



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING OR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: A FALSE CHOICE

**Like air to breathe and food to eat, housing is a basic human need.**

Too many Oregonians are suffering because of the housing crisis. Residential sprawl often creates greater inequities and results in negative health impacts.

When properly executed, Oregon's statewide **LAND USE PLANNING SYSTEM** provides for the availability of housing options for all income levels.

### WHO WE ARE

For 35 years, LandWatch has fought for sustainable, healthy communities in balance with nature, waterways and wildlife in Central Oregon.

Leveraging our legal expertise, policy analysis, and experience with Oregon's land use planning system, we bring public concerns about natural resources and urban growth to government decisions and negotiations with private interests.

### OUR CONCERN

Too often, measures intended to encourage affordable housing end up creating sprawl by driving development outside Urban Growth Boundaries. This ends up costing communities in the long-term through negative public health impacts, environmental impacts, and infrastructure supply costs.

We know that social determinants of health, like access to healthcare, walkable neighborhoods and accessible public spaces, are linked to where people live. Across Oregon, low-income communities are priced out of housing in vibrant, mixed-use areas with safe transportation options because there is not enough of it. We need to increase the supply of healthy housing.

Lifting land use protections does not solve the affordable housing crisis. The biggest factors driving the cost components of housing are construction costs, consumer demand, past development patterns, and lack of funding for infrastructure.

### WHAT WE SUPPORT

Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) provide a framework for keeping cities compact so that housing is close to jobs, parks, schools, healthcare, and services. Infill and brownfield development in existing urban areas have lower infrastructure costs because sewer and water pipes, power lines, transit, roads, and bike lanes are readily available. We support making healthy neighborhoods accessible to everyone by incentivizing more of them within current UGBs (i.e. mixed use, infill, safe transportation options).

The COVID-19 pandemic's widespread impact on people's lives only underscores the need for well-designed cities and towns. Across the globe, the factors affecting public health have been preparedness, policy, and good urban design. Healthy communities have enough space devoted to the public, plenty of transit options available, and safe homes for everyone near the services they need.

