

Increased density must be done right

Olympians for Smart Development and Livable Neighborhoods (OSD&LN), a grassroots group supporting responsible growth, takes issue with the recent editorial “ [Embrace increased housing density to address homelessness](#).” Density will likely increase over time. Public input and regulatory safeguards matter.

Dismissing concern about the city delegating planning power to developers is divisive. We are not NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard). We support increasing density in ways that provide everyone a voice and create sustainability. We support ensuring infrastructure meets increased demands. Neighborhood expansion is coming and must be carefully implemented. We call that “density done right.”

Our City Council is crafting a sweeping new ordinance that can’t be appealed. Now, residents, renters and owners alike, are not allowed to chart their own future.

While the notion that unfettered density could lead to lower housing costs is seductive, it’s really a stepping stone to rising costs and gentrification. Increased Seattle density has not lowered housing prices. Costs there are helping drive Olympia’s crunch as people leave high-density Seattle hoping to find affordability here.

Developers want to bring their failed Seattle model to Olympia. They insist we can build our way into affordable housing, but only if we do it now and without question. That’s a red flag for everyone concerned about affordability and sustainability.

OSD&LN says let’s slow down, ask questions, get citizen input, and make sure density is done right. Developers won’t like that approach, but our future as a city depends on it. We encourage readers to visit our website, densitydoneright.org, to learn more.

Douglas Benson, Olympia, president of OSD&LN