LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 330, as amended, Skinner. Housing Crisis Act of 2019.

(1) The Housing Accountability Act, which is part of the Planning and Zoning Law, prohibits a local agency from disapproving, or conditioning approval in a manner that renders infeasible, a housing development project for very low, low-, or moderate-income households or an emergency shelter unless the local agency makes specified written findings based on a preponderance of the evidence in the record. The act specifies that one way to satisfy that requirement is to make findings that the housing development project or emergency shelter is inconsistent with both the jurisdiction’s zoning ordinance and general plan land use designation as specified in any element of the general plan as it existed on the date the application was deemed complete. The act requires a local agency that proposes to disapprove a housing development project that complies with applicable, objective general plan and zoning standards and criteria that were in effect at the time the application was deemed to be complete, or to approve it on the condition that it be developed at a lower density, to base its decision upon written findings supported by substantial evidence on the record that specified conditions exist, and places the burden of proof on the local agency to that effect. The act requires a court to impose a fine on a local agency under certain circumstances and requires that the fine be at least $10,000 per housing unit in the housing development project on the date the application was deemed complete.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would specify that an application is deemed complete for these purposes if a preliminary application was submitted, as described below.

Existing law authorizes the applicant, a person who would be eligible to apply for residency in the development or emergency shelter, or a housing organization to bring an action to enforce the Housing Accountability Act. If, in that action, a court finds that a local agency failed to satisfy the requirement to make the specified findings described above, existing law requires the court to issue an order or judgment compelling compliance with the act within 60 days, as specified.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would additionally require a court to issue the order or judgment previously described if the local agency required or attempted to require certain housing development projects to comply with an ordinance, policy, or standard not adopted and in effect when a preliminary application was submitted.

Existing law authorizes a local agency to require a housing development project to comply with objective, quantifiable, written development standards, conditions, and policies appropriate to, and consistent with, meeting the jurisdiction’s share of the regional housing need, as specified.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would, notwithstanding those provisions or any other law and with certain exceptions, require that a housing development project only be subject to the ordinances, policies, and standards adopted and in effect when a preliminary application is submitted, except as specified.

(2) The Planning and Zoning Law, except as provided, requires that a public hearing be held on an application for a variance from the requirements of a zoning ordinance, an application for a conditional use permit or equivalent development permit, a proposed revocation or modification of a variance or use permit or equivalent development permit, or an appeal from the action taken on any of those applications. That law requires that notice of a public hearing be provided in accordance with specified procedures.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would prohibit a city or county from conducting more than 5 de novo hearings, as defined, held pursuant to these provisions, or any other law, ordinance, or regulation requiring a public hearing, if a proposed housing development project complies with the applicable, objective general plan and zoning standards in effect at the time an application is deemed complete, as defined. The bill would require the city or county to consider and either approve or disapprove the housing development project at any of the 5 hearings consistent with the applicable timelines under the Permit Streamlining Act and prohibit a city or county from continuing a hearing to another date.

(3) The Planning and Zoning Law requires a county or city to designate and zone sufficient vacant land for residential use with appropriate standards, as provided. That law also authorizes a development proponent to submit an application for a development that is subject to a specified streamlined, ministerial approval process and not subject to a conditional use permit if the development satisfies certain objective planning standards.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* with respect to land where housing is an allowable use on or after January 1, 2018, would prohibit a county or city in which specified conditions exist, determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development as provided, from~~(A)~~ imposing any new, increasing or enforcing any existing, requirement that a proposed housing development include parking in excess of specified~~amounts or (B) charging fees, as defined, for the approval of a housing development project in excess of specified amounts, or charging any fee in connection with the approval of units within the housing development that meet specified affordability criteria, subject to certain exceptions and limitations.~~*amounts.* If the city or county grants a conditional use permit approving a proposed housing development project and that project would have been eligible for a higher density under the city’s or county’s general plan land use designation and zoning ordinances as in effect on January 1, 2018, the bill would also require the city or county to allow the project at that higher density. The bill would require a project that requires the demolition of certain types of housing to comply with specified requirements, including the provision of relocation assistance and a right of first refusal in the new housing to displaced occupants. The bill would require that any units for which a developer provides relocation assistance or a right of first refusal be considered in determining whether the housing development project satisfies the requirements, if applicable, of an inclusionary housing ordinance of the county or city.

The bill would state that these provisions would prevail over any conflicting provision of the Planning and Zoning Law or other law regulating housing development in this state, except as specifically provided. The bill would also require that any exception to these provisions, including an exception for the health and safety of occupants of a housing development project, be construed narrowly.

(4) The Permit Streamlining Act, which is part of the Planning and Zoning Law, requires each state agency and each local agency to compile one or more lists that specify in detail the information that will be required from any applicant for a development project. That law requires the state or local agency to make copies of this information available to all applicants for development projects and to any persons who request the information.

The bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* for purposes of any state or local law, ordinance, or regulation that requires a city or county to determine whether the site of a proposed housing development project is a historic site, would require the city or county to make that determination, which would remain valid for the pendency of the housing development, at the time the application is deemed complete. The bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would also require that each local agency make copies of any above-described list with respect to information required from an applicant for a housing development project available both (A) in writing to those persons to whom the agency is required to make information available and (B) publicly available on the internet website of the local agency.

The Permit Streamlining Act requires public agencies to approve or disapprove of a development project within certain timeframes, as specified. The act requires a public agency, upon its determination that an application for a development project is incomplete, to include a list and a thorough description of the specific information needed to complete the application. Existing law authorizes the applicant to submit the additional material to the public agency, requires the public agency to determine whether the submission of the application together with the submitted materials is complete within 30 days of receipt, and provides for an appeal process from the public agency’s determination. Existing law requires a final written determination by the agency on the appeal no later than 60 days after receipt of the applicant’s written appeal.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would provide that a housing development project, as defined, shall be deemed to have submitted a preliminary application upon providing specified information about the proposed project to the city or county from which approval for the project is being sought and would require the Department of Housing and Community Development to adopt a standardized form that applicants for housing development projects may use for that purpose, as specified. After the submittal of a preliminary application, the bill would provide that a housing development project would not be deemed to have submitted a complete initial application under these provisions if the development proponent revises the project such that the number of residential units or square footage of construction changes by 20% or more until the development proponent resubmits the information required by the bill so that it reflects the revisions.

The bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would require the lead agency, as defined, if the application is determined to be incomplete, to provide the applicant with an exhaustive list of items that were not complete, as specified.

The bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would also provide that all deadlines in the Permit Streamlining Act are mandatory.

The Permit Streamlining Act generally requires that a public agency that is the lead agency for a development project approve or disapprove a project within 120 days from the date of certification by the lead agency of an environmental impact report prepared for certain development projects, but reduces this time period to 90 days from the certification of an environmental impact report for development projects meeting certain additional conditions relating to affordability. Existing law defines “development project” for these purposes to mean a use consisting of either residential units only or mixed-use developments consisting of residential and nonresidential uses that satisfy certain other requirements.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* would reduce the time period in which a lead agency under these provisions is required to approve or disapprove a project from 120 days to 90 days, for a development project generally described above, and from 90 days to 60 days, for a development project that meets the above-described affordability conditions. The bill would recast the definition of “development project” for these purposes to mean a housing development project, as defined in the Housing Accountability Act.

(5) The Planning and Zoning Law, among other things, requires the legislative body of each county and city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city and of any land outside its boundaries that relates to its planning. That law authorizes the legislative body, if it deems it to be in the public interest, to amend all or part of an adopted general plan, as provided. That law also authorizes the legislative body of any county or city, pursuant to specified procedures, to adopt ordinances that, among other things, regulate the use of buildings, structures, and land as between industry, business, residences, open space, and other purposes.

This bill, until January 1,~~2030,~~*2025,* with respect to land where housing is an allowable use on or after January 1, 2018, except as specified, would prohibit a county or city, including the electorate exercising its local initiative or referendum power, in which specified conditions exist, determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development as provided, from enacting a development policy, standard, or condition, as defined, that would have the effect of (A) changing the land use designation or zoning of a parcel or parcels of property to a less intensive use or reducing the intensity of land use within an existing zoning district below what was allowed under the general plan or specific plan land use designation and zoning ordinances of the county or city as in effect on January 1, 2018; (B) imposing or enforcing a moratorium on housing development within all or a portion of the jurisdiction of the county or city, except as provided; (C) imposing or enforcing new design standards established on or after January 1, 2018, that are not objective design standards, as defined; or (D) establishing or implementing certain limits on the number of permits issued by, or the population of, the county or city, unless the limit was approved prior to January 1, 2005, in a predominantly agricultural county, as defined. The bill would, notwithstanding these prohibitions, allow a city or county to prohibit the commercial use of land zoned for residential use consistent with the authority of the city or county conferred by other law. The bill would state that these prohibitions would apply to any zoning ordinance adopted or amended on or after January 1, 2018, and that any development policy, standard, or condition on or after that date that does not comply would be deemed void.

The bill would state that these prohibitions would prevail over any conflicting provision of the Planning and Zoning Law or other law regulating housing development in this state, except as specifically provided. The bill would also require that any exception to these provisions, including an exception for the health and safety of occupants of a housing development project, be construed narrowly. The bill would also declare any requirement to obtain local voter approval or supermajority approval of any body of the county or city for specified purposes related to housing development against public policy and void.

(6) The State Housing Law, among other things, requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to propose the adoption, amendment, or repeal of building standards to the California Building Standards Commission, and to adopt, amend, and repeal other rules and regulations for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare of the occupant and the public, governing hotels, motels, lodging houses, apartment houses, and dwellings, and buildings and structures accessory thereto. That law specifies that the provisions of the State Housing Law and the building standards and rules and regulations adopted pursuant to that law apply in all parts of the state and requires specified entities within each city, county, or city and county to enforce within its jurisdiction those pertaining to the maintenance, sanitation, ventilation, use, or occupancy of apartment houses, hotels, or dwellings. That law authorizes an enforcement agency to institute an appropriate action or proceeding to prevent, restrain, correct, or abate violations of that law, or building standards, rules, or regulations adopted pursuant to that law, after providing 30 days’ notice, or a shorter period of time under certain circumstances. A violation of the State Housing Law, or any building standard, rule, or regulation adopted pursuant to that law, is a misdemeanor.

This bill would authorize the owner of an occupied substandard building or unit in a zone where residential use is a permitted use that receives a notice to correct a violation of a building standard under the State Housing Law or abate a nuisance to submit an application to the enforcement agency requesting that enforcement of the violation or nuisance be delayed for up to 7 years. The bill would require the enforcement agency to grant a request to delay enforcement if it determines that correcting the violation or abating the nuisance is not necessary to protect health and safety. The bill would repeal these provisions as of January 1,~~2030.~~*2025.*

(7) This bill would include findings that the changes proposed by this bill address a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities, including charter cities.

(8) By imposing various new requirements and duties on local planning officials with respect to housing development, and by changing the scope of a crime under the State Housing Law, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that with regard to certain mandates no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

With regard to any other mandates, this bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs so mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

(9) This bill would provide that its provisions are severable.

DIGEST KEY

Vote: majority   Appropriation: no   Fiscal Committee: yes   Local Program: yes