

Opening and framing

Good evening Chair and Commissioners. For the record, my name is Bo Smith with LandWise, here on behalf of Olin Homes. We are located at 27 SW Dorion Ave. in Pendleton. Thank you for the time and effort that went into the staff report. I appreciate the level of detail and the concerns that were raised.

Before I respond to the individual comments, I want to set the table clearly for both the Commission and anyone here from the community. This application does not approve a subdivision, it does not approve a house, and it does not require any property to be developed differently than it is today. What it does is update the development code so that when housing is proposed in the future, the city has more flexibility to allow housing types that better match current needs.

Nothing in this proposal removes the city's authority or safeguards. All existing review processes remain in place.

Density and potential increase in households

Staff raised concerns that reducing minimum lot sizes could increase residential density and potentially add hundreds or even over a thousand households citywide. Those figures represent a theoretical maximum buildout if every eligible parcel were developed to its absolute limit. That is not how development happens in reality.

Zoning capacity does not equal development approval. Market demand, financing, ownership patterns, infrastructure timing, and subdivision review all determine what actually gets built and when. This amendment does not force land to be developed or require higher density. It simply allows flexibility where it makes sense over time.

For residents, this means gradual, incremental change rather than sudden neighborhood shifts. For the city, it means planning ahead instead of reacting later when housing pressure becomes more difficult to manage.

Water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure

Staff expressed concern that increased density could strain water, sewer, and stormwater systems and suggested additional analysis may be needed. Infrastructure capacity is an important issue, but the appropriate time to analyze it is when an actual development proposal is submitted.

This amendment does not approve extensions of utilities or override infrastructure review. Every future subdivision or development would still be required to demonstrate adequate capacity

before moving forward. If infrastructure is insufficient, the city already has the authority to deny or condition development.

From a resident standpoint, this ensures systems are not overburdened. From the city's standpoint, it preserves full control over timing and capital planning decisions.

Traffic and transportation

Staff also raised traffic concerns and referenced thresholds that typically trigger traffic studies. Those standards are designed to evaluate specific development proposals, not legislative zoning changes.

At this stage, there is no project location, no site layout, and no roadway frontage to analyze. Requiring traffic studies now would be speculative and would not meaningfully inform decision making. Traffic impacts are best evaluated during subdivision and site plan review, when actual trip generation and mitigation can be identified.

For residents, this ensures traffic issues are addressed where they actually occur. For the city, it avoids spending time and resources on analysis that does not reflect real world conditions.

Parking

Concerns were also raised that smaller lots could increase on street parking. This amendment does not change parking requirements. Existing standards for garages and off street parking remain in place.

Lot size alone does not determine how many vehicles a household owns. Smaller homes often serve seniors, smaller households, or first time buyers who typically have fewer vehicles. Parking impacts are project specific and are most appropriately evaluated when a development is proposed.

For residents, this means neighborhood protections remain intact. For the city, it avoids overregulating based on assumptions rather than evidence.

Affordability and housing cost

Staff questioned whether smaller lots actually result in more affordable housing and noted that home prices are influenced by developer business models. That is true, and it is also why zoning should avoid unnecessary barriers.

No zoning code can guarantee affordability. However, large minimum lot sizes guarantee higher land costs per home. Reducing lot size lowers the land component of housing cost and allows more attainable options to be built.

This proposal is about workforce housing and housing choice, not price controls. It creates opportunity without mandates.

For residents, this expands options for young families, downsizing seniors, and local workers. For the city, it supports economic diversity and long term community stability.

Housing needs and timing

Staff referenced the Housing Needs Analysis and suggested that the city may already have sufficient capacity to meet projected demand. Capacity on paper does not always translate into housing on the ground.

Many parcels are constrained by ownership, infrastructure timing, or feasibility. The same planning documents that identify capacity also recommend zoning reform as a tool to address future needs.

Acting now allows the city to stay ahead of demand rather than waiting until shortages become more acute. For residents, this helps prevent displacement. For the city, it supports proactive planning rather than emergency responses.

Public facilities and services

Concerns were raised that increased households could place additional demand on city services. Growth of any kind increases demand, but compact and incremental growth is more efficient to serve than low density expansion.

Smaller lots within existing residential areas make better use of infrastructure that is already in place. Development also contributes system development charges and tax base that help fund services.

For residents, this supports more efficient public investment. For the city, it strengthens long term fiscal sustainability.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Staff noted a preference to delay ADU consideration. ADUs are not the focus of this amendment. They were included as optional, informational language, and I am comfortable separating that discussion entirely so the Commission can focus on the core issue of lot standards.

Conditions and additional requirements

Staff suggested that if the amendment is approved, conditions such as infrastructure analysis or traffic studies could be applied. Conditions are most effective when tied to specific development proposals.

Applying broad conditions at the zoning stage risks undermining the purpose of the amendment by reintroducing barriers the change is intended to address. The city already has full authority later in the process to ensure projects meet all standards.

Closing

At its core, this amendment is about flexibility, not force. It does not approve development, remove safeguards, or override city authority. It simply updates outdated standards so future housing can better match the needs of people who already live here.

For residents, it provides choice and helps people stay in the community. For the city, it aligns zoning with adopted policy and positions Irrigon for thoughtful, manageable growth.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer questions.

My name is Angie Sullivan with LandWise 27 SW Dorion Ave, Pendleton

Chair and Commissioners, my name is Angie Sullivan with LandWise, LLC. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

I want to focus on affordability, but I want to frame it in terms of **values**, not just numbers, because this decision is really about **who Irrigon is for**, now and in the future.

Affordability isn't about cutting corners or lowering standards. It's about **creating opportunity**. It's about recognizing that our community is made up of people in different stages of life, with different household sizes, incomes, and needs, and that our code should reflect that reality.

Right now, Irrigon's development standards assume that every household needs a large lot and a large home. But for many working families, seniors, and first-time buyers, those minimums quietly push homeownership out of reach before a project ever gets off the ground.

This amendment addresses affordability where it actually begins: **with land and design flexibility**.

By allowing smaller lots and homes down to 800 square feet, we are not mandating smaller housing. We are allowing choice. We are allowing someone to buy less house instead of being forced to buy more than they need or can afford.

The staff report notes that code changes alone don't guarantee affordability, and that's true. But what is also true is that **current standards guarantee higher costs**. Large minimum lots, wide frontage requirements, and minimum home sizes all translate directly into higher prices, regardless of who is building the home.

This proposal does not remove safety standards, design requirements, or neighborhood compatibility rules. It does not change height limits or eliminate parking requirements. What it does is modernize outdated assumptions about what a "successful" home must look like.

The City's Comprehensive Plan, particularly Goal 10, calls for a range of housing types and price points. This amendment is a practical way to put that value into action. It also aligns with statewide housing policy that encourages communities to remove barriers to smaller homes, missing-middle housing, and attainable ownership options.

If we want people who work in Irrigon to live in Irrigon, we need housing they can realistically afford. If we want seniors to downsize without leaving their community, we

need homes that fit that stage of life. And if we want growth that is thoughtful, fiscally responsible, and sustainable, we need flexibility built into our code.

This proposal does not force change on any neighborhood. It simply allows the City to say yes when an appropriate, well-designed project comes forward.

At its core, this is a stewardship decision. It's about ensuring Irrigon remains a community where people can build a future, not just pass through.

I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to recommend approval and allow this conversation to continue at the City Council level.

Thank you for your time and service.



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February 5, 2026

**Executive Summary – Letters of Support
Proposed Residential Development Code Amendments
City of Irrigon**

The enclosed letters of support reflect broad, informed backing for the proposed residential development code amendments from regional housing professionals, municipal leadership, builders, and engineering experts. Collectively, these letters emphasize that the proposed updates are a practical, well-considered response to current housing market conditions, rising construction costs, and documented workforce housing needs.

Industry representatives, including the Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association and local builders, note that existing dimensional standards such as minimum lot sizes, frontage requirements, and minimum home sizes have become increasingly misaligned with today's construction realities. The proposed amendments introduce modest, targeted adjustments that improve project feasibility and housing affordability while maintaining neighborhood character, zoning intent, and community standards. Importantly, supporters emphasize that the proposal does not expand the urban growth boundary, alter zoning districts, or introduce new housing types where they are not already permitted.

Municipal leadership from the City of Stanfield provides firsthand experience demonstrating that similar code changes have resulted in successful, well-maintained neighborhoods that are embraced by residents. These developments have improved housing availability for working families, reduced per-unit infrastructure costs, and strengthened long-term community stability, all while integrating seamlessly into existing neighborhoods.

From an engineering and infrastructure perspective, the proposed amendments are described as a responsible approach to growth. Smaller, more efficient lots allow cities to make better use of existing infrastructure, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and support sustainable residential development patterns that benefit both residents and municipalities.

Taken together, these letters affirm that the proposed development code amendments align with local comprehensive planning goals, regional and statewide housing strategies, and real-world development experience. The consistent message across all letters is clear: the proposed updates represent a balanced, thoughtful solution that supports housing supply, affordability, and community resilience within the City of Irrigon.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bo Smith". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bo Smith

Letters of Support – Summary Overview

1. Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association (NEOHBA)

Letter From: Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association

Signed By: Shanna Escobedo, Executive Officer

Date: February 3, 2026

Summary:

NEOHBA expresses strong support for the proposed residential development code amendments, emphasizing that the changes are a locally tailored, practical response to rising construction costs and workforce housing needs. The letter highlights how reduced minimum lot sizes, narrower frontage requirements, and lower minimum home sizes improve feasibility without altering zoning districts, expanding the urban growth boundary, or changing allowed housing types. NEOHBA notes that the amendments align with Irrigon's Comprehensive Plan and statewide housing strategies, supporting increased housing supply within existing city limits while maintaining neighborhood character.

2. City of Stanfield

Letter From: City of Stanfield

Signed By: Darla Linker, City Manager

Date: Noted on letter (2026)

Summary:

Drawing from Stanfield's firsthand experience, the City supports Irrigon's proposed code amendment allowing smaller residential lot sizes. The letter explains that while similar projects initially faced community skepticism, the completed neighborhoods proved successful, well-maintained, and highly desirable. Smaller lots helped reduce infrastructure costs, improved housing affordability, supported workforce retention, and strengthened neighborhoods. Based on these outcomes, the City of Stanfield encourages approval of the amendment as a positive tool for addressing workforce housing while preserving community character.

3. Residential Construction Specialists / Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association

Letter From: Residential Construction Specialists

Signed By: Reed Jassmann, President, Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association; Owner, Residential Construction Specialists

Date: Not specified (2026)

Summary:

This letter supports the proposed code amendment from a builder and industry perspective. It explains that restrictive lot standards, combined with rising land and construction costs, limit the ability to deliver homes that working families can afford. Increased flexibility in lot standards allows for efficient land use while maintaining quality, livability, and long-term value. The letter emphasizes strong buyer demand for homes on efficiently sized lots and notes that such changes help projects move forward, increase housing supply, and support local employment without compromising community standards.

4. ACH Engineering, P.S.

Letter From: ACH Engineering, P.S.

Signed By: Aaron Hoeft, Civil Engineer

Date: January 21, 2026

Summary:

From an engineering and infrastructure standpoint, ACH Engineering supports the proposed development code amendment. The letter explains that thoughtfully planned increases in residential density improve infrastructure efficiency, reduce per-lot costs, and support long-term maintenance. Smaller lots enable more effective use of existing streets, utilities, and stormwater systems while expanding housing opportunities for the workforce. Based on professional experience designing and reviewing similar projects, the amendment is described as a practical, reasonable update that balances growth with safety, livability, and responsible infrastructure planning.



February 3, 2026

Letter of Support for Proposed Residential Development Code Amendments

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the **Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association**, we are pleased to offer our strong support for the proposed amendments to the City of Irrigon's residential development standards.

This application reflects exactly the type of **locally tailored, practical solution** communities need to address today's housing challenges especially workforce housing. Local governments are best positioned to understand their housing market conditions and infrastructure capacity. These proposed updates appropriately use local flexibility to remove barriers that currently make housing production difficult, while maintaining the intent and structure of existing zoning.

The current dimensional standards in Irrigon—including large minimum lot sizes, wide lot frontage requirements, substantial setbacks, and high minimum house size thresholds—directly affect housing feasibility. As construction, labor, and material costs have risen, these standards have increasingly made it difficult to produce homes at price points attainable for working families. Modest reductions in lot size, lot width, side yard setbacks, and minimum floor area are reasonable adjustments that can significantly improve project feasibility without fundamentally altering neighborhood character.

Importantly, this amendment focuses on **increasing housing supply within existing city limits/urban growth boundaries** on land that is already zoned for residential use and served by infrastructure. By reducing the minimum lot size from 6,000 to 4,000 square feet, narrowing frontage requirements, allowing more workable setbacks, and lowering the minimum enclosed floor area from 1,200 to 800 square feet, the proposal enables more efficient use of land while still supporting quality residential development.

Equally important is what this amendment does *not* do. It does not change zoning districts or the zoning map, does not alter allowed housing types, does not expand the urban growth boundary, and does not introduce multifamily development where it is not already permitted. Instead, it makes targeted code refinements that allow the community to better meet its housing needs under existing plans and infrastructure.



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The proposal is consistent with Irigon's Comprehensive Plan Goal 10, which calls for a variety of lot sizes and housing options, and it aligns with regional and statewide housing strategies encouraging communities to remove regulatory barriers through clear and objective standards.

These updates represent a balanced approach that supports housing choice, improves affordability feasibility, and helps ensure that workforce families can find homes in the communities where they live and work. We respectfully urge approval of this application.

Sincerely,

Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association

By: 
Shanna Escobedo, Executive Officer



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CITY OF STANFIELD

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Mayor

Darla Linker
City Manager

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Letter of Support for Proposed Development Code Amendment

To the Irrigon Planning Commission,

My name is Darla Linker, and I serve as the City Manager for the City of Stanfield, Oregon. I am writing to express my support for the proposed development code amendment being considered by the City of Irrigon related to residential lot size standards.

Stanfield has firsthand experience with residential developments that include smaller lots. When these projects were first proposed, there was understandable skepticism from the community. Questions were raised about neighborhood character, market acceptance, and long term impacts. However, after these neighborhoods were built and occupied, the results spoke for themselves.

The homes developed on smaller lots in Stanfield have been well designed, well maintained, and warmly received by residents. These neighborhoods have integrated successfully into the community and have become places where people are proud to live. Perhaps most telling is the market response. Homes on smaller lots have consistently sold quickly, demonstrating strong demand from working families and individuals who want to live in Stanfield but need housing that fits their budget.

From a municipal perspective, these developments have provided meaningful benefits. Smaller lots allow cities to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure, reduce the per unit cost of public services, and support orderly growth within city limits. They also help ensure that housing opportunities are available for local employees, young families, and residents who want to remain in the community long term.

Based on Stanfield's experience, updating development standards to allow for smaller residential lots can be a positive and effective tool for addressing workforce housing needs while maintaining community character and quality of life. When done thoughtfully, these projects strengthen neighborhoods and contribute to a more resilient local housing market.

I believe the proposed amendment presents an opportunity for Irrigon to achieve similar outcomes, and I encourage the Planning Commission to support this update to the development code.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Darla Linker

Darla Linker
City Manager
City of Stanfield, Oregon



RESIDENTIAL
CONSTRUCTION
SPECIALISTS

Letter of Support for Proposed Development Code Amendment

Planning Commission Members,

My name is Reed Jassmann, I serve as the president of the Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association, and I own Residential Construction Specialists. I am writing to share my support for the proposed development code amendment currently being reviewed by the City of Irrigon.

Across Northeast Oregon, communities are struggling to keep housing within reach for the people who work there. From a builder's standpoint, one of the biggest challenges is that development standards have not kept pace with today's construction costs, land prices, and market demand. When lot requirements are too restrictive, it becomes difficult to produce homes that local buyers can realistically afford.

Providing flexibility in residential lot standards allows builders to design neighborhoods that use land more efficiently while still delivering high quality homes. These types of developments can fit comfortably within existing communities and meet modern expectations for livability, appearance, and long term value. This is not about cutting corners, but about allowing practical design solutions that reflect how housing is actually built and sold today.

From my experience in the market, homes built on more efficiently sized lots consistently attract strong interest. They appeal to first time buyers, workforce households, and families who want to stay in their community but are limited by rising prices. When cities allow this flexibility, housing supply improves and projects move forward instead of stalling.

As both a homebuilder and an industry representative, I see this type of code update as a responsible step that supports housing opportunity without compromising community standards. I believe the proposed amendment will help Irrigon remain competitive, support local employment, and expand housing choices for its residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely



Reed Jassmann

President, Northeast Oregon Home Builders Association
Owner, Residential Construction Specialists

ACH ENGINEERING P.S.

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PHONE 319 1372

January 21, 2026

Letter of Support for the Proposed Irrigon Development Code Amendment

To the Irrigon Planning Commission,

My name is Aaron Hoeft, and I am a civil engineer practicing in the region. I have worked on a wide range of development projects and residential subdivisions throughout Eastern Oregon, including projects in communities similar in size and character to Irrigon.

I am writing to express my support for the proposed development code amendment that would allow for smaller residential lot sizes within the City of Irrigon.

Through my professional experience, I have seen firsthand how thoughtful increases in residential density can create positive outcomes for both residents and municipalities. On numerous projects, I have observed how reduced minimum lot sizes can help deliver housing that is attainable for working families while still meeting all applicable engineering, safety, and livability standards.

From an engineering standpoint, smaller lots can be served efficiently by public infrastructure when developments are properly planned and designed. Streets, utilities, and stormwater facilities can be constructed in a cost-effective manner that reduces per lot infrastructure costs and supports long term maintenance efficiency for the city.

In addition, appropriately scaled residential density helps communities make better use of existing services, strengthens the local tax base, and supports local employers by expanding housing opportunities for the workforce. These benefits are especially important for growing communities that are working to balance housing demand with responsible growth.

Based on my experience designing and reviewing similar projects, I believe the proposed code amendment represents a practical and reasonable update to the City's development standards. I support the Planning Commission and City Council in considering this amendment and encourage its approval.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,



Aaron Hoeft
ACH Engineering