



# Planning Commission Agenda

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

**July 25, 2023**

**Study Session**

## AGENDA

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 p.m., Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street

II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

III. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Note: If you wish to discuss an agenda item, please contact [PC-public-testimony@ashland.or.us](mailto:PC-public-testimony@ashland.or.us) by July 25, 2023, 10 a.m. to register to participate electronically. To speak to an agenda item in person you must fill out a speaker request form at the meeting and will then be recognized by the Chair to provide your public testimony. Written testimony can be submitted in advance or in person at the meeting. If you are interested in watching the meeting via Zoom, please utilize the following link: <https://zoom.us/j/95262206024>

IV. **OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Croman Mill Site Update - Townmakers, LLC**

**B. Legislative Update**

V. **OPEN DISCUSSION**

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Next Meeting Date:** August 8, 2023

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please email [planning@ashland.or.us](mailto:planning@ashland.or.us). Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).





# **OTHER BUSINESS**

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## **Croman Mill Site Update - Townmakers, LLC**



# Memo

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**DATE:** July 25, 2023  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Derek Severson, *Planning Manager*  
**RE:** Townmakers/Croman Mill District Update

Following several quarterly updates to the City Council regarding the redevelopment plans for the former Croman Mill site, the Planning Commission had requested that the developer, Townmakers, LLC, provide a status update to the Commission.

In early May, site sampling was conducted by SCS Engineers, the property owners' environmental engineering consultant, with oversight by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). DEQ staff are scheduled to discuss preliminary test results at the July 31, 2023 City Council study session as they work with the property owner to develop a clean-up plan. Townmakers has indicated that the site will need to be cleaned and a "No Further Action" letter provided by DEQ before their plans move forward.

At the most recent Council presentation on June 5, 2023 key issues were:

- Discussing potential phasing to ensure an acceptable balance of commercial and residential square footage in the phasing plan.
- Discussing the possibility of the City creating an urban renewal district to utilize tax increment financing options to fund needed public infrastructure.

Townmakers' team will be available to provide an update to the Commission at the July 25<sup>th</sup> study session and answer any questions Commissioners may have. Townmakers has provided the attached packet material to inform this discussion.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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# TOWARD A NEW MASTER PLAN FOR CROMAN MILL

*Background document on a development proposal for a key “opportunity site”*

## Summary

Many Ashland citizens are eager to see the site of the former Croman Mill cleaned up and developed into a dynamic new district for the city. Townmakers LLC and its team also see an opportunity for an innovative and successful new development on the site, and they intend to move forward on acquisition and redevelopment. However, if the site is to be more than simply another form of conventional development, careful strategy and collaboration will be needed.

In a recent report on economic diversification of the City, the economics consulting firm ECONorthwest describe the Croman Mill site as “Perhaps the property with the most potential to redefine its area,” with a mixed-use development that provides family-wage jobs, employment and needed housing.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, the Townmakers team’s draft master plan features a walkable, mixed-use, live-work-play, sustainable form of urbanization that will incorporate climate-friendly strategies, seek to add core employment and family wage jobs, and provide much-needed housing supply, including affordable and workforce housing.



*Left: the site. Right: the current master plan showing potential use areas.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ashlandchamber.com/files/2022AshlandEconDiversificationStrategy.pdf>

Broadly speaking, we plan to pursue two complementary strategies. One strategy is to try to capture existing markets for employment-generating industries, including agriculture-related products, technology businesses, and the like. Another complementary strategy, which we feel would be very appropriate for Ashland, would be to build on the unique qualities, assets, and local culture of the city, generating more businesses at a smaller and more local scale – including a diverse range of pay scales. Examples might include craft-based and value-added food and beverage products, specialty technologies, recreation-related businesses, businesses related to sustainability and climate change, fire resilience expertise, research and consulting expertise, and lifestyle-related health and wellness innovations, as well as other emerging opportunities.

Such an “ecosystem” of smaller businesses and so-called “makerspaces,” could be highly complementary to the more sustainable development model of a walkable, mixed-use, live-work-play district – and crucially, one that is complementary to, and not competitive with, other areas and established businesses of the city.

**The key role of housing in economically competitive, “live-work-play” neighborhoods**

The original 2010 Croman Mill District Plan did not contemplate a significant increment of housing. At that time, the main goal was the recruitment of large “core employers,” and housing was a secondary consideration. However, since 2010, conditions have shifted dramatically. There is now a housing crisis, fueled by a lack of diverse or affordable housing. There is an urgent need to create more housing supply to meet demand, and ease upward pressure on prices. And as the Ashland Housing Capacity Analysis of 2021 reported, “Ashland will need more diverse housing types [sometimes referred to as ‘missing middle’]...such as: small single-family detached housing, accessory dwelling units, cottage housing, townhouses, duplexes, tri- and quad-plexes, and apartments.” This is also an issue of economic competitiveness, since potential employers are looking for locations that are suitable for their employees.

Moreover, the nature of employment has changed, and the line between housing and employment has blurred. Especially in the wake of COVID, more people work from home, or have started home-based businesses. More employers want employees to live nearby, in desirable, livable neighborhoods with diverse amenities. Croman Mill needs to attract good employees, in order to attract good employers.



*Left: Bird's-eye view of “civic core” looking north from Siskiyou Boulevard. Right: The compatible industrial or “makerspace” district, integrated with nearby housing. Illustrations by Laurence Qamar for Townmakers LLC.*





# **OTHER BUSINESS**

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## **Legislative Update**



# Memo

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**DATE:** July 25, 2023  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Derek Severson, *Planning Manager*  
**RE:** 2023 Legislative Update

After a six-week walkout by some senators made it seem uncertain, the Oregon State Legislature was ultimately able to conclude the 2023 regular session with the passage of a number of bills dealing with Oregon's land use program in the areas of housing, natural and working lands, and wildfire resilience. These bills are outlined in the attached.

Given the number of bills passed at the end of the session, staff have relied upon materials compiled by several groups including the League of Oregon Cities, 1,000 Friends of Oregon, the Oregon Environmental Council and the Building Resilience Coalition to prepare this summary. *Bills that stalled or failed are not included in the attached.*

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# 2023 Legislative Update

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## Housing

### **HB 2001** 'Housing for All' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill establishes the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (**OHNA**) framework and ensures that Oregon cities and the state enact a full set of land use tools, related investments, and other strategies to support building housing for all, in every neighborhood. (*The OHNA was initially outlined under [HB 2889](#), which is now a technical clean-up bill.*)

**Why it matters:** OHNA updates the way the state and cities plan for, invest in, and ensure housing production, so that every Oregonian has the opportunity for an affordable housing choice in every community in keeping with Oregon land use Goal 10, Housing. The bill is also intended to take pressure off of lands that produce food and fiber and provide clean air, water, and natural habitat.

### **HB 2984** 'Reuse Commercial Buildings for Workforce Housing'

**PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill will allow, within urban growth boundaries (**UGBs**), the conversion of buildings from commercial use to housing without a zone change or conditional-use permit. It prohibits local governments from requiring *more* parking and limits collection of system development charges.

**Why it matters:** This bill will enable the reuse of buildings that are well-located and soundly built, but for which there may no longer be viable commercial use, especially after pandemic-related changes to how and where people shop and work. These structures can still provide needed housing in existing communities while preserving existing buildings.

### **HB 3151 'Manufactured Dwellings and Parks' PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill offers financial protections and incentives to tenants in manufactured home parks, expands the definition of affordable housing to include manufactured home parks, and expands the state's loan authority to include constructing new parks (not just acquisition of existing parks).

**Why it matters:** This bill continues and expands Oregon's commitment to one of the most affordable home ownership opportunities for Oregonians, and one that can be developed fairly quickly: manufactured housing parks.

### **HB 3197 'Clear and Objective Residential Development' PASSED**

**What it does:** [HB 3197](#) clarifies that clear and objective standards for residential development apply only inside urban growth boundaries (UGBs).

**Why it matters:** Residential development is planned to occur within cities' UGBs; further enabling residential development outside of UGBs does not make sense where the land is zoned mostly for farming, forestry, and natural resources. These areas are not residential zones. Instead, this is where housing is minimized, so as to support, and not conflict with, farming and forestry and

not interfere with streams, habitat, wetlands, and other natural resource areas. In these areas, statutes and rules have properly given local governments discretion to weigh factors and consider conditions in deciding whether a residential use will adversely interfere with these resource uses.

### **HB 3309 'Housing Accessibility' PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill requires the Housing and Community Services Department to assess the amount of housing it funds that includes accessibility features, estimate the amount of unmet accessible units in the state, review rules and building code standards that are applicable to accessible units, and file a report with the legislature in September 2024 with its findings and any recommendations.

**Why it matters:** This bill aims to increase the overall supply of accessible housing units in Oregon.

### **HB 3395 'Housing Package' PASSED**

**What it does:** [HB 3395](#) contains many housing proposals including:

- Makes it easier to use commercially zoned land inside urban growth boundaries (UGBs) for affordable housing.
- Requires all cities with populations over 2,500 to allow duplexes on all single-family lots in residential zones.
- Makes it easier to site emergency housing shelters inside UGBs.
- Allows residential developments of four or more attached units that share a common kitchen on residentially zoned lands.

- Directs grants for community housing supporting agricultural employees.
- Provides funding to local governments to support housing development efforts.

**Why it matters:** These provisions make it easier to develop a range of housing for all, including people with moderate and lower incomes, in all communities.

## **SB 406** 'Housing for All' **PASSED**

**What it does:** [SB 406](#) adds the cities and certain unincorporated communities in Tillamook County to the list of cities around the state that must comply with the middle housing provisions of 2019's [HB 2001](#) (*not to be confused with this year's housing bill with the same number*). That previous legislation was directed at cities with more than 10,000 people, of which there are none in Tillamook County.

**Why it matters:** With this bill, the seven incorporated cities and the named unincorporated communities in Tillamook County will have to allow middle housing in all their residential zones, and they will also be potentially eligible for funding and planning assistance from DLCD. Tillamook County and its cities have voluntarily chosen to participate in this program, to provide more diverse and affordable housing options for residents and workers.

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# Natural & Working Lands, Food Systems, and Rural Climate Solutions

## **HB 3409** 'Climate Resilience Package' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This package of bills uses an initial state investment of approximately \$90 million in order to leverage roughly \$1 billion in federal funds.

- **Resilient, Efficient Buildings Policy Package** ([SB 868](#), [869](#), [870](#), [871](#)) - Leverages federal funding to improve efficiency of homes and buildings; supports healthy, affordable, resilient communities and family-wage job creation across Oregon.
- **Community Resilience Hubs** ([HB 2990](#)) - Funds community resilience hubs and networks across the state to coordinate and provide access to resources and services for vulnerable populations during disasters.
- **Natural Climate Solutions** ([SB 530](#)) - Supports cost-sharing to leverage tens of millions in federal investments for Oregon forestland owners, farmers, and ranchers to implement climate-smart land management practices, increasing carbon sequestration and improving the resilience of Oregon communities and natural resource economies.
- **Oregon Climate Council Modernization** ([SB 522](#)) - Provides long-overdue staffing and representation on the Oregon Global Warming Commission.
- **Medium and Heavy Duty Electric Vehicle Rebate Program** ([HB 2714](#)) - Creates a DEQ program that can compete for \$1 billion in federal IRA funding for medium- and heavy-duty zero emission vehicle rebates.
- **Trees Restoring Economic and Environmental Stability Act** ([HB 3016](#)) - Creates a Community Green Infrastructure Grant Program at DLCDC to



fund communities to develop projects that increase tree canopy, improve livability, and support water quality and conservation.

- **Climate Protection Program Fee Bill (HB 3196)** - Supports DEQ oversight and accountability of Oregon's cornerstone Climate Protection Program to ensure the Community Climate Investment program achieves its intended climate pollution reduction goals and benefits for communities of color, rural, low-income, Tribal, and other communities across the state.
- **Harmful Algal Blooms (HB 2647)** - Protects Oregonians from harmful algal blooms in drinking water, which are likely to occur more often due to shifting precipitation patterns from climate change.
- **Woody Biomass for Low-Carbon Fuels (HB 3590)** - Directs College of Forestry at Oregon State University to research development of fuel pathways for low carbon fuels derived from woody biomass residues from forestry operations.
- **Siting Renewable Energy (HB 3181)** - Directs DLCD in coordination with ODOE to find opportunities and minimize conflicts on siting of solar projects in Oregon through engaging stakeholders in a rulemaking advisory committee process.

**Why it matters:** The package of bills recognizes the potential of working and natural lands to address climate change by sequestering carbon and supports the land-stewardship activities of farmers and ranchers. It also reinforces the reasons to protect farm and forest lands.

## **HB 3410** 'Rural Economic Development' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill provides funding for various rural economic-development opportunities around the state, including increased funding to

the Department of Agriculture to support grant programs that assist meat processors in meeting the requirements of the new State Meat Inspection Program.

**Why it matters:** This funding will create new opportunities for Oregon ranchers to bring meat to the retail market.

### **SB 507** 'Updating the Farm Direct Marketing Law' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill updates Oregon's Farm Direct Marketing law, by allowing farmers to bring certain low-risk, value-added products to farmers markets and their farm stands. This has strengthened local and regional food systems, as countless farmers and communities, particularly in rural Oregon, have benefited from the increased economic capital generated by farm-to-consumer sales.

**Why it matters:** By expanding the allowed product lines, the bill expands the economic benefits to growers from direct farm marketing.

### **SB 5506** 'Omnibus Funding' Bill **PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill includes funding for critical activities related to working lands, including:

- The Morrow and Umatilla Drought Relief Aquifer Recharge and Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project
- OSU Extension Service's Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems, which provides site-specific technical assistance and research

to all farmers interested in incorporating climate-smart, healthy-soil practices.

- The Oregon Community Food Systems Network to develop regional food-system infrastructure and support small-scale farms and ranches.
- Oregon Farm to School grant program, supporting education, school food programs, and food producers across the state.

## **SB 70** 'More Houses on Eastern Oregon Farmland' **PASSED**

**What it does:** Expands the farmland available to be rezoned to residential use for the 100 homes allowed under 2021's [SB 16](#). Those homes could be clustered or individually sited on some farmlands throughout the Eastern Oregon Border Region.

**Why it matters:** [SB 70](#) opens up farmland in irrigation districts and in the Snake River Valley viticulture area (AVA) to new residential development not related to farming or ranching.

## **HB 3382** 'Deep Draft Navigation Channels' **PASSED**

**What it does:** In its original form, this bill would have allowed deep channel dredging and other activities in five Oregon ports, without application of statewide land use planning Goal 16 (Estuaries). Based on advocacy by land use and environmental watchdog groups, the bill was amended to apply only to the Port of Coos Bay, and now requires an applicant to go through the land use "exceptions" process if the applicant wants to dredge the deep-water channel and engage in certain other activities in that estuary. However, it also

recognizes that such dredging and other activities can qualify for an exception.

**Why it matters:** [HB 3382](#) effectively amends Goal 16 (Estuaries) without the normal process required in amending a land use goal or any related rule.

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## Transportation

### **HB 3014** 'Alternative Transportation Options for Schools' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill gives greater flexibility to school districts in funding multimodal, active transportation options for kids to get to school.

**Why it matters:** Providing safe ways for kids to get to school on foot, bike, and bus means healthier kids and fewer cars on the road.

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## Climate

### **HB 3630** 'State Energy Strategy' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This package of bills requires the State Department of Energy to develop a comprehensive strategy to optimally achieve the state's energy policy objectives, including renewable energy, and includes:

- **State Energy Strategy (HB 2534)** - Directs ODOE to develop a comprehensive state energy strategy that identifies optimized pathways to achieving the state's energy policies.

- **County Energy Resilience Planning (HB 3378)** - Supports counties' development of energy resilience planning and integration into wildfire mitigation plans.
- **Resilient, Efficient Buildings - ODOE One-Stop-Shop (HB 3166)** - Leverages federal funding to improve efficiency of homes and buildings; supports healthy, affordable, resilient communities and family-wage job creation across Oregon.
- **Environmental Justice and Tribal Navigator (SB 852)** - Establishes a program within ODOE to provide information about state and federal funding opportunities and other technical assistance to rural, Tribal, and other environmental justice communities as they work to develop energy projects or build energy-related capacity.
- **Residential Solar Rebate Program Extension (HB 3418)** - Lifts sunset on solar and storage project rebates for residential customers and low-income service providers, extending the program through January 2029, enabling the program to potentially receive and distribute tens of millions in federal funding from EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.
- **Residential Heat Pump Program Extension (HB 3056)** - Supports implementation of ODOE's Residential and Community Heat Pump Deployment Programs established by the 2021 legislature to bring much-needed heat relief to Oregon communities.
- **Community Renewable Energy Grant Program** - Provides funding for ODOE's Community Renewable Energy Grant Program, established by the legislature in 2021, to support planning and developing community renewable energy and energy resilience projects.

**Why it matters:** The current lack of a state-level energy plan significantly hinders integration of renewable energy needs with agricultural, natural resources, ranching, forestry, coastal resources, and community needs. This comprehensive state energy assessment and strategy will set the stage for a

more coordinated, public-oriented system of energy generation and transmission.

## **SB 5506** 'CFEC Omnibus Funding' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This omnibus funding bill includes funding to continue implementation of LCDC's Climate Friendly & Equitable Communities program by cities within the major urban areas of the state.

**Why it matters:** To implement CFEC rules intended to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, it is critical that cities have adequate funding and technical support to plan for climate-friendly areas.

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# Wildfire Resilience & Preparedness

## **SB 80** 'State Hazard Mapping' **PASSED**

**What it does:** This bill reclassifies the state wildfire map as a "hazard" map (rather than a "risk" map) with three hazard levels and adds an "unclassified" category. It also focuses community outreach, education, preparedness and resiliency investments, assistance, and standards in high-hazard areas and those areas with vulnerable populations.

[SB 80](#) also establishes several funds and programs: the 'Landscape Resiliency' Fund, 'Community Risk Reduction' Fund, and 'Wildfire Home Preparedness' Program for these purposes. The home-preparedness program will aid in the

retrofitting and building of dwellings to be resistant and resilient to wildfire, focusing on economically- and socially vulnerable communities.

**Why it matters:** [Senate Bill 80](#) maintains the map's scientific integrity of indicating the exposure to wildfire hazard that exists based on landscape-scale climate, weather, topography, and vegetation. This will enable the map to be more effectively used as originally intended: as a guide for where to focus investments, technical assistance, on-the-ground crews, infrastructure protection, evacuation planning, and appropriate regulations to make Oregon families and their communities more wildfire prepared and resilient.

## **SB 5506 'Land Use & Wildfire Omnibus Funding' PASSED**

**What it does:** This omnibus funding bill includes several provisions related to land use planning and wildfire:

- Funding for the Oregon Conservation Corps which, among other things, carries out defensible space work.
- Funding for wildfire mitigation.

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## I-5 Bridge Replacement

### **HB 5005 'Interstate Bridge Replacement Funding' PASSED**

**What it does:** There were several different policy attempts to fund Oregon's portion of the I-5 Bridge Replacement Program, with HB 2098 being the policy bill heard in the Joint Committee on Transportation in the earlier part of the

session. Several policy disagreements existed with that legislation, and it did not pass. This, combined with the walkout, left an unclear path forward on how Oregon was going to navigate this transportation funding question. In the last days of session, the legislature made an unprecedented move to pay for the entirety of this project from the general fund.

**Why it matters:** This bill involves replacing the I-5 bridge with a seismically safe replacement that expands transportation options over the Columbia River.

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## Semiconductors

### **SB 4** 'Semiconductors' **PASSED**

**What it does:** [SB 4](#) makes \$210 million of state money available to assist Oregon's semiconductor industry. It helps semiconductor companies compete for federal funding made available by the CHIPS and Science Act, and it supports higher-education institutions, workforce development, and site readiness for semiconductor expansions. The bill gives authority to the Governor to bring a certain number of sites, of specific sizes, into an urban growth boundary (UGB) by executive authority – only if there is no other available land for possible semiconductor expansion.

**Why it matters:** Semiconductors are one of Oregon's major industries, and the bill's financial and educational incentives will help grow high-tech workforce for the future and bring existing industrial lands to full readiness. The governor's special executive authority expires at the end of 2024, and land brought inside a UGB under this law would be removed from the UGB if federal funding was



not ultimately awarded for the project at hand. As a result of this [SB 4](#) process, cities across the state have put forward industrial sites within their UGBs that are large and well-suited to high-tech development and as such, there is a good chance that the Governor's new executive authority will not be needed.