

HB 302

Talking Points

- Local ability to regulate exterior cladding material is not merely to address aesthetic issues, it is also an important tool for ensuring the quality of materials used in residential construction. Not all cladding is appropriate, durable, or cost-effective for homeowners. In fact some cladding is not appropriate for use in high wind zone areas such as along the coast. **HB 302 would eliminate this ability.**
- Design standards attract high quality builders and ensure that the investments builders, developers and homeowners make are protected. **HB 302 would put this at risk.**
- The Bryan County Commissioners strive to make development reflect their community and its standards. **HB 302 would take that ability away from our local elected officials thereby eroding home rule.**
- While historic districts are protected in the bill, which indicates an understanding that standards do make sense, why would a county commission be precluded from having similar standards for their communities. **Counties should be treated no differently than an historic district.**
- Counties and the building/developer community both win when appropriate design standards are incorporated with basic zoning districts and land use policies, thereby creating a diverse, stable, profitable and sustainable residential development. **HB 302 puts this idea in jeopardy.**
- Design standards and regulation of materials help local officials create the communities they want years from now as discussed in the local comprehensive plans that are established with great citizen input, as required by law. **HB 302 would greatly limit our citizens ability to have meaningful input into establishing these comprehensive plans.**

Arguments for Residential Design Standards

Background:

- Detached single-family housing is the predominant building type in most cities and counties in Georgia.
- In suburban cities and counties, single family homes comprise a significant proportion of local tax base.
- A negligible percentage of single-family homes are designed by qualified architects or individuals with even modest training in design principles.
- While many homes in newer subdivisions are subject to covenants or deed restrictions, design-based deed restrictions tend to be limited to homes in higher-end subdivisions with architectural review committees.
- Design-based deed restrictions are lacking from the vast majority of existing lots within the state.

- While proposed legislation exempts designated historic homes and districts from the proposed prohibition on design review, these protections would not apply to most of existing neighborhoods and would have no application to new subdivisions that lack design-based regulations or functioning design review boards.

Need for Residential Design Standards

1. To ensure compatibility within existing neighborhoods. Context sensitive design addresses scale/orientation and form of buildings without necessarily mandating an architectural style or layout of a structure. They can prevent new homes and home remodeling projects that diminish the value of properties within a neighborhood even though the homes comply with height and setback standards:
2. Good design standards:
 - a. Increase short and long-term property values without significant increases in home costs;
 - b. Protect property value, privacy and the enjoyment of personal property so homeowners can expect their largest investment to build personal wealth;
 - c. Deter blight and help protect the tax base required to fund essential public services;
 - d. Improve child and other pedestrian public safety by increasing distances between garage faces and the streets while allowing homes to be built closer to the street;
 - e. Reduce crime by enabling residents to keep eyes on the street and by ensuring that entries are visible from the street;
 - f. Ensure that porches and other architectural features are functional, rather than merely ornamental.

There is a big difference between cheap and affordable. Poorly designed and constructed houses may be less expensive, but the repair costs and loss of potential capital growth reduce their affordability. True affordability accounts for land costs, mobility costs (access to work, shopping, schools and amenities), access to reliable water and wastewater service, durable, resilient construction and other factors shaped by location, density and design.