” bill. The bill was intended to remove barriers to more, and more affordable, housing through allowing diverse housing types. In cities with populations above 25,000, “middle housing” must be allowed in areas zoned for residential use that allows the development of a single-family dwellings.

In implementing HB 2001, Salem will be increasing housing access throughout the City. While there are minimum requirements in compliance with the administrative rules, and your planning team has done an excellent job in making recommended code changes, there are policies that can increase housing access to a greater degree and better meet other goals of the City. For instance, the City should consider density bonuses if a development guarantees that a number of the units are affordable to those making 80% area median income. The City could also promote the protection of tree canopy by offering density bonuses for the protection of trees that are greater than a certain diameter. Finally, accessibility is important for people with all types of mobility and a density bonus could be permitted if a number of the units are accessible.

While minimum compliance with HB 2001 will definitely improve access to housing in Salem, more can be done to meet the City’s goals around housing the sustainability.

We appreciate your consideration of this testimony and look forward to engaging with you more on this topic as implementation progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexis Biddle".

Alexis Biddle
Great Communities Program Director and Staff Attorney
1000 Friends of Oregon