

AFFORDABILITY CRISIS CONTINUES

OREGONIANS FEEL THE CRUNCH, SUPPORT MIDDLE HOUSING

DHM Panel May Survey Results

June 11, 2019

In October 2015, the City of Portland declared a state of emergency on housing and homelessness, the first of an ongoing set of policy responses across the state to address concerns with housing affordability. Earlier this year, Oregon became the first state to enact caps on rent increases and legislators are now considering other measures to address the affordable housing crisis in Oregon. For DHM's May survey, we checked in with Oregonians to find out whether or not they feel the impact of the housing crisis, and if they support or oppose some of the proposed solutions.

These findings come from the May 2019 fielding of our DHM Panel. The survey was conducted from May 16 to 23, 2019, and surveyed 624 Oregonians. The results were weighted by age, gender, area of the state, political party, and level of education to ensure a representative sample of Oregon residents. The margin of error for this survey is $\pm 3.9\%$.

Perceptions of the Oregon housing crisis have not changed since 2016.

Similar to results from past years, 84% of Oregonians agree that the state is experiencing a housing crisis. This opinion is shared by most demographic groups, though those from the Willamette Valley are less likely to hold this opinion (68%) than their counterparts (91%). Residents of the Willamette Valley area (76%) are also more likely than those in other areas of the state (53%-67%) to consider their housing "affordable," meaning housing costs account for no more than 30% of their household's income.

While a majority of Oregonians continue to find their own housing situation affordable, clear differences exist between renters and homeowners.

The percentage of Oregonians who consider their housing situation affordable has also remained consistent since 2016. In each year, about six in ten Oregonians (63% in 2019) have reported that their housing costs, including basic utilities, account for no more than 30% of their household's income.



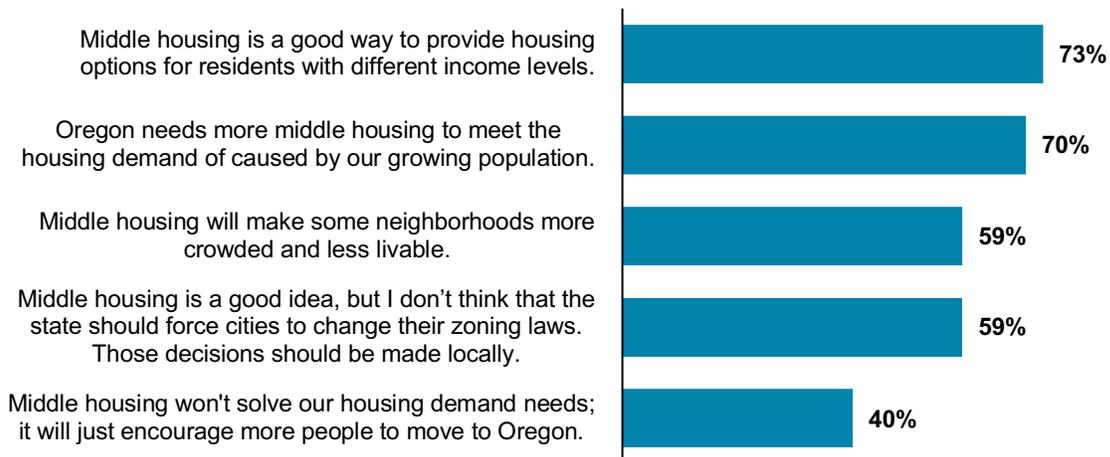
Though the majority of panelists find their current housing situation to be affordable, the data suggests that clear disparities exist between renters and homeowners. 72% of homeowners say their housing is affordable, compared to only 43% of renters. Renters are also significantly less likely than homeowners to be able to afford an emergency costing \$1,000. One-half of renters would not be able to afford this expense, compared to 17% of homeowners.

For all these differences in access and affordability, renters do have something in common with homeowners: a desire to one day live on their own property. Almost all renters say they currently rent as a matter of circumstance rather than as a choice, and three in four would like to own a home someday.

While most support proposed zoning laws to incorporate *middle housing* in Oregon’s residential areas, Oregonians see pros and cons.

Though a comprehensive rent control bill passed in February, political leaders in the state have continued to pursue other policy options to address the affordability crisis. The Oregon State Legislature is now considering a bill that would require the Portland metropolitan area and other cities with populations greater than 25,000 to allow *middle housing* in any area that is zoned for residential use. *Middle housing* includes duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhouses, and cottage clusters. 64% of Oregonians support this proposal, with Republicans as the only demographic group without majority support (36%).

Oregonians express the strongest agreement with claims about middle housing’s ability to provide housing options for all income levels and to meet growing population demands. On the con side, about six in ten agree that middle housing will negatively impact livability, or that the issue should be dealt with on a more local scale. Oregonians least agree with the claim that an increased housing supply will only encourage more people to move to Oregon.



Taken together, these results suggest that while Oregonians do not see *middle housing* as a silver bullet, they support the legislature continuing to take steps to address the housing crisis.