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U.S. 'Opportunity Zones' Use Tax Breaks for Developers to Help Poor Neighborhoods - But Are They Really Helping?

By most accounts, Beaverton, part of Oregon's Sunset Corridor, is a desirable American suburb. It's 15 minutes from downtown Portland, home to Nike headquarters and has a median household income of around US\$50,000 range.

Why, then, are American taxpayers subsidizing developers to build in Beaverton, along with dozens of other economically robust communities just like it?

The answer lies in an ambitious public-private partnership initiative known as opportunity zones. Embedded in the U.S. Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, aimed at incentivizing private investors to develop real estate in low-income communities and spur local business growth, the program has attracted billions of dollars in projects from Beaverton to Boston.

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