

Lawmakers contemplate options for affordable housing

New construction not keeping pace

By MARK MILLER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — It's getting harder to find a place to live in Oregon, and state lawmakers are making a bipartisan effort to address what some call a housing crisis.

New housing construction isn't keeping pace with population growth, according to state economists. The Up for Growth National Coalition estimates that from 2000 to 2015, Oregon "under-produced" its housing needs by 155,000 units. Increases in real estate and rental prices in the Portland area only recently started easing.

State Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, D-Portland, has been working on housing issues in the Legislature since 2013. As chair of the House Human Services and Housing Committee, she's excited about the work legislators are doing, and she likes many of the proposals she's seen, including more money for local planning departments, a lifeline for struggling mobile home parks, boosting density in residential neighborhoods and beyond.

She's worried about how the state is going to pay for them.

About \$70 million is being sought for housing-related legislation, House Speaker Tina Kotek said.

"I don't know if we'll find the money, but we're going to try," Kotek said.

One of her priorities is opening more residential areas to multifamily housing.

House Bill 2001 would require all cities above 10,000 in population to permit a duplex wherever they would allow a single-family house. All cities above 25,000 — as well as virtually the entire Portland Metro area — would have to allow triplexes, quadplexes, townhouses and cottage clusters in residential neighborhoods, as well.

The goal, Kotek said, is "to provide more housing choice in residential areas." Permitting what she calls "missing middle" housing types would mean more rentals that low-income Oregonians can afford, more homes for first-time homebuyers, and more apartments, condominiums and small houses for older adults looking to downsize.

HB 2001 was introduced to significant skepticism from cities and counties, conservative economists and Republican legislators. But after multiple rounds of revisions, the bill passed out of Keny-Guyer's committee on an 11-0 vote in favor of passage.

"I was very supportive of the overall concept, and I was very supportive of making some pretty big changes to it, and I think all of that happened," Keny-Guyer said.

Rep. Jack Zika, R-Redmond, is among the committee Republicans who came around on HB 2001 after initial doubts. He's still hoping for some more changes, he said, but he is "starting to like the bill."

"When you need affordable housing, you've got to do everything you can,"

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Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Don Kelly moves his metal detector slowly over the ground looking for buried items on a friend's property near Astoria in 2018. He was upset to hear about the looting at the national park.

DIGGING OUT

Looting at park opens window into 'mud larkers'

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

When looting at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park in March turned a protected archaeological site into a mud pit, digging — specifically illegal digging — was already on the minds of some park staff.

The Daily Astorian had published an article about self-described "mud larkers," amateur archaeologists and treasure hunters who use metal detectors to find historic artifacts.

Superintendent Jon Burpee, concerned by the response to the hobby, drafted a letter to the newspaper.

"While I share their enthusiasm for our local history," he wrote, "I would like to echo the guidance to call ahead to understand what restrictions may be in place."

The national park was established by Congress to protect natural and cultural resources, he continued.

"These resources do not belong to any one individual, but to the entire country and future generations."

The diggers who hit the park near the Netul River Trail used metal detectors to find and remove historic artifacts — a potential federal felony. They left behind nine deep holes and when they dug away at a riverbank, they also damaged a rare plant community.

The park does not know who was behind the crime, and these kinds of cases are notoriously difficult to solve.

Chris Clatterbuck, resource program manager at the national park, sees one positive in the whole situation: "There's a growing awareness throughout the community of what ethical metal detecting is."



The wreck of the Peter Iredale is a popular attraction at Fort Stevens State Park.

He added, hopefully, "The person who did this probably just didn't know the rules."

'Dirt fishing'

Don Kelly was dismayed when he heard about the looting.

"It really upset me that people would desecrate historical sites," he said.

Kelly, an Astoria native, has been mud larking — he prefers the term "dirt fishing" — for 50 years. He is the administrator of the Facebook group Northwest Artifact Recovery Team and prides himself on a careful, conscientious approach to the hobby.

Research is always the first step before he starts digging, he said. Many of his hunts take place on private land. He doesn't sell what he finds, hauls away any trash and fills in the holes he makes before he leaves.

"All the people I have dug with are

respectful of our laws and code of ethics regarding metal detectors," Kelly said, adding that illegal digs hurt the people who follow the rules.

Kelly worries a dig like the one at Lewis and Clark could begin to limit where he and others are allowed to dig in the future.

"A true 'detectorist' is not just a coin and jewelry hunter, but one who loves history and preserves it before it is gone forever," he said.

However, park staff say some amateur diggers may be damaging more history than they are saving. Small items can tell big stories, but when people pull them out of their context, jumble them with other items in shovel-scoops of dirt, or even toss them aside because they're not obviously interesting, those stories are lost.

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Law allowing salvage of roadkill proves popular



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

A dead deer lies along U.S. Highway 101 near Gearhart.

From death to dinner

By BEN BOTKIN
Statesman Journal

SALEM — Three months in, Oregonians have embraced a new law that lets them claim for food deer and elk killed along the state's highways.

More than 200 permits were issued by the end of March, and primarily where expected: rural areas with an abundant supply of both wildlife and motorists. Urban areas and far-flung, sparsely populated counties, not so much.

The law allows people to take deer and elk killed by vehicles, whether their own or someone else's. Other animal species are not included.

Highways near small and medium-size towns are roadkill hotspots. Residents near La Grande in eastern Oregon and Klamath Falls in southern Oregon applied for the most roadkill permits, state data show.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which administers the roadkill permit system — officially known as road salvage permits — provided the data in

response to a public records request from the Statesman Journal.

Agency officials expected people to apply for the new permits, but they didn't know what type of volume to anticipate, Michelle Dennehy, a state Department of Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman, said in an email.

"We expect roadkill permit usage will pick up in spring and fall during annual big game migration, as wildlife-vehicle collisions peak at these times," Dennehy said.

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