

Submitter: Paul and Nikki Majkut

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure: HB3414

This bill does not incentivize the building of affordable housing. We need quality in infill development, not shortcuts that eliminate compatible infill. When it comes to preserving livability, density is not really the issue, as many of us know. Some high-density areas are delightfully livable, and some low-density areas are miserable. The deeper question is the quality of the development, and whether it elegantly handles impacts like vehicles, shading, safety issues, noise, and just plain ugliness.

Reject this bill and let us take another approach such as that proposed by Laurence Qamar, Heather Flint Chatto and colleagues for infill development in Portland, Oregon. Instead of the usual approach of professional boilerplate regulations, they offered precedent designs and visual guidelines that are developed with the community beforehand—in one case, in a community charrette in Portland’s Woodstock neighborhood. The precedent designs can be pre-approved by the neighborhood association, and can even be pre-planned and pre-entitled by the City. A developer can take them more or less off the shelf, or use them to develop very similar plans, essentially moving forward with a project that the neighborhood has already conceptually reviewed and approved.