

Submitter: Brooke Best
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

As proposed, HB 3414 would allow developers to bypass city codes and processes in place to protect our built and natural resources, including regulations governing the alteration of landmark properties and new construction in designated districts, without demanding any increased density or level of affordability. The current version includes a list of exceptions that allow regulations relating to density, height, and floor-to-area ratio to remain, however, all other existing protections to avoid incompatible new development will no longer apply if a developer asks for a variance under this bill. This would eliminate design compatibility protections such as massing, orientation, materials, windows, character-defining features, and stylistic detailing, as well as setbacks and tree preservation obligations for new residential development in every zone where residential uses are allowed. The impacts from by-right adjustments will be felt in every community and neighborhood, and will not necessarily increase the overall supply of housing, housing affordability, nor increase housing choice. Additionally, HB 3414 would continue a well-established trend of displacement and gentrification of culturally diverse areas that deserve continued protection.

There are many ways that we can support streamlining and incentivizing housing in a preservation- and climate-friendly manner without sacrificing our existing resources. HB 3414 does not get it right.