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SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE AND ECONOMICS * ENERGETICS OF PLACE

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DLCD Affordable Housing Work Group
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Dear Friends,

From the meeting minutes, your group seems to be working hard and doing well. I look forward to your conclusions. I'd like to request two additions to the package you are assembling:

1. Inclusion of counties as well as cities as jurisdictions to which bringing land into UGBs for affordable housing applies. Tillamook County, for example, has 12 unincorporated rural communities, for which the county is the governing body, and whose population exceeds that of all the incorporated cities. These "communities" are coastal, with high land and housing prices, and severe affordable housing issues. It feels that the ability to bring land into their growth boundaries should be possible on the same ground as cities.

2. Development of a statewide affordable housing accessory dwelling unit framework. Info that has been accumulation lately indicates several things:

- Our homes are oversized - double in size since the 1960s. The simplest way to provide affordable housing is to divide existing single-family residences into duplexes/ADUs. This can also help with the present mortgage crunch.
- The simplest way of dealing with housing energy use is major increase in the envelope insulation of existing residences. Dividing oversized homes into two cuts the per-family energy use in half. Good data is now available from studies of "Near-Zero-Energy" retrofits in Alaska, the SW, New England, and across the country. Energy hogs are turned into twice as many homes - that require *no* energy for heating and cooling.
- Nationally, and probably more in Oregon, 80% of existing housing stock was built in the '60s-80s; 33% in the 70s; and probably around 50% consists of 3-bedroom ranch-houses. I've demonstrated ("Two for One") the ease of doing energy upgrades on such homes and by removal of one set of non-bearing-wall partitions, of turning them into duplexes or ADUs.

- ADU ordinances have been developed to avoid the cost of application of marginal value building code requirements that may be of value in new construction, but are unjustifiably inhibiting in working with existing structures (separate electric meters, 1/8" more sheetrock separating units, separate water and sewer, etc.)
- Appropriate restrictions on affordable housing ADUs can secure achievement of the above goals, without opening Pandora's Box:
 - Apply to *existing* structures.
 - Require energy/water efficiency upgrades on unit during conversion.
 - Register the unit, maximum rental rate affordable by 80%AMI residents.
 - Short-term rentals not permitted.
 - Define as "not a separate dwelling unit" to avoid hookup charges, SDCs, additional water and sewer connections. The efficiency upgrades above should result in the ADU (which is adding no additional housing space) not putting additional load on utility infrastructure.
- These ADUs increase efficiency of use of existing structures rather than increase density of structures. They can make housing available at a fraction of the cost of new construction, and avoid some need for bringing new land into UGBs.

I'd be happy to make a presentation or answer questions on what has been shown possible, if it would help your discussions. Thanks so much for your good work.

Warm regards,



Tom Bender

* There are several articles on my website <www.tombender.org>, that may be of interest. Under "new on website"/global warming actions, "Quick and Simple Answers" shows how to achieve 90% reduction in energy use in housing, food, and transportation. Further down on that index page is "Two-for-One" documenting redo and conversion of a 3-bedroom ranch. Two other articles in the section explain flex-plexes. Lower down is link to "Zero-Energy-Homes". It's fairly dated already, things are moving so fast in this area, but a good intro. Our <www.neahcasa.org/accessory_units.htm> gives an intro to, and links to good ordinances for affordable housing accessory dwelling units.

