



PETER STEVENSON, MAYOR
MICHAEL BROWNRIGG, VICE MAYOR
ANDREA PAPPAJOHN
DESIREE THAYER
DONNA COLSON

The City of Burlingame

CITY HALL -- 501 PRIMROSE ROAD
BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA 94010-3997

TEL: (650) 558-7201
www.burlingame.org

May 19, 2025

State Senator Anna Caballero
Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Re: Senate Bill 79, the *Abundant & Affordable Homes Near Transit Act*-- OPPOSE

Dear Senator Caballero and Senate Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the City of Burlingame, I write to convey **our unanimous opposition to SB 79 (Wiener), also known as the Abundant & Affordable Homes Near Transit Act**, which proposes to further limit the ability of local governments to regulate land use and housing development within their jurisdictions.

While we recognize the urgent need to address California's housing crisis, SB 79 continues a troubling trend of top-down mandates that undermine the ability of cities and counties to shape development in ways that reflect their unique needs, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and community priorities. This bill would significantly erode local discretion in planning and zoning by forcing uniform development standards that may be ill-suited to diverse urban and suburban communities.

The City of Burlingame's General Plan, adopted in 2019, planned for dense, transit-oriented developments near the Millbrae BART/Caltrain station on Burlingame's northern border. The City further increased height and density standards through the adoption of a North Rollins Specific Plan in 2023 and adopted its 6th cycle Housing Element in 2023. These planning processes have included robust public input and reflect the will of residents. By circumventing these processes, SB 79 silences the voices of the very communities most affected by development decisions.

Burlingame's Regional Housing Needs Allocation of the 6th cycle is 3,257 units. The City has planned for up to 5,352 units with its buffer and performed extensive analysis to ensure that there is adequate infrastructure to support these developments. State-imposed density increases and streamlined approvals may lead to developments in areas not adequately served by public transit, schools, water systems, or emergency services, compromising quality of life and public safety.

Burlingame has more than 2,200 residential units in the pipeline, with 1,208 units constructed as of December 2024. SB 79 would erroneously penalize even "good actor" jurisdictions that plan for abundant transit-oriented housing opportunities affordable to residents of all incomes, such as the City of Burlingame.

California's housing challenges require solutions that are both ambitious and locally grounded. Rather than imposing one-size-fits-all policies, we should empower cities and counties to continue crafting innovative, equitable, and sustainable housing strategies tailored to their communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you and your colleagues to reconsider SB 79 and work with local governments to find balanced, collaborative solutions to our housing crisis.

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Sincerely,

Peter Stevenson
Mayor