



May 6, 2026

City of San Diego

City Council

202 C Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor

San Diego, CA 92101

**Subject:** Recommendations for Optimized SB 79 Implementation

Honorable Members of the City Council,

The Council of Infill Builders, San Diego Chapter, writes to provide feedback on the proposed implementation framework for Senate Bill 79. At this critical juncture for our city, we believe that increasing housing density at major transit stops represents a significant net benefit rather than a cost to be managed or delayed. In a time of severe budget crisis, San Diego must prioritize efficient land-use patterns; building transit-oriented development (TOD) not only raises vital public revenues through property and sales taxes, but it also sustains our local economy by providing the essential housing our region's workforce requires. Delaying this housing, which could add an estimated 367,000 units near transit, stalls the economic engine San Diego needs right now.

### **Preserving San Diego's Pro-Housing Momentum**

The City of San Diego has earned a distinguished Pro-Housing designation from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by recognizing that housing production is the primary solution to the affordability crisis. However, the proposed framework, which seeks to limit the immediate application of SB 79 to only 16% of eligible land near transit, diverges from that successful narrative.

San Diego is not currently on track to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) obligations. SB 79 provides a vital mechanism to correct this trajectory. Implementing broad delays until 2031 in many neighborhoods will make meeting these state-mandated goals



significantly more difficult and may invite stricter, more prescriptive intervention from Sacramento lawmakers in the future.

### **Density as the Foundation for Resource Growth**

The perspective that lower-resource areas cannot support immediate density due to a lack of current amenities often overlooks the economic realities of urban development. In practice, the reverse is true:

- **Addressing Food Deserts:** Essential services, such as full-service supermarkets, require a specific population density to remain profitable. Increasing the number of residents is the most direct way to create the market demand necessary to eliminate food deserts and attract new businesses.
- **Fiscal Sustainability:** New transit-oriented projects provide a critical pathway to increasing city revenues. This private investment generates the funds essential for improving local infrastructure, parks, and public spaces in the very neighborhoods the city seeks to "boost".

### **Strategic Implementation for Equity**

Limiting the immediate impact of SB 79 primarily to high-income areas inadvertently denies underserved neighborhoods the revitalizing investment they need. Transit-oriented housing should act as a catalyst for growth throughout the city, rather than being treated as a burden to be deferred.

We strongly urge the Council to adopt a more comprehensive implementation schedule that aligns with San Diego's pro-housing identity and ensures that all transit-adjacent communities can benefit from the economic stability and growth that density provides.

Sincerely,

Andrew Malick

Chapter President

The Council of Infill Builders, San Diego Chapter