



TO: Senate Committee on Housing and Development
FROM: Oregon Recreation & Park Association
DATE: April 10, 2023
RE: HB 2984 Opposition – CONDENSED HOUSING NEEDS PARKS

Please consider this letter voicing great concern regarding restrictions on System Development Charge (SDC) in HB 2984.

People of all income levels deserve parks and open areas. People in all housing types need to have outdoor opportunities. People with fewer options for inside, need more options for outside.

While we believe commercial to residential conversion opportunities are an excellent solution to help with the housing crisis, we have significant concerns and legitimate objections to the changes to SDCs. It is important to know that in some cities commercial development never pays parks system development charges. So, allowing conversion from commercial to residential could add hundreds of units that under HB 2984 that also would not pay parks SDCs.

We offer as a solution: if the initial commercial development paid a parks SDC, no additional charges will be required when the property is converted to housing. But, if the parks SDC was not charged for the former commercial use, at the time of the conversion to residential a parks SDC will be charged at the former commercial rate or at the proposed residential rate, whichever is less.

Park and recreation facilities are a critical part of a healthy and thriving community. As cities across the state increase density, Park SDCs are not an obstacle but a means to ensuring that all Oregonians have equitable access to high-quality parks, nature, trails, and recreation facilities— not just those living in certain neighborhoods or areas of a community.

In addition to improving physical and mental health, parks and greenspaces are also critical to the environmental health of cities and are important tools for mitigating the effects of climate change. Low-income communities of color have historically received even lower park investments than whiter, wealthier communities. Inequitable park investments have contributed to health disparities in communities of color, where rates of obesity, heart disease, anxiety, and depression are significantly higher.

Please help us help communities – please consider changing this legislation.