

Castle Rock opposes proposal to eliminate single-family homes



By Mike McKibbin / NewsBreak Denver / April 6, 2023

[CASTLE ROCK, COLO.] — With words like “draconian,” “attack,” “frightening,” and “faulty,” the Castle Rock Town Council Tuesday night unanimously opposed a bill in the Colorado legislature they said would eliminate single-family homes.

[Senate Bill 23-213](#) is sponsored by three Democrats: senate majority leader Dominick Moreno, majority co-whip Iman Jodeh and state Rep. Steven Woodrow. It would also allow multi-family dwellings nearly anywhere single-family homes are permitted, including within existing single-family neighborhoods and remove certain homeowners’ association protections.

The council approved a resolution and a letter to state lawmakers opposing the bill.

Affordable housing goal not addressed

Town Manager Dave Corliss gave an often-animated presentation to the council to highlight the “draconian” effects the bill would have on local governments statewide by removing single-family zone districts.

He said the bill also mandates limitations on parking, setbacks and occupancy in multi-family housing.

“This is all under the argument that the state needs more affordable housing,” Corliss stated. “But the bill does absolutely nothing regarding affordable housing. It doesn’t require it or set up any income thresholds.”



Castle Rock Town Manager Dave Corliss. Photo by [Town of Castle Rock](#)

Corliss added the bill is based on a “faulty premise” that if more housing of some type is built, it will be responsive to high housing prices and that there isn’t enough housing for people who want it.

“When you build on a faulty premise and don’t consult with the impacted community, you end up with some very draconian and, quite frankly, scary effects regarding our quality of life,” he said.

The worst impact, Corliss added, is the bill would “decimate” the value of single-family homes.

“Those are the most important asset we will ever have,” he said. “It’s generational wealth we hope to pass down to our children. The state is saying the municipalities we live in can’t control the quality of the buildings and would allow things like sixplexes to be built immediately next door to single-family homes. That’s very frightening.”

Home rule attacked

In the bigger picture, Corliss said the bill is an attack on home rule government, which gives local governments more flexibility and control than statutory governments.

“If we can’t decide things like zoning and parking, how can we claim local control?” Corliss asked. “The issue is the state has decided one size fits all.”

He noted Castle Rock added 4,862 single-family homes between 2018-22 and 1,578 multi-family housing units such as apartments. Corliss said the bill would also allow accessory dwelling units as a use-by-right. Castle Rock has approved more than 80 such units, he added.

He noted an “incredible irony” in the bill’s support by conservation groups such as those focused on open space conservation.

“This bill will encourage single-family homes in rural areas with 5-10 acres each,” he said, reducing open space and encouraging sprawl.

“I don’t think we’re looking at amendments to fix the bill. This is a bad bill; it needs to be stopped,” Corliss said. “The state should step back and find better ways to work with local governments and achieve some of the goals in this bill.”



Council voices concerns

Councilmember Laura Cavey said she was unaware of any local elected officials supporting the bill.

“I want to call out the disingenuousness of (Gov. Jared Polis, a bill supporter) who said he’s been working with municipalities across the state and has all this support,” she said. “It’s simply not true.”

Cavey also pointed out that the town will still have to provide services such as public safety, traffic and roads as it grows.

“So all the burden will fall on towns when the state builds 20-40 multi-family units, but it’s still on us taxpayers to pay for these services,” she said.

Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Bracken said the bill resembles the steps taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“States declared emergencies to access federal relief money,” he explained. “Watch what’s happening. It takes rights away and doubles down on the same playbook.”

Mayor Jason Gray said the state presumes it knows any town or city better than those communities.

“I would never tell Littleton how to run their town,” he added. “This is out of bounds; it’s overreach. I’m uncomfortable with several things in the state Capitol, but this takes the cake.”

Castle Rock was joined in opposition to the bill by the Lone Tree City Council, which [passed a resolution](#) against SB23-213. The bill had its first hearing before a state Senate committee Thursday.