

**Public Opposition to Increased Housing Density in Eugene, Oregon**  
***How Opposition to Multifamily Housing Impacts the Built Environment***  
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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Public Opposition to Increased Housing Density in Eugene, Oregon** *How Opposition to Multifamily Housing Impacts the Built Environment*

Land use planning plays an integral role within housing and the built environment. As cities and neighborhoods grow, planners are often challenged by opponents of increased housing density. Opponents of housing density in Eugene, Oregon are most often community members within surrounding neighborhoods. This project finds that Eugene community members believe multifamily housing results in higher traffic levels, loss of on-street parking, decreased public safety, and lower property values. This project analyzed approximately 238 public comments submitted for four proposed multifamily developments in Eugene. According to public comments, the majority of individuals who oppose multifamily housing reside in single-family homes. As a result, proposed multifamily housing developments located nearby single-family homes generally met high opposition from surrounding residents.

Research indicates that people carry preconceived opinions of housing density, which are influenced by their race and socioeconomic status. These opinions take the form of negative stereotypes towards multifamily developments (Pendall, 113).

This research project primarily investigates whether attitudes towards housing density impact the built environment in neighborhoods and communities by affecting the project applications. This project will also provide a case study analysis of four multifamily housing developments in Eugene, Oregon that vary from the density of their surrounding environment. Each case study summarizes the project from proposal to buildout. In addition, all public comments received by the City of Eugene in response to the proposed developments are summarized. Any measurable effects of public opposition on the final built development are also reported. The purpose of this case study analysis is to explore how opposition impacted the final outcome of each project and how the City of Eugene addressed these challenges.

This project will be useful for planners in Eugene and other jurisdictions to help them better understand how public opposition effects multifamily housing developments. In addition, this project investigates inequities in access to affordable housing caused by the social phenomenon of NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard).

### **ORGANIZATION OF REPORT**

This research project begins by discussing why most multifamily projects in Eugene are approved by right, while some require land use actions. Multifamily developments that require land use actions must undergo an approval process because their proposed use requires an adjustment to the City of Eugene building code.

This research project describes the total number of residential permits issued in Eugene between 2010 and 2016. This research project then examines the number of land use actions

and the units approved within each decision. In addition, tables are provided that depict the total applications approved without conditions, those approved with conditions, and those denied. These housing projects are highlighted because their proposed use required a land use action.

This research project next provides four case studies of multifamily developments that were approved in Eugene with conditions. These case studies include an analysis of all submitted public comments. All case studies include any measurable impacts that public comments had on the final outcome of the built development.

This research project next discusses the typical codes required for compliance in multifamily projects. This section of the report also illustrates barriers to developing multifamily units in Eugene. For example, what are neighbors saying to oppose multifamily developments? What are their fears and perceptions?

In addition, this research project compares the built density of multifamily developments to the level of density allowed by the code. Specifically, this comparison shows the ratio of units built per acre to the ratio of units per acre allowed. The purpose of this comparison is to examine whether Eugene is developing multifamily housing to the highest density possible.

Finally, this research project concludes with a literature review that details the effects of NIMBYism on multifamily housing and housing density as a whole.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of my research project is to assess whether public opposition imposes any measurable impact on the final built outcome of multifamily developments. Research conducted for this project does not indicate that NIMBYism has a significant impact on the actual development of multifamily housing.

Current literature indicates that large multifamily developments experience more NIMBYism than smaller developments with fewer units (Pendall, 130). Literature also shows that developers choose to build affordable housing and multifamily housing in communities perceived to offer less opposition. This implies that developers may exacerbate NIMBYism by purposely concentrating multifamily housing in poor communities (Scally&Tighe, 761).

The multifamily developments used as case studies in my research project found a relationship between the size of the proposed development and the level of public opposition. The developments with more proposed units received significantly more public comments than developments with fewer proposed units. Many of the public comments reflected common themes in NIMBY literature, such as fear of increased traffic congestion, lower property values, and loss of neighborhood character.

My research project is primarily a qualitative study that analyzes whether public comments have measurable impacts on multifamily developments. My research project did not investigate if a relationship exists between proposed sites of multifamily developments and projected levels of public opposition. However, many of the multifamily developments approved in Eugene from 2010 through 2016 were located in existing affluent communities, downtown centers, and single-family neighborhoods. Therefore, it does not appear that developers in Eugene choose to build multifamily housing in communities perceived to offer less opposition.

The most contentious case studies in my research project were located within affluent residential communities in Eugene. Therefore, developers in Eugene do not appear to be exacerbating NIMBYism by concentrating multifamily housing in poor communities.

## **CHAPTER 2: POLICY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY**

### **EUGENE'S MULTIFAMILY APPROVAL PROCESS**

The City of Eugene defines a multifamily development as three or more dwelling units on a lot. According to the City of Eugene, the city code is designed to encourage multifamily developments in residential and commercial zones. The City of Eugene bases the number of dwellings allowed in a residential development on the maximum density dictated by the zone. The number of dwelling units allowed in commercial zones is not specified or regulated, but limitations may apply. Residential and commercial zones have specific regulations that dictate aspects of the project, such as building height, setbacks, and development standards.

Multifamily developments can be regulated by either residential or commercial codes. For example, Eugene's Residential Building Code regulates townhouses and single-family dwellings. Eugene's Commercial Building Code regulates multifamily developments such as apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and mixed-use structures. The City of Eugene requires a separate application for multifamily developments.

The City of Eugene allows most multifamily developments (88%) to be approved by-right if the proposed project is compliant with zoning and all required building codes. These projects are allowed to forego the planning application phase and progress to the building permit phase. Projects approved by-right also forego the public appeal process. The absence of the public appeal process is permitted because the project complies with all regulations and building codes. Therefore, public opinion is not required or needed. The City of Eugene encourages by-right approval to expedite the multifamily development process.

Twelve percent of all multifamily developments from 2010 through 2016 required land use applications to achieve approval. These projects required applications because aspects of the development were not compliant with City code. Each land use application required at least one land use action. Land use actions differ based on the type of proposed multifamily development. According to City of Eugene application records, most multifamily land use applications are approved within three to nine months, depending on the number of required land use actions. Each type of land use action in Eugene is explained in the following sections.

#### **Planned Urban Development Tentative (PDT) and Planned Urban Development (PDF)**

A Planned Urban Development requires a two-phase approval process. Both phases must be approved for the project to move forward. The initial phase is called a Planned Urban Development Tentative. The second phase is the Planned Urban Development Final.

The PDT usually requires multiple conditions to achieve approval. These conditions must be complete prior to Planned Urban Development Final, including any conditions related to adjusting the final site plans.

## **Adjustment Review Minor (ARA) and Adjustment Review Major (ARB)**

When a project cannot comply with specific standards, an applicant can apply for an adjustment review. These actions allow the applicant to prove that they are meeting the intent of the standard. These actions are somewhat voluntary, as the applicant is allowed to redesign the project to comply with the standards in the land use code. The difference between an Adjustment Review Minor and an Adjustment Review Major are the specific standards being adjusted. While both are Planning Director decisions, the ARA is appealed to the Hearings Official and the ARB is appealed to the Planning Commission. An adjustment review can be submitted with another land use application, such as a site review. An adjustment review can also be a single application if a site review is not required for the project.

## **Site Review (SR)**

A Site Review is required in one of two scenarios. A SR is required if the property on which the multifamily development is proposed has a SR overlay zone. A SR may also be required if dictated in Eugene's zoning code. For example, a multifamily development must comply with all standards for development or apply for SR approval. Unlike PUDs, Site Reviews cannot be submitted voluntarily.

Some proposed multifamily developments in Eugene are approved with specific conditions that must be satisfied prior to applying for the building permit. For example, a project's impact on traffic is often a contentious component of multifamily developments. However, few multifamily developments in Eugene are required to complete a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA). A TIA is required if the project is estimated to increase daily vehicle trips by 100. All multifamily developments approved with conditions must provide notice of the planning director's decision to residents within 500 feet of the project site.

All residents within 500 feet of the project site are allowed to submit written comment on the proposed development. These comments can either oppose or support the development. Comments can also take the form of questions that must be answered by City staff or developers. A submitted comment provides standing for the individual in court. Concerned residents and neighborhood associations can appeal the planning director's decision. The planning director's decision is then evaluated by a Hearings Official. The Hearings Official then provides a final decision on the land use application. If the opposing residents still disagree with this decision, the residents can then appeal to the Eugene Planning Commission. If the residents disagree with the Planning Commission's decision, they can then appeal to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). If LUBA still affirms the original land use decision, the residents have the right to appeal to the Oregon Court of Appeals. However, this process requires significant financial cost in the form of legal fees. For these reasons, land use decisions on multifamily developments in Eugene rarely proceed past the LUBA.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This project uses multiple research methods. Sources for data include the following:

**City of Eugene Permit Data from 2010 through 2016**  
**City of Eugene Submitted Application Materials and Public Comments**  
**Local Newspaper Articles**

Data analysis, case study research and content analysis are the primary research methods for this project. Specifically, this project analyzes all residential permits approved by the City of Eugene between 2010 through 2016. In addition, approximately 238 submitted public comments are analyzed to discern the nature of opposition and presence of NIMBYism.

Permits are categorized by housing type and neighborhood. All land use applications that required a land use action are categorized by those approved, approved with conditions, and denied. This project also provides a case study analysis of four multifamily housing developments that required a land use action. Case studies are summarized by final outcome of development and nature of public comments. Local newspapers are referenced to illustrate the level of public opposition to the four individual case studies.

These methods and data sources are used to answer questions within the three following sections:

### **1) Trends in Multifamily Housing Permits**

- a) What were the residential housing trends in Eugene from 2004 through 2017?
- b) How many multifamily housing permits were approved by-right in Eugene from 2010 through 2016?
- c) How many multifamily housing units were approved in Eugene from 2010 through 2016?

### **2) Land Use Actions and Conditions**

- a) How many multifamily developments have gone through the land use action process?
- b) What are common code adjustments that prevent outright approval of proposed multifamily developments?
- c) Are multifamily developments in Eugene built to the maximum density allowed within zoning?



d) What conditions did the City of Eugene impose in the land use actions?

### **3) Public Opinion**

a) Does public opposition impact the final site plans of approved multifamily developments?

b) What are the primary concerns of opponents to increased housing density?

c) Do the complaints submitted by residents in Eugene reflect those seen in the NIMBY literature referenced for this research paper?

d) What percentage of Eugene complaints were seen in NIMBY literature?

e) What types of NIMBYism found in literature were not seen in Eugene comments?

f) Do the public comments reflect the reason for the land use action?

g) Which concerns are related to code adjustments and which concerns are NIMBYism?

h) Do public comments cite specific building codes in their complaints?

### **LIMITATIONS**

There are several limitations to consider when assessing this project:

- The findings for this report are based solely on City of Eugene land use permit records, applications, and newspaper articles. No members of the public were contacted to verify or question findings. As a result, all findings within this project are based on documentation of public records. Therefore, it is possible that relevant data exists outside this project that provides additional insight.
- This project does not report housing developments that were not proposed for fear of public comments.
- This project does not report multifamily projects that did not occur for fear of regulatory barriers.

## **CHAPTER 3: KEY FINDINGS**

This chapter will discuss the process that multifamily housing developments undergo to achieve approval in Eugene. All residential housing developments from 2010 through 2016 are analyzed by housing permits, housing units and land use actions. This chapter explores whether public opposition impacted the final site plans of multifamily developments in Eugene. This analysis also includes an examination of all public comments submitted in opposition to four multifamily developments. Public comments are analyzed to report the primary concerns of residents as well as the presence of NIMBYism.

### **1) Trends in Multifamily Housing Permits**

The following sections discuss trends in multifamily housing by examining multifamily developments approved by right and those that required land use applications.

#### **a) What were the residential housing trends in Oregon from 2004 through 2017?**

This research project primarily analyzes housing data provided by the City of Eugene from 2010 through 2016. However, permitted housing unit data provided by the US Census is included in this section to explore market trends in Oregon prior to 2010. From 2004 through 2017, the percentage of single-family homes manufactured per year generally decreased when compared to multifamily housing. In 2017, per year production was nearly equal with single-family homes at 54% and multifamily homes at 46%.

**Table 1.1 Oregon Housing Units**

| <b>2004 - 2017 Permitted Housing Units - US Census</b> |                      |                        |                    |                        |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>Single Family</b> |                        | <b>Multifamily</b> |                        |
| <b>2004</b>  | 20,728               | 78%                    | 5,655              | 22%                    |
| <b>2005</b>  | 23,840               | 79%                    | 6,214              | 21%                    |
| <b>2006</b>  | 19,859               | 77%                    | 5,998              | 23%                    |
| <b>2007</b>  | 15,310               | 74%                    | 5,249              | 26%                    |
| <b>2008</b>  | 7,466                | 65%                    | 3,970              | 35%                    |
| <b>2009</b>  | 5,278                | 76%                    | 1,667              | 24%                    |
| <b>2010</b>  | 5,259                | 78%                    | 1,467              | 22%                    |
| <b>2011</b>  | 4,854                | 64%                    | 2,709              | 36%                    |
| <b>2012</b>  | 6,342                | 61%                    | 4,132              | 39%                    |
| <b>2013</b>  | 8,417                | 57%                    | 6,254              | 43%                    |
| <b>2014</b>  | 8,577                | 52%                    | 7,792              | 48%                    |
| <b>2015</b>  | 10,255               | 60%                    | 6,911              | 40%                    |
| <b>2016</b>  | 11,006               | 57%                    | 8,332              | 43%                    |
| <b>2017</b>  | 10,604               | 54%                    | 9,057              | 46%                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | 157,795              | <b>% of Year Total</b> | 75,407             | <b>% of Year Total</b> |

**Source: US Census**

**Note on Table 1.1 Oregon Housing Units:** It is necessary to acknowledge the discrepancy between US Census building permit data in Table 1.1 and building permit data in the following sections. The data in Table 1.1 is derived from: (<https://www.census.gov/construction/bps/pdf/annualhistorybystate.pdf>). The building permit data in the following sections was obtained from City of Eugene housing records. It is beyond the scope of this project to understand why this data varies so drastically.

**b) How many multifamily housing permits were approved by-right in Eugene from 2010 through 2016?**

From 2010 through 2016, approximately 245 multifamily housing permits were approved, compared to 1,243 single-family permits. The most multifamily permits occurred in 2012, (64 permits), while the least occurred in 2015, (7 permits). 71% of all residential permits were single-family homes. Multifamily permits accounted for approximately 14% of all residential permits approved. 15% of residential permits were other types of housing, including duplexes, manufactured homes, townhouses and secondary dwelling units.

**Table 1.2 Eugene Housing Permits**

| <b>2010 - 2016 Eugene Housing Permits</b> |                      |                    |               |                     |                  |                                |              |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
|   | <b>Single Family</b> | <b>Multifamily</b> | <b>Duplex</b> | <b>Manufactured</b> | <b>Townhouse</b> | <b>Secondary Dwelling Unit</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>2010</b>                               | 145                  | 15                 | 5             | 11                  | 5                | 8                              | 189          |
| <b>2011</b>                               | 100                  | 37                 | 5             | 13                  | 8                | 15                             | 178          |
| <b>2012</b>                               | 111                  | 64                 | 5             | 20                  | 5                | 6                              | 211          |
| <b>2013</b>                               | 165                  | 49                 | 3             | 12                  | 4                | 8                              | 241          |
| <b>2014</b>                               | 232                  | 60                 | 18            | 15                  | 13               | 10                             | 348          |
| <b>2015</b>                               | 182                  | 7                  | 11            | 10                  | 8                | 1                              | 219          |
| <b>2016</b>                               | 308                  | 13                 | 13            | 16                  | 10               | 2                              | 362          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>1,243</b>         | <b>245</b>         | <b>60</b>     | <b>97</b>           | <b>53</b>        | <b>50</b>                      | <b>1,748</b> |
| <b>% of Total</b>                         | <b>71%</b>           | <b>14%</b>         | <b>3%</b>     | <b>6%</b>           | <b>3%</b>        | <b>3%</b>                      |              |

Source: City of Eugene 2010 - 2016 Residential Housing Records

**c) How many multifamily housing units were approved in Eugene from 2010 through 2016?**

Approximately 4,309 housing units were provided by multifamily developments in Eugene between 2010 through 2016. Though single-family housing permits outpaced multifamily permits by 998, multifamily developments provided approximately 3,066 more housing units than single-family homes. Overall, 21% of residential units were single-family homes. 73% of residential units were multifamily homes. 7% of residential units were other types of housing, including duplexes, manufactured homes, townhouses and secondary dwelling units.

**Table 1.3 Eugene Housing Units**

| 2010 - 2016 Eugene Housing Units |               |              |            |              |           |                         |              |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------|
|                                  | Single Family | Multifamily  | Duplex     | Manufactured | Townhouse | Secondary Dwelling Unit | Total        |
| <b>2010</b>                      | 146           | 298          | 10         | 11           | 17        | 8                       | 490          |
| <b>2011</b>                      | 103           | 714          | 10         | 13           | 20        | 15                      | 875          |
| <b>2012</b>                      | 111           | 994          | 10         | 20           | 10        | 6                       | 1,151        |
| <b>2013</b>                      | 166           | 1,395        | 6          | 12           | 4         | 14                      | 1,597        |
| <b>2014</b>                      | 227           | 598          | 36         | 15           | 13        | 10                      | 899          |
| <b>2015</b>                      | 182           | 54           | 18         | 10           | 20        | 1                       | 285          |
| <b>2016</b>                      | 308           | 256          | 24         | 16           | 10        | 2                       | 616          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>1,243</b>  | <b>4,309</b> | <b>114</b> | <b>97</b>    | <b>94</b> | <b>56</b>               | <b>5,913</b> |
| <b>% of Total</b>                | <b>21%</b>    | <b>73%</b>   | <b>2%</b>  | <b>2%</b>    | <b>2%</b> | <b>1%</b>               |              |

Source: City of Eugene 2010 - 2016 Residential Housing Records

## 2) Land Use Actions and Conditions

The following sections discuss required land use actions for multifamily developments in Eugene. Common adjustments to building codes are detailed below. In addition, conditions imposed on multifamily developments that required an application are also discussed.

### a) How many multifamily developments have gone through the land use action process?

From 2010 through 2016, approximately 31 different projects with land use applications required a land use action. Of these 31 projects, approximately 56 different land use applications required actions. Approximately 52% of multifamily developments that required a land use action were approved with conditions. Proposed multifamily developments were rarely denied.

Of the 31 multifamily projects, 58% required at least two land use actions. 16% percent required at least three land use actions. 6% required four or more land use actions.

**Table 1.4 Multifamily Land Use Actions**

| <b>2010 - 2016 Multifamily Land Use Actions</b> |   |                                      |                                      |  |                         |              |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
|   | <b>Planned Urban Development Final (PF)</b> | <b>Adjustment Review Minor (ARA)</b> | <b>Adjustment Review Major (ARB)</b> | <b>Planned Urban Development Tentative (PDT)</b> | <b>Site Review (SR)</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Approved</b>                                 | 3   | 2                                    | 1                                    |  | 2                       | 8            |
| <b>Approved with Conditions</b>                 | 5   | 6                                    | 2                                    | 5  | 11                      | 29           |
| <b>Denied</b>                                   |   |                                      |                                      | 2  |                         | 2            |
| <b>No Decision</b>                              |   | 7                                    | 4                                    |  | 6                       | 18*          |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>8</b>                                    | <b>15</b>                            | <b>7</b>                             | <b>7</b>   | <b>19</b>               | <b>56</b>    |

\*These applications were either withdrawn by the applicant or have not received a decision by the planning director.

Source: City of Eugene 2010 - 2016 Residential Housing Records

**b) What are common code adjustments that prevent outright approval of proposed multifamily developments?**

Adjustments to multifamily standards were the most commonly imposed code adjustments by the City of Eugene. Multifamily developments that required land use applications most commonly needed adjustments to building orientation and entrances on the site. Parking configuration was the second most common adjustment. The size of the building and outer façade was the third most adjusted. Accessibility to and from the site by pedestrians and vehicles was the fourth most adjusted code. Finally, mandatory open space requirements were the fifth most common code adjustment for multifamily developments. Table 1.5 below details the five most commonly adjusted codes.

**Table 1.5 Most Common Multifamily Code Adjustments**

| <b>Top Five Most Common Adjustments</b>  |              |
|--|--------------|
|  | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>EC 9.5500(5) Multifamily Standards: Building Orientation and Entrances</b>    | 12           |
| <b>EC 9.5500(12) Multifamily Standards: Vehicle Parking</b>                      | 10           |
| <b>EC 9.5500(6) Multifamily Standards: Building Mass and Façade</b>              | 8            |
| <b>EC 9.5500(11) Multifamily Standards: Site Access and Internal Circulation</b> | 7            |
| <b>EC 9.5500(9) Multifamily Standards: Open Space</b>                            | 5            |

Source: City of Eugene 2010 - 2016 Residential Housing Records

**c) Are multifamily developments in Eugene built to the maximum density allowed within zoning?**

According to gross density calculations compared to net density standards dictated by zoning regulations, no multifamily developments that required land use actions met or exceeded maximum density standards. Of the 31 multifamily projects that required land use applications, the units per acre averaged five to 15 less than the maximum net density per acre allowed within the zone. For example, the average gross density of a proposed project in Residential 2 (R2) zoning is roughly 20 units per acre. The maximum density of an R2 zone is 28 units per acre. Therefore, the majority of multifamily developments that require a land use action in Eugene are not developed to their maximum allowed density. The below table illustrates multifamily land use application characteristics for all applications from 2010 through 2016.

**Table 1.6 Multifamily Land Use Application Characteristics**

| <b>2010 - 2016 Multifamily Land Use Application Characteristics</b> |       |
|---|-------|
| <b>Total Units</b>  | 3,587 |
| <b>Average Units</b>  | 120   |
| <b>Average Acreage</b>  | 6     |
| <b>Average Gross Density Per Acre (Units)</b>                       | 33.1  |

Source: City of Eugene 2010 - 2016 Residential Housing Records

## **d) What conditions did the City of Eugene impose in the land use actions?**

A variety of conditions were imposed on the four case studies analyzed for this research project. These conditions were required to be completed by the applicant prior to final approval of the proposed multifamily development. All conditions for the four case studies are summarized below.

### **Alder Springs Apartments**

The City of Eugene required four conditions of approval for the Alder Springs apartments. These conditions are summarized below:

- Compliance with stormwater drainage easement
- Compliance with all future public utility easements
- Issue of a PEPI permit to guarantee construction of future public improvements
- Submittal of report verifying compliance with tree preservation and removal conditions

### **Amazon Corner**

The City of Eugene required two conditions of approval for Amazon Corner. These conditions are summarized below:

- Verification of a parking configuration consistent with city code standards
- Required planting of trees to create a natural visual buffer

### **Goodpasture Island PUD**

The City of Eugene required 29 conditions of approval for the Goodpasture Island PUD. These conditions are summarized below:

- Compliance with right-of-way widths
- Required planting of vegetation and trees
- Compliance with pre-determined vehicle trip estimates
- Traffic mitigation installations such as a crosswalk for pedestrian safety
- Verification of public utility compliance such as water, wastewater and electricity
- Compliance with geotechnical, flood hazard and storm water conditions
- Compliance with landscape conditions and verification of Willamette River Greenway permit
- Compliance with pedestrian circulation and parking conditions

### **Shotola Apartments**

The City of Eugene required five conditions of approval for the Shotola apartments. These conditions are summarized below:

- Compliance with pedestrian access requirements



- Compliance with recycling and garbage area conditions
- Mandatory adjustments of alley width adjacent to site
- Compliance with stormwater management conditions

### **3) Public Opinion**

The following sections detail the primary concerns of opponents to multifamily housing and whether comments have measurable impacts on multifamily developments.

#### **a) Does public opposition impact the final site plans of approved multifamily developments?**

- Public comments rarely impact the final site plans of approved multifamily developments.
- The City of Eugene does not keep record of instances when public comment impacts an application's site plans.
- According to the Register Guard, in one of the case study projects, the developer of the Goodpasture Island PUD may have lowered the height of one proposed building and reduced the development's overall units in response to public opposition. However, the developer also stated that local housing demand would not meet the number of units within the original proposed development. Therefore, it is unclear whether public opposition actually impacted the final site plans of the development.

#### **b) What are the primary concerns of opponents to increased housing density?**

- Opposition in multifamily case studies were most concerned about the increase in traffic as a result of the multifamily development. Nearly all opposition resided in single-family homes and were most upset that the multifamily development would increase traffic in their neighborhood.
- All opposition in case studies believed that multifamily developments decrease the availability of on-street parking. Residents feared they would be forced to park on neighboring streets, far from their homes. Most opposition felt that the City did not take parking into account when approving multifamily developments.
- Opposition in case studies broadly believed that higher residential density resulted in more noise and less privacy. Many opponents stated that they had already moved out of noisy neighborhoods to escape loud environments.

All public comments submitted for the four multifamily case studies were individually analyzed for this research project. Table 1.7 below reports all concerns based on their occurrence within public comments.

**Table 1.7 Case Study Opposition Concerns**

|                        |            | Amazon Corner |            | Goodpasture Island PUD |  |
|------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------------------|--|
|                        | Count      | Percentage    | Count      | Percentage             |  |
| Traffic Increase       | 86         | 37%           | 58         | 28%                    |  |
| Pedestrian Safety      | 59         | 25%           | 40         | 19%                    |  |
| Environmental          | 8          | 3%            | 38         | 18%                    |  |
| Neighborhood Character | 41         | 18%           | 31         | 15%                    |  |
| Loss of Open Space     | 0          | NA            | 24         | 12%                    |  |
| Increased Noise        | 11         | 5%            | 8          | 4%                     |  |
| Parking                | 21         | 9%            | 5          | 2%                     |  |
| Home Value             | 2          | 0%            | 0          | NA                     |  |
| Loss of Privacy        | 4          | 2%            | 2          | 1%                     |  |
| Increased Crime        | 1          | 0%            | 0          | NA                     |  |
| Anti-Renter            | 1          | 0%            | 0          | NA                     |  |
| <b>Total Concerns</b>  | <b>234</b> |               | <b>206</b> |                        |  |
| <b>Total Comments</b>  | <b>135</b> |               | <b>85</b>  |                        |  |
|                        |            | Alder Springs |            | Shotola Apartments     |  |
|                        | Count      | Percentage    | Count      | Percentage             |  |
| Traffic Increase       | 8          | 22%           | 0          | NA                     |  |
| Pedestrian Safety      | 4          | 11%           | 0          | NA                     |  |
| Environmental          | 1          | 3%            | 1          | 13%                    |  |
| Neighborhood Character | 7          | 19%           | 2          | 25%                    |  |
| Loss of Open Space     | 0          | NA            | 0          | NA                     |  |
| Increased Noise        | 3          | 8%            | 1          | 13%                    |  |
| Parking                | 5          | 14%           | 3          | 38%                    |  |
| Home Value             | 3          | 8%            | 0          | NA                     |  |
| Loss of Privacy        | 4          | 11%           | 0          | NA                     |  |
| Increased Crime        | 1          | 3%            | 1          | 13%                    |  |
| Anti-Renter            | 0          | NA            | 0          | NA                     |  |
| <b>Total Concerns</b>  | <b>36</b>  |               | <b>8</b>   |                        |  |
| <b>Total Comments</b>  | <b>15</b>  |               | <b>3</b>   |                        |  |

Source: City of Eugene 2010 - 2016 Residential Housing Records

### **Amazon Corner Opposition Concerns**

The most common concern of surrounding residents to Amazon Corner was the potential increase in traffic. The increase in traffic was assumed to result in more vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle accidents. Many neighbors also felt that the development would be detrimental to the neighborhood's character. Loss of parking on surrounding streets and increased noise were the next most common concerns.

### **Goodpasture Island PUD Opposition Concerns**

The most common concern of surrounding residents to the Goodpasture Island PUD was the potential increase in traffic. Surrounding residents were very concerned that increased traffic would result in higher pedestrian accidents with vehicles. Many neighbors were also concerned about the negative environmental impacts of the development, as well as the effect on the neighborhood's character. Loss of open space was the next most common concern.

### **Alder Springs Opposition Concerns**

The most common concern of surrounding residents to the Alder Springs apartments was the potential increase in traffic as a result of the development. Many neighbors also felt that the development would be detrimental to the neighborhood's character. Loss of parking on surrounding streets and decreased privacy were the next most common concerns.

### **Shotola Apartments Opposition Concerns**

The most common concern of surrounding residents to the Shotola apartments was the impact on parking. Residents were also concerned that the applicant had not provided sufficient off-street parking for the development. Two of the three public comments were also concerned that the apartment complex would not be compatible with the neighborhood's character.

### **c) Do the complaints submitted by residents in Eugene reflect those seen in NIMBY literature referenced for this research paper?**

All NIMBY literature referenced for this research project is available in Appendix F: Literature Review. Types of NIMBYism identified in literature are seen in many of the opposition's comments. These comments primarily concentrate on the negative aspects of apartment complexes within existing neighborhoods. Though not greatly emphasized, many comments state that close proximity to apartment complexes lowers the value of their home, which is a common NIMBY stereotype. Several comments state that greater multifamily density results in higher crime rates, which is also a common NIMBY theme. The most common concern expressed by opposition is the negative impact of multifamily developments on traffic within surrounding neighborhoods. Many opposing comments state that increased traffic dramatically impacts the safety of pedestrians. Fear of increased traffic is a primary theme in NIMBY

literature. The below table compares common themes in NIMBYism that relate to complaints about multifamily developments in Eugene.

**Table 1.8 NIMBYism in Literature**

| NIMBYism in Literature  | Related Eugene Opposition Complaints  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Homeowners believe close proximity to multifamily developments lowers property values (Pendall, 114).</b></p>   | <p>Apartment complexes reduce the desirability of neighborhoods to potential homeowners. Apartment complexes cause current homeowners to leave neighborhoods.</p>     |
| <p><b>Americans idealize homeownership in contrast to renting. As a result, homeowners negatively stereotype multifamily developments (Pendall, 115).</b></p> | <p>Apartment complexes are not compatible with the character of single-family neighborhoods. Further, multifamily developments reduce privacy and increase noise.</p> |
| <p><b>Homeowners believe that multifamily housing increases crime (Koenig, 436).</b></p>  | <p>Higher concentrations of people in one area result in higher crime rates.</p>  |
| <p><b>Homeowners believe that higher density housing increases traffic congestion (Pendall, 124).</b></p>   | <p>Apartment complexes increase traffic in single-family neighborhoods and decrease availability of parking.</p>  |

**d) What percentage of Eugene complaints were seen in NIMBY literature?**

**Homeowners believe close proximity to multifamily developments lowers property values (Pendall, 114).**

- Approximately 1% of all comments believe that close proximity to multifamily developments lowers property values.

**Americans idealize homeownership in contrast to renting. As a result, homeowners negatively stereotype multifamily developments (Pendall, 115).**

- Approximately 17% of all comments believe multifamily developments are not compatible with their neighborhood’s character.

- Approximately 2% of all comments believe multifamily developments reduce privacy for surrounding neighbors.
- Approximately 5% of all comments believe multifamily developments increase noise within neighborhoods.

**Homeowners believe that multifamily housing increases crime (Koenig, 436).**

- Less than 1% of all comments believe multifamily developments increase crime.

**Homeowners believe that higher density housing increases traffic congestion (Pendall, 124).**

- Approximately 31% of all comments believe multifamily developments increase traffic within neighborhoods.
- Approximately 22% of all comments believe multifamily developments decrease pedestrian safety within neighborhoods.

**e) What types of NIMBYism found in literature were not seen in Eugene comments?**

Review of literature concludes that the primary cause of NIMBYism stems from racial prejudice, outdated American idealism of homeownership, and the desire to maintain property values (Pendall, 115). There are no recorded concerns in Eugene comments that relate to racial bias or prejudice. The American idealism of homeownership is related to such values as privacy, neighborhood character and safety. Protection of these values are seen in Eugene comments. The desire to maintain property values is present in Eugene comments, but statistically negligible. The concerns expressed in Eugene comments represent the most common forms of NIMBYism in housing.

**f) Do the public comments reflect the reason for the land use action?**

The primary NIMBY concerns connected to code adjustments in multifamily applications were loss of privacy, neighborhood character, traffic increase, pedestrian safety and loss of parking. Very few of the comments cited city codes when commenting on specific portions of multifamily developments. This implies that opposing community members are most concerned about aspects of the development related to their own stereotypes and prejudgments. Adjustments to the code are rarely targeted by opposing members of multifamily developments. Therefore, the majority of public comments are based on common NIMBY themes, and do not reflect the reason for the land use action. These unrelated comments include increased noise, loss of home value, increased crime, environmental concerns, and loss of open space.

**Table 1.9 Case Study Code Adjustments**

| Case Study Code Adjustments   | Related Case Study Concerns              |
|---|--|
| EC 9.5500(4) Multifamily Standards: Minimum and Maximum Building Setbacks | Loss of Privacy                          |
| EC 9.5500(5) Multifamily Standards: Building Orientation and Entrances    | Loss of Privacy                          |
| EC 9.5500(6) Multifamily Standards: Building Mass and Façade              | Loss of Privacy / Neighborhood Character |
| EC 9.5500(9) Multifamily Standards: Open Space                            | Loss of Open Space                       |
| EC 9.5500(11) Multifamily Standards: Site Access and Internal Circulation | Traffic Increase / Pedestrian Safety     |
| EC 9.5500(12) Multifamily Standards: Vehicle Parking                      | Loss of Parking                          |

**g) Which concerns are related to code adjustments and which concerns are NIMBYism?**

Approximately 82% of all public comments relate to the above code adjustments in EC 9.5500 Multifamily Standards. These code adjustments relate to public concerns such as loss of privacy, neighborhood character, loss of open space, loss of parking, traffic, and pedestrian safety.

Approximately 18% of all public comments relate to other NIMBY concerns such as environmental impacts, increased noise, increased crime, and home value.

**h) Do public comments cite specific building codes in their complaints?**

Surrounding residential neighbors rarely cite building codes in their opposing comments. The few comments that do cite building codes are generally submitted by attorneys who represent opposing property owners.

## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides conclusions for this project based on the findings provided in chapter 3 and the literature review in Appendix F. This chapter is separated into sections titled *Key Conclusions*, *Conclusions from Data*, and *Conclusions from Literature*.

### KEY CONCLUSIONS

- There is no evidence that public comments altered the final site plans of any multifamily developments in Eugene from 2010 through 2016.
- Multifamily developments proposed by developers are nearly always approved; some are approved with conditions while most are approved by-right.
- Conditions do not limit the number of units approved within a proposed multifamily development. Developers ensure that the proposed units in their development conform to Eugene's zoning regulations prior to applying for a building permit.

### CONCLUSIONS FROM DATA

#### 1) Trends in Multifamily Housing Permits

##### a) What were the residential housing trends in Oregon from 2004 to 2017?

From 2004 through 2017, the percentage of single-family homes manufactured per year generally decreased when compared to multifamily housing. In 2017, per year production was nearly equal with single-family homes at 54% and multifamily homes at 46%.

##### b) How many multifamily housing permits were approved by-right in Eugene from 2010 through 2016?

The majority of housing permits from 2010 through 2016 were single family homes (71%). Multifamily permits accounted for approximately 14% of all residential permits approved. 15% of residential permits were other types of housing.

##### c) How many multifamily housing units were approved in Eugene from 2010 through 2016?

The majority of permitted housing units from 2010 through 2016 were multifamily homes (73%). Single-family units accounted for approximately 21% of residential units.

## **2) Land Use Actions and Conditions**

### **a) How many multifamily developments have gone through the land use action process?**

Approximately 52% of multifamily developments that required a land use action were approved with conditions. Proposed multifamily developments were rarely denied. 58% required at least two land use actions. 16% percent required at least three land use actions.

### **b) What are common code adjustments that prevent outright approval of proposed multifamily developments?**

Adjustments to EC 9.5500 Multifamily Standards were the most commonly imposed code adjustments by the City of Eugene. The most common adjustments were building orientation and entrances, vehicle parking, building mass and façade, site access and circulation, and open space.

### **c) Are multifamily developments in Eugene built to the maximum density allowed within zoning?**

No. None of the multifamily developments that required a land use action in Eugene were developed to their maximum allowed density.

### **d) What conditions did the City of Eugene impose in the land use actions?**

The conditions imposed by the City of Eugene varied by multifamily development. Common conditions of approval included compliance with public utility installations, pedestrian access requirements, vegetation and tree preservation, stormwater management, and parking configuration.

## **3) Public Opinion**

### **a) Does public opposition impact the final site plans of approved multifamily developments?**

Public comments do not impact the final site plans of approved multifamily developments.



## **b) What are the primary concerns of opponents to increased housing density?**

Opposition was most concerned about the increase in traffic as a result of the multifamily development. Pedestrian safety was the second most common concern. Damage to neighborhood character was the third most common concern, followed next by loss of parking.

## **c) Do the complaints submitted by residents in Eugene reflect those seen in NIMBY literature referenced for this research paper?**

The majority of comments complain about increase in traffic and loss of public safety, which is a common theme in NIMBY literature. Though not greatly emphasized, many comments state that close proximity to apartment complexes lowers the value of their home, which is a common NIMBY stereotype. Several comments state that greater multifamily density results in higher crime rates, which is also a common NIMBY theme.

## **d) What percentage of Eugene complaints were seen in NIMBY literature?**

Approximately 31% of all Eugene complaints believe multifamily developments increase traffic within neighborhoods.

Approximately 22% of all Eugene complaints believe multifamily developments decrease pedestrian safety within neighborhoods.

Approximately 17% of all Eugene complaints believe multifamily developments are not compatible with their neighborhood's character.

Approximately 5% of all Eugene complaints believe multifamily developments increase noise within neighborhoods.

## **e) What types of NIMBYism found in literature were not seen in Eugene comments?**

Racial prejudice was the primary NIMBY stereotype that did not occur within any opposing comments. All other Eugene comments exhibited the most common negative NIMBY stereotypes seen in literature.

## **f) Do the public comments reflect the reason for the land use action?**

The primary NIMBY concerns connected to code adjustments in multifamily applications were loss of privacy, neighborhood character, traffic increase, pedestrian safety and loss of parking.

**g) Which concerns are related to code adjustments and which concerns are NIMBYism?**

Approximately 82% of all concerns relate to loss of privacy, neighborhood character, loss of open space, loss of parking, traffic, and pedestrian safety.

Approximately 18% of all other NIMBY concerns relate to environmental impacts, increased noise, increased crime, and home value.

**h) Do public comments cite specific building codes in their complaints?**

The few comments that do cite building codes are generally submitted by attorneys who represent opposing property owners.

**CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature referenced for this research project indicates that the housing market for low-income families in America has become worse over time. Affluent housing communities continue to resist higher density developments for fear of increased crime and lower property values. NIMBYism is a complicated, multifaceted social issue caused by ignorance, prejudice and racism. Research indicates that public education could reduce the resistance to high density, low-income developments. Research concerning housing attitudes must incorporate attitudes towards race and socioeconomic status in future studies. This will allow future research to provide a more comprehensive perception of the challenges facing multifamily development. It is critical for housing advocates and planners to understand modern perceptions of NIMBYism in housing. These are all issues that planners must take into consideration when addressing NIMBYism with the public.

## CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide recommendations that Eugene administrators and planners should consider when assessing future multifamily developments. The recommendations in this chapter primarily recommend altering the process of approving multifamily developments. In addition, this chapter explains how improved public knowledge of zoning regulations could reduce residential opposition to multifamily developments.

### Recommendation

- Multifamily developments that require a land use action often require adjustments to similar Eugene building codes. For this reason, the City should consider revising specific codes that are repeatedly adjusted by proposed developments. Repeated adjustments may imply that the building code is creating an unnecessary barrier to development.

### Action

- The building codes that are most often adjusted by developers in Eugene are building orientation and entrances, vehicle parking, building mass and façade, site access and internal circulation, and open space. These codes are adjusted most often because portions of proposed developments do not immediately comply with City standards. City of Eugene administrators should reference the site plans of developments that applied for adjustments to these building codes. Review of site plans may reveal that building codes are excessively restrictive. Less restrictive zoning could speed the process of approval for multifamily developments. Less restrictive zoning could also make multifamily housing more appealing to potential developers.

### Recommendation

- Of the 31 multifamily projects that required land use applications from 2010 through 2016, 58% required at least two land use actions. On average, most land use actions required 3 – 4 months to achieve approval by the City of Eugene Planning Division. The City could consider combining land use actions required to achieve final approval for some projects. Fewer land use actions could increase the speed of development for multifamily housing projects in Eugene.

### Action

- There are five potential land use actions required for multifamily developments with land use applications: PDF, PDT, ARA, ARB and SR. City administrators should review all requirements within each action and assess the possibility of combining actions. Each action requires additional costs to the developer and additional administration time for City planners. Fewer land use actions may result in a cheaper, faster and more efficient approval process for multifamily developments in Eugene.

### Recommendation

- The City of Eugene should begin to provide zoning information for future and current homeowners. According to public comments analyzed for this project, many homeowners expressed lack of knowledge concerning allowed uses in their neighborhood. The City of Eugene should consider improving the accessibility of zoning information for the public. Better informed residents could reduce opposition to multifamily developments.

### Action

- City of Eugene planners should produce zoning information pamphlets that detail the types of approved uses within residential sectors of Eugene's Urban Growth Boundary. These pamphlets could be distributed at the City of Eugene Planning Department. Current homeowners may find these pamphlets beneficial when consulting with City planners for improvements to their existing property. In addition, City planners could provide these pamphlets to local real estate agencies for distribution to future homeowners. The goal is to make current and future homeowners more aware of the types of developments that may be proposed within their neighborhood.

### Recommendation

- The City of Eugene should adopt a universal records system for residential permit data. Data sets should be uniform and useable. Accurate assessment of the 2010 – 2016 residential housing records used for this project required intensive manual organization. Though the City of Eugene is not responsible for providing data sets to the public, improved housing records would make assessing information more efficient.

### Action

- Organization of housing data can begin by categorizing all phased and non-phased residential housing permits by year. All types of housing permits could next be categorized within each year, such as multifamily, single family, duplex, manufactured, and secondary dwelling units. A uniform records system makes referencing and assessing housing data easier in the future.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research in Eugene multifamily housing should include the following methods:

- Interviews with planners and developers may help future researchers better understand the land use process for multifamily developments. Planners and developers were not consulted for this research project. As a result, none of the findings for this project include insight from professionals currently involved in multifamily housing. The perspective of professionals involved in multifamily housing would be highly useful when analyzing data and developing findings.
- Consulting land use planners may provide a more accurate assessment of alterations to final site plans as a result of public opposition. Research for this project did not involve communication with any of the planners who approved multifamily developments used in the case studies. As a result, assessing changes to site plans throughout each phase of development was difficult.
- Interviews with property owners in opposition to multifamily housing would provide a better understanding of their concerns. No members of opposing residential neighborhoods were consulted for this research project. Interviewing property owners would provide first-person insight of opposing perceptions to multifamily developments.

## APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES



| Alder Springs Apartments           |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Final Decision</b>              | October 13, 2017  |
| <b>Proposed Units</b>              | 106   |
| <b>Constructed Units</b>           | -   |
| <b>Acres</b>                       | 8.61  |
| <b>Zoning</b>                      | GO / R-2  |
| <b>Gross Density</b>               | 12.3 du per acre  |
| <b>Zoning Density</b>              | 13 - 28 du per acre   |
| <b>Neighborhood</b>                | River Road Neighborhood   |
| <b>Public Comments</b>             | Yes   |
| <b>Conditions of Approval</b>      | 4   |
| <b>Reasons for Land Use Action</b> | Minimum and Maximum Building Setbacks / Building Orientation and Entrances / Building Articulation / Block Requirements |

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **Proposal**

The subject site is located near the northwest corner of the intersection of Howard Avenue and North Park Avenue. The site is a portion of Lot 41 of Pennington Acres Subdivision. The applicant is proposing to construct 106 apartment units in 14 two-story buildings, configured as a mixture of 4,6,8, and 12-plexes and one standalone single story manager's unit. The site is split zoned, with GO General Office and R-2 Medium Density Residential. This development also includes the creation of a private street that will extend from Larry Lane and circulate through the development site prior to connecting North Park Avenue. In addition to the private street, the development proposes parking and necessary public/private utilities to serve the site. The area to be developed is located entirely in the GO zoned portion of the site. The R-2 zoned portion of the site is almost entirely a Goal 5 protected wetland and riparian area. This portion of the site will be left undeveloped. Another portion of the site, adjacent to North Park is an unprotected wetland and riparian area. Most of the area is also left undeveloped.

The applicant elected to use the needed housing approval criteria for the site review application. This written statement addresses the needed housing approval criteria for a site review at EC 9.8445.

### **Summary of Project Outcome**

The applicant proposed the construction of a 106-unit multifamily apartment complex. The development received significant opposition from surrounding community members and was appealed following the director's decision. A primary concern of surrounding residents was increased traffic as a result of the development. The application was approved by the Hearings Official after first being appealed. The Hearings Official found that the Planning Director had made one very important assignment of error. This error is worth explaining as it illustrates the primary opinion of opposition to the development.

The Hearings Official stated the following:

"The Planning Director's decision not to require a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) was based solely on the applicant's calculations for vehicle trips – even though the applicant's calculations only considered the proposed 106 unit apartment complex. The Planning Director erred by failing to require the applicant to consider all the development that would occur on all lots resulting from the land division, per EC 9.8670(1) in their calculations."

"In addition to calculation of vehicle trips from the proposed 106 unit apartment complex, the Planning Director and applicant must also take into consideration Phase 1 of the development (the 40 single-family homes) as well as the likely development of the three undeveloped residential lots (42, 43, and 44) and the likely development of 'lot 46'."

The Planning Director only considered the number of vehicle trips that would be generated by the 106 apartments in determining that the TIA was not required. The Hearings Official found fault with this method, as vehicle trips created from developments on neighboring lots were ignored. However, the Hearings Official decided that the primary goal of the development was to provide needed housing opportunities for Eugene. The Hearings Official concluded that the housing proposal was completed using clear and objective standards. Conversely, the Hearings Official ruled that the TIA standards were not clear and objective. Therefore, the TIA was not required and the development was approved.

There was moderate media attention surrounding the proposed multifamily development. The Register Guard reported that the owner of the subject property, Brent Lanz, proposed to construct the 106-unit multifamily apartment complex to be spread across 13 apartment buildings on vacant 8.6 acre lots. Lanz purchased the property for \$900,000 prior to proposing the development. Lanz defended his proposed development on grounds that the local housing market needed more affordable housing in west Eugene. The Register Guard cited City of Eugene building permits, stating that the majority of multifamily housing in Eugene was focused near campus. As a result, most multifamily housing catered exclusively to students, not families in need of housing. The property was zoned to accommodate most types of apartments.

### **Summary of Public Comments**

Nearly all public comments presented concerns over the increase in traffic as a result of the development. Several opponents provided their own calculations that claimed a TIA was necessary to properly assess the effects of increased residential occupancy. Planners from the City of Eugene responded with citations from the ITE Trip Generation Manual, indicating that the proposed development would not exceed the 100-trip threshold that automatically triggers a TIA.

Street connectivity and accessibility was an additional concern of applicants. Applicants expressed anger that traffic would be routed through an existing subdivision. City planners explained to the concerned applicants via email that the subdivision in question was designed to serve the proposed development. The proposed development was originally Phase 2 of the existing subdivision. The proposed development had since changed names to Alder Springs.

A third primary concern involved parking, which came from surrounding neighbors living in existing single-family homes near the proposed development. The opponents broadly acknowledged that apartments were a needed form of housing. However, these opponents stated that multifamily housing would make living within their existing homes highly inconvenient. The single-family homeowners indicated that the developers had not adequately planned the proposed development to accommodate overflow parking. Single-family homeowners believed that once the parking lot for the proposed development became full, cars would be forced to park on the street. Opponents argued that their streets were not wide enough to accommodate extra cars. Opponents stated that the proposed development should be denied, and single-family homes built in its place.



Surrounding home owners were also concerned for the safety of pedestrians as a result of the increased traffic. Increased foot traffic was also believed to contribute to higher crime rates. The addition of more people in the area was also expected to increase the level of noise in the area. Loss of quietness and privacy was a concern of multiple home owners in the surrounding neighborhood.

In summary, 15 public comments were reviewed for this case study. Residents from the surrounding area who received notice of the decision reported the following concerns.

According to residents, development of the Alder Springs apartment complex would:

- Create an unsafe environment for neighbors due to increased traffic
- Reduce available parking on surrounding streets from overflowing parking lot
- Increase congestion due to narrow neighborhood streets
- Increase crime and noise
- Decrease privacy

#### **Final Impacts of Public Comments on Alder Springs apartment complex**

- To be determined.



| Amazon Corner                      |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Final Decision</b>              | January 27, 2017  |
| <b>Proposed Units</b>              | 108   |
| <b>Constructed Units</b>           | 117   |
| <b>Acres</b>                       | 1.8   |
| <b>Zoning</b>                      | C-2   |
| <b>Gross Density</b>               | 65  |
| <b>Zoning Density</b>              | 45 du per acre minimum  |
| <b>Neighborhood</b>                | Southeast Neighbors   |
| <b>Public Comments</b>             | Yes   |
| <b>Conditions of Approval</b>      | 2   |
| <b>Reasons for Land Use Action</b> | Vehicle Parking / Building Mass and Façade / Minimum and Maximum Building Setbacks / Site Access and Internal Circulation / Landscape Standards |

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **Proposal**

The proposal was for an Adjustment Review to allow flexibility under the City's multifamily residential development and landscaping standards. As presented in the application materials, the overall project is to construct a mixed-use development that includes a combination of residential apartments and commercial uses. The development will include up to 108 apartments and approximately 14,000 square feet of commercial space. A list of the requested adjustments and an evaluation of the project's compliance with the approval criteria is included below. The Adjustment Review application requires a Type II land use approval (a Planning Director Decision), and the relevant application procedures are addressed in EC 9.72000 – 9.7230.

The proposal also requires a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) application because the proposed development will generate over 100 peak hour vehicle trips.

### **Summary of Project Outcome**

Amazon Corner is a \$23 million mixed-use, multifamily development located in south Eugene. The 62-foot structure is situated behind a grocery store next to single-family homes. The proposed development will rise 22 feet above the grocery store. The proposed development is projected to house 117 renters. The owner, Michael Coughlin, paid \$1.7 million for the lot, which contained a church he later demolished. Amazon Corner will feature four stories of multifamily apartments with a bottom floor of retail stores, cafes and restaurants. An underground parking garage will accommodate residents of the development. New multifamily housing has rarely been proposed in south Eugene, as the majority of new apartments are situated near campus to accommodate students.

Though the development has received extensive disapproval from surrounding residents, the zoning standards accommodate high-rise apartments, regardless of proximity to single-family homes. In addition, Community Commercial (C-2) zoning allows developers to demolish single-family homes and build large, multifamily or commercial developments. Retail businesses and restaurants are allowed in C-2 zoning without conditions. Coughlin was required to complete a TIA for the development because daily vehicle trips were expected to increase by at least 100. Though Eugene-based Sandow Engineering found that Amazon Corner would increase traffic, the development would not exceed the mobility standards of the surrounding intersections. However, the City of Eugene planning director did require the addition of a signaled pedestrian crossing in front of the development. Also, the developer was required to add designated turn lanes to improve accessibility to the development. According to the Register Guard, Coughlin originally planned for Amazon Corner to be only four stories, but later assessed that five stories was required to ensure financial profit.

## Summary of Public Comments

Opposition broadly claimed that the TIA was inadequate, as it only studied traffic during evening hours. Opposition believed that early morning traffic should have also been studied. Neighbors were upset that the development did not require a public hearing, as all aspects of the project complied with City zoning. Though official public hearings were not provided, the local neighborhood association held multiple gatherings to voice their opposition. Opposition at the meetings primarily focused on increased traffic. However, building height and loss of parking was also a major concern. Neighbors were very worried that shoppers unable to locate within the underground parking garage would begin to park on surrounding streets.

The Register Guard claimed that the neighborhood association was planning to fight the development in its initial proposed form. However, the association lacked the funds to pursue a long-term legal battle. An initial appeal was pursued, and the City received approximately 135 written comments in opposition to the development.

In summary, residents surrounding Amazon Corner provided the following comments:

- The proposed building is too tall and out of character with the existing neighborhood
- 108 apartment units will bring too many people into the neighborhood and they will park on neighborhood streets
- Since underground parking might not be viable, there should be a determination by a qualified professional that below-grade underground parking is viable
- The proposed site plan does not clearly show the proposed building projections into the setback area beyond the building footprint. The site plan should be modified to show the amount of all building projections beyond the footprint. This could be accomplished with a colored dashed line, or similar indication
- No through movement connecting E. 32<sup>nd</sup> to Hilyard should be permitted

The project should provide:

- Median refuges for vehicles at 31<sup>st</sup> Street and Hilyard
- Bike lanes on 32<sup>nd</sup> avenue
- Median refuge for cars travelling south on 32<sup>nd</sup> avenue
- Mitigation of head-on left turns at 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Hilyard
- A bus stop bump-out on Hilyard in front of Amazon Corner
- Creation of 8 to 12-foot sidewalks with adequate setbacks
- The TIA study area should be expanded to include additional streets and intersections

## Final Impacts of Public Comments on Amazon Corner

- To be determined



| <b>Goodpasture Island PUD</b> |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Final Decision</b>         | September 11, 2013            |
| <b>Proposed Units</b>         | 840                           |
| <b>Constructed Units</b>      | 583                           |
| <b>Acres</b>                  | 22.70                         |
| <b>Zoning</b>                 | R-3                           |
| <b>Gross Density</b>          | 25.7 du per acre              |
| <b>Zoning Density</b>         | 20 - 56 du per acre           |
| <b>Neighborhood</b>           | Call Young Neighborhood Assn. |
| <b>Public Comments</b>        | Yes                           |
| <b>Conditions of Approval</b> | 29                            |

**Reasons for Land Use Action**      Bicycle Parking Standards / Pedestrian Circulation On-Site

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **Proposal**

Approval on Remand from the Land Use Board of Appeals of a modification to Tentative Planned Unit Development (PUD), Final PUD, and Tentative Subdivision approval to create a five-lot multifamily residential development including 10 apartment buildings and one age restricted and assisted living building, two residential use clubhouses, a neighborhood commercial building, open space, and associated infrastructure.

### **Summary of Project Outcome**

The Goodpasture Island Planned Urban Development was tentatively approved in concurrence with a Traffic Impact Analysis, Zone Change and Adjustable Review approval on June 14, 2010. The original application experienced significant modification to achieve approval. For example, the applicant requested to lower the building height of structures to allow for assisted living units and age restricted units instead of exclusively age restricted units as initially approved. As modified, the Goodpasture Island PUD consisted of 10 apartment buildings, one assisted living/age restricted building, a 7,011 square foot commercial building, two club houses, open space and associated infrastructure. The total number of units provided on these properties was reduced from 840 units to 583 with the modification.

The initial phase of the development included construction of the 125-unit senior independent living facility, a 146-unit apartment complex, and the large commercial building. The development caters to higher-income households with luxury-style finishes and premium amenities. The estimated pricing of apartment units was initially \$800 to \$1,800 per month. Keys' original proposal of 840 units also included condos, which were later removed. Brent Keys is the Portland-based developer who proposed the Goodpasture Island PUD. After conducting a private housing market analysis in Eugene, Keys concluded the 840 units exceeded housing demand. The entire project was estimated to cost \$100 million with final buildout projected for 2020.

### **Summary of Public Comments**

According to The Register Guard, Keys voluntarily reduced the initially proposed size of the development from 840 units to 583 due to public opposition. However, Keys also claimed that the local housing market would not meet the demand for 840 units. Public opposition also found fault with the height of the buildings, causing Keys to reduce the height of one building on parcel four from four stories to three.

The primary source of opposition came from Bill Reeve, owner of a nearby independent-living and retirement center, Willamette Oaks. Reeve strongly opposed Keys' request to change the current residential (R-2) zoning to limited high density residential (R-3). Reeve believed the existing R-2 zoning was adequate to accommodate the proposed development. Reeve appealed Keys' request to change the area's zoning to R-3 – first to Eugene's hearing officer, second to

the Eugene Planning Commission, and third to the Land Use Board of Appeals. With the rezone in place, Reeves argued that Keys could simply amend his original PUD application and add additional units in the future. Reeve stated that the 11-building development was not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and would increase traffic in the area to an unsafe level. All of Reeve's appeals were denied.

The Cal Young Neighborhood Association (CYNA) also provided significant opposition in the form of testimony at hearings and written comment. CYNA claimed that the City of Eugene prematurely granted the zone change from R-2 to R-3 before correctly assessing the impact from increased traffic as a result of higher residential occupancy in the area. CYNA demanded that Keys address the traffic increase while pursuing PUD approval. CYNA recommended that infrastructure in the form of traffic lights and pedestrian pathways be added to increase safety for surrounding community members. CYNA claimed that the City denied these recommendations based on "technical" reasons.

The public also supported the reduced visibility of parking around buildings, which was eventually adopted into the applicant's site plans. This information was shared with the public through two presentations made by developers. Public opposition initially focused on the applicant's request to change the existing R-2 zoning to R-3, which better accommodated higher density, multifamily housing. The public argued that the zone change did not need to occur, as the current R-2 zoning was sufficient for the proposed density per acre. Residents at the nearby Willamette Oaks center claimed they did not receive the initial notice of decision from the City. The residents stated that the documents required to make comment were unnecessarily complicated and discouraged testimony.

In summary, 234 pages of public comments were reviewed for this case study. Residents from the surrounding area who received notice of the decision reported the following concerns.

According to residents, development of the Goodpasture Island PUD would:

- Negatively alter the character of the Cal Young neighborhood
- Block the neighborhood's view of the surrounding hillside
- Hinder recent environmental restoration efforts within surrounding park areas
- Negatively impact wildlife and discourage resident access to parks
- Endanger safety of residents due to increased traffic

### **Final Impacts of Public Comments on Goodpasture Island Planned Urban Development**

- According to the Register Guard, public opposition reportedly played a role in Brent Keys' decision to reduce the initially proposed units in the development from 840 to 583.
- The Register Guard stated that one building on parcel four was reduced from four stories to three to reduce visual obstruction for neighbors. However, Keys also moved to lower the building height of the structure to allow for assisted living units and age

restricted units, instead of exclusively age restricted units as initially approved. Therefore, it is unclear if Keys lowered the building height due to public opposition.

- Public opposition helped influence the City's decision to conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) for the proposed development. According to the final decision by Hearings Official, Kenneth D. Helm, all roads and infrastructure were installed to City standards. No additional mitigation efforts were required of the applicant to address traffic.
- Parking areas were made less visible from outside the development after opposing testimony from numerous members of the public.





| <b>Shotola Apartments</b>     |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Final Decision</b>         | March 17, 2017         |
| <b>Proposed Units</b>         | 8                      |
| <b>Constructed Units</b>      | -                      |
| <b>Acres</b>                  | 0.37                   |
| <b>Zoning</b>                 | R-3 / SR               |
| <b>Gross Density</b>          | 21.6                   |
| <b>Zoning Density</b>         | 20 - 56 du per acre    |
| <b>Neighborhood</b>           | Whiteaker Neighborhood |
| <b>Public Comments</b>        | Yes                    |
| <b>Conditions of Approval</b> | 5                      |

**Reasons for Land Use Action**

Public Improvement Standards

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **Proposal**

The subject site is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of West 4<sup>th</sup> and Adams Street. It is currently developed with two apartment buildings, and an unimproved parking area. The applicant is proposing to construct a new apartment building, landscape and upgrade a portion of the existing parking area, and improve the surface of West 3<sup>rd</sup> Alley directly to the north of the site. The applicant is requesting Site Review approval under the Needed Housing criteria provided by Eugene Code (EC) section 9.8445, and Adjustment Review approval under the criteria at EC 9.8030. The relevant Type II land use application procedures are primarily addressed at EC 9.7200 through EC 9.7230.

### **Summary of Project Outcome**

The applicant proposed to improve the existing two apartments that contain six units each. The proposed improvement was a single structure with eight units. The existing apartments had a total square footage of 2,586. The proposed apartments would increase the size of the apartment complex by 5,722 square feet, which is an increase of 222%. The applicant was aware of conditions that needed to be satisfied prior to improvement. For example, the applicant admitted to 19 existing non-compliant parking spaces used by the existing apartment. Eugene code required 15 parking spaces and the proposal provided for 15, of which 12 spaces were compliant with the land use code. The applicant's proposed improvement was granted by the planning director on March 17, 2017.

### **Summary of Public Comments**

Letters of public comment were received from three individuals who resided nearby the existing apartment complex. The issues raised focused on compatibility of the new building with the existing character of the Whiteaker neighborhood, parking issues, and density of development. Specifically, one applicant expressed his opinion that the City had a long history of poorly integrating multifamily apartments into the Whiteaker neighborhood. The applicant expressed that multifamily apartments within the Whiteaker neighborhood were poor quality and did not positively enhance the character of the area.

The second public comment expressed concern for the increase in traffic as a result of the proposed improvement. The individual felt that the Whiteaker neighborhood had become overly densified and was unhealthy for residents. The nearby mill, breweries, bars, and increased vehicle usage had made the neighborhood very uncomfortable. The individual appeared to connect increased housing density to higher rates of drug and alcohol use in the area. In addition, parking in the area had not been adequately planned by the City. According to the individual, the streets were routinely too full to find parking for residents, which was primarily blamed on the businesses in the area. The individual felt that the proposed

improvement would further exacerbate problems like loud noises, lack of parking, loss of privacy, and vehicle exhaust.

The third public comment focused solely on loss of off-street parking as a result of the proposed improvement. The individual claimed to have consulted a City of Eugene staff member, who confirmed that the proposed improvement did not comply with off-street parking. It is worth noting that the applicant had proposed to add needed parking spaces to comply with City code prior to public notice being sent to surrounding neighbors.

In summary, three public comments were reviewed for this case study. Residents from the surrounding area who received notice of the decision reported the following concerns.

According to residents, development of the Shotola apartment complex would:

- Decrease available parking in the neighborhood
- Increase traffic congestion, noise pollution, exhaust pollution, drug and alcohol use, and possibly crime
- Decrease privacy

#### **Final Impacts of Public Comments on Alder Springs apartment complex**

- To be determined

**APPENDIX B: Single-Family and Multifamily Housing Permits by Neighborhood**

| <b>2010 - 2016 Single Family and Multifamily Housing Permits by Neighborhood</b> |                      |                    |   |                      |                    |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|---|----------------------|--------------------|
|  | <b>Single Family</b> | <b>Multifamily</b> |   | <b>Single Family</b> | <b>Multifamily</b> |
| Active Bethel Citizens   | 239                  | 2                  | Jefferson Westside Neighbors              | 7                    | 3                  |
| Amazon Neighbors Association   | 5                    | 0                  | Laurel Hill Valley Citizens               | 44                   | 0                  |
| Cal Young Neighborhood Association   | 106                  | 0                  | Northeast Neighbors                       | 152                  | 80                 |
| Churchill Area Neighbors   | 149                  | 6                  | River Road Community Organization         | 143                  | 15                 |
| Crest Drive Citizens Association   | 13                   | 1                  | Santa Clara Community Organization        | 193                  | 0                  |
| Downtown Neighborhood Association  | 0                    | 16                 | South University Neighborhood Association | 3                    | 13                 |
| Fairmount Neighbors  | 9                    | 7                  | Southeast Neighbors                       | 64                   | 0                  |
| Far West Neighborhood Association  | 1                    | 23                 | Southwest Hills Neighborhood Association  | 9                    | 0                  |
| Friendly Area Neighbors  | 20                   | 3                  | West Eugene Community Organization        | 0                    | 17                 |
| Goodpasture Island Neighbors   | 1                    | 6                  | West University Neighbors                 | 10                   | 36                 |
| Harlow Neighbors   | 32                   | 12                 | Whiteaker Community Council               | 2                    | 3                  |
| Industrial Corridor Community Organization                                       | 1                    | 0                  |   |                      |                    |

## APPENDIX C: Multifamily Applications - Land Use Action Acreage

| Average Application Acreage |   |           |   |                  |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------|---|------------------|
|                             | Planned Urban<br>Development<br>Final (PDF) | ARA & ARB | Planned Urban<br>Development<br>Tentative (PDT) | Site Review (SR) |
| <b>Average</b>              | 8.5   | 20.3      | 16.1  | 2.3              |
| <b>Median</b>               | 4.5   | 12.3      | 17.7  | 0.6              |
| <b>Minimum</b>              | 0.8   | 12.3      | 7.4   | 0.3              |
| <b>Maximum</b>              | 38.9  | 28.4      | 21.6  | 12.3             |

- The majority of multifamily developments in Eugene are less than 10 acres in size.
- About half of all multifamily developments that require a Site Review are less than one acre in size.
- About half of all Planned Urban Developments are less than five acres in size.

## APPENDIX D: Multifamily Applications - Zoning Count

| 2010 - 2016 Multifamily Land Use Application Zoning Count |       |
|---|-------|
|   | Total |
| <b>R1</b>   | 4     |
| <b>R2</b>   | 12    |
| <b>R3</b>   | 5     |
| <b>R4</b>   | 6     |
| <b>C2</b>   | 2     |
| <b>GO</b>   | 1     |

## APPENDIX E: 2010 – 2016 Multifamily Application Code Adjustments

| <b>Multifamily Code Adjustments</b>  |              |
|--|--------------|
|  | <b>Total</b> |
| EC 9.5500(5) Multifamily Standards: Building Orientation and Entrances       | 12           |
| EC 9.5500(12) Multifamily Standards: Vehicle Parking                         | 10           |
| EC 9.5500(6) Multifamily Standards: Building Mass and Façade                 | 8            |
| EC 9.5500(11) Multifamily Standards: Site Access and Internal Circulation    | 7            |
| EC 9.5500(9) Multifamily Standards: Open Space                               | 5            |
| C 9.8030 Adjustment Review - Approval Criteria                               | 4            |
| EC 9.5500(4) Multifamily Standards: Minimum and Maximum Building Setbacks    | 3            |
| EC 9.6105 Bicycle Parking Standards  | 3            |
| EC 9.6730 Pedestrian Circulation On-Site                                     | 3            |
| EC 9.8015 Adjustment Review - Purpose  | 3            |
| EC 9.2170 Commercial Zone Development Standards - General                    | 2            |
| EC 9.4530 TD Transit Oriented Development Overlay Zone Development Standards | 2            |
| EC 9.5500(3) Landscape Standards Adjustment                                  | 2            |
| EC 7.420 Access Connections - Locations                                      | 2            |
| EC 9.6210 Description of Landscape Standards                                 | 2            |
| EC 9.6420 Preservation of Existing Vegetation                                | 2            |
| EC 9.2750 Residential Zone Development Standards                             | 1            |
| 9.3915 S-W Whiteaker Special Area Zone Development and Lot Standards         | 1            |
| EC 9.4250 Purpose of /ND Nodal Development Overlay Zone                      | 1            |
| EC 9.5500(7) Multifamily Standards: Building Articulation                    | 1            |
| EC 9.5500(8) Multifamily Standards: Site Landscaping                         | 1            |
| EC 9.5500(10) Multifamily Standards: Block Requirements                      | 1            |
| EC 9.5500(13) Multifamily Standards: On-Site Pedestrian Circulation          | 1            |
| EC 9.6505 Public Improvement Standards                                       | 1            |
| EC 9.6735 Public Access Required   | 1            |
| EC 9.6815 Connectivity for Streets   | 1            |
| <b>Total Adjustments</b>   | <b>80</b>    |

## **APPENDIX F: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

NIMBYism and public distrust of density are tangible social issues that hinder more than the efficient progression of the built environment. There are profound social implications and consequences to distrust and prejudice. For example, proposed high density, low-income developments often receive disapproval from nearby affluent communities. Research indicates that affluent communities carry preconceived opinions of affordable housing residents. Federal housing policies are directly impacted by how people vote in support or opposition to housing measures and initiatives. As a result, prejudice in the form of NIMBYism can have a dramatic effect on access to affordable housing. The goal of this paper is to report the causes of NIMBYism and propose solutions to mitigate its negative effects on society.

This literature review highlights significant findings from academic research surrounding NIMBYism and its relationship to housing. The findings within this literature review are separated into two broad sections: *Effects of NIMBYism in Housing* and *Solutions to NIMBYism in Housing*. Within each of these broad sections are sub-sections to provide further organization.

### **Effects of NIMBYism in Housing**

#### **Introduction**

Opposition to increased density and affordable housing is the consequence of prejudice and preconceived social judgments. Research indicates that affluent communities most commonly perceive that low-income developments lower property value and decrease the quality of public services. Affluent communities also believe that affordable housing lowers the quality of architectural form and reduces open space (Pendall, 113). Government subsidized housing programs earn the highest controversy with neighbors due to the assumption of increased crime. Affluent communities also assume that subsidized housing will decrease the desire of other affluent people to live in existing neighborhoods (Pendall, 114). Modern research blames homeowner opposition to affordable housing on a misunderstanding of the residents within these developments. For example, research indicates that many affluent homeowners feel renters are less invested in their community. Homeowners believe that they provide greater stability to their community because they reside longer in their home. In addition, homeowners believe they contribute more money to the local economy through higher paying jobs and greater purchasing power (Scally, 721).

#### **NIMBYism and Race**

Current research also draws a tangible connection between race and opposition to housing. For example, the proportion of white homeowners in San Francisco is far higher than home owners

who are black or Hispanic. As a result, white homeowners in San Francisco oppose affordable housing at much higher rates than other ethnicities (Pendall, 115). Research concludes that the primary cause of NIMBYism stems from racial prejudice, outdated American idealism of homeownership, and the desire to maintain property values (Pendall, 115). Research additionally shows a correlation between the locations of affordable housing communities and race. Developers may be choosing to build affordable housing units in communities that are perceived to offer less opposition. This implies that developers play a direct role in concentrating low-income families in pre-designated communities, further exacerbating future NIMBY housing opposition (Sally&Tighe, 761). Fear of people who live in affordable housing developments continues to be the primary driver of NIMBYism in housing. Most importantly, research concludes that allowing opposition to hinder development of affordable housing thwarts the government's power to implement national housing policies (Tighe, 977). Further, affluent communities are given the ability to exclude minority populations and low-income families from achieving housing.

### **NIMBYism and Administrative Actions**

The built environment also performs a major role in prompting NIMBY opposition. For example, projects with higher numbers of housing units experience greater NIMBY opposition than projects with few units (Pendall, 130). Current research draws an important connection between the administrative approval process for developments and the level of NIMBY opposition received. For example, housing developments brought before the planning council in a San Francisco study received almost 30% less opposition than those approved by the city council (Pendall, 130). In addition, developments that required more actions to achieve approval, such as amendments and permits, received far more opposition than developments that required fewer administrative steps. In conclusion, additional administrative actions encourage more "antigrowth" sentiments by interested residents, which translates to more opposition.

### **Financial Costs of NIMBYism**

Impacts to housing can also take the form of monetary costs. Though difficult to quantify, common costs take the form of legal fees. For example, appeals to land use decisions often require the employment of legal counsel to defend or oppose. These costs are then passed on to developers. As a result, affordable housing developments are less appealing to developers due to high development costs and low profit margins (CPW, 65). Opposing community members also fail to understand that affordable housing developments meet a real need. A common concern of opposing neighbors is that tax dollars are benefiting people outside their community. In reality, there are income guidelines for affordable housing developments that are not publicized. For example, only people in specific financial circumstances qualify for affordable housing (CPW, 57).



## **Social Services and NIMBYism**

Research indicates that NIMBYism has increased in America as the need for social services has expanded (Dear, 289). The cause of increased demand for social services is primarily due to economic inequities in America. For example, the need for federally aided medical care has increased in response to the rising cost of health insurance. The gap between the wealthy and poor in America has dramatically expanded throughout the last century. This disparity in income distribution impacts the built environment, affordable housing, and access to necessary services (Dear, 289).

NIMBYism in housing has increased as funding for social welfare programs has decreased (Dear, 290). As populations grow, so does the overall demand for medical care and affordable housing. However, the rising price of health insurance further exacerbates the healthcare disparity in America by forcing people to depend on government subsidized care. In conclusion, people who live in low-income communities stay poor and live poorer quality lives than those in affluent communities. Affluent communities have greater access to resources and enjoy a higher quality of life. This obvious disparity in lifestyle is reflected in housing communities.

## **History of NIMBYism in Housing**

Federal housing policies have recently begun to “deconcentrate” poverty-stricken communities (Koenig, 437). Housing units for poor families have been historically concentrated in planned inner-city communities. These impoverished neighborhoods were the result of a common federal housing practice, and a direct consequence of NIMBYism. Throughout the previous century, poor households were consciously grouped into public houses and segregated neighborhoods. As a result, issues such as unemployment and “social deviance” became concentrated in disadvantaged neighborhoods, further exacerbating the problem (Koenig, 437). These deplorable urban housing practices have arguably aided modern-day NIMBYism. Affluent communities now have preconceived notions of life near affordable housing developments. Modern perceptions of low-income housing usually involve crime, poor public services, and fear of other cultures (Koenig, 436).

## **Impacts of NIMBYism Illustrated: A Case Study of Housing NIMBYism in San Francisco**

In the 1980s, San Francisco, California was recovering from an economic recession. Rising incomes resulted in more people desiring higher quality housing. Federal and state programs also provided mortgage interest tax deductions, which encouraged people to transition to suburban developments outside San Francisco. Suburban homes were generally priced higher to target higher income residents. Traffic congestion within the Bay Area dramatically increased due to commuters travelling to work from surrounding suburbs. Land values also increased to meet the higher demand. San Francisco implemented impact fees as high as \$20,000 per dwelling unit, which was designed to discourage growth. The fees were meant to make population growth pay for itself. However, growth did not slow and demand for housing only increased. In response to the Bay Area’s growing population, regional park districts purchased

massive amounts of open space to discourage development. However, developers simply converted grazing and agriculture land into apartment complexes and shopping centers (Pendall, 116).

Surveys conducted by the California Department of Finance, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and the California State Board of Equalization, found that high income individuals are “less welcoming of people who are different” (Pendall, 124). This finding is directly connected to the broad opposition to affordable housing in San Francisco. The survey additionally found that blue-collar workers also oppose affordable housing and the types of residents generally found within these developments (Pendall, 124).

This San Francisco case study concluded that communities with a history of fast growth in San Francisco and Oakland experienced “more or less controversy than slower-growing ones” (Pendall, 124). This controversy is primarily caused by the level of stress on infrastructure in response to increased growth. When growth occurs more quickly, local infrastructure experiences greater strain, which in turn lowers the quality of services to residents. As a result, current residents blame the individuals and communities causing the growth, which is often those residing in dense, affordable housing units (Pendall, 124).

In conclusion, multifamily developments and affordable housing units in the Bay Area earn greater NIMBY opposition than single-family and market-rate housing combined. (Pendall, 127). The research conducted within this case study offers several important implications for NIMBYism in housing. First, federal and state housing programs encourage home ownership by providing mortgage interest tax deductions. This federal housing policy encourages the most affluent members of society to own their own home. As a result, housing becomes inherently segregated. Poor people cannot afford to live in affluent suburban developments. In addition, affluent people do not wish to live nearby those who can’t afford their same style of living. Therefore, affluent people are likely to oppose affordable housing developments within close proximity to their own neighborhoods.

Second, the progression of the American highway system helped develop modern-day NIMBYism. For example, those who could not afford suburban homes were forced to live in poor inner-city communities. Negative stereotypes revolving around dense, multifamily neighborhoods were further propagated as a result. Third, fast population growth overwhelms infrastructure and significantly impacts transportation and public services. Affluent community members perceive these negative impacts of growth as a direct attack on their own quality of life. As a result, affluent community members blame those they perceive to be the cause of the problem. In many cases, the people blamed for these problems are those most in need of affordable housing.

## **Solutions to NIMBYism in Housing**

### **Introduction**

Though the existence of NIMBYism is broadly acknowledged at the national scale, little has been done at the local level to mitigate its effects. However, literature indicates that the federal government attempts to address NIMBYism and even propose solutions. In 2003, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established the America's Affordable Communities Initiative (AFCI), which works to "remove or reduce federal barriers to housing affordability" (HUD, 14). Most importantly, HUD understands the importance of combating NIMBYism at the community level, as local prejudice contributes to blocking families from affordable housing. For example, the AFCI pledges to actively assist local governments and housing authorities by providing "model regulatory approaches and systems" for educational purposes (HUD, 14).

### **Combating NIMBYism Through Effective Communication**

Research conducted by the Center for Community Innovation (CCI) encourages planners to "sell" their proposed developments as highly beneficial to the surrounding community. Interestingly, the CCI cautions against using traditional promotional methods such as presentations and community activities, as these have shown little evidence of success (Machell, 1). The CCI instead encourages social researchers and planners to humanize their message when interfacing with the public.

In a recent focus group conducted by the CCI, researchers discussed issues surrounding low-income housing with higher income individuals from the San Francisco Bay Area. The focus group facilitators "humanized" their message by exhibiting images of typical individuals who apply for openings in affordable housing developments. Focus group participants overwhelmingly responded with empathy for the depicted individuals. Participants remarked that the people appeared very similar to themselves, but were less economically privileged. Though the educational impact of the focus group was negligible when considering the number of participants, the method of direct engagement with the public was deemed a success (Machell, 14). Other solutions include improved communication between subsidized housing developers and local agencies to reduce stereotypes and fears. This communication can take the form of befriending police and fire departments, planners, and non-profit housing advocates (CPW, 42). Partnering with these agencies can help reduce negative messaging with the public.

A report by the Florida Housing Coalition suggests that advocates for affordable housing should focus on customizing the context of their message for their target audience. Further, advocates should contact people of influence in the business community and social service agencies to garner support. Advocates should also attempt to educate elected officials prior to the occurrence of public debate over NIMBY issues. In addition, advocates should become highly

familiar with federal housing laws, specifically those within The Federal Fair Housing Act and the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule (Ross, 2-37).

Studies have also concluded that there is no statistically significant connection between the locations of affordable housing and household incomes. This implies that the stereotype correlating poor people with poor quality housing may be false. Research has found that public hearings are not effective at mitigating NIMBY housing opposition. Instead, community leaders and governments should invest in public engagement and effective messaging campaigns (Scally&Tighe, 765).

### **Government: The Best Hope for Long-Term NIMBY Mitigation?**

Researchers encourage local municipalities to implement policies that allow the rezoning of residential areas for multifamily development (Tighe, 978). Research suggests that the federal government may be the best hope for mitigating NIMBYism in housing (Scally, 740). The federal government should help by being transparent when promoting government subsidized housing. This transparency can occur by publishing finance information, tax contributions, projected increases in municipal services, and future tenants (Scally, 740). Short-term mitigation efforts could involve incentives to municipalities that choose to expedite applications from regions with few affordable housing opportunities. Inclusionary zoning mandates could also offer a long-term solution (Scally, 739). For example, local municipalities could expedite the approval process for multifamily units in residential areas designed to accommodate these developments.

Research also shows that multiple governmental entities supporting low-income developments reassured concerned community members that negative outcomes were less likely to occur. Planners should focus their efforts on shaping affordable housing as a necessary component to modern society. As a result, cultural stereotypes may begin to change and encourage more housing diversity (Tighe, 978). In addition, research suggests that affordable housing developments received less opposition when the developers were part of local communities. Developers from outside communities are generally less trusted and more commonly opposed (CPW, 57). Current research further encourages developers to partner with community leaders and opposing public to mitigate negative feedback (Scally&Tighe, 761).

In conclusion, though the literature discussed above does express the need for public education to combat NIMBYism at the local level, the proposed methods for achieving this goal are rather broad and resemble a recipe of possible strategies. For example, Jaimie Ross of the Florida Housing Coalition admits that “advocates should make use of credible research and local data to support their message” (Ross, 2-36). Research gathered for this paper concludes that there is no singular procedure to follow when addressing NIMBYism in housing. However, continuing to educate and distribute positive messaging is proven to help expel prejudice and preconceived social stereotypes.

## **NIMBYism within Recovery Housing**

Access to housing is also a problem for those recently released from incarceration or recovering from substance abuse. Recent research indicates that significant barriers exist for “recovery homes” attempting to locate near suburban developments. Recovery homes historically face broad disapproval from community members and city councils. According to a report by DePaul University, recovery homes are targeted for placement within “low-drug, low-crime communities in which residents have access to resources and amenities that enable autonomy and substance-free lifestyles” (Leonard, Online). However, current residents within these communities generally oppose recovery homes.

A common stereotype is that recovery homes invite felons and drug addicts inside existing peaceful communities. In reality, most recovery homes require residents to remain drug and crime free, in addition to obtaining employment to pay for room and board. If residents fail to maintain these standards, expulsion from the home is required. As a result, the most problematic or dangerous individuals do not remain in residential areas (Leonard, Online). In contrast, recent studies indicate that recovery homes can help “educate the community about stigmatized populations (e.g., people with substance abuse problems, developmental disabilities, or mental illnesses)” (Leonard, Online). In addition, research shows that “group homes actually have very little impact on their surrounding neighborhoods and generally blend into the community” (Leonard, Online).

The report by DePaul University also found that people engaged and accepted recovery homes more often when authorities made efforts to educate community members. In addition, the report suggests, “the more a facility resembles the neighborhood in which it resides and the more autonomous the facility residents, the more likely residents will integrate into the community. Further, research indicates that closer proximity and increased contact between community members and group home residents has a positive effect on the reception of the homes” (Leonard, Online).

## **Analysis**

### ***Effects of NIMBYism in Housing***

Analysis of the literature used in this paper reveals a strong correlation between NIMBYism in housing and racial prejudice. Research also suggests that large affordable housing developments usually experience more NIMBY opposition than smaller developments. Litigation costs of NIMBYism are extensive and often passed on to developers, further discouraging affordable housing development. NIMBYism in housing has increased with the demand for social services. Historical federal housing policies that isolated impoverished neighborhoods further exacerbated NIMBYism. NIMBYism in housing is prevalent in both white and blue-collar workers.

### ***Solutions to NIMBYism in Housing***

Analysis of literature used in this paper finds that partnership with community leaders and government agencies reduces community opposition to affordable housing developments. Strategic communication is an effective technique for educating opponents of the need for affordable housing. Incarcerated individuals face many of the same challenges as minority populations when pursuing affordable housing. Government intervention may be required to provide long-term solutions for affordable housing.

## **Findings**

### ***Effects of NIMBYism in Housing***

Research indicates that developers choose to build affordable housing units in communities perceived to offer less opposition. This implies that developers may exacerbate NIMBYism by purposely concentrating affordable housing in poor communities (Scally&Tighe, 761). Government subsidized housing programs earn the highest controversy with community members due to the assumption of increased crime. This may be due to antiquated federal housing practices that concentrated impoverished families in inner-city centers. These developments were rife with crime because of low employment and poor social services. As a result, prejudice towards dense, low-income housing became commonplace in American society.

The number of administrative steps a development requires for approval correlates to the amount of opposition that development receives. The cause of this relationship may be that certain types of permits require notification to surrounding neighbors. As a result, an extensive administrative process ensures more neighbors are informed of controversial developments than by-right developments. Research indicates that NIMBYism has increased in America as the need for social services has expanded (Dear, 289). This is primarily due to the growing income disparity in America. Poor people who cannot afford healthcare continue to need social services. Their low income also implies that they cannot afford high-quality housing. As a result, a direct correlation can be made between demand for social services and the need for affordable housing.

### ***Solutions to NIMBYism in Housing***

Research indicates that partnering with community authority figures can directly impact the level of opposition a development receives. The assumption is that opposing community members feel less intimidated when authority figures assure their fears are unsubstantiated. Developers experience dramatically reduced opposition to affordable housing developments once construction of these developments are finished. This indicates that opposing community members perceive the development is not as detrimental to the surrounding community once experienced first-hand. Further, a successful affordable housing development can serve as an example to opposing community members to dispel negative stereotypes (CPW, 57). Research

has found no statistically significant connection between the locations of affordable housing and household incomes. This implies that the stereotypes correlating poor people with poor quality housing may be false (Scally&Tighe, 765).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, research indicates that the housing market for low-income families has become worse over time. Affluent housing communities continue to resist higher density developments for fear of increased crime and lower property values. NIMBYism is a complicated, multifaceted social issue caused by ignorance, prejudice and racism. Research indicates that public education could reduce the resistance to high density, low-income developments. Research concerning housing attitudes must incorporate attitudes towards race and socioeconomic status in future studies. This will allow future research to provide a more comprehensive perception of the challenges facing multifamily development. It is critical for housing advocates and planners to understand modern perceptions of NIMBYism in housing. These are all issues that planners must take into consideration when addressing NIMBYism with the public. The goal of this research paper is to identify holes in current literature and better understand NIMBYism and its effects on American housing.

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