

Committee: Environment & Transportation
Testimony on: HB 1406 - Land Use - Development - Middle Housing
(Modest Home Choices Act of 2020)
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 4, 2020

Today's housing patterns seem to be either single-family homes or high-density apartment buildings. "Missing middle housing" is housing of a more modest level – duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes. These housing types, when built in areas currently zoned for single-family houses, can provide new affordable housing that fits into existing neighborhoods. Land is expensive and it makes sense to use it intensively. It would be nice to see something other than multimillion-dollar mansions being built there.

Building "middle housing" where jobs and transit already exist makes it possible for people to drive less. This is good for people's pocketbooks and for the environment.

There's a shortage of housing near today's job centers and the term "drive until you qualify" means you have to look further and further out from the city to find a home you can afford. While such a home may seem "affordable", it also creates long daily commutes, increases traffic congestion and increases costs to the local government (need for new roadways, water/sewer and other infrastructure). The extra driving also harms our environment with increased GHG emissions and more stormwater runoff.

Amending single-family zoning to allow "middle housing" is one way to help meet affordability goals. By allowing duplexes or triplexes to be built on some single-family lots, we bring housing and jobs closer together.

A favorable report on HB 1406 will support greater access to affordable housing.

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