

What is NC House Bill 765?

House Bill 765, filed in the North Carolina General Assembly in April 2025, proposes sweeping changes to local authority over zoning, land use, and development processes. While it's framed as a way to address housing shortages, many local officials and community advocates are raising red flags. The bill would shift numerous land-use decisions from local governments to the state, and in many cases, directly to developers.

Key Provisions of the Bill

- **Eliminates Local Oversight:** Local governments would be prohibited from requiring landscape buffers, sidewalks, tree protections, or parking minimums. These are common tools communities use to manage traffic, walkability, and environmental impact.
- **Automatic Approvals:** If a planning board or local government does not act on a development proposal within 90 days, the project would be automatically approved. This applies regardless of the proposal's size, impact, or complexity.
- **Mandatory Zoning Allowances:** Cities with populations over 125,000 (e.g., Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Durham) would be required to allow tiny homes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in all single-family zones, without local adjustments.
- **Reduces Public Engagement:** Local governments could no longer require public hearings for certain types of development. This limits opportunities for residents to voice concerns about how new projects affect schools, roads, utilities, and neighborhoods.
- **Legal Threats to Local Officials:** The bill opens the door for lawsuits against elected officials or planning board members simply for expressing public opposition to a development—chilling free speech and community dialogue.
- **Weakens Historic Preservation:** HB 765 raises the threshold for establishing or updating local historic districts, making it harder to protect culturally significant areas.

Why This Matters

- It limits local decision-making. Cities and counties understand the unique needs of their communities. This bill creates a one-size-fits-all approach that undermines their ability to plan responsibly.
- It doesn't guarantee affordability. While marketed as a response to the housing crisis, HB 765 includes no requirements that new development include affordable units, rent controls, or protections against displacement.
- It shifts power toward developers, allowing for faster approvals and fewer regulations while reducing accountability and transparency.
- It undermines local infrastructure planning. Rapid or unchecked development without infrastructure coordination can overburden roads, water systems, and schools.

This Isn't About Party—It's About Community

This is not a partisan issue. Across the state, both rural and urban communities—Republican and Democrat-led—value their right to guide local development. HB 765 limits that ability. It makes it harder for local governments to listen to their residents, protect the environment, and plan growth in ways that reflect community values.

What You Can Do

- **Contact your legislators:** Ask them to vote NO on HB 765.
- **Attend town meetings:** Stay informed and speak up.
- **Share this information** with friends, neighbors, and local groups who care about responsible growth and local democracy.

