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May 24, 2017

Erin Foote Morgan
Bend 2030
Bend, OR

Re: Bend Collaborative Housing Workgroup

Dear Erin:

Thank you for this opportunity to address the draft policy tools the Bend Collaborative Housing Workgroup has made available for community feedback. Bend2030's goals of increasing the availability of "middle market" housing are critically important in light of Bend's urgent housing crisis, and citizen support for the tools that align with what was adopted in the City's Urban Growth Boundary ("UGB") plan will be meaningful in helping implement that community vision for the future.

We are writing to express our support for your draft policy tools which we believe will help implement and are consistent with the City's adopted UGB plan and Findings Report. These measures include your May 19, 2017, draft policy tools #5 (rework SDC policies), #6 (allow parking districts and reduce parking requirements), #7 (allow vertical housing tax exemption), #8 (new urban renewal areas), and perhaps, depending on the details, #2 (create mixed-use transportation corridors).

The more that the draft policy tools can be connected with the adopted UGB Plan, the better. For example, one key concept of the UGB Plan was "complete communities." The premise of this concept is that there should be commercial centers convenient to various neighborhoods across the City so that people have an option of walking and biking to get necessary services. It will be very important for the City to adopt policy tools to implement this key concept of the UGB Plan.

We are concerned with other aspects of the draft policy tools of May 19 with regard to the lack of recognition that a number of these concepts were already addressed by the City Council and that other efficiency (density) measures were adopted as a part of the UGB process. Just seven months ago, the City adopted this comprehensive UGB Plan with a host of efficiency (density) measures.

What was adopted by a unanimous City Council and County Board, with broad public support, was a balance that included some efficiency measures and excluded others. The Findings Report explained some of the reasoning behind the Plan:



“The Residential and Employment TAC recommendations on new efficiency measures reflect the recognition that Bend’s UGB expansion proposal and package of amendments are taking place in a time of transition. Vertical mixed use is a relatively uncommon in Bend. There are concerns in existing neighborhoods about infill and redevelopment, as well as the scale and uses in neighboring commercial areas. Topics like accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are controversial. At the same time, there is a need for more affordable housing, housing supply in general, and a greater mix of housing types. These are hot topics, and elicit many different perspectives. Operating in this environment, the Residential and Employment TACs have taken clear steps to encourage a greater diversity and density of housing and mixed use development, described below, but care was taken to balance these efforts with the concerns of residents in existing neighborhoods. This balance is reflected in the efficiency measures that apply city-wide. However, the Residential and Employment TAC recommendations also proposed larger scale changes by focusing more far-reaching changes in Opportunity Areas, which tend to be in the core of the City. These recommendations focus on good urban form with more intensive development in more central locations in the city. They recognize the opportunities provided by larger vacant sites to be master planned in the future, as well as the need to provide modest code changes to remove barriers to higher intensity and a greater mix of housing in existing residential areas. Together, these measures support and guide Bend’s transition from a small town to a city.”

Given that balance adopted by the City, we don’t believe it is appropriate to change the terms that formed the balance. Policy tool items #1 (align comp plan and zone map), #9 (calculate density differently), #10 (allow fourplexes in the standard residential zone), #11 (link open space requirements to parks), and #12 (increase allowable lot coverage for multifamily) are efficiency concepts which were or could have been considered but were not adopted by the City Council.

While LandWatch is generally in favor of greater efficiency measures within urban areas, we do not believe that such density has to happen everywhere or all at once or with all density measures possible. That is why, during the UGB process, we argued for greater density to be accommodated as much as possible in some of the Opportunity Areas like the Central District and undeveloped lands instead of in existing neighborhoods. We still believe that even more growth can be accommodated in the Opportunity Areas than was conservatively assumed in the UGB Plan.

Also, while we share the goal of achieving more affordable housing and middle housing, we don’t believe the case has been made that additional density measures in existing neighborhoods beyond what was adopted in the UGB Plan are necessarily appropriate at this time. We are not convinced that what will be built will end up being either affordable or middle housing and we believe that existing efficiency measures need to be tried out to test both their effectiveness and their compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

With the substantial challenges to City staff to implement the adopted UGB Plan and to provide the infrastructure necessary for it, we are concerned about them taking on more work or to re-engage the community. For example, item #1 alone would constitute a substantial time drain to put through a



plan amendment. The City would also need to be consulted regarding the feasibility of draft policy tool #2 (create mixed-use transportation corridors) and #3 (incentivize area planning).

An additional consideration is the fact that the City went to great effort to involve the general public as much as possible in the UGB process. Because this process extended over several years, the public did actually become involved. If there is any effort to amend the adopted UGB Plan, it will be necessary to engage the public in a broad way.

Finally, we again want to emphasize how important this work of Bend 2030 and the others participating in this project is. The adoption of the UGB Plan needs follow-through and if the Collaborative Housing Workgroup can identify the tools necessary to implement the Bend UGB Plan that will be a significant contribution to the City's efforts.

Thanks again for doing this work.

Very truly yours,

Paul Dewey,
Executive Director

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