

Alexander Schroeder  
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Dear Planning Commission:

As a San Francisco homeowner whose house needs extensive and expensive upgrades, I strongly support the Planning Commission and Planning Department's efforts to reform the Discretionary Review process.

Under the current DR process a Project Sponsor whose project has already been determined to comply with the Planning Code and Residential Design Guidelines can be held up unfairly for an excessive amount of time and at great expense.

It is very unfortunate that homeowners, who brave the complexities and expenses of remodeling their home to update *their property* and make it more livable, can be held hostage by very subjective and self-serving notions of neighbors.

It is especially troubling that projects which have been determined to meet the Planning Code and the Residential Design Guidelines and that have already given up otherwise allowable square footage of buildable and much needed interior space to appease neighbor concerns, sometimes in several iterative compromises, then still find themselves faced with the same neighbor opposing the project by filing for a DR and then the appeal(s!).

If and when the project does go before the Planning Commission, I have seen the Commission wrongly appease the DR Requestor by "hacking away" additional square footage, so that ultimately the new addition becomes worthless as the equally important interior space it was supposed to provide.

In many cases I have seen, the DR Requestor's demands are clearly unjust to the Project Sponsor, and these cases should never have been allowed to progress to the level of Discretionary Review.

The process, as it currently stands has the potential to be highly abusive to the Project Sponsors. To me it appears to have serious legal questions and in effect amounts to a form of extortion. It appears as an unjust exercise of something equivalent to Eminent Domain but without any compensation for the sacrifices in time, money, professional services required, and most of all the actual amount and usability of the intended additional space a homeowner is entitled to create on *their own property* by Code and by Planning Guidelines.

I can only hope the proposed improvements are well-designed, comprehensive, and will be a benefit to all. The proposed improvements to the Planning Department's internal review must provide a more predictable and consistent process for permitting and must minimize the current arbitrary and divisive nature of the current DR process.

I greatly appreciate the Planning Commission and Planning Department being proactive in improving the DR process.

Please approve the Planning Department's proposed improvements.

Sincerely, Alexander Schroeder