



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

January 10, 2020

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

On December 9th, two members of the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board (BEDAB) participated in your work session on proposed code updates for Bend's Core Area. During that discussion, two items generated the most comments: a reduction in parking minimums within the Core Area and removal of the square footage cap on specific uses.

BEDAB has devoted two meetings to discussing these changes with members of the development community and City of Bend Planning staff. At our meeting on Monday, January 6th, the BEDAB voted unanimously to recommend moving forward with the proposed code changes, as presented by staff.

Our conversation focused on two key portions of the code, a change in parking requirements and removal of use size restrictions. Please read on for more detail on those items.

Parking Code Changes

Parking generated the most discussion at BEDAB's recent meeting. Many members expressed the same concerns shared at Planning Commission, that a reduction in parking minimums could overwhelm on-street parking availability. However, BEDAB sees the urgent need for new housing in Bend outweighing these concerns. Further, the realities of development financing, coupled with the ability to implement management strategies should parking become an issue, would help mitigate these concerns if Core Area development occurs more quickly than anticipated.

The need for additional flexibility in developing the Core Area's numerous small lots by exempting parking requirements for floor plans below 10,000 square feet was highlighted as vital in spurring new development that maximizes buildable area. Pairing this exemption with an increase in parking maximums provides additional flexibility to let the

market find the right mix of parking and density while meeting the Core Area vision.

BEDAB would like to monitor development progress and parking impacts within the Core Area going forward. We would welcome participation from the Planning Commission as we receive updates from staff on new development at our meetings should these code changes be approved.

Use Size Restrictions

During your work session on December 9th, the square footage cap on certain uses within the Core Area generated concern from some members of the Planning Commission. These caps are arbitrary and have a chilling effect on potential development in the Core Area. Along with housing, the Core Area needs access to services, workspace, and urban style amenities. Rather than focusing on usage caps to limit the size of development, the proposed design standards in the code are a better tool to ensure the urban form envisioned for the area while providing flexibility to businesses to right size their developments.

There are numerous examples of large footprint retail spaces developing in urban settings. New retail, office space, or small-scale manufacturing development of this type would not only serve potential core area residents, but residents of Bend and Central Oregon as a whole. The removal of the use cap could play a vital role as we consider avenues to ensure businesses in Bend have room to expand and in attracting new companies to the city.

The City's Urban Growth Boundary requirements, the success of a potential urban renewal district in Bend's core, and making progress in addressing Bend's housing crisis are all contingent on activating dense development within the Core Area. Again, BEDAB sees these proposed code changes as a way to achieve these goals and is supportive of the changes as presented.

Thank you for your service on Planning Commission. We're eager to continue to work closely together as you consider code and policy changes with the potential to foster economic growth that benefits all Bend residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Senner', written in a cursive style.

Stephanie Senner
Chair, Bend Economic Development Advisory Board