



August 10, 2020

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4066
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 288 – Exempt Transit-Friendly Projects from CEQA

Dear Senator Wiener:

On behalf of the Council of Infill Builders, a statewide organization of real estate professionals committed to improving California through infill development, I write to support Senate Bill 288. SB 288 will exempt temporarily from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) certain projects that benefit transit ridership, active transportation and infill development, such as reduced parking requirements and new bus rapid transit, bus, or light rail services on public rail or highway rights-of-way.

During the COVID emergency, people, businesses and local governments are under severe economic distress. SB 288 will provide crucial streamlining for needed projects that enhance mobility, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and provide needed construction jobs. Our members strongly support such efforts to streamline permitting for infill development and infill-related transit projects, which can otherwise create a significant barrier for badly-needed housing near our job centers and major transit. Local government decisions to allow discretionary review on these types of projects can trigger lengthy and expensive CEQA review. In the absence of by-right, ministerial local permitting, the existing statutory and categorical CEQA infill exemptions provide relief but need updating and expanding.

SB 288 helps address this need by streamlining local agency actions to reduce minimum parking requirements. Minimum parking requirements hurt housing affordability and are at odds with our climate goals. They add unnecessary costs for home buyers and renters and encourage excess vehicle miles traveled, while discouraging transit usage, walking and biking.

The Council of Infill Builders thanks you for your legislative efforts on SB 288 and infill housing.

Sincerely,

Mott Smith
Board Member, Council of Infill Builders