



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
CITY COUNCIL AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

AGENDA

**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026, AT 6:01 PM**

**AMEDEE O. "DICK" RICHARDS JR. COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1424 MISSION STREET, SOUTH PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91030**

NOTICE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & ACCESSIBILITY

The South Pasadena City Council Meeting will be conducted in-person from the Amedee O. "Dick" Richards, Jr. Council Chambers, located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030.

Public participation may be made as follows:

- In-Person – Council Chambers, 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030
- Live Broadcast via the City website –
http://www.spectrumstream.com/streaming/south_pasadena/live.cfm
- Via Zoom – Meeting ID: **825 9999 2830**
- Written Public Comment – written comment must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting by emailing to ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov
- Via Phone—+1-669-900-6833 and entering the Zoom Meeting ID listed above.

Meeting may be viewed at:

1. Go to the Zoom website, <https://zoom.us/join> and enter the Zoom Meeting information; or
2. Click on the following unique Zoom meeting link:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82599992830> or
3. By calling: +1-669-900-6833 and entering the Zoom Meeting ID listed above; and viewing the meeting via http://www.spectrumstream.com/streaming/south_pasadena/live.cfm

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor

Sheila Rossi

**ROLL CALL OF CITY
COUNCIL:**

Mayor

Sheila Rossi

Mayor Pro Tem
Councilmember
Councilmember
Councilmember

Omari Ferguson
Michael A. Cacciotti
Jon Primuth
Janet Braun

**ROLL CALL OF PLANNING
COMMISSION:**

Chair

Lisa Padilla

Vice Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

Amitabh Barhakur
Mark Gallatin
Jason Claypool
Arnold Swanborn
James Martin

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker for the agendized items only.

ACTION/DISCUSSION

2. OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SENATE BILL 79 (ABUNDANT AND AFFORDABLE HOMES NEAR TRANSIT ACT)

Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council and Planning Commission receive the presentation and report and provide direction as necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

FUTURE CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

January 21, 2026	Regular City Council Meeting	7:00 P.M.
February 4, 2026	Regular City Council Meeting	7:00 P.M.
February 18, 2026	Regular City Council Meeting	7:00 P.M.
March 4, 2026	Regular City Council Meeting	7:00 P.M.

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ACCOMMODATIONS

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CERTIFICATION OF POSTING

I declare under penalty of perjury that I posted this notice of agenda for the meeting to be held on January 14, 2026, on the bulletin board in the courtyard of City Hall located at 1414 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030, and on the City, website as required by law, on the date listed below.

01/08/2026

/S/

Date

Mark Perez, Acting Chief City Clerk



City Council and the Planning Commission Agenda Report

ITEM NO. 1

DATE: January 14, 2026

FROM: Todd Hileman, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Mark Perez, Deputy City Clerk

SUBJECT: **PUBLIC COMMENT**
Public Comment will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker for the
agendized items only.



City Council and the Planning Commission Agenda Report

ITEM NO. 2

DATE: January 14, 2026

FROM: Todd Hileman, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Roxanne Diaz, City Attorney
Erika Ramirez, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: **OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SENATE BILL 79 (ABUNDANT AND AFFORDABLE HOMES NEAR TRANSIT ACT)**

Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council and Planning Commission receive the presentation and report and provide direction as necessary.

Background

Senate Bill (SB) 79, known as the “Abundant and Affordable Homes Near Transit Act,” adds Government Code Sections 65912.155 through 65912.162 to override local zoning requirements and allow housing developments at increased heights and densities near specified transit stops in various counties, including Los Angeles County and the Metro A Line station in the City of South Pasadena.

This report provides an overview of SB 79, including a review of its key provisions, as well as its applicability to South Pasadena. As further explained, there are various options under SB 79 for its implementation by the City and the goal is to review those options with the City Council and Planning Commission and receive feedback. As background, it is evident that SB 79 imposes complex, and at times imprecise, standards and processes for transit-oriented development projects envisioned by the bill.

Analysis

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SB 79

Senate Bill (SB) 79, is a state law introduced by Senator Scott Wiener and signed by Governor Gavin Newsom that will be effective on July 1, 2026. In general, SB 79 does the following:

- Provides that a “Housing Development Project” is an allowed use as a transit-oriented housing development on any site zoned for residential, mixed-use, or commercial sites located within one-quarter (1/4) or one-half (1/2) mile of a Transit-Oriented Development (“TOD”) Stop as long as the development meets certain threshold standards and requirements set forth in the statute.
- Makes such housing eligible for state enacted development standards for building height, density and floor area ratio.

SB 79 defines TOD Stops as either a “Tier 1” TOD Stop or a “Tier 2” TOD Stop depending on the type of transit that services the stop. Currently, the only TOD Stop in South Pasadena is the Metro A Line station, which is considered a “Tier 2” TOD Stop. The Metro A Line station is located at the intersection of Mission Street and Meridian Avenue.

The development standards set forth in SB 79 both generally and specific to a Tier 2 TOD Stop, supersedes any development standards otherwise established by the City and thereby usurp the City’s local control over its land use.

The SB 79 development standards increase the allowable density, floor area ratio and height for a Housing Development Project and the standards vary depending on whether the site is within 1/4 or 1/2 mile from a TOD Stop. However, because South Pasadena’s population is less than 35,000 the provisions of SB 79 would only apply to those residential, commercial, or mixed-use sites located within 1/4 mile of the Metro A Line station.

In addition to the prescribed development standards, SB 79 also imposes other requirements and standards including affordability requirements for Housing Development Projects with more than 10 units, labor standards, including payment of prevailing wages, for buildings over 85 feet in height, and a streamlined ministerial process only if the Housing Development Project complies with certain affordability requirements and site location restrictions as specified in SB 35 (Govt. Code Section 65913.4). The use of State Density Bonus Law is also encouraged as SB 79 offers additional incentives beyond those afforded by State Density Bonus Law if the project meets specific minimum density standards.

Housing Development Projects and SB 79 State Mandated Standards and Requirements

SB 79 provides that a “housing development project” must be an allowed use as a transit-oriented housing development on any site zoned for residential, mixed, or commercial development within 1/4 mile (in the case of South Pasadena) of a TOD stop. For the purposes of SB 79, projects that are eligible to utilize the provisions of SB 79 are:

- A use consisting of residential units only;
- A mixed-use project where at least two-thirds of the new or converted square footage is designated for residential use, except for projects of 500 net new residential units, which in such case, must have at least 50 percent of the new or converted square footage designated for residential use;
- Transitional or supportive housing; and
- Farmworker housing.

Based on the above, it should be noted that transit-oriented housing development projects may include residential projects with a commercial component, even if the underlying zoning does not permit for commercial or mixed uses, except that hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns or other transient lodging uses are not permitted in an SB 79 project. This means that a 100% residential project could be proposed in a commercial area and a mixed-use development with up to 1/3 of the square footage dedicated to commercial uses could be proposed in a single-family or multi-family residential neighborhood.

Table 1 contains a comprehensive list of the threshold standards and requirements for a SB 79 transit-oriented housing development project to qualify for SB 79 and Table 2 contains the specific Tier 2 TOD Stop development standards that the City must allow.

TABLE 1**STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SB 79 HOUSING PROJECT**

Project Eligibility Criteria	Requirement
Zoning	Must be located on a site zoned for residential, mixed-use, or commercial uses.
Number of Units	Minimum 5 dwelling units
Density	Greater of (i) 30 dwelling units/acre or (ii) the minimum density required under local zoning for the site
Average Residential Unit Size	A maximum of 1,750 “net habitable square feet.” [1]
Housing Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential only;• Mixed use residential if:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ At least two-thirds (2/3) of the new or converted square footage is residential uses;◦ At least 50 percent (50%) of the new or converted square footage is residential uses and the project includes at least 500 net new residential units;◦ At least 50 percent (50%) of the new or converted square footage is residential uses and the project includes at least 500 net new residential units and the project involves the demolition or conversion of at least 100,000 square feet of nonresidential uses, and the project demolishes at least 50 percent (50%) of the existing nonresidential uses on the site;• Transitional or supportive housing• Farmworker housing
Disqualified Uses	Project may not include hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inn or other transient lodging.
Sites Excluded from Development	<p>Sites containing, or that contained, within the last seven years, more than two units of housing subject to any form of rent or price control through a public entity’s valid exercise of police power.</p> <p>Sites with no walking path of less than one mile from that location to the TOD stop (requires substantial evidence and adoption of ordinance).</p>

Affordability Requirements (calculated before density bonus)	<p>If project includes more than 10 units, must include at least one of the following percentages of affordable units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7% extremely low-income units • 10% very low-income units; or • 13% low-income units
Minimum Requirement of Affordable Units to Qualify for Streamlined Ministerial Approval	<p>For for-rent projects: ≥ 10 % dedicated to very low income households (≤50% AMI)</p> <p>For for-sale projects: ≥ 10 % dedicated to lower income households (≤80% AMI)</p>
Labor Standards	For any project that is over 85 feet in height, the project must meet prevailing wage and skilled and trained workforce requirements as specified by statute.

[1] “Net habitable square footage” is defined as the finished and heated floor area fully enclosed by the inside surface of walls, windows, doors, and partitions, and having a headroom of at least 6.5 feet, including working, living, eating, cooking, sleeping, stair, hall, service, and storage areas, but excluding garages, carports, parking spaces, cellars, half-stories, and unfinished attics and basements.

TABLE 2	
Development Standard	Tier 2 Provisions Applicable to Parcels ¼ Mile from TOD Stop
Density	Must allow at least 100 dwelling units/acre base density
Density to be Eligible for Additional Density Bonus Concessions (see Table 3)	Base density must be at least 90 dwelling units/acre
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	Must allow at least 3 FAR for residential floor area
Height	Must allow at least 65 feet
Average Residential Unit Size	A maximum of 1,750 “net habitable square feet.”
“Adjacency Intensifier”	<p>Projects located within 200 feet of a TOD Stop are eligible for an intensity multiplier as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional 20 feet in height for a total of 85 feet • Additional 40 dwelling units/acre for a total of 140 du/ac • Additional FAR of 1 for a total FAR of 4

With regard to the density of 30 du/ac described in Table 1, this is the *minimum* density a transit-oriented housing development must include in order to qualify for or submit a project under SB 79. The 100 du/ac density described in Table 2 is the minimum density the City must allow under SB 79 (either by ordinance, or the practical effect of SB 79 when it takes effect on July 1, 2026).

As for the “adjacency intensifier,” described on Table 2, the distance of a transit-oriented development project from a TOD Stop is measured in a straight line from the nearest edge of the parcel containing the proposed project to a pedestrian access point for the TOD Stop. The 200’ radius for the Mission Station will be from each of its entries.

Relationship to State Density Bonus Law

A transit-oriented housing development project is eligible for a density bonus, incentives or concessions, waivers or reductions of development standards and parking ratios pursuant to State Density Bonus Law or the City’s density bonus program, using the density allowed under SB 79 as the base density, which in this case is 100 dwelling units/acre, or 140 units/acre for those properties subject to the adjacency intensifier discussed above. Notwithstanding, the City is not required to approve an incentive, concession or waiver to approve additional height if the project proposes a height greater than the height limit set by SB 79 (in this case the height limit is 65 feet, or 85 feet if the adjacency intensifier applies). There is one exception for 100% affordable housing projects, which are entitled to a height increase of up to three additional stories, or 33 feet under Density Bonus Law. In addition, SB 79 projects that have a density of at least 75 dwelling units/acre are also eligible for additional density bonus concessions as set forth in Table 3.

TABLE 3 - Density Bonus	
Number of Additional Concessions	Eligibility Criteria
1	Provide low-income units
2	Provide very low-income units
3	Provide extremely low-income units

Housing Crisis Act Replacement Obligations.

A transit-oriented housing development project is subject to the housing replacement obligations and occupant protections of SB 330 and the Housing Crisis Act (Government Code Section 66300.6), including any local requirements or processes implementing that section.

The Housing Crisis Act requires residential dwelling unit replacement obligations, such that if any residential units are demolished by the project, at least as many residential dwelling units must be created. Occupant protections include: (1) allowing existing occupants to occupy their units until six months before start of construction activities, and (2) relocation benefits and a right of first refusal for a comparable unit in the new housing development affordable to the household at an affordable rent or housing cost must be provided by the developer for “protected units”

A “protected unit” is a unit that (1) was subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of lower or very low income in the past five years; (2) residential dwelling units subject to any form of rent or price control within the past five years; (3) residential units that are or were rented by lower or very low income households within the past five years; or (4) residential dwelling units that were withdrawn from rent or lease in accordance with the Ellis Act in the past five years.

Local Demolition and Antidisplacement Standards.

A transit-oriented housing development project is subject to any demolition and antidisplacement standards established by the City through a local ordinance.

Tenant Protections

Transit-oriented housing development projects may not be located on a site containing more than two units where the development requires the demolition of housing that is subject to any form of rent or price control and that has been occupied by tenants within the past seven years. Projects also may not be located on a site where more than two units of housing that were subject to price or rent control were demolished within the past seven years. While South Pasadena does not have a local price or rent control program, many properties within the City are subject to AB 1482, known as the Tenant Protection Act of 2019, which imposed rent caps statewide on many rental units. It is not clear whether sites with units subject to AB 1482 are disqualified from the reach of SB 79, although there is an argument that the provision of AB 1482 constitute a “form of rent or price control through a public entity’s valid exercise of its police power” because it is based on the State’s exercise of the police powers. Further, SB 79’s language does not limit it only to “local” rent or price controls.

Labor Standards for Buildings over 85 feet tall.

For any transit-oriented housing development project with a building over 85 feet in height, the project must meet certain labor standards including payment of prevailing wages and compliance with skilled and trained workforce provisions as set forth in SB 79. From a practical perspective as it applies to South Pasadena, this is not likely to come into play unless the City were to adopt an ordinance allowing greater height than SB 79 requires, since for SB 79 projects within 200 feet of an entry to either a Tier 2 Stop, where heights of up to 85 feet must be allowed, and other projects must be allowed only up to 75 feet.

B. PROCESSING TRANSIT-ORIENTED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

SB 79 does not create a ministerial approval process or exempt transit-oriented housing development projects from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). However, SB 79 projects may avail themselves of the streamlined ministerial permitting process under Government Code Section 65913.4 (“SB 35”), as modified by SB 79. In such cases, the project is exempt from CEQA and is not subject to a conditional use permit or any other non-legislative discretionary approval.

To qualify for this ministerial approval process, a transit-oriented housing development project must comply with the affordability requirements in Section 65913.4(a)(4)(B)(i) that are outlined in “Table 1” in addition to other applicable SB 35 requirements. SB 35 requirements include site location restrictions which prohibit building on environmentally sensitive sites or sites that have hazardous conditions (such as but not limited to flood hazard areas). Staff, however, does not believe that there are any sites that can be disqualified on that basis. SB 35 also provides that streamlined ministerial approval is not available for any transit-oriented housing development project on a site where the development would require the demolition of housing that has been occupied by tenants within the last 10 years; is subject to any form of rent or price control; or is subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of moderate, low, or very low income. Sites that

were previously used for housing occupied by tenants that was demolished within 10 years before the SB 79 developer submits their application, would also prevent ministerial approval as would any development that would require the demolition of a historic structure that is on the national, state or local historic register. Last, no ministerial approval is available for a development on a property that contains housing units occupied by tenants, and units at the property are, or were, subsequently offered for sale to the general public.

SB 79 projects that do not meet the standards for SB 35 processing must be reviewed according to the City's development review process and the Housing Accountability Act (Government Code Section 65589.5), except that any local zoning standard conflicting with the requirements of this chapter shall not apply. Such projects may be eligible for CEQA exemptions depending on the circumstances. Projects that are subject to discretionary review that involve special considerations such as potential historic resource impacts may be subject to more exhaustive CEQA review.

Starting on January 1, 2027, SB 79 states that the denial of an eligible transit-oriented housing development project on a site located a high resource area (this would apply to South Pasadena) is presumed to be in violation of the Housing Accountability Act. In this circumstance, a city becomes immediately liable for penalties in a minimum amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per housing unit, unless the city demonstrates and provides substantial evidence that it has a health, life, or safety reason for denying the project.

C. OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In terms of implementation, SB 79 provides several different pathways for compliance:

- Option A: State SB 79 Implementation
- Option B: Delay Effectuation and Exclude Certain Individual Sites
- Option C: Adoption of a Local Alternative Plan
- Option D: Delay Effectuation and Exempt Certain Individual Sites in conjunction with preparation of a Local Alternative Plan.

SB 79 also allows for delayed effectuation, through adoption of an ordinance, as to an entire TOD zone in which at least 33 percent of sites in the TOD zone have permitted density and residential floor area ratio no less than 50 percent of the standards specified under Section 65912.157(a) and which includes sites with densities that cumulatively allow for at least 75 percent of the aggregate density for the transit-oriented development zone specified under Section 65912.157(a). Staff analyzed these criteria and have determined that the Mission TOD zone does not meet the criteria, since only 152 of the approximately 600 sites within the 1/4 mile radius have densities of 50 du/acre or higher, which is 25%. Thus, the 33% requirement is not met. Further, it does not appear that the requirement for 75% of the aggregate density in the TOD zone can be met. Thus, delayed effectuation of the entire TOD zone does not appear to be a viable option.

The City's GIS consultant prepared three maps that provide a visual of the properties and their respective zoning, both in the 1/4 mile area and 1/2 mile area from the Mission Station and the third map that overlays the two areas. The maps include an overlay for any properties with a historic designation, which in the City's case are primarily historic properties or districts on the California or Federal Register. While the City maintains an inventory of historic resources, we understand there is a handful of properties on the City's local register within the 1/4 mile

radius. We are undertaking additional work to separate the historic properties by local, state and federal designations. This is important because as we go through the options below, SB 79 provides that only sites on a local register as of January 1, 2025 can be excluded under Option B and in reducing the capacity of sites as part of the alternative plan discussed under Option C, the only historic sites for consideration are those on a local register. A fourth map delineates the 200-foot area of the TOD Stop (i.e. the Mission Station). Projects located within 200 feet of a TOD Stop are eligible for an “adjacency intensifier,” which adds an additional 20 feet in height, an additional 40 dwelling units/acre and an additional FAR of 1. (See, Table 2).

It should be noted that SB 79 requires that the “Metropolitan Planning Organization” (“MPO”) for each region create the official map showing the 1/4 and 1/2 mile radius from transit stops in which SB 79 provisions apply in accordance with the guidance promulgated by the Department of Housing and Community Development (“HCD”). The Southern California Association of Governments (“SCAG”) is the applicable MOP. When such maps are created, the map will have a rebuttable presumption of validity for use by project applicants and the City. SCAG has yet to release such maps.

Option A: State SB 79 Implementation

Option A is the implementation of the provisions of SB 79 as written in the bill. Essentially the City defaults to the provisions of state law. While not required, the City may also enact an ordinance to update the South Pasadena Municipal Code to be consistent with SB 79 provisions. This may include the adoption of objective development standards, conditions and policies that apply to transit-oriented housing development projects that meet the SB 79 development standards set forth in the statute. The ordinance adopted by the City cannot physically preclude, alone or in concert with the SB 79 development standards, a transit-oriented housing development project.

Option B: Delay Effectuation and Exclude Certain Individual Sites

The City could consider adopting an ordinance to exclude certain individual sites from SB 79 until one year after the adoption of the seventh cycle housing element, which likely would be April, 2031, given the current estimated adoption date of April 15, 2030. The following discussion uses the term “temporary exclusion” to reflect the delayed effect of SB 79 under these provisions.

Under this option, SB 79 would apply to any properties that are not temporally excluded, which would include most sites zoned for single family residential uses.

SB 79 allows for temporary exclusion of sites meeting the following criteria:

1. A site that has been identified by the local agency which permits density and residential floor area ratio at no less than 50 percent of the standards specified under Section 65912.157(a) (Table 1 and Table 2). Many sites within the Downtown Specific Plan likely would qualify for temporary exclusion given that densities range from 50 dwelling units to 70 dwelling units per acre within the ¼ mile radius of the station. We note that this could allow for deferral of sites with higher residential densities, however, lower density residential such as Altos De Monterey Residential (AM), Residential Estate (RE), Residential Low Density (RS), Residential Medium Density (RM) and Residential High Density (RH), and any commercial sites would remain subject to SB 79’s requirements.
2. A site that is covered by a local transit-oriented development alternative plan adopted by

a local agency. See Option C below.

3. Sites for which substantial evidence shows that there exists no walking path of less than one mile from that location to the transit-oriented development stop. However, there are no sites that meet this requirement.
4. Sites within a very high fire hazard severity zone or within the state responsibility area. However, there are no such areas within ¼ mile of the A Line station.
5. Sites with a historic resource designated as of January 1, 2025, on a local register. We note that the statutory language is specific to resources designated on a “local” register. Although SB 79 is silent as to sites designated on the state or national registers, it seems logical that such resources also could be temporarily excluded, and it is our understanding that this may be a topic of SB 79 cleanup legislation in 2026.

As noted above, residential areas with densities of less than 50 dwelling units per acre and commercial areas with no residential density established generally would not qualify for temporary exclusion, whereas areas within the Downtown Specific Plan could qualify. Thus, while this option could limit the impact of SB 79, it would not result in reduction of SB 79 allowed densities in the lower density residential and commercial areas within the 1/4 mile radius of the station.

There are two other types of sites that can be excluded but neither are applicable in South Pasadena. SB 79 allows for temporary exclusion of sites vulnerable to one foot of sea level rise, however that is not applicable in South Pasadena. Further, SB 79 allows temporary exclusion of certain sites in areas designated as low resource, however, South Pasadena is in the Highest Resource area, so those criteria do not apply.

Option C: Adoption of a Local Alternative Plan

The City may adopt a “transit-oriented development alternative plan” (“Alternative Plan”) to comply with SB 79 in lieu of being subject to the default requirements of SB 79, as described above. Alternative Plans must meet the following requirements:

1. Maintain at least the same net zoned capacity, in terms of both total units and residential floor area, as provided for in SB 79 across the City’s TOD zone. Net zoned capacity in units is measured by subtracting the current number of units on the site from the number allowed by the applicable development standards of SB 79, with some exceptions. Net zoned capacity in floor area is measured by subtracting the current developed floor area of the site from the amount allowed by the applicable development standards of SB 79, with some exceptions.
2. The Alternative Plan does not reduce the maximum allowed density for any individual site on which the plan allows residential use by more than 50 percent below that permitted under SB 79, except for sites meeting the following criteria:

- i. Sites within a very high fire hazard severity zone, or within the state responsibility area. (No such properties exist in ¼ mile area around the Mission Station.)
- ii. Sites that are vulnerable to one foot of sea level rise. (No such properties exist in ¼ mile area around the Mission Station.)
- iii. Sites with a historic resource designated on a local register. However, such exclusions cannot cumulatively exceed 10 percent of the eligible area of any transit-oriented development zone.

Any site excluded from the minimum density requirements for the reasons listed above is not counted toward the plan’s capacity.

3. Projects on sites within one-half mile of a Tier 2 TOD stop shall not have a density below 30 units per acre with a residential floor area ratio of 1.0, except for sites specified in the exempt categories above, and should be considered for attached entry level owner occupied housing development opportunities.
4. The Alternative Plan cannot reduce the capacity in any TOD zone in total units or residential floor area by more than 50 percent. (Given that South Pasadena has only one TOD zone, this would not impact an Alternative Plan if pursued by the City.)
5. A site's maximum capacity counted toward the plan cannot exceed 200 percent of the maximum density established under SB 79.

An Alternative Plan may consist of an existing local transit-oriented zoning ordinance, overlay zone, specific plan, or zoning incentive ordinance, provided that it meets the requirements of an Alternative Plan, as specified above. Staff has reviewed the City's Downtown Specific Plan, and it does not meet these criteria, and thus it would not serve as an alternative plan for SB 79 purposes.

Alternative Plans may be adopted in several ways, including with the adoption of the housing element, a program to implement the housing element, the adoption of a specific plan, a zoning overlay, or enactment of an ordinance. If the City opts to proceed with the preparation of an Alternative Plan, the preferred method is an ordinance pursuant to Government Code Section 65912.160, through the process described below, which would qualify for SB 79's statutory CEQA exemption.

Alternative Plans require approval by HCD, and HCD's approval is only valid through the jurisdiction's next amendment to the housing element of its general plan.

Through an Alternative Plan, the City has the opportunity to shift a portion of the SB 79 density from certain areas within the 1/4 mile radius of the Mission Station to other areas within a 1/2 mile radius of the station. Thus, if the City wanted to minimize the impact of SB 79 on lower density residential areas (including multi-family), up to 50% of the SB 79 density could be shifted to other areas, such as areas within the Downtown Specific Plan, where greater densities are envisioned.

Any site receiving the shifted density cannot be increased beyond 200% of the exiting residential density either through SB 79 within the 1/4 mile radius, or existing zoning in areas between 1/4 and 1/2 mile from the Mission Station.

If the City opts to pursue an Alternative Plan, staff would seek authorization to retain a planning consultant to help develop the Plan and supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the statutory requirements in order to obtain the required HCD approval. In order to understand budget implications a Request for Proposals would be issued to gather cost estimates.

Option D: Delay Effectuation and Exempt Certain Individual Sites in conjunction with preparation of a Local Alternative Plan.

The City could explore a hybrid approach of adopting an ordinance to exclude qualifying sites as described in Option B above, while it undertakes the planning process to develop an alternative plan, as described in Option C above. While this approach could blunt the impact of SB 79 on properties that qualify for temporary exclusion while an Alternative Plan is developed, it would not address the increased density allowed on the remaining properties

with densities of less than 50 dwelling units per acre (single-family and multi-family).

D. PROCESS FOR CITY ADOPTED IMPLEMENTING ORDINANCES

Any ordinance adopted to temporarily exclude qualifying sites or adopt an Alternative Plan would be subject to an HCD review process as follows:

- At least 14 days prior to adoption of an ordinance, the local agency must submit a draft ordinance to HCD. HCD may review the draft and report its written findings to the planning agency.
- Within 60 days of the ordinance's enactment, the local agency must submit a copy of the ordinance to HCD.
- Within 90 days, which may be extended by HCD for a period of 30 days, of receiving an enacted ordinance, HCD must review the enacted ordinance, make a finding as to whether the ordinance is in substantial compliance with SB 79, and report that finding to the local agency.
 - If HCD does not provide written findings to the local agency within the review period, the ordinance is deemed compliant for the purposes of assessing penalties.
 - If HCD provides written findings within the review period, the local agency shall consider any findings made by HCD and shall either:
 - Incorporate HCD's findings and amend the ordinance to comply with SB 79; or
 - The local agency must adopt findings that explain the reasons the local agency believes that the ordinance complies with SB 79 despite the HCD findings. If the local agency does not amend its ordinance in response to HCD's findings or does not adopt a resolution with findings explaining the reason the ordinance complies with SB 79 and addressing HCD's findings, HCD must notify the local agency and may notify the Attorney General that the local agency is in violation of SB 79.

If at any time HCD determines that the ordinance does not comply with SB 79, HCD must notify the local agency in writing. HCD must provide the local agency a reasonable time, not to exceed 60 days, to respond before taking further action, described above.

E. HCD'S ROLE UNDER SB 79

HCD is tasked with overseeing compliance with SB 79. HCD must promulgate standards on how to allow for capacity pursuant to SB 79 to be counted in a city or county's inventory of land suitable for residential development pursuant to Section 65583.2, no later than July 1, 2026. As explained above, HCD must review and provide comments on SB 79 implementing ordinances and determine alternative plan compliance with SB 79 requirements.

F. TOD PROJECTS ON TRANSIT AGENCY LAND

SB 79 creates a complex process that gives transit agencies, like Metro, authority to adopt enforceable development standards for projects meeting specified criteria on land Metro owns, potentially overriding local zoning standards at these sites.

Based on our research, we understand that Metro owns land in the City, however, the Metro-owned land is almost exclusively the parcels comprising the Metro A Line. In reviewing Metro's property data base, Metro owns two parcels that are not the track. However, these

parcels are beyond 1/2 mile from the Metro A Line TOD Stop and therefore not eligible to be developed under the SB 79 provisions applicable to transit agencies. The first parcel is a 2,666 square foot vacant lot located off of Marmion Way across from Arroyo Seco Park. The second parcel is a 4,823 square foot parcel with a 1,404 square foot building and it appears to be used by Metro for operation of the Metro A Line, since the Google map image shows it is fenced in, with signs warning about underground power lines.

Conclusion

In conclusion, staff from both Community Development and the City Attorney's office will be available at the SB 79 study session for the City Council and Planning Commission's discussion of this matter. At the time of posting of this report, only one map (the 1/4 and 1/2 mile overlay map) is included as an attachment. The three additional maps will be provided separately prior to the meeting as an "add doc."

Also attached to this report are two tables. The first table is a continuation of the table we used during the Measure SP height and density discussion, and it now includes information under SB 79 for height and density. The second table lists all the zones in the 1/4 mile TOD area and lists their current height and density as well as the associated height and density under SB 79.

Attachment:

[Attachment No. 1 - SB 79 Map](#)

[Attachment No. 2 - Density Height Progress Table](#)

[Attachment No. 3 - Density Height by Zones](#)



Mission/Meridian Station: SB 79 Overlay Analysis

Station and Proximity Areas

- Metro A Line Mission/Meridian Station
- 1/2-Mile Radius from Metro Station Pedestrian Access Points
- 1/4-Mile Radius from Metro Station Pedestrian Access Points
- Parcels located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

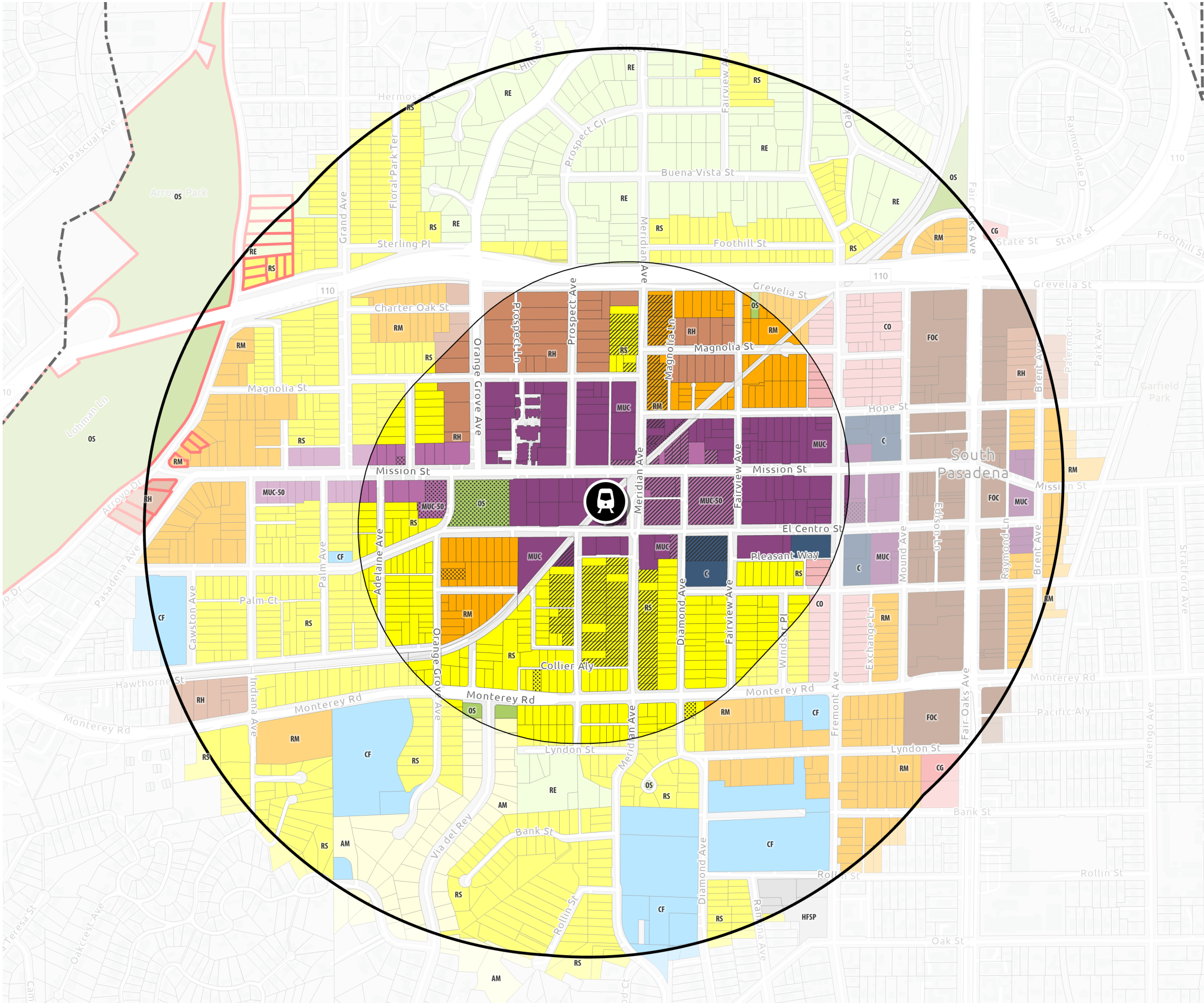
Official Historic Designations

- Historic District
- Historic Landmark

Zoning

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Altos De Monterey Residential (AM) | Mixed Use Core (MUC) |
| Civic (C) | Mixed Use Core (MUC-50) |
| Commercial General (CG) | Open Space (OS) |
| Commercial Office (CO) | Residential Estate (RE) |
| Community Facilities (CF) | Residential High Density (RH) |
| Fair Oaks Corridor (FOC) | Residential Low Density (RS) |
| Holy Family Specific Plan (HFSP) | Residential Medium Density (RM) |

Only the Metro A Line Mission/Meridian Station qualifies as a Tier 2 transit stop under SB 79; no bus routes in South Pasadena meet the state's criteria for bus rapid transit. Portions of the 1/4-mile Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zone intersect with parcels located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, shown in red outline (Source: Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Local Responsibility Areas, as Recommended by the State Fire Marshal, 2025). Data sources: City of South Pasadena (2025) zoning and historic parcels; Metro GIS; CAL FIRE (2025). Map prepared by MIG, Inc., January 2026.



Summary Table of Height and Density								
Location	Original Regulations			8/20 City Council Adopted Regulations			SB 79 Scenario	
	Zone	Density	Height	Zone	Density	Height	Density	Height*
Mission St (within 1/4 mile)								
Mission St and Adjacent Downtown Areas, east of Orange Grove	DTSP-MUC	70 du/ac	45'	DTSP-MUC	70 du/ac	55'	100 du/ac	65'
Nat'l Register Historic District	DTSP-MUC	70 du/ac	45'	DTSP-MUC	50 du/ac	50'	100 du/ac	65'
Mission St, West of Orange Grove	DTSP-MUC	70 du/ac	45'	DTSP-MUC	50 du/ac	50'	100 du/ac	65'
Fair Oaks Ave (within 1/2 mile)								
Fair Oaks Ave - Downtown	DTSP-FOC	110 du/ac	45'	DTSP-FOC	90 du/ac	70'	100 du/ac	65'
Fair Oaks Ave, South of Downtown	CG w/ MU Overlay RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	CG w/ MU Overlay RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	55'	100 du/ac	65'
Huntington Dr								
Huntington Drive, Neighborhood Centers	CG, CO w/ MU Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	CG, CO w/ MU Overlay	70 du/ac	55'	n/a	n/a
Huntington Drive, West of Marengo Av.	RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	55'	n/a	n/a
Huntington Drive, East of Marengo Av.	RM w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	RM w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	55'	n/a	n/a
Large Congregational/Private School Sites on/near Huntington Drive	CF	0 du/ac	No max	CF-50	50 du/ac	50'	n/a	n/a
Ostrich Farm & Western Areas								
Ostrich Farm (Pasadena Ave.)	CG, BP w/ MU Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	CG, BP w/ MU Overlay	70 du/ac	55'	n/a	n/a
North Side of Monterey Rd., West of Indiana Av.	RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	55'	n/a	n/a
South Side of Monterey Rd., West of Pasadena Av. ⁶	RM w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	RM	30 du/ac	45'	n/a	n/a
West Side of Mission St/East Side of Arroyo Dr., South of Mission St.	RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	RH w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	55'	n/a	n/a
East Side of Pasadena Av. Between Mission St. and Hawthorne St.	RM w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	RM	30 du/ac	45'	n/a	n/a
North Side of Mission St., West of Forest Av./ East Side of Arroyo Dr., North of Mission St.	RM w/ HO Overlay	70 du/ac	45'	RM	30 du/ac	45'	n/a	45'

* SB 79 does not allow for an additional Density Bonus height concssion/waiver except for 100% affordable housing project

Summary Table of Height and Density by Zone					
	Current Regulations		SB 79 Scenario (1/4 mile)		
Zone (Within 1/2 mile)	Density	Height	Density	Height*	200 ft radius
Mixed Use Core (MUC)	70 du/ac	55'	100 du/ac	65'	140 du/ac & 85'
Mixed Use Core (MUC-50)	50 du/ac	50'	100 du/ac	65'	140 du/ac & 85'
Residential High Density (RH)*	45 du/ac	45'	100 du/ac	65'	
Residential Medium Density (RM)*	30 du/ac	45'	100 du/ac	65'	
Residential Low Density (RS)	5 du/ac	35'	100 du/ac	65'	140 du/ac & 85'
Altos De Monterey Residential (AM)	3 du/ac	25'	100 du/ac	65'	
Commercial Office (CO)*	0 du/ac	45'	100 du/ac	65'	
Civic (C) (SB 79 N/A)	0 du/ac	N/A			
Zone (Beyond the 1/4, within 1/2 mile)					
Residential Estate (RE)	3 du/ac	35'	100 du/ac	65'	
Commercial General (CG)*	0 du/ac	45'			
Community Facilities (CF)**	0 du/ac	N/A			
Fair Oaks Corridor (FOC)	90 du/ac	70'			

* If located in HO or MU Overlay Districts, 70 du/ac with 55' max. height

** If located in CF-50 zone, 50 du/ac with 50' max. height