

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 8, 2026

City of San Diego Advances Plan to Implement New State Law that Encourages More Homes Near Transit

THE CITY WILL SEEK PUBLIC INPUT ON AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN TAILORED TO BEST ADDRESS SAN DIEGO'S NEEDS

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego is advancing a locally tailored approach to implement a new California law that encourages more homes near transit.

In 2025, the State of California approved Senate Bill 79 (SB 79) to address the housing shortage by creating more opportunities to build homes near transit. The law requires cities to approve certain housing projects within a half mile of qualifying transit stops on sites zoned for residential, mixed-use or commercial development.

The City's approach allows a phased rollout in certain areas, providing time to develop a plan shaped by public input. In areas not eligible for phased implementation, the City will be required to approve development consistent with state law beginning July 1, 2026.

“This approach allows the City to implement this required state housing law while ensuring it works in a way that is best for our communities,” said City Planning Director Heidi Vonblum. **“It gives us time to gather feedback from community members and more thoughtfully plan and evaluate where additional homes near transit make the most sense while considering factors such as wildfire risk, equitable housing distribution, climate resiliency, historic resources and infrastructure.”**

The City Council unanimously approved an ordinance to phase implementation during a public meeting on Thursday, May 7. As an advocate for pro-housing policies, Mayor Todd Gloria supported the passage of SB 79, representing the largest city in the state to support the bill.

In San Diego, qualifying transit includes 48 existing trolley stations and qualifying bus rapid transit stops serving millions of riders each year. Qualifying transit stops will be identified by the San Diego Association of Governments under SB 79.

Consistent with SB 79, the ordinance exempts areas where physical barriers – such as canyons and freeways – limit access to transit. It also phases in the law in select areas, allowing implementation to begin after the City develops a tailored plan shaped by community input.

Under the ordinance, areas more than one mile walking distance from an eligible transit stop will be exempt from SB 79. The City will also phase implementation of SB 79 in the following areas:

- Low resource areas
- Very high fire severity zones
- Sites with designated historic resources
- Sites subject to one foot of sea level rise

The City will now begin preparing an alternative plan to implement the law. The draft will be shared with the public for review and feedback before being considered by the Planning Commission, Land Use & Housing Committee and the City Council within a year.

Community members can learn more about this law, review an interactive map showing locations for phased implementation and sign up for updates on the development of the alternative plan and opportunities to provide feedback on [this webpage](#).



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