



## CITY OF BEND

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Dear Commissioners,

The Neighborhood Leadership Alliance (NLA) is writing to offer our conditional support of the creation of Micro-unit Developments in the Bend Development Code (BDC). The NLA believes there may be a role for Micro-unit Developments in the BDC, but that several specific elements of the proposed code need to be revised before adoption. We ask that the Planning Commission address each of the items below before proceeding with adoption of the code.

The NLA held a seat on the HB 2001 Stakeholder Advisory Group. Throughout the process, the NLA gathered input from Neighborhood Association (NA) Land Use Chairs and subject matter experts on the amendments proposed. At the August 10 Planning Commission work session, we shared our concerns regarding Micro-unit Developments. After the work session, we launched a survey to gather community input on these developments. We have attached the results from this survey here for your reference, and summarized below our concerns and requests for the Planning Commission if you choose to move forward with this proposed development alternative.

### **Prohibit Micro-unit Short-Term Rentals**

We believe the Planning Commission is already in alignment with our thoughts regarding prohibiting Micro-unit Developments from being utilized as short-term rentals. The NLA asks that they be prohibited as short-term rentals in both mixed use and commercial zones, in addition to residential zones. The intent of these units is to create housing for residents of Bend, which is not achieved by using them as short-term rentals.

The majority of survey respondents *disagree* that micro-units should be permitted as short-term rentals in mixed-use or commercial zones (Survey Q.6).

### **Common Kitchen Capacity**

If Micro-Unit Developments are added to the BDC, the NLA asks that the ratio or number of micro-units to one common kitchen be decreased. Assuming two individuals per unit, the proposed one common kitchen per 10 units would be insufficient. We suggest a minimum of one common kitchen per five units, and request specifications for full-size appliances and accommodation for storage.

Additionally, we are concerned about the potential public health consequences of sharing kitchen space and believe anything larger than the ratio of one kitchen per five units could compromise resident health or discourage them from cooking nutritious meals (Mark, 2020).

The majority of survey respondents *disagree* that 10 micro-units to one common kitchen is appropriate (Survey Q.4).

### **Management & Maintenance**

If Micro-Unit Developments are added to the BDC, the NLA asks that at some designated number of units, on-site management and maintenance be required. There currently is no requirement for on-site management in the proposed code. Self-management seems appropriate for small developments that are more on the scale of traditional shared housing, but there is greater potential for issues related to maintenance and management of common space in larger scale developments (Plitt, 2016).

### **Laundry Facilities**

If Micro-Unit Developments are added to the BDC, the NLA asks for the code to outline requirements for laundry facilities. There is currently no requirement for laundry facilities in the proposed code. We suggest that a minimum of one washer and dryer per five units would be appropriate to include in the code.

### **Micro-Unit Development Trial & Zones**

If Micro-Unit Developments are added to the BDC, the NLA asks that they be initially permitted in Mixed-use Urban Zones and in the Bend Central District. These areas, which the City has targeted to support higher-density with public transit and other infrastructure, offer the best potential for success of this concept, especially with extremely limited parking allocation for the developments. Studies have shown that the people who prefer to live in micro-units want to be located in areas with good access to amenities like restaurants and grocery stores, public transportation and cultural amenities (Urban Land Institute, 2014, p. 9-21). Mixed-use Urban Zones provide all of this. If these developments prove to be successful in these most promising areas, the concept could be extended to other zones.

The NLA supports the efforts to add missing-middle housing types in all residential zones and welcomes more diversity in the options available throughout our community. However, we have concerns about the livability of our neighborhoods after learning of

the troubled history that similar units have had in other cities. We ask that if micro-units are permitted in residential zones, that they be limited to RM and RH zones.

The majority of survey respondents *agree* that Micro-Unit Developments should be first trialed in one area of Bend (Survey Q.7). The majority of survey respondents *disagree* Micro-Unit Developments should be permitted in all residential zones (Survey Q.3).

### **Parking**

If Micro-Unit Developments are added to the BDC, the NLA requests that the proposed 0.5 parking spaces/unit be adjusted to be consistent with requirements for Small Dwelling Unit Developments of 1 parking space/unit in all areas other than the Bend Central District ([Table 3.3.300](#)). Additionally, we suggest including a requirement for bicycle parking in the development.

Survey respondents *disagree* that 0.5 parking spaces per micro-unit is appropriate (Survey Q.5).

### **Affordable Housing**

From our research, we know that Micro-unit Developments, tend to be temporary housing for those *with* options and quasi-permanent housing for those *without* options. They are only moderately affordable, and lead to unintended consequences such as increasing rental rates for all other properties and potentially have the negative impact of creating economic and racial discriminatory housing practices (Rothstein, 2017). Rental rates for housing are often calculated on a price per square foot basis, and as these units contain a smaller footprint and fewer amenities, the price per square foot is much higher than a standard apartment. We may all agree that these units are not in fact “comparable,” but the market will focus on people having basic shelter (Knight, 2014). The majority of survey respondents *disagree* that Micro-unit Developments will help to create affordable housing options in Bend (Survey Q.2).

This type of housing does have a place in the community, if operated under the umbrella of a nonprofit with associated support systems and on-site management. Nonetheless, it should not be considered a long-term solution to housing needs (Lloyd, 2012).

We believe Bend can do better when addressing the need for affordable housing and encourage the Planning Commission to request continued conversation around this concept.

Sincerely,

Hans Jorgensen  
Chair, Neighborhood Leadership Alliance

Lisa Mushel  
Vice-Chair, Neighborhood Leadership Alliance

## Articles for Consideration:

- **\$1,000 a month for tiny room, bedbugs, seedy surroundings in the Mission**  
By Heather Knight | Aug 5, 2014 <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/1-000-a-month-for-bedbugs-shared-bathroom-in-5668140.php>  
*References affordability and value of Single-room Occupancy Hotels in San Francisco.*
- **The SRO Blues / Nonprofit management best bet for residents stuck in SF's infamous roach hotels**  
By Carol Lloyd, special to SFGate | June 26, 2001 Updated: Feb. 1, 2012  
<https://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/The-SRO-Blues-Nonprofit-management-best-bet-for-2904705.php>  
*Addresses management issues for Single-room Occupancy Hotels in San Francisco, also shows their use as transitional housing.*
- **The next COVID-19 outbreak could already be happening**  
By Julian Mark | Apr 29, 2020 <https://missionlocal.org/2020/04/the-next-sro-outbreak-could-already-be-happening/>  
*Tells the story of how COVID-19 (and other communicable diseases) is magnified by Single-room Occupancy Units.*
- **What it's really like to live in NYC's first micro-unit building**  
By Amy Plitt | Sep 22, 2016 <https://ny.curbed.com/2016/9/22/13019200/nyc-studio-apartment-carmel-place-house-calls>  
*Inside look at a Single-room Occupancy Unit in New York City. The unit in this article includes a full kitchen.*
- **The Macro View on Micro Units**  
Urban Land Institute | 2014 [https://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/MicroUnit\\_full\\_rev\\_2015.pdf](https://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/MicroUnit_full_rev_2015.pdf)  
*A study of Micro Units (they define) and where they fit in densification efforts. This article defines these units as having kitchenettes, where the proposed code for Bend does not.*
- **The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America**  
By Richard Rothstein | 2017  
*Novel about segregation in America's cities that still exists today.*